Croisements interculturels et entreprise médiatique

La première ambassade japonaise en Europe (1582-1590) et le De missione legatorum iaponensium ad Romanam curiam

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Avant de méditer sur le mystère de l’Incarnation, au cœur des *Exercices spirituels*, Ignace impose un prélude à l’imagination : « *videre magnam capacitatem et ambitum mundi* ». Comme en un panorama déconcertant, le monde s’offre au regard, dans toute son ampleur et son amplitude. De quelles capacités est-il doué ? De quelles ambitions est-il le foyer ? Toute entreprise spirituelle d’envergure nécessite, au départ, cette vision concrète du monde, ainsi que la juste appréhension des réalités les plus matérielles. Tel est précisément le risque de l’Incarnation, défi permanent qui, dans la tradition jésuite, hante le moindre effort pour la propagation de la foi. Les Compagnons d’Ignace en ont fait une expérience singulière en Extrême-Orient.

On 13 April 1586, after twenty-one months spent in Europe, Itô Mancio (1570-1612), Chijiwa Seizaemon Miguel (1569?-1633), Nakaura Julião, and Hara Martinho, accompanied by the Jesuit Diego de Mesquita (1553-1614), and two Japanese Jesuit Brothers - Jorge de Loyola (1562-1589) and Constantino Dourado (1567?-1620) –began the long voyage back from Lisbon to Nagasaki. Alessandro Valignano S. J. (1539-1606), was in Macao when the four young Japanese disembarked in 1588 and together they all waited nearly two years for the ship that linked Macao and Nagasaki – the so called nau do trato or kurofune (black ship) in Portuguese and Japanese respectively.

While in Lisbon, following Valignano’s written instructions, Diego de Mesquita had acquired the full equipment to organize and run a printing press with both Latin and Japanese movable types and brought it to Macao and then to Kyūshū. While in Portugal, Jorge de Loyola and Constantino Dourado learned the technique for casting and using matrices with metal type Japanese syllabary, the katakana. The success of the Jesuit press in the Jesuit seminary in Rachol, near Goa, led Valignano to believe that the introduction of Latin and Japanese moveable-type printing could be essential to the effective development of the Jesuit missionary enterprise in Japan, making it possible to produce textbooks for the newly established Jesuit seminaries and helping to create and disseminate a new Japanese Christian literature.

During their forced stay in Macao, having at his disposal the press, Valignano resolved to prepare a detailed account of the boys’ long journey to Europe in the form of a fictional dialogue, originally to be published in both Latin and Japanese. According to Valignano a publication that celebrated the Japanese legates’ experiences could be a strategic tool for advancing the Jesuit mission in Japan from two main interrelated perspectives: on the one hand, there was the wish to impress the Japanese readers with the splendor of Christian Europe to oppose what Valignano believed were the negative impressions left by Portuguese merchants in Japan; on the other hand, once received in Europe, the work could contribute to raise awareness amongst the clerical and secular European elites about the importance of investing resources in the Japanese mission, a landmark
in the early modern global process of evangelization carried out by the Society of Jesus.

Composed in Spanish by Valignano in the form of a continuous story, the work was transformed into a dialogue and translated into Latin by Duarte de Sande S. J. (1531-1600) under the title De missione legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam curiam, rebusque in Europa, ac toto itinere animadversis dialogus ex ephemeride ipsorum Legatorum collectus (A dialogue concerning the sending of the Japanese legates to the Roman Curia, on the things of Europe and the whole itinerary they observed, composed from the notes of the Legates) and was published in Macao by the Jesuit press between 1589 and 1590 under the direct supervision of Valignano. In contrast to Valignano’s initial project, the De missione was not translated into Japanese: the Japanese Brother Jorge de Loyola, in charge of the translation, suddenly died in Macao in 1589; in later years, the preparation of a monumental and archetypal Latin-Portuguese-Japanese dictionary, published in Amakusa by the Jesuit press in 1595, almost absorbed all available resources.

At the very time in which the unity of Christian Europe had collapsed under the pressure and violence of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations – an aspect carefully kept hidden to the four legati – Valignano structured the De missione around the trope that an (alleged) unified, peaceful, and prosperous (Catholic) Europe could disclose the whole world to all civilizations, through its refined culture and the composite agency of its scholars, missionaries, merchants, and cartographers.

Among its many contents, the De missione also created a literary imago mundi through which a fully fictional, literary orbis terrarum was displayed to the Japanese. At the same time, through the eyes of the Japanese and by an inevitable dialectic process of self-identification through the internal and external comparison of the self with the other, the same orbis terrarum was displayed to Catholic Europeans themselves.

It is worth reporting the initial parts of the first and of the last of the thirty-four colloquia, involving three Japanese boys, Miguel, Leo and Linus. Leo, introduced in the De missione as ‘the brother of the king of Arima,’ a fictional character, and his fellow Linus were assigned the role of the young Japanese who have never been out of Japan. Miguel represented instead Chijiwa Seizaemon Miguel. Right
Leo: [...] to help us understand it [Europe], could you please explain what region is meant by the name Europe?

Miguel: This is a very good question [...] Let me put before you briefly the principal parts of the world: the world is divided, according to the most learned of scientists, into five principal parts, namely Europe, Africa, Asia, America, and lastly, that land which learned writers call terra incognita. [...] Miguel: [...] for the moment, then, it is enough to have spoken of these five parts of the world, though I shall have something to say later on about the form, so to speak, of the world as a whole.

In the final colloquium, entitled 'A summary description of the whole world, and a statement as to which is its principal and noblest part,’ Leo reminds Miguel to speak more about the ‘world as a whole’:

Leo: Up till now, Miguel, you have told us, in the colloquia so far, about the different parts of the world. Today, however, we have come together to hear you speak about the world as a whole [...] Now that with your arrival here all the difficulties of your journey are at an end, it remains for you to put before our eyes the picture of the whole of the world [orbis terrarum] which we were promised in the first colloquium, and to tell us about the difference between its principal parts.

Miguel: That is why I had the Theatrum orbis [Ortelius’ Theatrum orbis terrarum] brought. You will find it a great pleasure to study the various maps in it. First of all, then, take a look at this picture, which contains a representation of the whole of the world [...].

Linus: I am delighted to see this picture of the world, but tell me, where is there a picture of Japan?

Through a careful reading of the De missione and its sources – e.g. Ortelius’ Theatrum orbis terrarium, first published in Antwerp in 1570 and known to Valignano in the 1585 edition – the goal of my essay is to analyze the cosmographic contents of Valignano’s De missione. The essays will focus on the way the orbis terrarum was disclosed to the Japanese, including the specific meanings that Valignano assigned to geographical concepts such as ‘Europe’,
‘Asia’, ‘India’, ‘China’, ‘America’ and the ‘New World’, and their whereabouts and the specific place of Japan in this global geography and cosmographic vision, including their epistemological foundation.
3) Hsin-Tien CHUANG (EHESS, Paris) The image of China according to Alessandro Valignano s.j. (1539-1606) around the turn of the year 1588: from the Historia del principio y progresso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias orientales (1542-64) to the De missione legatorum iaponensium ad Romanam Curiam

The image of China fluctuates over time according to the opinions of the missionaries. We propose to focus on the position of the Jesuit Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606) in the first decade of the mission in China, by analyzing particularly three of his writings: the Historia del principio y progresso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias orientales (1542-64); a letter from Valignano to the General Claudio Acquaviva (1543-1615) dated November 11th, 1588; the De missione legatorum iaponensium ad Romanam Curiam. Valignano occupied the position of Visitor of the East Indies from 1574 until 1595, except for the years when he held the office of Provincial of India from 1583 to 1587. The Visitor, unlike the Jesuits who work on Chinese soil such as Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607) and Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), does not have direct access to the study of Chinese culture and society. He relies upon information from his informants to form a schematic view of the Middle Kingdom. Nevertheless, he has as landmarks his good knowledge of the history of missions in the East Indies and also his experience in Japan, including the composition of a ceremonial for missionaries in Japan that concerned him in the 1580s.

Valignano began his first visit to Japan in 1579, when he organized an embassy of four Japanese adolescents to Rome, a mission known in History as Tenshō shōnen shisetsu 天正少年使節. Led by the Visitor, the embassy leaves Japan in 1582 via Macao to arrive at Cochin on April 7th, 1583. Valignano received the news from the General Claudio Acquaviva (1543-1615), who promoted him as Provincial of the East Indies, which forced him to stay in Goa for nearly four years after his arrival on November 10th, 1583. Valignano entrusted the embassy to the Portuguese Jesuit Diogo de Mesquista (1553-1614) who took with him to Europe the first part of the Historia del principio y progresso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias orientales (1542-64), a work composed of two parts attributed to Valignano. This work, the first part of which is probably completed on June 13th, 1583, contains three chapters on the description of China.

The young legates landed at Lisbon on August 11th, 1584, and then visited Portugal, Spain, and Italy. On their way back, Valignano again Visitor in 1587 joined them in Goa and conceived the project of writing the De missione legatorum iaponensium ad Romanam Curiam in order to serve in Japan as a Latin
textbook and presentation of Europe. On April 22th, 1588, Valignano left Goa with the embassy to arrive in Macao three months later, where he met Ruggieri and Duarte de Sande (1547-1599). The latter was in charge of transposing the texts into dialogue in Latin. The book, published in Macao in 1590, contains a chapter describing China, entitled "Agitur of Sinico regno, eiusque moribus, & administratione" (Of the Kingdom of China, its manners and its administration). This description of the Middle Kingdom reached a wider audience because the chapter also appeared in English, when one of the rare Latin copies fell into the hands of Richard Hakluyt, a great collector and publisher of travel literature. He includes it in the second edition of its collection *Principal Navigations* in 1599 under the title of "An excellent treatise of the kingdom of China, and of the estate and government thereof".

