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## Introduction

### The Project

This book stems from the research project *Interactions Between Rivals: The Christian Mission and Buddhist Sects in Japan (c.1549–c.1647)* hosted by CHAM – Centre for the Humanities, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (NOVA FCSH), and funded by the FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P. (the Portuguese National Funding Agency for Science, Research and Technology) (reference: FCT – PTDC/HIS-HIS/118404/2010), which ran from March 2012 to September 2015 with Alexandra Curvelo as PI and Angelo Cattaneo as Co-PI.<sup>1</sup> The research team included as fundamental researchers Arimura Rie, Lucia Dolce, Nicolas Fiévé, Daniele Frison, Frédéric Girard, Hayashi Makoto, Ana Fernandes Pinto, Martin Nogueira Ramos, José Miguel Pinto dos Santos and Silvio Vita, and as Research Fellows (Grant Holders) Helena Barros Rodrigues, Carla Tronu and Linda Zampol D’Ortia.

The project and the book are not about the Christian mission in Japan during the early modern period. If the factual context in which the Christian mission in Japan evolved during almost a century framed our work and also appears in this book through the inclusion of a Contextual Chronology prepared by Daniele Frison, our main focal point was located not in Europe, but Japan, and aimed at a bifocal perspective. From the initial stages of conceptualizing the proposal – a work in which François Lachaud (École française d’Extrême-Orient) played a key role – it was clear that we aimed at promoting comprehensive research on the way that Catholic Southern Europeans and Japanese confronted each other, interacted and mutually experienced religious Otherness through the study of a composite cultural heritage, created in Japan by either side. This was the central structural axis of the project, as it is of the texts that can be read in the present volume. Each author directly associated with the project or following it from an early stage conducted his or her research in line with this chief principle.

The comprehensive portrait of these interactions has been studied during the duration of the project and beyond it through four main lines of enquiry that are in some way reflected in the way this book is organized:

1. References to Buddhist sects, system of beliefs, and practices in missionary writings.

This line of enquiry consisted in the study of references to Buddhist sects, systems of beliefs, and practices in missionary writings, aimed at analysing the records

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1 [http://www.cham.fcsh.unl.pt/pr\\_descricao.aspx?ProId=3](http://www.cham.fcsh.unl.pt/pr_descricao.aspx?ProId=3)

written by the missionaries working in Japan between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries to assess the awareness of Japanese Buddhism by the Europeans of that time. The achievement of this task led to a better knowledge of Japanese religious practices in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Furthermore, it enabled the research team to understand with more accuracy how Japanese Buddhist practices have been perceived and disclosed in Europe

## 2. Buddhist influences in Christian literature published in Japan.

This research aimed at identifying Buddhist elements that can be found in Japanese-written Christian literature printed in the second half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century. These elements can be terms and expressions originating from the Buddhist literature as well as examples, images, figures of speech, etc., that relate to Buddhist concepts. Once this identification was done, we tried to analyse to what extent these elements could interfere with the intended message of these publications by comparing them with those of similar nature published in Europe during the same period. It was also our aim to determine if there was any evolution in time as far as the quantity and quality of these elements are concerned.

## 3. Interactions between Buddhist and missionary visual culture and ceremonial practices.

This investigation developed a methodological approach that was not only object-centred but also object-driven. Having as the main data of analysis the written documents and visual/material culture, this research examines the visual arts, religious architecture and performing arts as interacting fields between missionary and Buddhist and Shinto practices. Particular attention is given to architectural and musical data, to the Painting Seminary opened by the Jesuits, and to the action of Giovanni Niccolò (c.1558–1626), who was called to the Japanese Mission to teach “Western-style” painting to any Japanese who might have an interest in learning and mastering oil painting, engraving, the technique of *chiaroscuro* and linear perspective.

## 4. Interactions between Buddhist and Jesuit scientific cultures.

Jesuit sources shed light on that way around 1600, within the Japanese Mission, Jesuits such as Pedro Gómez (1533/35–1600), Carlo Spinola (1564–1622), and Pedro Morejón (c.1562–1639) were engaged with the Japanese military and political elites to challenge in public dispute Buddhist monks on scientific topics, mostly related to the explanation of astronomical and cartographical phenomena. In the course of disputes, maps of the world, celestial and terrestrial globes, clocks, armillary spheres and other astronomical instruments were used. Based on field research conducted in Japanese museums, temples and libraries, an impressive corpus of manuscript world maps depicted on folding screens has come to light. These maps reinterpret with new elements regarding Europe, as well as Matteo Ricci’s Chinese cosmography and cartography; and at least in one case, also Chinese and Sino-Korean world cartography. In the light of these discoveries, the island of Kyūshū

appears as a unique place in the world where the most important cosmographic languages available around 1600 were used simultaneously. It is important to stress that some of these maps were held in Buddhist temples. In the framework of this line of enquiry, these different *corpora* of documents (Jesuit written accounts, scientific books written in both Latin and Japanese, maps and cosmographies) are the object of an interconnected analysis, to show how different visions of the world competed and interacted with each other, serving theological, political and scientific purposes in early modern Japan.

When referring to the Christian mission in early modern Japan, many of the essays focus on the work of the Jesuits. The reasons for this can be briefly summarized by the fact that the missionaries of the Society of Jesus were the first to arrive in the archipelago and to establish a Mission in 1549, having had the exclusivity of the missionary work until 1593, the year the Franciscans were permitted to settle in, followed by the Dominicans in 1601, and the Augustinians in 1602. Also, and partially associated with this precedence in Japan, the Jesuits' administrative procedures, missionary strategy and evangelization method gave rise to a written, material, musical and visual culture that has no parallel with any other religious presence in the territory. However, we are well aware that this ascendancy of the Jesuits should not underestimate the accomplishments of the other religious orders that came to work in Japan, and some of the texts, as well as the Data Collection Project, attest to this consciousness.

