

VOLUME 9, SPRING 2024



**Journal of Asian
Humanities at
Kyushu University**

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Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University

VOLUME 9, SPRING 2024

The Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University (JAH-Q)
is a peer-reviewed journal published by Kyushu University,
School of Letters, Graduate School of Humanities, Faculty of Humanities
九州大学文学部 大学院人文科学府 大学院人文科学研究院.

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We consider research articles, state-of-the-field essays, and research reports related to Asian humanities subjects for publication. We also seek articles or reports for the themed section, “Kyushu and Asia,” and reviews (books, exhibitions, films) for the “Reviews” section. Potential contributors should consult the Submission Guidelines available at <https://www.imapkyudai.net/jahq>.

For questions and submissions, please contact jah_q_editor@lit.kyushu-u.ac.jp.

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Recent Research on the Azuchi Screens

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The Azuchi Screens, a pair of folding screens depicting Oda Nobunaga's (1534–1582) newly constructed Azuchi Castle and gifted by Nobunaga to Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585) via Jesuit missionaries, were the first major diplomatic gifts exchanged between Japanese and Western leaders. Although lost only a few years after their arrival in Rome, the traces of these unique objects in the European record reveal much about evolving attitudes on Japan in Europe around the turn of the seventeenth century. This paper argues that in their placement within the Vatican as well as their afterlife as a reference on Japanese culture in international scholarly circles, the Azuchi Screens reveal a sophisticated and dualistic understanding of Japan as proving the righteousness of the Catholic Church's message as well as a locus for interrogating Europe's unique Christian history.

Violation: Murasaki's Challenge to the Scholarly Consensus on Sexual Assault in *The Tale of Genji*

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This article closely examines a famous literary depiction of the sexual exploitation of one of the main characters of *The Tale of Genji*, Lady Murasaki, to determine whether certain courtly sexual practices in classical Japan can be described as rape. Contrary to the prevalent scholarly view (which cautions against projecting twenty-first century mores onto premodern hearts and minds), close textual analysis reveals a subtle but powerful moral condemnation of the practice of older men forcibly turning girls of thirteen into wives. The author of the tale offers insight into Murasaki's feelings of violation, thereby awakening readers to the possibility that, even though it may narratively have been the logical next step in the relationship between Genji and Murasaki, it was also morally transgressive. Thus, simply because a custom was (believed to be) inevitable does not in and of itself mean everyone accepted this sexual role willingly or was unable or unwilling to see it as morally wrong.

KYUSHU AND ASIA

"A Ship Arrived from an Unknown Country on a Fire-Bird Day": Another Look at the *Teppōki*

SUSAN TSUMURA

INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

Nanpo Bunshi's famous *Teppōki* (An Account of Firearms) describes the arrival in 1543 of a ship at Tanegashima, an island off of Kyushu, with Portuguese on board who introduced firearms to Japan. Often, this event is identified with the arrival of some Portuguese in Japan mentioned in contemporaneous Portuguese accounts and the *Teppōki* is interpreted in light of that. However, this paper argues that there is no good reason to assume that they describe the same events. Another matter often discussed is the nature of Nanpo's sources, as he wrote his account over sixty years after the event. This article argues that because several of his dates include the cyclic days (analogous to giving days of the week), Nanpo must have had a source written in 1543, or an extract of one, as only someone writing in that year could have known the cyclic days.

REVIEWS

Morgan Pitelka, Reiko Tanimura, and Takashi Masuda. *Letters from Japan's Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Correspondence of Warlords, Tea Masters, Zen Priests, and Aristocrats*. Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2021.

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David Johnson. *The Stage in the Temple: Ritual Opera in Village Shanxi*. Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2022.