It seems that between these two descriptions of China which were both intended to be published, an important revision was made. The *Historia del principio y progresso de la Compañía de Jesús* was only published in 1944 by Josef Wicki s.j. (1904-1993). In 1588, Valignano, alerted by the precarious situation of the mission in China, appealed again for a papal embassy a decade after his first request, in order to obtain the support of the Emperor of China through the tribute system, so that he would give the Jesuits the authority to dialogue with the Mandarins. On November 11th, 1588, Valignano wrote a long letter to the General, containing a detailed description of the Mandarins, the bonzes, and the place of missionaries in Chinese society. On this occasion, Ruggieri was sent from Macao to Rome to convey Valignano's message to the General. In a letter dated November 23th, 1588, three days before Ruggieri's departure, Valignano warns Acqua viva that the chapters on China in the first part of his *Historia* are to be rectified. He asks that nothing be published before he can correct it personally. The *Historia* was never published during his lifetime. In the year 1588, the Visitor surely had the feeling of a radical change, either in his personal knowledge of China or in the presentation of China to the European public.

Our study consists in comparing the *Historia* of 1583, the letter of November 11th, 1588 and the *De missione legatorum iaponensium* of 1590 to observe the possible modifications made about China. Firstly, we will chronologically expose the context in which the Visitor composed these three texts, related to Valignano's evangelization strategy and to the situation of the mission in China and Japan, considering the difference between the writings for internal use and those to be published and the impact of the first ban on Christianity in Japan in 1587. Then we will undertake a general comparison of the content of the writings
to bring out their main message, the positive or negative image of China compared to that of Japan. At first glance, the *Historia* and the letter of Valignano offer a similar pattern of China. In the *De missione legatorum iaponensium*, while the geographical, economic and political data are enriched by the new reports of the missionaries, the description on the "sect of the literati" makes a volte-face. The Visitor had presented in the *Historia* and in the letter a vision of the Chinese teachings based on the "double doctrine" according to which the scholars were philosophers while the bonzes and the people were superstitious. It took a few years for this image representing a dichotomous hierarchy to be replaced by another one found in the *De missione legatorum iaponensium*, where three "sects", all of which were perceived from a "religious" point of view, were coexisting. This will be discussed in the third section of our article, focusing especially on Neo-Confucianism, the official thought of the Middle Kingdom. The name of Confucius appears in its Latinized form, probably for the first time in a published work, even before its presentation transcribed in "Confusius" by Ruggieri to Pope Gregory XIV in 1591 in his *Catechismus Sinici Paraphrasis*. A curious fact catches our attention. Valignano asks on November 23th, 1588 to correct the content of his description of China before 1583. However, the letter of November 11th, 1588 does not give the General a radically different picture from that of the *Historia*. If Valignano's personal apprehension about China has not changed, why has he prevented the publication of the *Historia*? How is it that the Jesuits' description of the "philosophy" and "religion" of the Chinese made a prodigious breakthrough in just two years of lag? For this puzzle that seems difficult to solve within the limited framework of this contribution, we propose for the moment some tracks and no results. The studies and translations of Chinese classics undertaken by the Jesuits from 1587 at the request of Matteo Ricci contributed to the knowledge of Neo-Confucianism, an aspect that we will discuss by mentioning the works in progress and published recently on this subject. The change of principal informant of Valignano between Ruggieri and Ricci is a track which we will follow through the letters of the Jesuits between 1588 and 1590. Finally, we formulate the hypothesis that the Visitor has voluntarily modified the description of China with a view to adapt to his audience, either European or Japanese.

We hope that this comparison between three texts of the Visitor, that is, in principle, the supreme leader of the mission in China and Japan, will enlighten us on the development of the missionary accommodation strategy. The Visitor's vision was not necessarily identical to that of Ruggieri or Ricci, or his direct
superior, the General Acquaviva. However, it represents the official image of China in the works to be published such as the *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús* and the *De missione legatorum iaponensium*, on which the Visitor's evangelization strategy is based.
4) Li Zhenche (U. Montpellier 3) Les jésuites en Chine des XVIe et XVIIe siècles : la rencontre de deux cultures ?

Quand le christianisme entra en Chine, il a suscité curiosité, sympathie, approbation et hostilité dans ce pays ancien. Les premiers jésuites, Matteo Ricci au XVIe siècle et les mathématiciens du roi au XVIIe siècle, sont non seulement les missionnaires chrétiens face à la civilisation chinoise, mais aussi les têtes de pont qui relient Europe et Empire du milieu. En présentant la vie et l’œuvre de Ricci et des autres jésuites des XVIe et XVIIe siècles, nous essayons de répondre aux questions suivantes. Comment les jésuites répandent-ils l’esprit chrétien parmi ce peuple à la culture et à la manière de penser si différentes ? Quelles contributions ont-ils apportées à la rencontre de deux cultures ? Enfin, pourquoi, finalement, malgré son expansion temporaire, le christianisme n’a-t-il pu s’implanter en profondeur dans le monde chinois ?
The Society of Jesus was a paragon of an early-modern long-distance corporation. Its vast networks provided the infrastructure and the initial impetus for its entry into various branches of early modern science, among them ethnography. In fact, by the latter half of the sixteenth century the society was a major supplier of basic ethnographic information and soon it also became a leading producer of racial analysis and theory. In his capacity as the Society’s Visitor to Asia, Alessandro Valignano controlled much of the Jesuit influx of information in this region and was familiar with information stemming from other continents as well. His role enabled him to be one of the leading and most original racial theorist of his age. His vision of the world race and their hierarchy appeared at first in his *Sumario* but reached maturity in *De Missione*. In this presentation, I will elaborate on Valignano’s racial worldview as reflected in the *De Missione* and discuss its background, singularity and influence.
At the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, two a priori very similar projects were launched in Japan, since both cases consisted of embassies to the King of Castile and the Pope of Rome and they both were sent theoretically in the name of important Japanese regional lords but actually organized and promoted by European Christian missionaries. But both coincide above all in not having achieved the objectives for which they were created —so we can consider them as a failure from a practical point of view— and also that these failures were due to the Japanese domestic political situation. Likewise, the main difference between the Tenshō embassy (1582-1591) and the Keichō embassy (1613-1620) is precisely what we have just added after their names: their dates. Because, although close in time, they actually belong to two completely different moments in the relations between Japan and Europe, depending on different policies of the respective Japanese governments, and those two different contexts marked not only the characteristics of both projects but also the responses they got when they reached their destination.

On the one hand, the Tenshō Embassy was conceived between the end of 1581 and the beginning of 1582, a few months before the death of Oda Nobunaga, betrayed by one of his generals, in what is known as the Honnō-ji Incident. We are talking about a moment when there was not a government that controlled the whole country yet, since Nobunaga had conquered approximately the central third part but large areas still remained in the hands of regional lords. For the Jesuit missionaries it was a very promising moment, since during the last decade they had made great advances in the number of converts, basically because of the interest that different lords —especially on the island of Kyūshū— had in the trade with the Portuguese, which led them to convert by decree all their subjects so they could ingratiate themselves with the priests. In addition, Oda Nobunaga, who seemed close to take over all of Japan, had until then been quite favorable to the Christian mission, so the Jesuits created an image of him as protector and even a champion of Christianity —an image far from real. Thus, for the missionaries it was a moment of optimism, in which their problems were more related to Europe than to Japan itself, since they needed to increase the number of members of the order who wanted to work in the Japanese mission and, above
all, they wanted to obtain a better and more regular way to fund their project, since the contributions of the Papacy and the Portuguese Crown were insufficient and most of the years they did not even arrive to Japan. So Alessandro Valignano, the famous Jesuit visitor, devised this embassy in order to improve these matters. Publicly, the reason was sending some Japanese envoys who would be able to explain the greatness of Catholic Europe upon their return, at least this is what Valignano affirmed in his work Apologia, but in some other documents of internal use he made clear that the first objective was "to seek the remedy for temporary and spiritual matters as needed in Japan". Nominally, in addition, this project was supposed to be an embassy sent by three powerful Christian lords of Kyūshū, although they only accepted the project created and designed by Valignano. Once in Europe they visited Philip II in Madrid, although they did it as King of Portugal, because the Japanese Jesuit mission depended on this country, and to the popes Gregory XIII and Sixtus V —after the death of the former—, besides being received by a good part of the nobility of the territories they were passing through. But, although in the formal side it was a success, this embassy was a complete failure in the achievement of its objectives, since they only succeeded in convincing a greater number of Jesuits to volunteer to go to Japan, while they didn’t obtain any economic improvement for the mission and it also had no impact on Japanese society. And this was due, again, to the Japanese political situation, since in 1591 the Japanese scenario was completely different from that of 1582. The country was finally unified under a powerful central government, the one of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and only four years before he had decreed the expulsion of the Jesuits —although he had not implemented this policy later—, so everything invited to keep a low profile and not to make ostentation of the great power of the Pope and the Catholic kings.