## The Book

From the arrival of the Portuguese to Tanegashima in 1542/43, to the last embassy sent to Japan by the king of Portugal in 1647, for a period of *circa* 100 years, in the context of the pressing events that brought about the military and political unification of the Japanese kingdom led by Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), Japan appears, in the eyes of cultural historians, as an extremely interesting laboratory of cross-cultural, social, political, linguistic, religious and philosophical interactions. During this relatively short period of time, even considered ephemeral by some historians,<sup>2</sup> small communities of European and Chinese merchants and Catholic missionaries mutually experienced very heterogeneous forms of cultural interactions with Japanese political, mercantile, military and religious communities. It included joint activities, such as the organization of networks of maritime trade; the foundation and construction of two interdependent new cities, Nagasaki and Macao; the foundation and organization of western religious institutions, such as the itinerant Jesuit Colleges and Seminaries (including the Painting Seminary); the introduction in Japan of new technologies such as firearms and western-style ships, printing using

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2 Elison, *Deus Destroyed. The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988 (first ed. 1973), p.248.

movable type in books using both the Romanized and logographic Japanese scripts, hybrid-western style forms of mapping and artistic production; the teaching of European music in Jesuit Seminaries; and finally, the mutual codification, teaching and learning of four previously disconnected languages (Portuguese, Latin, Japanese and Chinese). These economic, cultural and technological interactions – which implied constructive forms of cooperation – developed almost concurrently with violent social and political processes of control that included rejection, persecution, banishment, and even martyrdom, of both European and Japanese Christians, as well as the expulsion of Portuguese and Spanish merchants in 1639.

Cooperation, acceptance, confrontation and rejection, dialogue and imposition, understanding and misunderstanding were in a constant fluid dialogue. These ambivalences are often forgotten, or at least undervalued, in the conspicuous historiography on Japan, at the time of the arrival and settlement of the first Europeans in early modernity. Most research tends to highlight one of the aspects of those interactions often in an exclusive perspective – acceptance, cooperation or rejection and violence – underestimating both the interdependence and the fluidity of these phenomena, strongly conditioned by power relations and dynamics out of control of part of the (very few) Europeans active in Japan.

In the context of early modern Japan, the European agents, whether Iberian, Dutch or British merchants and Catholic missionaries, were in radical asymmetry, in terms of number, resources, concrete possibilities to act and plan, with respect to their Japanese interlocutors. Asymmetric power relations with the Japanese military-political and Buddhist elites were the main factors influencing the development of both European merchants' and missionaries' strategies and practices. By referring to current theoretical debates, in contexts in which the balance of power clearly favoured the Japanese, the (confrontational) interactions, whether economic, religious, cultural or political, were characterized by the controlled contact pattern (for and by the Japanese) and the minority culture pattern (for and by the Europeans). In this type of cultural encounter – as has been convincingly argued recently by Luís Afonso, based on Urs Bitterli's former analysis<sup>3</sup> – the

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3 Afonso, "Patterns of Artistic Hybridization in the Early Protoglobalization Period". *Journal of World History*, vol. 27, no. 2 (2016), pp.215–253 (p.218): "In this balance of power, between symmetric or asymmetric relations, there are three possible settings: (1) the two parties have equivalent positions; (2) one party has a dominant position; and (3), consequently, the other party has a minor position. From here emerge the three main patterns of artistic hybridity studied in this article: the *partnership pattern*; the *controlled contact pattern*; and the *minority culture pattern*. There are variations in each of these patterns, depending on the degree of cultural differences between partners, the (a)symmetry of forces involved in their (confrontational) interactions, the moment and location where these interactions take place, the degree of acceptance (or rejection) that these parties have of each other's cultures, and the idiosyncrasies of the individuals and groups on each side who participate more actively in the interaction process." See also Bitterli, *Cultures in*

local agents were always in a position to determine the conditions and nature of relations with the visitors, “who had to accept the terms offered.” Only in rare cases could the Europeans negotiate these terms, and very often, as in the case of Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s 1587 first decrees of the expulsion of the Jesuits and limiting the propagation of the foreign creed, the non-execution of orders or resolutions taken by the Japanese authorities depended almost exclusively on the implicit decision of the same authorities to not put them into practice, and very little, if not at all, from specific actions and decisions by the Europeans involved.<sup>4</sup>

Under these circumstances, scrutiny and analysis of available sources reveals that the ability to adapt and deal with these very uncertain dynamics, linked to a radical asymmetry of power, was a fundamental condition of survival. Those who failed to adapt or to achieve at least an attitude of adaptation, including the learning of the Japanese language, habits and social behaviours, had little chance of keeping their position or even surviving, in the complex and potentially hostile context of Japan. The well-known cases of the Jesuit Francisco Cabral (1533–1609) during his time as Superior of the Japanese mission (1570–1579), before the arrival in Japan of Alessandro Valignano, and the following appointment of Gaspar Coelho (c. 1529–1590) as the first Vice-Provincial of the mission of Japan clearly illustrate these difficulties and the misunderstandings that could ensue.<sup>5</sup>

Cabral’s harsh rejection of the Japanese culture, language and habits and Coelho’s decision to build and equip an armed ship that he showed proudly to Hideyoshi Toyotomi, together with the imprudent offer of military support in the incipient campaign of Korea, are revealing. Cabral left Japan and ended up in Goa, eventually becoming rector of the College of São Paulo and later even Visitor to India. Coelho’s hasty behaviour, instead, made Toyotomi Hideyoshi indelibly suspicious of the missionaries, to the point that in July 1587 he presented Coelho with the decree that ordered the *Bateren* out of Japan.

The highly variable and asymmetric relations with the political-military elites of Japan at times favoured, but also opposed and in any case, tried to strictly control international trade through the tally system. European merchants – from the mid-sixteenth century, Portuguese traders, then from the end of the sixteenth century, also Spanish (from the Philippines), British and mostly Dutch – overcame the disadvantages of the asymmetry by placing themselves as strategic intermediaries, at first with the *daimyō* (feudal lords) of Kyūshū, and then with the Tokugawa Shogunate in the “maritime space between” in early modern South-East Asia. Japan

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*Conflict: Encounters between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492–1800*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993, pp.137–140.

- 4 Boscaro, “Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the 1587 edicts against Christianity”, *Oriens Extremus*, vol. 20, no. 2 (December 1973), pp.219–241.
- 5 On Cabral see D’Ortia, *The Cape of the Devil. Salvation in the Japanese Jesuit Mission Under Francisco Cabral (1570–1579)*. A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Otago, December 2016.

could no longer be kept apart from the phenomenon of the world scale process of “politicization of Oceanic Space”.<sup>6</sup>

Missionaries, instead, tried to cope with and negotiate the radical asymmetry of power balance with their Japanese interlocutors by adopting and exploring (controversial) strategies of adaptation and accommodation that, over the course of circa 70 years, guaranteed the implementation of relevant mutual learning processes. Far from being an *a priori* philosophical position, an ethical or moral choice of (alleged and anachronistic) respect for cultural differences or otherness, or – on the contrary – a hidden, subtle and premeditated strategy to penetrate and conquer the (otherwise lost) souls of the (Japanese) pagans, the so-called Jesuit *acomodatio* or “adaptation” to local contexts of interactions in a place like Japan in early modernity, was above all a reaction to and a consequence of the radical asymmetry of power, aimed at securing safer living conditions in the potentially hostile local contexts of the mission.