BOOK REVIEW BY WEI LIU

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Recent Research on the Azuchi Screens

MARK K. ERDMANN AND ÉLIANE ROUX

ON 4 April 1585 a remarkable exchange took place in Rome.¹ Having arrived in the city roughly two weeks earlier after a three-year journey from Japan, a group of four Japanese teenage boys, sent as emissaries by the Jesuit mission and retroactively named the Tenshō Embassy, met with Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585; r. 1572–1585) in his private quarters. This rare privilege of a private audience followed the boys' official public reception at a crowded papal consistory and was one of several meetings between the parties before the pope's death on 10 April. During this occasion, the boys presented several gifts brought from Japan, including a pair of large six-panel

folding screen paintings (*byōbu* 屏風) known today as the Azuchi Screens.² The screens had been commissioned and given to the Jesuits by the warlord Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–1582), the first of the so-called three great unifiers of Japan. They depicted a panoramic, bird's-eye view of Azuchi Castle—Nobunaga's newly-constructed, palatial, mountain fortress home—as well as its surrounding town and adjacent ports. According to a compiled account of the day's events, Gregory XIII seems to have immediately recognized the importance of the gift. After receiving them, he “ordered that the paintings on which Azuchi was depicted were to be displayed in that well-adorned

1 The present article is based on three research reports authored by Éliane Roux in the context of the Azuchi Screens Research Network team project: *The Humanist-Antiquarian Philips van Winghe (1560–1592) and Network*, 2019; *The Rome-Padua Network of Humanist-Antiquaries 'Ethnographers' and Far East (16–17th cent.)*, 2020; and *The Donation of the Azuchi Folding Screens to Gregory XIII (1585) and Their Original Location in a 'Gallery'*, 2023. It is also based on an article authored by Mark K. Erdmann titled “Nebuchadnezzar's Draw: Revisiting Philips van Winghe's Sketches of the Azuchi Screens in Lorenzo Pignoria's *Images of the Gods and Ancients*” (forthcoming), and an article authored by Roux titled “‘Antiquities’ from the ‘Indies’: Circulation of Knowledge on East Asian Art and Material Culture in Early Modern Italian Antiquary Networks, 16–17th Centuries” (forthcoming). Part of these results were presented by Erdmann and Roux in the panel “From Azuchi to Rome: The Tenshō Embassy and the

Azuchi Screens” at the international online symposium “Beyond the Southern Barbarians: Repositioning Japan in the First Global Age” (held by Kyushu University and Yale University, 16 February 2021), entitled: “Nebuchadnezzar's Draw: Revisiting Philips van Winghe's Sketches of Azuchi Castle” (Erdmann) and “An ‘Antiquity’ from Japan: The Azuchi Castle Screens and Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century European Antiquary Networks” (Roux). The authors want to express their gratitude to the reviewers for their comments. Special thanks to Sugimoto Studios and a JSPS 2017–2018 postdoctoral grant to Erdmann for funding this research.

2 On the Tenshō Embassy in Rome and the donation of the Azuchi Screens to Gregory XIII, see, for example, de Sande, *Japanese Travellers*; Brown, “Courtiers and Christians”; Cooper, *The Japanese Mission*; Valignano, *Dialogo sulla missione*.

loggia, to show that [the boys'] gift was to be counted among those to be held in high esteem..."³ Gregory XIII's command, however, was not maintained. The Azuchi Screens would disappear from the historical records less than a decade after their reception.

Since the rediscovery of the history of these paintings in the twentieth century, hope that they or some traces of them remain has inspired many scholars to search for them.⁴ The enthusiasm to find the screens is entrenched in their profound cultural significance in Japan and beyond. In addition to their international pedigree as the first major diplomatic gift sent from Japanese to Western leaders, their value as historical documents cannot be overstated. The screens represent one of only a handful of paintings attributable to Kanō Eitoku 狩野永徳 (1543–1590), not only the most influential painter in Japan of the late sixteenth century, but an artist famed for his detailed renderings of cityscapes filled with genre scenes. Analogous paintings by Eitoku (figure 1) suggest that the Azuchi Screens contained numerous meticulously painted, colorful vignettes depicting the architecture and daily life in Azuchi and, as such, they would offer a wealth of insights into a range of historical topics. Although it existed only for three years, Azuchi Castle was a landmark monument in the development of the opulent Azuchi-Momoyama-安土桃山 period (1573–1615) aesthetic, the Japanese castle architectural typology, and the urban plan of the castle town. Furthermore, as the screens are known to have included a depiction of the Jesuit seminary in Azuchi, they would offer a rare, illustrated record of Jesuit activities in Japan at their peak as well as an architectural example of hybrid forms of expression arising from the local policy of cultural accommodation.⁵ Yet, their value extends beyond the historical. For the people of Shiga Prefecture, home of Azuchi Castle's ruins, the screens are a symbol of a past heyday and hold the promise of a future renaissance. Should they be