As for the Keichō Embassy, the proportions of its authorship were distributed differently than the previous one between the missionary and the official side, since in this case the regional lord who sent it, Date Masamune, was directly and actively involved in its conception, although the idea arose again from a religious, in this case from the Franciscan Luis Sotelo. It also had a certain degree of governmental legitimacy, since the Tokugawa shōgunate knew about the project and authorized it. In this case, the real reasons for organizing this embassy were also of a material nature, because Date wanted to establish commercial relations with New Spain to benefit from international trade in the same way that the lords of Kyūshū had done for decades, and Sotelo actually wanted to get a new diocese
established in northern Japan and be appointed bishop of it. They traveled to Europe following the Castilian route and visited Philip III in Madrid—in this case as King of Castile, since the missions of the mendicant orders depended on this country—and Pope Paul V in Rome. Again, the embassy was a complete failure, since not only it did not achieve any of the objectives pursued but this time it failed even in the way they were received, infinitely more discreet than in the case of the Tenshō Embassy—with the exception of Seville, the city of Sotelo, where his family was very influential, and in Rome, because the Pope was personally delighted with the visit. The greatest example of indifference was experienced in Madrid, whose court did not want to hear about the embassy and did everything they could to get rid of the problem as soon as possible, refusing even to receive them on their return from Rome. But this failure of the embassy in Europe was, again, caused by the Japanese political situation, since when they were in Mexico City—where they had been received with all the honors—some news arrived from Japan about the prohibition of Christianity by the Tokugawa government. Obviously, neither Philip III nor the Pope were going to open relations with a country that had prohibited and was persecuting the Christian faith, so the embassy was doomed to failure at that very moment. The Council of the Indies heard about these news through the viceroy of New Spain before Sotelo and the Japanese envoys arrived in Madrid, where the king had already been advised not to attend to any of their requests. In turn, the court of Philip III asked the pope, through his ambassador in Rome, to do the same, and so he did, although formally the embassy was received with large parades and official receptions.

So we see then that both embassies, although they present similarities as well as differences, coincide in their most basic aspects. First, the active agent that originated the project was European, since although this is much clearer in the case of the Tenshō embassy, where Alessandro Valignano was almost its sole architect, this was also the case with Luis Sotelo, with Date Masamune being the necessary partner to whom the Franciscan convinced to join, in the same way he could have done with some other regional lord. But the main similarity must undoubtedly be attributed to the fact that both projects failed because of a much greater active agent, since it was responsible not only for the failure of these two embassies but also for the failure of the whole contact between Europe and Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Japanese domestic political situation. It was this agent that fostered a favorable reception in the first decades of this contact, in which the Jesuit missionaries took advantage of a divided country in
which each province and each fief was at war with all the others, so their regional lords were very interested in the economic benefits of trade and in the acquisition of Portuguese firearms, even embracing Christianity if necessary. It was this agent who made Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi to be favorable to the Jesuit mission first and the mendicant orders’ later. It was this agent who decided that, once the country became unified, first with the Toyotomi government and then with the Tokugawa shōgunate, that both Christianity and the presence of foreigners in Japan had become a potential source of instability and had to be suppressed. Thus, through two specific and therefore easier to analyze cases, the Tenshō and Keichō embassies become a good way to understand a much greater problem, that of the contact between Europe and Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and they allow us to reach the conclusion that—despite the classic narrative on this subject and its ideological bias—the Japanese side of the contact was undoubtedly the one that marked its conditions.

Spanish

A finales del siglo XVI y a principios del XVII se pusieron en marcha dos proyectos en Japón a priori muy parecidos, pues en ambos casos se trataba de embajadas al rey de Castilla y al papa de Roma enviadas teóricamente en nombre de importantes señores regionales japoneses pero organizadas y promovidas en realidad por misioneros cristianos europeos. Pero ambas coinciden sobre todo en no haber conseguido los objetivos para los que fueron creadas—por lo que pueden considerarse un fracaso desde un punto de vista práctico—y en que estos fracasos se debieron a la situación política interna japonesa. Asimismo, la principal de las diferencias entre la embajada Tenshō (1582-1591) y la embajada Keichō (1613-1620) es precisamente lo que acabamos de añadir a sus nombres: las fechas. Por que, aunque cercanas en el tiempo, pertenecen en realidad a dos momentos completamente distintos de las relaciones entre Japón y Europa, en función de distintas políticas de los respectivos gobiernos japoneses, y esos dos contextos diferentes marcaron tanto las características de ambos proyectos como las respuestas que obtuvieron al llegar a su destino.

Por un lado, la embajada Tenshō se ideó entre finales de 1581 y principios de 1582, unos meses antes de que muriése Oda Nobunaga, traicionado por uno de sus generales, en el conocido como Incidente Honnō-ji. Hablamos de un momento en que aún no existía un gobierno que controlase todo el país, puesto que Nobunaga había conquistado aproximadamente el tercio central pero grandes zonas aún
permanecían en manos de señores regionales. Para los misioneros jesuitas se trataba de un momento muy prometedor, ya que durante la última década habían hecho grandes avances en cuanto al número de conversos, básicamente por el interés que distintos señores —sobre todo en la isla de Kyūshū— tenían en el comercio con los portugueses, lo que les llevaba a convertir por decreto a todos sus súbditos para congraciarse con los sacerdotes. Además, Oda Nobunaga, quien parecía destinado a hacerse con todo Japón, se había mostrado hasta entonces bastante favorable a la misión cristiana, creando los jesuitas una imagen de él como protector e incluso adalid del cristianismo —una imagen bastante alejada de la realidad. Así, para los misioneros se trataba de un momento de optimismo, en el que sus problemas estaban más relacionados con Europa que con el propio Japón, pues consistían en aumentar el número de miembros de la orden que quisiesen trabajar en la misión japonesa y, sobre todo, en conseguir una mejor y más regular financiación de su proyecto, ya que las aportaciones por parte del papado y de la Corona Portuguesa eran insuficientes y la mayoría de años ni siquiera llegaban a Japón. Y fue para mejorar estos asuntos para lo que Alessandro Valignano, el célebre visitador jesuita, ideó esta embajada. Públicamente, el objetivo era que los enviados pudiesen explicar a su vuelta las grandezas de la Europa católica, o así lo afirmaba Valignano en su obra Apología, pero en otros documentos de uso interno se dejaba claro que el primero de los objetivos era “buscar o remedio que no temporal y no espiritual he necessario em Japão”. Nominalmente, además, se vestía al proyecto de embajada enviada por tres poderosos señores cristianos de Kyūshū, aunque éstos únicamente aceptaron el proyecto creado y diseñado por Valignano. Una vez en Europa visitaron a Felipe II en Madrid, aunque lo hicieron en calidad de rey de Portugal, porque era de este país del que dependía la misión jesuita japonesa, y a los papas Gregorio XIII y Sisto V —tras la muerte del primero—, además de ser recibidos por buena parte de la nobleza de los territorios por los que fueron pasando. Pero, aunque en las formas fue todo un éxito, esta embajada fue un completo fracaso en cuanto a la consecución de sus objetivos, pues sólo se logró que un mayor número de jesuitas se hiciesen voluntarios para ir a Japón, mientras que en la práctica no se consiguió ninguna mejora económica para la misión y tampoco tuvo ningún impacto en la sociedad japonesa. Y esto fue debido, de nuevo, a la situación política japonesa pues en 1591 el escenario japonés era completamente distinto al de 1582. El país estaba finalmente unificado bajo un poderoso gobierno central, el de Toyotomi Hideyoshi, y éste hacía cuatro años que había decretado la expulsión de los jesuitas —aunque posteriormente no hubiese implementado esta política—, por lo
que todo invitaba a mostrarse discretos y no hacer ostentación del gran poder del papa y de los reyes católicos.

En cuanto a la embajada Keichō, las proporciones de su autoría se repartieron de forma distinta a la anterior entre el lado misionero y el oficial, puesto que en este caso el señor regional que la enviaba, Date Masamune, sí estuvo directa y activamente implicado en su concepción, pese a que la idea surgió nuevamente de un religioso, en este caso del franciscano Luís Sotelo. También contó con cierta pátina de legitimidad gubernamental, puesto que el shōgunato Tokugawa supo del proyecto y lo autorizó. En este caso, los verdaderos motivos de organizar esta embajada fueron también de carácter material, pues Date quería establecer relaciones comerciales con Nueva España para beneficiarse del comercio internacional de la misma forma en que lo habían hecho los señores de Kyūshū durante décadas, y Sotelo en realidad pretendía conseguir que se estableciese una nueva diócesis en el norte de Japón y ser nombrado obispo de la misma. Viajaron hasta Europa siguiendo la vía castellana y visitaron a Felipe III en Madrid —en este caso sí como rey de Castilla, de la que dependían las misiones de las órdenes mendicantes— y al papa Paolo V en Roma. Nuevamente, la embajada fue un completo fracaso, puesto que no sólo no se consiguió ninguno de los objetivos perseguidos sino que esta vez lo fue también incluso en la forma en que fueron recibidos, infinitamente más discreta que en el caso de la embajada Tenshō —con la excepción de Sevilla, ciudad de Sotelo y en la que su familia era muy influyente, y en Roma, porque el papa se mostró personalmente encantado con la visita. La mayor muestra de indiferencia se vivió en Madrid, en cuya corte no se quería ni oír hablar de la embajada e hicieron todo lo posible por quitarse el problema de encima cuanto antes, negándose incluso a recibirles a su vuelta de Roma. Pero este fracaso de la embajada en Europa vino, de nuevo, causado por la situación política japonesa, ya que estando en Ciudad de México —donde habían sido recibidos con todos los honores— llegó desde Japón la noticia de la prohibición del cristianismo por parte del gobierno Tokugawa. Obviamente, ni Felipe III ni el papa iban a establecer relaciones con un país que había prohibido y estaba persiguiendo la fe cristiana, por lo que la embajada quedó condenada al fracaso en ese mismo momento. El Consejo de Indias supo de estas noticias por medio del virrey de Nueva España antes de que Sotelo y los enviados japoneses llegasen a Madrid, donde ya se había aconsejado al rey no atender a ninguna de sus peticiones. A su vez, la corte de Felipe III pidió al papa, mediante su embajador en Roma, que
hiciese lo mismo, como así fue, pese a que formalmente los recibiese con grandes desfiles y recepciones oficiales.