Well before it was theorized and described in the well-known texts by Valignano, composed following his first stay in Japan between 1579 and 1582 – the *Advertimentos e Avisos acerca dos costumes e catangues de Jappão* (1581)<sup>7</sup>; the *Sumario de las cosas de Japón* (1583)<sup>8</sup> and the *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias orientales* (1583)<sup>9</sup> – the reading and analysis of the letters and reports composed already in the first 20 years of the presence of the Jesuits in Japan reveal that the enculturation and acculturation of Christianity to and for the Japanese audiences, later systematized by Valignano, largely depended on the practices that some of the Jesuits had tried to implement since the very first years of the arrival of the missionaries of the Society of Jesus in Japan. Power imbalance did not only prevent the development of relevant cultural interactions, but on the contrary stimulated some of the Jesuits toward creative strategies and practices of communication and cultural translation, which later became the broader framework of early modern Catholic global mission.

The essays in this volume share the fact that they take into consideration these processes of transcultural interactions, which involved, directly or indirectly, Catholic missionaries, their Japanese assistants, the population they addressed, the military and political elites, Buddhists monks, and neo-Confucian scholars.

Part I reunites four essays under the broad topic of ‘Interactions between Christian and Buddhist Written Cultures and Practices’ and opens with a text by

6 Mancke, “Early Modern Expansion and the Politicization of Oceanic Space”, *Geographical Review*, vol. 89, no. 2, Oceans Connect (Apr. 1999), pp.225–236.

7 Valignano, *Il Cerimoniale per i missionari del Giappone*. «*Advertimentos e Avisos acerca dos Costumes e Catangues de Jappão*». Josef Franz Schütte, S.J. (Ed.). Roma: Edizioni di «Storia e Letterature», 1946.

8 Valignano, *Sumario de las cosas de Japon (1583)*. *Adiciones del Sumario del Japon (1592)*. José Luis Alvarez-Taladriz (Ed.). Tōkyō: Sophia University, 1954.

9 Valignano, *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias orientales (1542–64)*. Josef Wicki (Ed.). Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1944.

Linda Zampol D’Ortia, Lucia Dolce and Ana Fernandes Pinto – “Saints, Sects, and (Holy) Sites: The Jesuit Mapping of Japanese Buddhism (Sixteenth Century)” – that investigates the approach through which the Jesuit missionaries based in Japan shaped and handled the information collected on Buddhism during the first decades of the Christian mission, between the 1540s and 1580s.

The authors of these writings are all well-known – with particular references to Captain Jorge Álvares (?–1552) and the missionaries Francis Xavier (1506–1552), Juan Fernández (1526–1567), Cosme de Torres (c.1510–1570), Melchior Nunes Barreto (c.1520–1571), Baltazar Gago (c.1515/20–1583), Francisco Cabral (1533–1609), Luís Fróis (1532–1597) and Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) – and so are the sources (both manuscript and printed). The latter constitute the basis of the Data Collection associated with the Project (see pp. 43–45) and its utilization is plainly demonstrated by this text.

This extensive documentation is analysed aiming at outlining a comprehensive genealogy of the missionary discourse on Japanese Buddhism during these fundamental years of the Mission when a narrative about this topic began to be constructed. The process was neither simple nor linear, as the gathering of information, writing and reporting about this ‘religious Other’ reveals. Moreover, the documents are analysed considering the hermeneutical framework utilized, the immediate motivations of these European agents and their purposes. The meticulous examination of these writings led the authors to perceive changes and adaptations in the discourse over the years, resulting from the understanding of the related interactions between missionaries and Buddhist monks.<sup>10</sup> From the first, far from a uniform presentation of Buddhism in Japan, an official position was adopted in the 1580s: a sensitive period for the Mission due to the political turmoil in the country. By this time Jesuit knowledge collected in the field, not only in Kyūshū but also in Kyōto, allowed them to be more aware of a broader physical landscape of sacred sites, of devotional aspects of Buddhism, as well as of Buddhist lineages in competition amongst themselves and the tensions thus created, which was also used for propaganda purposes, raising the missionaries’ interest in the Buddhist institutional configuration. The image that surfaces of Buddhism in Japan by the end of the sixteenth century as a complex and powerful religion, albeit imprecise and necessarily compromised by the Jesuit standpoint, was a major intellectual achievement with an impact on the ways that other religions were perceived in Asia. Furthermore, Buddhist doctrine came to assume a significance it had not held in previous discussions of other Asian religions.

Adding to the religious and cultural barriers, and inextricably related to them, Hubert Cieslik referred to the linguistic obstacle, particularly the need to translate Christian concepts and terms into Japanese, as “one of the most vexing missionary

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10 App, *The Cult of Emptiness. The Western Discovery of Buddhist Thought and the Invention of Oriental Philosophy*. Rorschach; Kyoto: UniversityMedia, 2012.



problems” that the Mission had to face in Japan.<sup>11</sup> José Miguel Pinto dos Santos’ essay – “Mincing Words: Terminological Sublation in the Japanese Christian Doctrines” – focuses on this fascinating topic through careful analysis of one of the paramount texts published by the Jesuit mission press in the territory: the *Dochiriina Kirishitan* (1591), based on the *Doctrina Christã* by Marcos Jorge, S.J. (1524–1571), first printed in 1566. Resulting from a complex and arduous process of apprenticeship of both Japanese language, culture and religion, this translation reveals a composite strategy that included employing vocabulary – borrowed mainly from Portuguese and Latin – which was used to express Christian concepts and doctrines (‘loan words’), as well as Japanese words (*ningen* 人間, for Man or human beings, *taisetsu* 大切 for love, *shi* 死 for death, *tengu* 天狗, for the devil), including several Buddhist words (as *sūtra*, *kyō* 經 and *goshō* 後生, the rebirth after death, but also employed to designate simply the future world).