Vemos pues que ambas embajadas, pese a que presentan tanto semejanzas como diferencias, coinciden en sus aspectos más básicos. Primero, el agente activo que originó el proyecto fue europeo, puesto que aunque esto se ve mucho más claro en el caso de la embajada Tenshō, donde Alessandro Valignano fue su artífice casi en solitario, también sucedió así con Luis Sotelo, siendo Date Masamune el socio necesario a quien el franciscano convenció para unirse a él, de la misma forma en que podría haber hecho con otro señor regional. Pero la principal semejanza debe atribuirse sin duda a que ambos proyectos fracasaron a causa de un agente activo mucho mayor, pues fue el responsable no sólo del fracaso de estas dos embajadas sino de todo el contacto entre Europa y Japón en los siglos XVI y XVII: la política interna japonesa. Fue este agente el que propició un recibimiento favorable en las primeras décadas de este contacto, en las que los misioneros jesuitas se aprovecharon de un país fraccionado en el que cada provincia y cada feudo estaba en guerra con todos los demás, por lo que los señores regionales se mostraron muy interesados en los beneficios económicos del comercio y en la adquisición de las armas de fuego portuguesas, tanto como para abrazar el cristianismo si fuera necesario. Fue este agente el que hizo que Oda Nobunaga primero y Toyotomi Hideyoshi después se mostrasen favorables a la misión jesuita primero y a las mendicantes después. Fue este agente el que decidió que, una vez unificado el país, primero con el gobierno Toyotomi y después con el Tokugawa, el cristianismo y la presencia de extranjeros en Japón se habían convertido en focos potenciales de inestabilidad que había que suprimir. De esta forma, y mediante dos casos concretos y por tanto fáciles de analizar, las embajadas Tenshō y Keichō se convierten en una buena forma de comprender una problemática mucho mayor, la del contacto entre Europa y Japón en los siglos XVI y XVII, y nos permiten llegar a la conclusión de que –pese a la narrativa clásica sobre este tema y su sesgo ideológico– el lado japonés del contacto fue sin duda el que marcó las condiciones del mismo.
7) Giuseppe Marino (U. Fudan, Shanghai) The *Memorandum* for the Emperor of China by Alessandro Valignano (XVIth century): a strategic manuscript

In November 1588, as the fortunes of the Zhaoqing mission were reaching their nadir, Michele Ruggieri jostled amid a crowd of two hundred Portuguese merchants at the port of Macao. He was on his way to Rome to obey the orders of his superior, Alessandro Valignano, the Jesuit Visitor in the Far East. The most revealing item in Ruggeri’s luggage was a handwritten, fifteen pages long document in Spanish signed by Valignano. It was titled *Memorandum of the things that need to be sent as a present from His Holiness to the King of China* (Fondo Jesuitico, 722/2.bis).

Destined to arrive in Rome, this manuscript, which now sits unremembered and still unpublished in the Jesuit archive in Rome, marked a crucial turning point during the mission in China. Dr Mary Laven named the manuscript a “shopping list” by which Chinese elite could be wooed with objects. Objects well chosen, sourced and presented with the utmost care. Motivated by this belief, Valignano worked together with Ruggeri and other Jesuits to identify and pick no fewer than twenty-one gifts for the Chinese emperor. The gifts were designed to function in complex and even contradictory ways which leave us with undefined questions in today’s time: Did the *Memorandum* only serve to impress the Chinese king with the magnificence of European civilization? And why was Valignano willing to risk the life of one of his most qualified missionaries on the perilous voyage home? This paper intends to discuss reasons and find solutions.
8) Vincent MASSE (Dalhousie U., Toronto) « La venue des Princes Japponnois en Europe »: Les séquelles imprimées immédiates (1585-1586) de l’ambassade Tenshō

En dehors des sources jésuites directes consacrées à l’ambassade Tenshō (les instructions, ou Regimento e instruiçao, préparées par Valignano ; le Tratado dos Embaixadores Japões de Luís Fróis ; le De missione legatorum japonensium, imprimé à Macao en 1590), il survit, pour les seules années 1585-1586, plus d’une cinquantaine d’éditions de minces imprimés – avvisi italiens, newe zeytung allemands, occasionnels français, etc. – produits et distribués à travers l’Europe1, annonçant l’extraordinaire événement que fut le passage, au Portugal, en Espagne et en Italie, de quatre adolescents japonais : Mancio Itō Sukemasu, Miguel Chijjwa Seizaemon, Julião Nakaura et Martinho Hara, envoyés des daimyōs convertis Dom Francisco (Ōtomo Yoshishige, ou Ōtomo Sōrin), Dom Barthelemeu (Ōmura Sumitada) et Dom Protasio (Arima Harunobu).


Ma contribution sera un apport lié à l’histoire des médias. Je m’intéresserai moins à l’ambassade elle-même, qu’à son contexte de publication. Je renverrai au besoin au second exemple de l’ambassade de 1613-1620 (celle du samouraï Hasekura Tsunenaga, baptisé Francisco Felipe Faxicura), qui elle aussi donna lieu à une flopée de minces imprimés (y compris certains canards annonçant de fausses conversions), et qui lui aussi appartient à un mode de transmission des

nouvelles que l’on dira « pré-périodique », précédant les premières Gazettes hebdomadaires de Théophraste Renaudot ou de Jean Epstein (1631-…).

Ma première partie sera donc une présentation du contexte éditorial immédiat de cette production de 1585-1586, qui d’une part est tout à fait caractéristique de l’industrie grandissante du « bulletin de nouvelles »². D’autre part cependant, les imprimés consacrés à l’ambassade de 1585 combinent, d’une façon tout à fait exceptionnelle, diverses catégories d’information favorisées par les occasionnels, mais qui rarement au XVIᵉ siècle se trouvèrent si bien entremêlées. Quatre catégories de Very Important Informations (non pas des VIP, mais des VII, en quelque sorte) sont tout particulièrement mises de l’avant dans notre corpus :

1) Les entrées cérémonielles, depuis les célébres entrées royales et leur panoplie de « livres de fête » jusqu’aux entrées ambassadoriales. Ce type d’information privilégiée – « le ballet incessant des échanges diplomatiques en Europe », en particulier les démonstrations publiques – deviendra au siècle suivant l’une des marques de commerce de la Gazette de Renaudot³, avec ses descriptions de trains d’équipage, de la qualité des livrées, de la splendeur des présents échangés, etc. ;


⁵ Toute première mention : L’institution des loix, coutumes et autres choses merveilleuses & memorables tant du Royaume de la Chine que des Indes, Paris, Sebastien Nyvelle, 1556.
3) Les bulletins de nouvelles étrangères, parfois carrément exotiques, qui fascinaient alors tant les lectorats cultivés que populaires, souvent sous la forme de courtes dépêches de 4 à 16 feuillets ; les nouvelles du Japon concurrençaient alors, sur le marché de l'imprimé, celles de l'empire Ottoman, du Brésil, de l'Inde, de l'Indonésie, mais également des nouvelles plus rapprochées, par exemple celles, toujours importantes, de Romme ou Rome⁶ ;


Cette extraordinaire jonction, intéressante en soi, est également une intersection idéale où étudier deux tirailllements (deux ambivalences, deux indécisions) qui

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⁶ Ex. : les Lettres envoyées de Romme (Lyon, 1561), ou la Copie d’autres nouvelles de Romme (Lyon, 1561), toutes imprimées par Benoît Rigaud, qui publiera également les nouvelles de l’ambassade.
parcourent le « discours occasionnel » au XVIe siècle, et que le cas de l’ambassade de 1585 met pour ainsi dire à nu. Une réflexion sur ses deux tirailllements constituera la deuxième partie de ma contribution.

A) **Immédiateté versus éloignement.** Le décalage des lettres ou nouvelles japonaises, qui ne parviennent donc en Europe qu’avec des années de retard, n’est exceptionnel qu’à un niveau quantitatif : les actualités connaissent toutes alors un certain décalage, toujours proportionnel à leur « étrangeté », ou éloignement d’origine. Les longs titres d’occasionnels, à eux seuls, résument numériquement ce rapport : la nouveauté, ou contiguïté temporelle, est garantie par le rapprochement des dates de rédaction des nouvelles (souvent indiquées) et de leur impression) toujours indiquées) ; l’étrangeté l’est par leur écart10. De même, dans les textes deux rhétoriques contradictoires se mettent en place : celle qui favorise l’éloignement (c’est-à-dire le lointain, tant temporel que spatial), celle qui favorise le rapprochement (l’immédiat). À deux reprises, toutefois, par un saisissant concours de circonstances, les « nouvelles japonaises » seront donc distribuée en Europe presque simultanément à leur production ; pour deux brefs instants – l’ambassade de 1582-1592 et celle de 1613-1620 – l’altérité japonaise ne sera plus ni temporelle, ni spatiale. À chaque fois, une explosion d’imprimés célébrera ces **coïncidences**.

**A)** **Familiarité versus altérité**, ou plus particulièrement ici : **Rituel familier (ou cérémonie familière) versus altérité.** Les échanges et les changements d’habits qui accompagnent l’ambassade illustre cette indécision : est-ce des différences ou du rapprochement culturel qu’on doit faire montre ? Les ambassadeurs japonais s’ « habille[n]t à l’Italienne » pour une entrée... à Madrid, alors que dans la foule le Duc de Bragança « pour leur faire honneur fit vestir son premier-né à la Japponoise » (6). À Venise, les Japonais donnent au Doge « Trois vestemens de soye à la Japponoise » ; à Pise, c’est à eux que l’on donne... « Un habit fait à la Japponoise » (6). Alors que les textes décrivent leurs habits, leurs moeurs étranges (leur chaperon jésuite, Diego de Mesquita, est à peine évoqué), la seule gravure qui survit d’un occasionnel français présente les quatre adolescents vêtus à l’européenne pour l’occasion, et c’est le portrait du « Pere Mesquita » qui y occupe la place

10 Ex. il est vrai extraordinaire : **ADVIS DU JAPPON DES ANNÉES M.D. LXXXII., LXXXIII. ET LXXXIV.** Avec quelques autres de la Chine, des années LXXIII., LXXIV. Recueilliz des lettres de la Compagnie de Jesus, receües au mois de Decembre M.D.LXXXVI, Paris, Thomas Brumen, « M.D.LXXXVI ».
central (8). Conflit de pertinences : d’un côté, on recherche les éléments étrangers, différentiels ; de l’autre, l’emphase est mise sur le familier, l’identique, l’orthodoxe, la conversion.

C’est au niveau médiatique que cette ambivalence m’intéressera le plus : d’une part, ces occasionnels empruntent, copient la rhétorique énumérative des livres de fêtes – celle que l’on retrouve alors dans tous les livres d’entrées royales imprimées au même moment 11. De l’autre, s’y accumulent également les descriptions proto-ethnographiques, où s’exprime un culte des singularités davantage associé à la littérature des voyages, et qui auraient pu servir d’écho à la logique antithétique du Traité des contradictions et différences de Luís Fróis12. Bref, les détails choisis, les caractéristiques génériques, les motifs empruntés, etc., semblent alternativement dominés par deux logiques opposées : élan soudain vers la familiarisation spatiale, temporelle et culturelle, entrecoupés d’impulsions inverses toutes autant soudaines.

Ces tiraillements, s’ils sont tout particulièrement remarquables dans les récits de l’ambassade Tenshō, parcourent néanmoins alors une grande part de la production d’occasionnels. D’un côté se met en place une industrie et un discours, avec ses pratiques, ses normes, ses stéréotypes, qui se perfectionneront au siècle suivant (avec une obsession encore plus grande pour les cérémonies publiques et ostentatoires) ; de l’autre, une quête déjà ancienne se poursuit, et tout un vocabulaire se développe, et une logique de pertinence, qui insistent sur le merveilleux, l’étrange, le singulier, le non-reproductible.

Bref, l’examen des séquelles imprimées de l’ambassade Tenshō nous renseigne sur ce « nouveau médium » que sont alors les imprimés occasionnels, et permet d’en saisir certaines orientations, certaines contradictions discursives. Mais ce contexte éditorial, intéressant en soi, est de plus précisément celui que perçoit déjà13 et que perfectionnera bientôt un ordre missionnaire tout particulièrement talentueux pour tirer profit des « nouveaux médias » d’alors.

13 Dans son Regimento e instruïçao, Valignano fait montre d’un intérêt très précis pour les cérémonies qu’accompliront, ou le spectacle que joueront les adolescents japonais, y compris au niveau de l’habiabilité (ex. : «
Bibliographie

1. **ADVIS VENUS NOUVELLEMENT DE ROME**, touchant l’entrée au consistoire public, de deux Ambassadeurs envoyez de la part de trois Rois puissans du Giapon, de nouveau convertis à la S. Foy Chrestienne, pour rendre obeissance à sa saincteté, Lyon, Benoit Rigaud, 1585.
   [Atkinson 307, Boscaro 22, Laures JL-1585-49, USTC 11779]

   [Atkinson 312, Boscaro 24, Laures JL-1585-51, USTC 35892]

3. **ACTES EXHIBEZ PUBLIQUEMENT AU CONSISTOIRE PAR NOSTRE SAINCT pere Gregoire Pape XIII. aus Ambassadeurs des Rois du Jappon à Rome, le XXIII. Mars. 1585. Avec un petit Recueil des Japponois, & de leur pais, Liège, Gualtier Morberius, 1585.**
   [Atkinson 313, Boscaro 25]

4. **LES ACTES DU CONSISTOIRE TENU PUBLIQUEMENT À ROME, PAR nostre sainct Pere le Pape Gregoire 13. pour recevoir les Ambassades des trespuissans Roys des Japonois : Ce qui fut le 23 jour de Mars en l’an 1585. Avec une briefve description des moeurs, loix, religion, & façons de vivre desdits Japonois, Paris, Jean Parant, 1585.**
   [Atkinson 314A, Boscaro 26, Laures JL-1585-53, USTC 38222]

5. **CHOSES DIVERSES DES AMBASSADEURS DE TROIS ROYS DE JAPON, QUI n’agueires venuz à Romme, rendirent obeissance au nom de leurs Maistres & Seigneurs, à Gregoire XIII. souverain Pasteur de l’Eglise : Qui peuvent grandement recreer le Lecteur, & merveilleusement exciter les cueurs des bons, à rendre grandes graces à Dieu, Louvain, Jehan Maes, 1585.**
   [Atkinson 308, Boscaro 27, Laures JL-1585-18-158-83, UTSC 13343]

Quand ils iront rendre visite à Sa Majesté pour la première fois, ils s’y rendront habillés à leur mode du Japon, soit en carrosse si on peut en obtenir, soit au moins à cheval car ils ne peuvent point traverser à pied la cité vêtus à leur manière » ; J. A. Abranches Pinto & Henri Bernard, « Les Instructions du Père Valignano pour l’ambassade japonaise en Europe (Goa, 12 décembre 1583) », *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 6, no 1-2, 1943, p. 394).
6. LE DISCOURS DE LA VENUE DES Princes Japponois en Europe, tiré d’un avis venu de Rome : En laquelle est contenue la description de leur pays, coutumes & manières de vivre, avec ce qui leur est advenu en chemin dès qu’ils sont partis de leurs Royaumes jusques à leur arrivée en Europe, & à Rome : Ensemble de l’obéissance prestée à nostre S. Pere, & la copie des lettres présentées à sa saincteté, de la part de leurs Roys & Seigneurs, c’est année M.D.LXXXV., Lyon, Benoist Rigaud, 1585.
[Atkinson 314, Boscaro 47, Laures JL-1585-61, USTC 34951]

[Boscaro 50, Laures JL-1586-10-183-852, USTC 79241]

Le vray pourtraict prins au naturel des quatre grands Princes Japponnoys venus dernièrement à Rome, [s.l.], [s.n.], 1585. [UTSC 76544]
In this paper, utilising a new manuscript I found in the Colonna Archives, I reveal that the Colonna family positively and actively engaged with the Tensho-period Japanese mission. Before getting down to the main topic, however, I describe the chain of events that led to my discovery of these documents.

The year 2013 marked the 400th anniversary of the departure of the Keichō-period Japanese mission to Europe, and interest in the mission has increased as a result. The negotiator and interpreter for part of the tour was Scipione Amati (1583~1655?). He accompanied the mission from Madrid to Rome (August 1615–January 1616) and published a report about it entitled *Historia del regno di Voxu del Giappone* (1615); he also left behind a report in manuscript about the political circumstances in Japan (1616?). Although these reports are arguably the most important sources for the study of the Japanese mission, little is known about Amati’s background.

According to the foreword of *Historia del regno di Voxu del Giappone*, when Amati was writing a political paper about Tacitus at the palace of Vittoria Colonna in Madrid, he was elected as interpreter and negotiator of the Japanese mission. In addition, he glorified the support he received from the Colonna family for all the work that went into his other book.

For the reasons mentioned above, and based on an examination of his works, it is clear that Amati had a relationship with the Colonna family. Relying on these hints, I made a humble attempt to research certain documents related to Amati in the Colonna Archive. Unexpectedly, I came upon 180 letters of Scipione Amati addressed to various lords.

Moreover, continuing in my humble attempt to research certain documents from 1585, during which time the Japanese mission stayed in Italy, I discovered new manuscripts about the Tensho-period Japanese mission in the Colonna Archive. These documents include four letters written by the Colonna family’s partisans and addressed to Ascanio Cardinal Colonna (1560–1608). By exploring Ascanio’s personal background, this paper aims to fill in some of the gaps in knowledge about this relationship. I also take this opportunity to provide an introduction to newly discovered historical materials related to the Tensho-period Japanese mission, including a number of letters recently uncovered at the Colonna Archive, in Subiaco.

1. The background of Ascanio Cardinal Colonna
Ascanio Cardinal Colonna met the Tensho-period Japanese mission at Alcalá in Spain in November 1584, and he gave to them musical instruments (lute, viola, viola da gamba, etc.). Two years passed before Ascanio was appointed as the cardinal. Japanese boys played the instruments for Hideyoshi Toyotomi after their return to Japan.

Ascanio was born in Marino, Italy, in 1560, and his father was Marcantonio II Colonna (1535–1584), who is best remembered for his role as the admiral of the papal fleet in the Battle of Lepanto. In his childhood, Ascanio accompanied his father to Spain a few times. He was educated at the University of Alcalá and the University of Salamanca. In 1581, while showing his unusual literary talent, he delivered a commemorative oration for Anna d’Austria (1549–1580), who was queen of Spain by marriage to King Philip II of Spain. In 1588, he inherited from Guglielmo Cardinal Sirleto (1515–1585) his library, in which Ascanio had previously helped Sirleto control a book stock of a library; moreover, he had reorganised this library, which contained books written in various languages (Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Armenian). As his keen interest in books suggests, Ascanio had an academic temperament. What information did Ascanio obtain about the Tensho-period Japanese mission? The newly discovered documents offer some answers to this question, as we shall see in the next section.

2. Ascanio Cardinal Colonna and the Tensho-period Japanese mission

The Tensho-period Japanese mission arrived in Rome on 22 May 2011 and had an audience with the Pope Gregorius XIII (1502–1585) on 23 May, but not long after this, the members of the mission were at the side of Pope Gregorius XIII when he died. Furthermore, they attended the installation ceremonies for the new pope, Sixtus V (1520–1590), in May of the same year, and left Rome on 3 June.