The ‘loan words’ were introduced by the Jesuits whenever they considered that previously adopted Japanese vocabulary was either misleading or unable to express a Christian doctrinal concept. Taking as examples some of these words – *Zezu Kirishito* (Jesus Christ), *Deusu* (God), *esuperansa* (hope), *kirishitan* (Christian), *karidade* (charity), *dochiriina* (Doctrine), *Chirindaade* (Trinity) – Pinto dos Santos asks if the final result would be effective from the point of view of a Japanese audience. In other words, “Could a hypothetical seventeenth-century Japanese reader, without any previous contact with a foreign missionary or a Japanese Christian, and without recourse to any of the other books published by the Jesuits in Japan, be able to make an educated guess at their meanings, just by reading the *Dochiriina Kirishitan*?” Through the textual analysis, the author argues that there is evidence of both the effort and ability from the Jesuits and their Japanese assistants to translate into Japanese the Christian doctrine, even if it implied borrowing words from other languages, a process that sheds a deeper understanding of the Mission’s intellectual work.

A similar perceptiveness results from the study of one of the texts published by the Jesuit Mission Press in 1600: the *Japanese Poems on the Nine Stages [of a Decaying Female Body]* (*Kusōka*, 九相歌), a collection of eighteen Japanese poems describing the process of decay of a female corpse, strongly connected to Buddhist doctrines and practices on the contemplation of impurity. The Jesuit version of the *Kusōka* is part of a miscellaneous compendium of Japanese texts appearing under the title *Royei Zafit*. By introducing the volume in which the poem collection was published, and its function within the Jesuit mission, the Buddhist tradition from which the poems originated, and finally providing a translation and analysis of the Jesuit edition of the poems, Carla Tronu thoroughly examines this intriguing publication in her essay “*Memento mori* and Impermanence (*Mujō*, 無常): The 1600 Jesuit Mission Press Edition of Japanese Poems on the *Nine Stages of a Decaying*

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11 Cieslik, “Balthasar Gago and Japanese Christian Terminology”. *The Missionary Bulletin*, vol. VII (May-June 1954), p.82.



*Female Body* (*Kusōka*, 九相歌). Tronu argues that there is evidence of its use by advanced students of the Japanese language on how to read poetry, epistolary style, and prose, as well as to broaden the conversation topics of future Jesuits with Japanese learned elites. Moreover, the *Kusōka* is also a good example of the Jesuit policy towards Buddhist terminology and testifies to the Western missionaries' grasping of the importance of the Buddhist concepts underlying the poems, namely the impurity and impermanence of the (female) body and sensual attachment or lust, thus giving new insight into Jesuit understandings of Buddhism.

In a text titled "In Search for a Buddhist Ecumenical Reformation in Contact with Christianity", Frédéric Girard explores an extremely complex and, at the same time, little investigated chapter of the reverberation of the doctrinal, theological and philosophical aspects of Christianity on Buddhist thought and doctrines since the late sixteenth century. As noted by Girard in the introduction of his essay, the vast majority of Christian doctrinal texts destined for the Japanese audience have been destroyed in the course of anti-Christian persecutions or have been lost following the abrupt expulsion of the missionaries. After the expulsion and the bloody revolt in Shimabara, Christianity, in all its doctrinal, literary, iconographic or material aspects, was banned, and even the slightest reference was prohibited. Despite this documentary deficit, Girard tackles with philological virtuosity the cross-cultural analysis of some fundamental texts elaborated in the framework of the Christian mission, which escaped from the destructions perpetrated by the Tokugawa persecutions and a vast selection of central works for the renewal of Japanese Buddhism, during the first half of the seventeenth century. Girard analyses the central notions and concepts of 'reason', 'vacuity', 'eternal soul', 'paradise', 'liberation and liberty', though a cross-cultural reading of works such as the *Compendium catholicae veritatis*<sup>12</sup> originally authored in Latin by Pedro Gómez, S.J., and in part translated into Japanese by Pedro Morejón, S. J., the *Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam*<sup>13</sup> printed by the Jesuit Press in Nagasaki in 1603–1604 and the treatises of relevant Buddhist masters, including Suzuki Shōsan 鈴木正三 (1579–1655), Sessō Sōsai 雪窗宗崔 (1589–1649), or monks such as Takuan 澤庵 (1573–1646), looking for indirect influences. Of particular importance is the analysis of 'paradise', "an integrating part of the Buddhist creed since it appeared in the

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12 *Compendium catholicae veritatis*. 3 Vols. Kirishitan Bunko Library, Sophia University (Ed.). Tōkyō: Ōzorasha 大空社 Co. Ltd., 1997. (Facsimile edition of the original Latin and Japanese manuscripts of the *Compendium Catholicae Veritatis in gratiam Iaponicorum Fratrum Societatis Iesu*)

13 *Vocabulario da lingoa de Iapam (1603)*. Tadao Doi (Ed.). Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1960. [Online: <https://archive.org/details/nippoijshovocabv06doit/page/n9/mode/2up>] Vocabulario da lingua de Iapam com a declaração em portugues, feito por alguns padres, e irmãos da Companhia de IESV. Nangasaqui: Collegio de Iapam da Companhia de IESVS, 1603. [facsimile edition: Tsukimoto Masayuki (Ed.) – Nippo jisho: kirishitanban: karā einban. Vocablario da lingoa de Iapam: Nagasaqui 1603–4. Tōkyō: Bensei shuppan, 2013.

Mahāyānic currents”, and of the Christian Faith. Girard’s analysis enables one to follow the tension between the promise of rebirth in Paradise for the men of goodwill, as preached by the Christian missionaries, and the Amidic Pure Land Buddhist doctrine. The faith in Amida and his Pure Land was widespread in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Japan, at the time of the missionaries’ presence. Through detailed textual and doctrinal analysis of seventeenth-century Buddhist masters, and by developing and deepening the reflection initiated by the pioneering work of Ōkuwa Hitoshi,<sup>14</sup> Girard puts forward the hypothesis, innovative from a historiographical point of view, that the criticism of Christianity by Buddhist monks was one of the cultural vectors that led them to a reformation of the Buddhist community from the inside, in the first half of the seventeenth century.