On 25 May, soon after the mission’s arrival in Rome, Giovanni Domenico Fiorentino sent the following letter from Rome to Ascanio, who had stayed at Alcalá:
The day before yesterday the Japanese mission, arrayed in the dress of their mother country, had an audience with the highly renowned Father, the very magnificent Pope, in the gorgeous royal hall, in which the Jesuit Father orated in Latin. Hearing this oration, many audiences wept.¹⁴

Judging from this description, it is evident that Giovanni Domenico wanted to promptly convey this information about the Japanese mission to Ascanio, who had met the mission at Alcalá in November of the previous year.

Furthermore, the following description appears in another letter of Giovanni Domenico’s, dated 21 April 1585 and addressed to Ascanio in Rome: ‘I was recently entrusted to send the Japanese letters and the oration to you’.¹⁵

The phrase ‘the Japanese letters’ refers to the letters of three daimyōs (Arima, Otomo, and Ōmura) translated into Latin. These letters, as well as the oration before the pope delivered by the Jesuit Gaspar Consalus Lusitanus, were institutionally printed and published by the Jesuits, because the information must have been thoroughly managed. Although there may be some exceptions, we deem possible that resident officers delegated to Rome by each city and each member of the nobility obtained the letters by some means and sent them to their base. Thus, it is possible that Ascanio received ‘Japanese letters and the oration’ in the form of a publication, utilising this transmission route for information.

In another letter addressed to Ascanio in Rome, written by Zappa and dated 24 April 1585, the following description appears: ‘I send you a brief report about the kingdom of these Japanese princes, and then I know send you this public consistory with copies of their Latin letters’.¹⁶

This letter refers directly to a report about the Japanese mission and Latin copies of the three daimyōs’ letters. We can surmise that many reports related to the Japanese mission had been published in relatively quick succession, considering that three weeks had passed since the mission’s arrival in Rome. Thus, it is possible that the reports attached to Zappa’s letter were also a publication. It seems that Ascanio obtained further information about the Japanese mission over time.

The following description occurs in Heronimo Grimaldi’s letter dated 14 April 1585 and addressed to Ascanio in Genova.

¹⁴Letters of Ascanio Colonna, Latin, owned by Colonna Archive. “Nudius tertius LegatosJaponensis patrio habitu indutos, à Ponte. Max. pleno patru’ confessu, in aula regia; luculenta à Sacerdote societatis IESU habita Latine’ oratione’.
¹⁵Letters of Ascanio Colonna, Latin, owned by Colonna Archive. ‘Japoniorum Literas, atque orationem (promissi non immemor) nunc demum ad te perferendas dedi’.
¹⁶Letters of Ascanio Colonna, Italian, owned by Colonna Archive. ‘Io li mandai Il berev’ Raguag lio Il Regno di questi Prencipii Giapponesi, cosi’ anco adesso li mando questo concistoro publico con le copie dei loro lettere latine’.
I send to you reports of Rome and others. I think that you understand how the public consistory in the royal hall was, when you read them. The welcome ceremony for the Japanese mission was held there. They were dispatched from the Japanese king, because they follow commands to obey Pope Gregorius XIII. In other words, the king of Bungo dispatched his nephew and relation to Rome, the Papal See via east India and Portugal by sea. A company of cavalry escorted the Japanese mission from Viterbo to Rome. After that, the Vatican, all cardinals and their family met and received them. And then, a Jesuit who came with the Japanese mission all the way to see the Pope customarily saluted and orated. Moreover, the Japanese mission recognised the salvation of souls via the Jesuits, namely the Jesuits’ books, documents and mission.17

It should be noted that Grimaldi’s letter was more dense and specific than Giovanni Domenico’s and Zappa’s and that it discussed the public consistory in greater detail. Furthermore, the voyage information of the Japanese mission included in Grimaldi’s letter is not recognised in other letters. We cannot know whether Grimaldi himself was interested in the voyage information or Ascanio requested it. But it is certain that Ascanio was interested in information from overseas, in contrast to other nobles and cardinals.

As described above, the newly discovered documents confirm that Ascanio Cardinal Colonna continually acquired information related to the Japanese mission after meeting its members at Alcalá, and it is noteworthy that specific voyage information of the Japanese mission was included in Grimaldi’s letter.

It is clear that Ascanio, who was very well cultivated and had easy access to the Vatican, could have had access to the information gathered in the Vatican, especially overseas information from the Jesuits, and that he also utilised the personal information network of the Colonna family. Ascanio took advantage of these opportunities to pursue his interest in Japan.

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This paper examines the possibility of one more text that the four members of the Tenshō Mission (habitually called the Japanese Embassy of the Tenshō era) brought for their meeting with Luis de Granada at Lisbon, the first city where they landed in Europe in 1584. Our guide is Charles Ralph Boxer’s hand written note in the margin of his personal copy of the book written by Ernest Satow *The Jesuit Mission Press in Japan 1591-1610*\(^\text{18}\).

In August of 1584, four young Japanese ambassadors arrived at Portugal. It had been two years and a half since they left Japan. In the travelogue *De missione legatorum japonensium ad Romanam curiam* (hereafter *De missione* \(^\text{20}\)), one of the four young boys tells us that they landed at Cascaes on the tenth of August 1584\(^\text{20}\) and next day they entered Lisbon\(^\text{21}\). The splendid reception that these four boys received is one of the important points to narrate in dialogue in order to enhance its persuasiveness so that the goal aimed at by this embassy is achieved as it is planned by the Visitor of the Society of Jésus Alessandro Valignano. However, his purpose is not the description of this worldly wealth. If the display of royal and papal magnificence was presented, it was a way toward the otherworldly glory. The four young Japanese understood it well. For, during their short stay that lasted from August 11 to September 5 in this Portuguese capital city\(^\text{22}\), they went to pay homage to Luis de Granada with some of his writings translated into Japanese. This meeting took place at the beginning of their two-year stay in Europe in their long voyage that lasted for eight years\(^\text{23}\). Our theme is to add one more text among those that are there as possible candidates of these Japanese translations mentioned in *De missione*. The most likely candidates of these manuscript translations is *Guia de Pecadores* by Luis de Granada whose Japanese translation was published in 1599\(^\text{24}\) or *Quinta parte de la Introducción del Symbolo de la Fe* translated in Japanese and published at Amakusa in 1592\(^\text{25}\).


\(^{19}\) We use for the basic reference the following translation in English: *Japanese Travellers in sixteenth-century Europe*, Third Series No. 25, ed. Gloria Clifton and Joyce Lorimer, London, Ashgate for The Hakluyt Society, 2012.

\(^{20}\) *De missione* 2012, ibidem, Colloquium VI, p. 93 and the note on the same page.

\(^{21}\) *De missione* 2012, ibidem, Colloquium XVI, p. 200 and note 1.

\(^{22}\) Colloquium I, ibidem, p. 43 and the footnote 3.

\(^{23}\) In Colloquium I, Mancio explains that the four members left Nagasaki to Europe on the twentieth of February 1582. See note 2, p. 43, in *Japanese Travellers in sixteenth-century Europe*, ibidem.

\(^{24}\) Luis de Granada, *Guia do pecador*, in Collegio Iaponico Societatis Iesv, 1599.

In addition to these books, there may be another book. This book is *Contemptus mundi* translated and published twice in Japanese in 1596 and 1610. In order to study this possibility, we are turning now to Charles Ralph Boxer’s note written in ink in the margin of his personal copy of the book *The Jesuit Mission Press in Japan 1591-1610* written by Ernest Satow. The notes reads as follows.

Fray Luis de Granada, Obras, Madrid 1788, tom VI p. 481 begins: “Comienza el libro primero del Contemptus Mundi ó Menospriecio del Mundo, y Imitation de Christo.” The quotation in chap. 1 from St John. Chap. VIII is “El que me sigue no anda en tinieblas, *mas tendrá lumbre de vida*,” and the other is ‘/Cor 2. “No se harta el ojo de ver, ni la oreja de oir.” This seems conclusive as to the use of his version in preparing the Japanese.

The book we are talking about is the translation of *Contemptus mundi ou Imitatio Christi* into Japanese written in roman character and published in 1596. The place of publication is not printed in the book, but supposedly it is Amakusa where the printing press imported from Europe with the initiative of Valignano was installed at this date.

Here Boxer’s argument is evident. According to him, in addition to the Latin edition of this famous book whose authorship is attributed to Thomas à Kempis, the Japanese translators looked at the Spanish translation by Luis de Granada who entitled it *Contemptus mundi ó Imitacion de Christo*. That the source text of the Japanese translation is in Latin does not change, because it is announced so at the beginning of the 1596 edition of Japanese *Contemptus mundi*. Boxer proposes Luis de Granada’s *Contemptus mundi* as an additional text that the Japanese translators consulted in preparation for the Japanese edition. His argument is based on two observations. First, Boxer talks about the reversed title words between the two elements of *Contemptus mundi* and *Imitatio Christi* in Japanese and Granada’s titles. Secondly, Boxer sees that the incomplete citation from John VIII became completed in Japanese and Granada’s version whereas the citation from Paul’s second epistle to Corinthians that is complete in Latin version stays the same both in Japanese and Granada’s Spanish versions. Boxer thinks that these changes are due to the fact that the translators in Japan, most likely the collaboration team of Japanese and European Jesuits, consulted the Granada’s book.

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26 Ernest Satow, op cit., p. 29.
27 CONTENPTVS / mundi jenbu. CORE YO VO ITOI, IESV CHRIS-/tono gocõxequio manabi tatematçu-/ ru michiu voxiyuru …, (Amakusa) : Nihon Gakurin, 1596.
28 We use the following Granada’s text from his complete works published in 1800. The page number of this edition is the same as in the text of 1788 that Boxer used. Luis de Granada, *Obras del V. P. M. Luis de Granada*, v. 6, Madrid : En la imprenta de la Real Compañía, 1800, pp. 479-574.
Boxer is not the only one who noticed the Spanish influence on Japanese translation of *Contemptus mundi* published in 1596. Anezaki Masaji, in his publication that translates *Contemptus mundi* of 1596 written in roman alphabet into Japanese characters, indicates that, even if the translation is done from Latin text, at least the title follows the Spanish custom at the middle of the sixteenth century when this text is most often called *Contemptus mundi*. Shin’mura Izuru and Hiragi Gen’ichi also make a remark in their book published in 1957 that in two sixteenth-century Spanish translations, the one published in Toledo in 1523 and the other translated by Luis de Granada and published in Seville in 1536, carry for the title *Contemptus mundi*. These Japanese critics think that, if not the Spanish translation by Luis de Granada, at least the Spanish publications of *Contemptus munji* at the middle of the sixteenth-century are the possible sources of inspiration for the translators in Japan.

Everyone seems to agree that this book attributed to Thomas à Kempis is originally written in Latin, but the bibliographical information of the Latin book or books announced at the beginning of Japanese translation of 1596 is far from being clear. To talk about the Latin source text introduces another question. Which Latin edition did the translators in Jesuit Seminary in Japan used? One of the most famous and the most widely read Latin texts is by Jean Gerson. Gerson’s text was suggested in a meeting of a Jesuit council for a possible translation into Japanese. However, the title of Gerson’s book in 1488 *Ioannis Gerson de contemptu [sic] omniuz [sic] vanitatu[m] mundi* does not emphasize in any particular meaningful way the words *contemptus mundi*. The chapter numbers of four books in *Imitatio Christi* are the same, but the citations from the Bible of this Gerson’s edition are different from the ones in the Japanese translation. The Gerson’s edition, at least the one of 1488, cannot be the Latin source text of Japanese translation of 1596 although the publication date of this Gerson is close to the supposed date in which Thomas à Kempis wrote his *Imitatio Christi* first. Because we do not know for sure the Latin

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30 *Contemptus mundi* 1976, p. 57.


32 *Contemptus mundi* 1957, p. 171.


34 Jean Gerson, *Ioannis Gerson de contemptu omniu[m] va[nitau[m] mundi* 1488. Lilly Library, Indiana University, call number: BV 4820 1488. The publication date is on the back of page 62. This book numbers the two sides of one leaf of paper for one page.
version used as the source of Japanese translation, Granada’s Spanish translation is the only source whose bibliographical information is clearly known along with the circumstantial evidence that allows us to situate it as one of the inspiration sources for the Japanese *Contemptus mundi* of 1596.

Luis de Granada’s writings translated into Japanese and presented to the author in Lisbon by the four Japanese of the Tenshō Mission may have included *Contemptus munji*. On the twentieth of February 1588, Luis Frois wrote in his letter that he sent a translation of *Contemptus munji* to a famous Christian and spouse of a Christian *daimyō* Hosokawa Garasha upon her request. In 1588 therefore it was already known in Japan that there was a Japanese translation of *Contemptus munji*. At this date, the Tenshō Mission was not back yet in Japan. This fact draws our attention to two possibilities: the translation was conducted during their absence from Japan or a translation existed already before their departure in 1582 even if it would be still fragmentary and not yet complete.

In lieu of concluding this proposal, I must write a precaution as follows. In the actual state of things in which the precise bibliographical information of the manuscript texts presented to Luis de Granada is not known and due to the complex nature of surprisingly multiple versions of Kempis’ text, we cannot look for the definite conclusion and answer to the question about the source text of the translation of *Contemptus mundi* into Japanese. Our goal is to question the meaning of the Japanese translation that is invested in the rich body of rewriting this text attributed to Thomas à Kempis.

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35 *Contemptus mundi* 1957, p. 103.
La seguente comunicazione intende presentare una peculiarità della Compagnia di Gesù: la scrittura. Attraverso la redazione di epistole, relazioni di viaggio, cronache e volumi i gesuiti inviano in Europa informazioni storico-politiche e socio-culturali dei paesi che essi tentano di evangelizzare. Ciò accade anche in Giappone a partire dall’arrivo di Francesco Saverio (15 agosto 1549) e prima ancora mediante due documenti di Niccolò Lancillotti, redatti a Goa nel 1548 e stilati in seguito ad alcune conversazione avute con il neofita Anjirō. Con l’avvento di Alessandro Valignano (Kuchinotsu, 25 luglio 1579) quest’aspetto viene ulteriormente ribadito e così il visitatore esorta i suoi confratelli a inserire nei loro scritti (specie nelle *litterae annuae*) notizie che mostrano le caratteristiche peculiari della realtà in cui i religiosi operano.

Il mio contributo tenta di esaminare il *De Missione* e alcuni documenti inediti che riguardano la *Tenshō shōnen shisetsu* (1582-1590) come “strumenti” che consentono la circolazione di idee e informazioni tra il Giappone e l’Europa cattolica. La divulgazione di questa opera e delle carte scritte durante il viaggio dei quattro giovani del seminario di Arima concretizza il processo di mutua conoscenza che si era prefissato Valignano: far conoscere ai giapponesi il mondo occidentale, una civiltà pari alla loro, se non superiore, di un mondo progredito e felice, dove i missionari si allontanano solo per rispondere pienamente alla loro scelta di vita religiosa e presentare agli europei la realtà nipponica, che cominciavano a conoscere proprio grazie alla stesura della documentazione prodotta dai gesuiti.

The following communication intends to present a peculiarity of the Society of Jesus: the writing. Through the redaction of the epistle, travel relations, chronicles and volumes the Jesuits send historic-political and socio-cultural information of the lands they try to evangelize. That which happens also in Japan from the time of the arrival of Francis Xavier (15 August 1549) and still previously through two documents of Niccolò Lancillotti, drafted in Goa in 1548 and styled following some conversations he had with Anjirō, a neophyte. With the coming of Alessandro Valignano (Kuchinotsu, on 25 July 1579) this aspect finally gets confirmed, and thus the visitor exhorts his confreres to insert in their writings the pieces of news that show the peculiar characteristics of the realities in which the religious worked.
My contribution tries to examine the *De Missione* and some unedited documents which deal with the *Tenshō shōnen shisetsu* (1582-1590) as “tools” that consent the circulation of ideas and information between Japan and the Catholic Europe. The spread of this work and of the letters, which were prefixed as Valignano, written during the journey of the four youngsters from the seminary of Arima concretizes the process of mutual acquaintance: makes known to the Japanese people the occidental world, a civilization equal to them, if not superior, of an advanced and blissful world, where the missionaries distance themselves only to respond fully to the selection of religious life and to present the Japanese reality to the Europeans, who were just beginning to know, thanks to the drawing up of documentation produced by the Jesuits.
My speech at the conference aims to examine the *De Missione Legatorum lapponesium* [...] *Dialogus* in the context of Alessandro Valignano’s missionary strategy. This strategy was developed in particular in the early years of the Jesuit’s stay in Japan between 1580 and 1582. According to Valignano, apostolic action could only be successful if it was based on mutual knowledge and communication between the culture of Japan, the destination of missionary efforts, and the European culture. This conviction led Valignano to undertake two parallel initiatives: The first was the drafting of the so-called *Cerimoniale* (*Advertimientos e avisos cerca dos costumes e catangues de Jappão*, written in October 1581) which illustrated the behaviour necessary for the missionaries to be accepted with respect in Japanese society; the second was the organisation of the trip of young Japanese people to Europe (1582-1590) with the aim of visiting European cities and courts to make them known in Japan, especially the reality of the Catholic Church as an earthly institution promoting the Christian religion. From this direct experience the *De missione* was to be born. Therefore, even if it was published in Macao only in 1590, it can be said that *De missione* was planned and conceived at the time of the expedition of the young travellers and therefore closely linked to the strategy of Valignano, as it is highlighted in the recent Italian edition of the text edited by Marisa Di Russo.

For this reason, in the first part of my presentation I would like to consider in parallel the two works, the *Cerimoniale* and the *De missione*, as both are part of the strategy of Valignano to make the two distant parts of the world, Japan and Catholic Europe, mutually known, as a prerequisite for the development of the mission. In the *Cerimoniale*, an internal text of the Society of Jesus of an above all practical nature, addressed to the missionaries of the order, Valignano describes the ways and means by which the religious can enter into a relationship of trust and respect with the Japanese. Valignano has taken over this news from the Japanese themselves whom it has met and therefore it is ultimately an operation of cultural mediation. As is well known, this text introduces the theme of the adaptation of Christian behaviour to oriental customs and therefore of the relationship between mission and culture, which becomes the most important topic aroused by missionary action in the East. Valignano wanted to bring this text to Rome personally, accompanying the young Japanese. This was not possible,
which is why he entrusted both the young travelers and the manuscript of the *Cerimoniale* to Pedro de Mesquita to deliver it to Rome and this links the two elements of the Jesuit's strategy.

In fact, the *De missione* is planned by Valignano as the final moment of the expedition of the Japanese. Valignano's goal was that Europe and the Roman Church should be told to the Japanese by the Japanese themselves, who would be more convincing. Thus Valignano chooses young people taken from among the converted Japanese nobility, who had already studied Latin, who were young enough to be reasonably sure that they could return to their homeland to tell their experience. Naturally Valignano also had a second purpose: to show Europe, the royal courts and the pontifical court how young Japanese people were prepared, educated and receptive to the Catholic religion and how it was worth financing the missionary effort for which Valignano was responsible in the East.