On the ‘Interactions between Buddhist and Missionary Material, Musical and Visual Culture’, which constitutes Part II, three essays analyse the architectural, musical, and visual and performative *milieu* in which the Christian mission evolved in connection with the Japanese religious and ceremonial backgrounds. These are fundamental aspects of the Mission’s endeavour in its evangelization strategy and interaction with a broader audience, yet still overlooked by most of the historiographical discourse on the subject. Emphasis is generally put on the examination of the remaining textual evidence, seldom placing it in dialogue with testimonies of the visual, material and intangible culture. One of the first to fully accomplish such an exercise was Jesús López Gay, S.J. in his seminal work *La Liturgia en la Misión del Japón del Siglo XVI*, published in 1970.<sup>15</sup> In that same year another reference book was published: Okamoto Yoshitomo and Takamizawa Tadao’s *Nanban Byōbu*, which can be considered the first attempt to systematize and study the known corpus of Japanese folding screens depicting the black ship and the *Nanban-jin*, missionaries included, confronting the visual domain with prevailing objects and written accounts.<sup>16</sup>

Departing from a field of study that has known considerable growth and maturation in the last decades, above all from a theoretical and methodological perspective, an achievement for which the intersection of different disciplines (History, Art History, Museum Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Conservation and Restoration, among others) has been proved crucial, all three essays aim at examining the interactions between the Western missionaries and their religious counterparts taking as the central object of study other than the written testimonies.

Stemming from a long and rich investigation on the subject, Arimura Rie’s essay “The Adaptation of Vernacular Sacred Spaces in the Catholic Architecture

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14 Ōkuwa, *Nihon kinseino shisō to bukkō* 日本近世の思想と仏教 (Thought and Buddhism in Modern Japan). Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法藏館, 1989.

15 López Gay, *La Liturgia en la Misión del Japón del Siglo XVI*. Roma: Libreria dell’Università Gregoriana, 1970.

16 Okamoto; Takamizawa, *Nanban Byōbu* 南蛮屏風. 2 Vols. Tōkyō: Kashima Kenkyūjo Shuppankai, 1970.

of Early Modern Japan” results from a comparative approach to the missionary contexts of both Portuguese and Spanish dominions conducive to a better understanding of the characteristics of the Japanese reality. If the phenomenon of architectural adaptation was not a unique feature of the evangelization of Japan, its circumstances can be considered distinctive from any other context. Contrary to what happened in the Spanish dominions in the American continent, where there was the presence of a centralized colonial government, Japan was never colonized. In terms of the missionary work in the country, the fact that it depended entirely on local circumstances, and that it was severely affected by the political and social instability Japan lived in, most of the Catholic churches could only be built after personal permission by the *daimyō* of each feudal domain was granted, and much of the missionary work depended on the help of different agents, mostly local lords and European merchants as well. What was ‘provisional’ for other missions became ‘permanent’ in Japan, as Arimura perceptively points out. However, this ‘permanence’ is of course, in itself an illusion, not only because of the political turmoil followed by the persecution of Christianity but also due to local traditions of construction. Arimura’s object of study, the reusing of Buddhist structures by missionaries, is in its essence ephemeral, albeit the remains left.

The examination of the Jesuits’ actions towards the adoption of Buddhist spaces to Christian usage – whether disused buildings or properties belonging to popular Buddhist schools, a process that evolved over time – is accompanied by the analysis of the procedures taken by the mendicant friars and mendicant architecture, particularly Franciscans and Dominicans, who followed the same trend. By adopting once more a comparative approach, the author demonstrates that the Jesuits were not alone in adapting practices at this level. Furthermore, Arimura claims that there was even continuity in the process, although with diverse criteria and sensibilities.

As in the case of traditional Japanese architecture also, music belongs to both the domain of the material and intangible culture. Music played a central role in Catholic liturgy, so much so that there are references to masses sung in Japan from a relatively early time, at least from the 1560s.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, it made part of the *curricula* of the Jesuit Missions, and missionaries often refer to the use of music and singing in their writings, mostly on festive occasions such as Christmas, the Holy Week and Easter, propitiatory moments to the development of musical practice and singing, both within churches and in processions that roamed the streets of Japanese towns where the missionary presence was more intense. Additionally, the Painting Seminary funded in the 1590s was a place intended not only to teach Western-style painting and engraving but also for the manufacture of European musical instruments.

One particular moment for the blooming of this domain was the Tenshō mission to Europe (1582–1590), which consisted of sending in a journey to Europe

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17 López-Gay, op. cit., p.158.

and eventually Papal Rome, four young Japanese converted to Christianity and related to three Christian lords. This important event for the Jesuit Mission in Japan is the departure point for Kathryn Bosi Monteath's essay "European Music as Taught in Jesuit Seminaries in Japan: The case of four noble youths who visited the Pope in 1585" in which the author examines the teaching of European music in Japanese Seminaries by the Society of Jesus as a tool for conversion, and the consequent surprise and admiration of Europeans that the four boys, during their European tour, could play European musical instruments such as the *viola da gamba*, the lute, and even the magnificent organ of the Cathedral of Évora.

The central idea that Missionaries interacted on different levels with diverse publics, including Buddhist monks and intermediaries, is further analysed by Alexandra Curvelo in her essay "A Culture In-Between: Materiality and Visuality in the Christian mission in Japan in the Early Modern Age". Taking as a point of departure a painting presumably portraying the author of the *Compendium catholicae veritatis* (Compendium of the Catholic Truth), the Jesuit Pedro Gómez with his hands in a position of a *mudra*, which has been identified as the *Seppō-(no)-in* (説法印), or more precisely the *Tenbōrin-(no)-in* (転法輪印), the gesture of the Buddha engaged in teaching and preaching, Curvelo explores some of the ways through which missionaries interacted on different levels with diverse publics, including Buddhist monks and intermediaries. Although the Mission had already adopted a visual and material culture imbued with Buddhist elements, as the reading of coeval missionary writings indicates, the Jesuit Painting Seminary appears as a pivotal institution in this regard. When it emerged during the last decade of the sixteenth century this complement to the humanist education and the study program of the Society of Jesus soon became a tool for outreach to a wider community and placed itself as a space of cultural interaction and mediation among different agents of the inner and outer circles of the Christian mission. The presence of the Jesuit painter Giovanni Niccolò, the founder of this Seminary, and the network of individuals, including Buddhist painters and the "dōgicos" (*dōjuku* 同宿), or auxiliaries of the mission, proved to be essential to the appearance of a religious hybrid culture embedded of 'visual bilingualism'<sup>18</sup> therefore understandable to different audiences, particularly Christian and Buddhist. Aiming at understanding the formation of such an environment, the author confronts textual sources with objects and images attesting to a complex process of adaptation and substitution within the Christian mission and confirming a cross-cultural partnership that dates to the first decades of its activity in Japan. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in the arrangements of sacred settings and performative activities central for the Christian religious ceremonial, such as the festivities associated with Christmas and Easter. One of the outcomes was the creation of a new visuality and materiality in late sixteenth-century Japan and the appearance of

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18 Hioki, "Visual Bilingualism and Mission Art: A Reconsideration of "Early Western-Style Painting" in Japan". *Japan Review*, no. 23 (2011), pp.23–44.

a ‘culture in-between’<sup>19</sup> created by continuing interactions between distinct cultural and religious domains, attesting to very stimulating, active, and insightful exchanges between two different religious and cultural spheres.