The country of the Rising Sun was in a particular situation with respect to the missionary world. It was an autonomous territory, not subject to foreign colonial powers (Dutch interests were not yet on the horizon and they revealed themselves at the beginning of the XVII century) where it seemed that Catholicism had imposed itself for the message it transmitted, where the formation of an "indigenous" local clergy seemed possible, where the relationship with the local political power had stabilized, where the level of civilization seemed to be high (see the contemporary classification of Acosta that placed the Japanese at the top), where one could also think of passing on to China.

Naturally Valignano does not want this contact between Europe and Japan to occur without being submitted to his direction, to his control, as can be seen from the instructions he leaves to his brother Mesquita, the accompanier of the young. The image that must remain impressed in the minds of young Japanese people and that they must record in their notes must be positive, they must see the best that Europe, the Church and their courts can offer in terms of majesty and beauty. From this optimistic and propagandistic vision emerges the affirmation of the universal spiritual supremacy of the Pope of Rome which gives credibility to missionary action in Japan.

However, Valignano can't control everything, he can't follow his instructions perfectly. For example, the definition of young travellers as "ambassadors" (legate) that enters the title of the book, overlaps in Europe to the original idea of
Valignano that was very different. Valignano did not want them to carry out this function, above all he had not sent them to show obedience to the pontiff. This is so as not to create suspicions in Japan of instrumentalisation and of the political value of travel. In fact, the effect on Europeans of the mission organized by Valignano went beyond the forecasts of its creator. In fact, the expedition had been prepared with extreme care for the ceremonial details: the gifts, the clothes (which for Valignano had to be Japanese-style), the speeches that the young people were already able to make, showing a more than discreet mastery of Latin, the documents written and signed by them manuscripts that they left (and that are still in various local Italian archives). All of this made it possible for the welcome into the Courts to be very sumptuous and solemn. Moreover, the tradition of the Church was to welcome ambassadors as witnesses of the conversion and adherence to Rome of their peoples.

On the other hand, even if there is no lack of the propagandistic aspect related to the success of Catholicism in Japan, Valignano does not want to obtain a mere solicitation of the European interest for exoticism or docility to the conversion of the "other" (such as, for example, the Tupinamba brought a few years earlier to the Court of France, of which Michel de Montaigne speaks in his *Essais*, with a completely different comparative register). Instead, the "civilization" of the Japanese and their potential ability to meet and welcome Western culture and the Christian religion is exalted. As it results from *De missione*, the journey of the Japanese youth reveals the acute sensitivity of the Jesuit for the themes of representation and political communication well developed in the Renaissance treatises of which Valignano was certainly nourished during his studies. In fact the book of Valignano testifies this attitude and completes the strategy started with the trip. The written text concentrates the memories and impressions of the filtered travelers in an appropriate way so that the enthusiasm can be passed on to the seminar students in Japan. After all, the Jesuit tradition for writing, understood both as correspondence and as book production, is well present in the humanistic formation of Valignano, "man of the Renaissance". It is enough to think of the metaphor with which he points out the young travellers and the informative function that they would have had on their return to Japan: "los meniños, que serán carta viva", a "living letter".

For Valignano there were also more specific reasons, related to his responsibility for the mission, for the publication in Latin that took place in Macao in 1590. On
the one hand Valignano wanted to circulate the book quickly in Europe to prove that the expedition had not had political implications and thus respond to accusations made by the Franciscans. On the other hand, in Japan, following the coming to power of Hideyoshi, the expulsions of Christian missionaries began in 1587 and therefore it was not very prudent to think of printing the work in Nagasaki. This situation leads to some alterations in the truth, for example, what was said at the beginning of the book that the dialogue between young people took place in Arima is false.

In the construction of *De missione*, we find a complex passage from the notes taken by the conscientious young travellers, to a text written by Valignano in Spanish (which unfortunately did not arrive) to the Latin translation of Duarte de Sande (the only one published in 1590 in Macao). The end point of this editorial process would have been the translation into Japanese to make the work accessible. For this work a Japanese convert who had participated in the expedition had been indicated, Jorge de Loyola, seminarian in Arima, who knew Latin well but could not translate the Latin text prepared by Duarte de Sande into his own language because he died on 16 August 1589 before returning to Japan.

Valignano's control over the contents of the book is evident. The descriptions of the young travellers seem full of enthusiasm for Europe, but without personal opinions and instead made more objective by the Jesuit intervention (as well as integrated with many parts taken from various works by other authors). Here we see the shrewdness of Valignano. While wishing to highlight Europe's superiority, it cannot exaggerate when compared with the criticism of Japan, precisely because this attitude would conflict with its policy of recognising local customs and traditions and the opportunity for missionaries to adapt to them. In the dialogue the exaltation of Europe prevails in a clear way: for example, in the description of the procession in the ceremony of the *possesso* of the pope (which the young observed at the election of Sixtus V), Linus, one of the two characters of the dialogue who did not make the journey, addresses almost with envy to Michael: "Happy and fortunate are you that first of our less educated world you were able to go in this other world so splendid and refined". There is often a contrast between the rich, culturally superior Europe (the observations on astronomy), well governed by principles open to the outside, and Japan divided by wars, violent and closed in on itself. However, Valignano is careful to avoid too harsh confrontations. Ultimately, this affirmation of European superiority exists and is also expressed with references to the climate and skin colour of the
inhabitants, but it is also mitigated by comparison with other countries and especially with China, at the same time hated and feared by the Japanese.

A last element is the form of the text chosen by Valignano, which however has an important value of communication between different cultures: the dialogue that takes place between the four Japanese young people who were in Europe and two other Japanese their peers. On this rhetorical level, too, we see how the Jesuit takes up the classical tradition from Plato to Cicero, revived in Humanism and the Renaissance by numerous examples, from Boccaccio to the *Cortegiano* by Castiglione, who are also similar to the themes linked to the ceremonial. But the dialogical style is also linked to communication linked to the apostolate: another example of this kind, known in missionary production, is the *Colloquium of the Twelve* written by the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún, which describes the dialogue between the first Franciscan missionaries in Mexico and the local nobles. But the difference is substantial. In that case the conversation is between Spaniards and Indians with the Spaniards who oppose Christianity to the idolatry of the Aztecs in a one-way speech that shows a lack of interest for the "other", almost a humiliation of the "savage". On the contrary, the dialogue conceived by Valignano, even if it has a cultural and religious propaganda purpose, is much more refined because the Japanese themselves are the bearers of the knowledge about Europe that they discuss with two of their fellow countrymen, allowing them to find a defence or a justification of the even proclaimed Japanese inferiority.

In the presentation at the conference I intend to present these elements that contribute to place *De Missione* in the whole activity of Valignano in Japan. Combining the story of the real journey of the young and the cultural confrontation, this text constitutes, in its long process of elaboration and construction, one of the instruments of its complex missionary and communicative strategy, which joins others and in particular the text on the *Cerimoniale* in the perspective of a "croisement culturel" between Europe and the East.
13) Toshio Takemoto (U. Lille 3) *Quattro ragazzi* de Wakakuwa Midori (1935-2007) : entre essai historique et récit viatique

14) Jérôme Thomas (Montpellier 3) « Chez nous roter à table devant les invités est très mal élevé ; au Japon, c’est très courant et personne ne s’en offusque » : Mœurs et coutumes japonaises au prisme des premiers observateurs Européens (1543-1585)

L’histoire du Japon s’est tout d’abord définie comme isolée, un pays aux portes fermées par des chaînes (sakoku). Il y aurait existé un corps insulaire et même un caractère national déterminé par un espace physique spécifique, ce qui aurait induit des mentalités et des perceptions originales. Ce « corps japonais » selon le mot de Marc Kober serait marqué par le regard européen et une curiosité condescendante. Ce corps se condense en certains traits jugés typiques et cette stéréotypie identifie une culture à un corps. La confrontation physique directe ou imaginaire fit naître des représentations tout au long du XVIe siècle. C’est l’époque des premiers étonnements devant les paradoxes de la pudeur et de la nudité racontés par Luis Frois alors qu’à l’inverse de nombreux témoignages laissent penser aux Japonais que les Européens sont tous roux et sentent le beurre. Frois, observateur attentif de la culture japonaise, qui se trouve dans l’archipel entre 1563 et 1597, dresse en six cent onze points la comparaison entre les coutumes européennes et japonaises, ce qui sert en premier lieu à éclairer les missionnaires sur les principales caractéristiques de la société où ils iront prêcher. En ce XVIe siècle, le topique des caractères des nations tend à devenir un genre littéraire à part entière et Frois n’y fait pas exception. Claude Lévi-Strauss écrit à propos de cet ouvrage que « des centaines de comparaisons, formulées de façon concise et construites sur le mode du parallélisme, suggèrent au lecteur qu’on ne lui signale pas seulement des différences, mais que toutes ces oppositions constituent en fait des inversions ». François Hartog explique que « le principe d’inversion est une manière de transcrire l’altérité, en la rendant aisée à appréhender ». Dans ce schéma réducteur, on est face au topos du monde inversé, dont la fonction est souvent accusatrice selon Frank Lestringant. À travers les sources et commentaires sur les premiers contacts entre Portugais et Japonais, de 1543 à l’ouvrage fondamental de Frois sur Européens et Japonais. *Traité sur les contradictions et différences de mœurs* (1585), et en passant par les écrits de François-Xavier et les lettres jésuites, nous tenterons de comprendre et d’analyser les mœurs et coutumes japonaises au prisme du regard européen face à cette nouvelle altérité. Comme le rappelle Sanjay Subrahmanym, le premier
mouvement face à cette réalité en évolution constante qu’est la « connection » du monde au XVIᵉ siècle, est la tentation de découvrir l’Autre dans une vaste entreprise de description ethnographique.
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