Part III of the volume, entitled “Interactions between Buddhist and Jesuit Scientific Cultures”, focuses on the way divergent cultures of space were encoded in the multiple and heterogeneous discourses and practices developed in Japan in the highly variable and asymmetric relations that involved European merchants, Jesuit missionaries, Buddhist monks, Confucian scholars, and several members of Japanese political, military and mercantile *élites*. In the first part of this section, Angelo Cattaneo’s essay, “Spatial and Linguistic Patterns in Early Modern Global History. Iberian and Dutch Merchants, Jesuit Missionaries, Buddhist Monks and Neo-Confucian Scholars and their Interactions in Japan”, analyses the multiple ways in which space was experienced in early modern Japan from four integrated perspectives. The first two parts of the essay examine the differences and similarities between (European) mercantile implicit understanding and practices of space and places and those of missionary orders. This comparison allows Cattaneo to highlight that while travelling the same sea routes, missionaries radically transformed the ways of experiencing and conceptualizing space and places with respect to merchants and soldiers. The third part of the essay considers specific cases of interaction involving space and spatiality among the Jesuits, the Buddhist *bonzes* and neo-Confucian scholars through the analysis of the disputes that saw them rivalling while debating cosmological and cosmographic topics. This analysis will shift the focus from a unique interpretation of acclaimed Jesuit missionary science to the theological relevance of cosmology and cosmography in missionary contests in which the Christian concepts of God creator and the world as creation were ignored as well as challenged by equally structured and alternative cosmologies.<sup>20</sup> Finally, as a conclusion of the essay, a long forgotten Japanese manuscript cartographic document, currently held at the Prefectural Library of Kōchi in the Shikoku island, that for the first time repositioned Japan from the margin of the Eurasian *oikumene* to the centre of the Iberian transpacific sea routes, is analysed and in part transcribed. The study of the cultural and scientific dynamics that took place in Japan, in the context of the interactions between Jesuit missionaries and Iberian and Dutch merchants with the Japanese learned Buddhist and neo-Confucian religious and academic communities, show that linear Eurocentric models of circulation of knowledge, people, and ideas are ill-adapted to articulate the complexities of the agencies, and also the places of exchange and transformation of culture, forms, and ideas in the long and multifaceted system of maritime and terrestrial routes that linked Europe to several kingdoms and cities in Asia.

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19 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

20 Hiraoka, “The Transmission of Western Cosmology to 16<sup>th</sup> Century Japan”. Luís Saraiva and Catherine Jami (Ed.), *The Jesuits, The Padroado and East Asian Science (1552–1773)*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2008, pp.81–98.

Complementary to Cattaneo's analysis, Max Moerman's essay, "The Epistemology of Vision: Buddhist versus Jesuit Cosmology in Early Modern Japan", focuses instead on the conspicuous – and so far, little known – Buddhist monks' and Neo-Confucian scholars' cosmological – direct and indirect – responses to Jesuits' proselytism involving the global earth and heavenly spheres as evidence of the Christian divine plan. Moerman's essay traces a broad landscape of the discourses and devices of Buddhist cartography and cosmology that developed throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries grounded in classical Buddhist cosmology and theory of vision "in which – Moerman argues – the limited optics of the human eye are incommensurate with the panopticism of the Buddha". The introduction by the Jesuits of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmos into Japan, since the mid-sixteenth century and, two centuries later, of Copernican astronomy, in the context of the *Rangaku* (蘭学, literally "Dutch learning"), presented significant challenges to the Japanese Buddhist worldview. Starting from an analysis of Jesuit sources, such as the first part of the *De sphaera* ("sphere" here meaning 'the spherical world', that is the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic universe), the first part of Gomez's *Compendium catholicae veritatis* (1595), Moerman analyses the work of Mori Shōken 森尚謙 (1653–1721), of the Pure land monk Monnō 文雄 (1700–1763), and of the Tendai monk Fumon Entsū 普門円通 (1755–1834), among several others. Fumon Entsū, one of the most distinguished advocates of classical Buddhist astronomy and geography in the late Edo period, stands out. While basing his theories on the classical texts of the Buddhist canon, as described in the *Abhidharmakosa*, Entsū incorporated the techniques of European science to prove the accuracy of traditional Buddhist cosmology over European astronomy well into the late nineteenth century.

Altogether, both Cattaneo's and Moerman's research trajectories allow us to focus on the processes of circulation, transformation, and above all of the negotiation, resistance and even of mutual rejection, between heterogeneous world views. There was no such thing as the "globalisation" of European culture or science before the nineteenth century.

Finally, Part IV of the volume, "The Aftermath", takes into consideration the decades immediately following the expulsion from Japan of the Catholic missionaries. We believe that the history of these decades, often considered extraneous or detached from the events connected to the effective presence of Catholic missionaries in Japan, is instead a fundamental and integral part of that history, one that, in particular and primarily, involves numerous Japanese communities that had to face the trying experiences of the ban of Christianity brought forward by the Tokugawa shogunate. In this final part of the book, the essays of Martin Nogueira Ramos and Kojima Yoshie approach from two different perspectives – however integrated – the history of the Japanese Christian communities, which, following the ban, tried to keep alive their faith and the memory of Christianity, while formally adhering to Buddhism. Finally, Akune Susumu analyses in detail the latest attempt by the Jesuits to return to Japan in 1643, trying to grasp the complex objectives and hopes embedded in this desperate endeavour, and thus

renovating a historiography that has mainly highlighted the search for a martyrdom to redeem the apostasy of Cristovão Ferreira S.J. (c. 1580–1650).

Martin Nogueira Ramos' essay, "Neither Apostates nor Martyrs. Japanese Catholics Facing the Repression (1612–Mid-Seventeenth Century)" focuses on the vast majorities of Japanese Christians who did not choose to apostatize or to become martyrs and decided instead to secretly practicing their religion. Although the Tokugawa shogunate obliged all Christians to recant Christianity and to formally become Buddhists by associating themselves with local temples, numerous communities of commoners tried to remain adherent, or at least not to lose, the Christian creed, in very discreet and prudent ways. By following and further developing Higashibaba Ikuo's<sup>21</sup> and Kawamura Shinzō's<sup>22</sup> studies on Catholic commoners, Ramos renews interest for popular religion by taking into considerations new sources that shed light on this chapter of social religious and cultural history through the example of the peninsula of Shimabara between 1612 and 1638. The region of Shimabara was one of the most significant places for the history of Christianity in Japan: the Shimabara *daimyō* Arima Yoshisada 有馬義貞 (1521–1576) and his son Arima Harunobu 有馬晴信 (1567–1612) were among the first to convert to Catholicism and, as argued by Ramos, at the time of the persecutions against the Christians, the commoners of Shimabara "were the initiators, along with peasants from Amakusa 天草, of a large-scale revolt of Christian inspiration in 1637–1638".

By analysing missionary sources, Japanese political documents and transcripts of interrogation as well as the few testimonies left by lay Catholics, Ramos sheds light on the religious mentality of Japanese Christians in the first half of the seventeenth century, at the time of the most violent attack against Christianity. These documents are accompanied by a fresh reconsideration of the texts written in the aftermath of the Shimabara revolt by Inoue Masashige 井上政重 (1585–1661), the "great inspector" (*ōmetsuke* 大目付) of the Bakufu, who supervised the ban of Christianity in the whole Kingdom. Altogether, these comparative and integrated readings on the one hand elucidate the anti-Christian measures and policies, and on the other, explain the progressive adaptation of the Christians to them. Extensive quotations and translations from original documents detailing the daily Christian practices in contexts where there were few missionaries and, after 1625, almost no missionaries at all, provide the basis on which Ramos manages to draw a very detailed social history of Christianity in Japan, beyond what is generally known through the more normative or even propagandistic Jesuit letters and reports. Of particular importance, in the final part of the essay, is the analysis of

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21 Higashibaba, *Christianity in Early Modern Japan: Kirishitan Belief and Practice*. Leiden, Boston & Koln: Brill, 2001.

22 Kawamura, *Kirishitan shinto soshiki no tanjō to hen'yō* キリシタン信徒組織の誕生と変容. Tōkyō: Kyōbunkan 教文館, 2003; Kawamura, *Sengoku shūkyō shakai shisō-shi: Kirishitan jirei kara no kōsatsu* 戦国宗教社会思想史—キリシタン事例からの考察. Tōkyō: Chisen shokan 知泉書館, 2011.



the documents about the Shimabara rebellion, which reported the voices of the officers who were in charge of fighting against the rebels, and even the echo of the hopes and fears of a few Catholic commoners of Shimabara.

Kojima Yoshie's essay, "Orthodoxy and Acculturation of Christian Art in Japan: The Transformation of the Eucharistic Representation of 'Hidden Christians'", focuses mainly on the descendants of the communities who maintained the Christian faith in secrecy in Ikitsuki, a small island in north-western Kyūshū, contiguous to Hirado island. Known in modern Japanese as 'Kakure Kirishitan かくれキリシタン' – Kakure means 'hidden one' and Kirishitan means 'Christians' – their systems of beliefs are considered to have originated from Catholic religious practices of the sixteenth century. Kojima's research takes into consideration a vast sample of images, traditionally known as 'Gozen-sama' 御前様 and Okake-e 御掛け絵 (the latter are sacred images of the Kakure Kirishitan of Ikitsuki, in the form of hanging scrolls), preserved and venerated by these communities, and discusses their functions and iconology. In ways similar to what happens with the recitation by the Kakure Kirishitan of prayers or ritual phrases which, while maintaining a sonority that recalls Latin, are just repeated as sounds, without any perception of their original meaning,<sup>23</sup> even their sacred images have undergone a similar process of loss of the original Christian meaning, while maintaining some of the very recognizable Christian stylistic features of the images that inspired them. With regard to this, particular emphasis is given to the analysis of the *Madonna with the Child* and the *Annunciation* paintings and their hybridisation with other Buddhist images, such as the *Amida-sanzon Raigō-zu* (Descent of Amida Trinity). In the final part of her essay, Kojima studies the Japanese Christian representations of the Eucharist in connection with texts in Japanese related to the Eucharist published by the Jesuits, such as *Hiidesu no Dōshi* (*Introducción del symbolo de la Fe* by Luis de Granada) in romanized Japanese language (1592), and *Sakramenta Teiyō* (*Manuale ad Sacramenta*) in Latin and romanized Japanese language. Among other *nanban* paintings, her analysis focuses on the *Madonna of Mysteries of the Rosary*, a painting originally conserved by the Harada family of Shimootowa, found in 1930 inside a bamboo tube, currently held in the Kyōto University Museum, and a similar *Madonna of Mysteries of the Rosary* belonged to the Higashi family of Sendaiji, found in 1920 in a hidden 'never-opened' box, currently held at the Ibaraki City Museum of Cultural Properties. Kojima develops an innovative research regarding the reverberations of these complex *nanban* images in a conspicuous series of okake-e depicted and worshipped by the Kakure Kirishitan of Ikitsuki, some of which are reproduced in the volume for the first time.

The last essay of the book, "New Evidence and Perspective of the Pedro Marques Missionary Group: At the Tail End of the Jesuit Enterprise in Japan", authored

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23 Minagawa Tatsuo, *Yōgaku torai kō: Kirishitan ongaku no eikō to zasetsu* 「洋楽渡来考: キリシタン音楽の栄光と挫折」 (*Introduction of Western music in Japan: study on Kirishitan mass*). Tōkyō: Nihonkirishutokyōdan-Shuppankyoku, 2004.

by Akune Susumu, develops a microhistorical analysis of the last attempts by the Jesuits guided by Antonio Rubino (1578–1643), *Visitador* of the Japan Province and the China Vice-Province, and the *Provincial* of the Japan Province, Pedro Marques (c.1576–1657), to reach Japan from the Philippines. Rubino and Marques, who were aware of the martyrdom that would affect them, were generally credited to have made their voyages to Japan to repair the shame of the apostasy of the former Vice-Provincial of Japan Cristóvão Ferreira SJ (c.1580–1650) who had recanted Christianity in 1633 and was given the Japanese name of Sawano Chūan.<sup>24</sup> By first reassessing a vast array of sources already available in the historiography mostly dealing with Rubino’s travel and martyrdom, on the basis of Josef Franz Schütte,<sup>25</sup> Akune develops a new and close reading of the *Relação da viagem do Padre Pedro Marquez Provincial de Japão...* (Report of the voyage of the Father Pedro Marques, Provincial of the Japan Province...), a manuscript document written in Portuguese by a Luso-Japanese Jesuit, Pedro Marques junior (1612–1670), preserved in the Roman Jesuit Archive, which details the origin, preparation, scopes and tragic doom of Marques’ endeavour, including his later reception in the Jesuit communities of Macao, *Cochinchina* (nowadays Vietnam), and the Philippines.<sup>26</sup> In doing so, Akune revises the conventional viewpoint that Marques was simply an epigone of Rubino and instead argues that both Rubino’s and Marques’ expeditions equally benefited from the full support of the Jesuit headquarter in Macao and were part of the Jesuit mission strategy in Southeast Asia, whose horizon included *Cochinchina*, Macao, the Philippines and Japan. “The report – Akune argues – holds significant value as a historical source as it is inclusive of a variety of documents written not only by missionaries but also by seculars” that include “a short maritime journal kept by a Spanish seaman, and a Dutch merchant’s report brought via the rare route, Batavia to Macao”. Through the integration of this and other sources – in particular the letters written by the officers of the Dutch East India Company – Akune follows the converging vicissitudes not only of Antonio Rubino and Pedro Marques, but also of Francesco Cassola (c.1608–1644), Alonso de Arroyo (1592–1644), as well as of the Japanese *Irmão* André Vieira (1601–1678) and of the renowned Giuseppe Chiara (1602–1685), the last Jesuits who survived in Japan under the control of the Japanese authorities for about 40 years after they landed Japan in 1643.

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- 24 Cieslik, “The case of Christovão Ferreira”, *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1974), pp.1–54; For the biographies of Rubino and Marques, see O’Neill; Domínguez (Eds.), *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús: Biográfico-Temático*. 4 Vols. Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2001, vol. 4, p.3430; vol. 3, p.2512.
- 25 Schütte, *Monumenta historica Japoniae. Textus catalogorum Japoniae. Aliaque de personis domibusque S.J. in Japonia informationes et relationes, 1549–1654*. Romae: Apud Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1975, pp.1010–1033.
- 26 *Relação da viagem do Padre Pedro Marquez Provincial de Japão, e mais companheiros da sua chegada, e prizaõ naquelle Reyno o anno de 1643*. ARSI, Jap. Sin. 29, f. 322r–328v.

## Final Remarks

In the introduction to their edited volume *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840*, when stressing the importance of connection (connected histories), David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam refer to at least two possible ways of conceptualizing the connected histories: “A first would suggest that connections did exist and were known to past actors, but have for some reason been forgotten or laid aside. The task of the historian would then be to rediscover these lost traces. A second view would instead posit that historians might act as electricians, connecting circuits by acts of imaginative reconstitution rather than simple restitution.”

The same can be argued about the essays in this volume, where both the rediscovery of lost traces and the imaginative reconstitution of linking circuits were put into practice, attesting to the presence of various kinds of border-crossing networks (cultural, religious, linguistic), and a history that is in every aspect transnational. The four parts and twelve essays offer a polycentric and complementary look at a plurality of interactions that, over the course of about one century, characterized the relations between Catholic missionaries, in particular the Jesuits, and their Japanese interlocutors: in particular Buddhist monks, Neo-Confucian scholars, the military and political elites, but also more numerous commoners, in connection with Portuguese and, by the end of the sixteenth century, Spanish and Dutch merchants. Moreover, the volume develops a transdisciplinary approach: religious history, philology and philosophy, book history, art history, history of music, history of science, history of the European expansion, history of ideas and mentalities are mobilized to explore various forms and contexts of interactions in early modern Japan. It is within the general framework of early modern history that such multifaceted disciplines and methodologies complement each other and guided us in this collective research.

The macro space where these interactions emerged – Japan at the moment when it was placed in the world map of the time – aggregates smaller spaces, such as parts of the island of Kyūshū, and even micro spaces, like the Christian mission itself. Whatever the scale, all of these spaces emerge as connected contact zones that were the stage for processes of various degrees of permeability, often resulting in adaptations, exchanges, and translations. Furthermore, as the essays demonstrate in different levels and on distinct issues, these processes were frequently marked by misunderstandings, incompatibilities, tensions, and disputes, with acceptances and rejections. Hence, the impossibility (and even the vacuity) of trying to label the history of the Christian mission in Japan as a ‘success’ or a ‘failure’. It was neither, or it was both, depending on the criteria adopted. However, in doing so, the central point is misplaced or even lost: that something new and unexperienced emerged from these interactions and interconnected histories in the early modern period.

Both the Christian and Buddhist religious dimensions are undoubtedly a central factor in these interactions; however, although it is essential to highlight

their pervasiveness, the multiplicity of existential and cultural spheres that they involved go far beyond internal religious perspectives. The great variety of documents highlighted and analysed by the authors who have contributed to this project reflects, on the one hand, the multiplicity of areas involved in the interaction, and on the other, the need to develop polycentric disciplinary approaches. None of the documentary *corpora* considered are more effective than the others for grasping the complexities of the negotiations that involved the European and Japanese interlocutors. On the contrary, it is precisely their heterogeneity that sheds light on the complexities and articulated outcomes of their interactions.

Judging by the material richness of the *corpora* taken into consideration, perhaps one aspect can be grasped: the end of the interactions – carried out through a series of edicts which progressively sanctioned the expulsion of the missionaries and their acolytes, together with the obligation to abjure Christianity by Japanese Christians – highlights the predominance of the political sphere in contrast to, or despite, the richness or effectiveness of the interactions. The political dimension and power dynamics and tensions, so fundamental both in the context of the military unification of Japan and for Catholic missionary policies within the framework of the Iberian Empires, were preponderant factors for the deconstruction, interruption and rejections of any interaction, independently from their social efficacy and cogency.