discovered, the screens would become the cornerstone for long-standing ambitions to reconstruct Azuchi Castle.

This paper represents a continuation of these efforts to determine the fate of the Azuchi Screens, and, at the same time, it seeks to reconsider, deepen, and reframe our understanding of the screens' significance within the context of social, cultural, and material interactions between Japan and Europe. This rethinking has evolved from research done by the Azuchi Screens Research Network (ASRN), the first collaborative, systematic attempt to search for new information related to the Azuchi Screens. ASRN was born of a 2005–2007 Japanese initiative led by Paola Cavaliere, Wakakuwa Midori (1935–2007), and Shimbo Kiyono, sponsored by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations and Azuchi Town 安土町.⁶ The project was revived in 2016 thanks in large part to the generous support of the artist Sugimoto Hiroshi 杉本博司 (b. 1948). Since this rebirth, ASRN has evolved into an international and interdisciplinary collective of academics, artists, and other professionals dedicated to researching early modern cultural and material exchange between Europe and East Asia, with a particular focus on Italy and Japan, and engages with a global network of specialists from different fields, as well as several academic, cultural, and governmental institutions.⁷

While the chance that the screens still exist in any form is low, the group's research efforts have found that there exists an abundance of research avenues related to the screens' reception, their original display context, and their legacy as research objects on Japan. These aspects of the screens' history, essential to uncovering more information about them and their possible fate, concurrently reveal it to be a sort of transcendent object. While its material character may only be minimally grasped or analyzed, its vestiges in the form of firsthand and secondhand accounts form a considerable nexus and foundation for interrogating the context in which they were received. The screens were not merely

3 Valignano, *De missione legatorum Iaponensium*, p. 257; adapted from de Sande, *Japanese Travellers*, p. 301. All the translations in this article are by Éliane Roux unless otherwise stated.

4 Hamada, "Azuchiyama byōbu ni tsuite."

5 In the Jesuit account of the reception of the screens, Nobunaga is said to have inquired whether Valignano "wished to carry [back] his very own college in painting ['painted']" before gifting them ("[...] se o padre [Valignano] desejasse de levar pintado o seu mesmo Collegio, de maneira que lhe mandou os seus beóbus para que os visse, e que se lhe contentassem os deixasse ficar, & não lhe contentando lhos tornasse a mandar"). Coelho, "Carta annua de Iapão." In *Cartas*, II, fol. 39v.

6 Wakakuwa, Shimbo, and Cavaliere, *Azuchi-chō*; Cavaliere, "Azuchijō no zu byōbu."

7 ASRN is composed of Gen Aihara, Paola Cavaliere, Mark Erdmann, Éliane Roux, Kiyono Shimbo, and Anton Schweizer, with affiliations to Kyushu University; the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Contemporary Culture Research Unit (ERCC) at the University of Melbourne's School of Culture and Communications; and the Odawara Art Foundation, Japan.



Figure 1. Kanō Eitoku. *Rakuchū rakugai*. Uesugi screens. Muromachi period, ca. 1565. Pair of six-panel folding screens. Ink, colors, and gold on paper. Each 160 x 364 cm. Yonezawa City Uesugi Museum. Detail of right screen, panels 1 and 2.

diplomatic gifts; they were lavish, large-scale, and rare “curious” objects that demanded notice and, as such, were immediately appreciated as symbols of the Church’s evangelization successes in Asia and the promise of the greater potential of its missionary effort spearheaded by the Jesuits. As Japan was increasingly closed off in the early seventeenth century and universalist scientific endeavors flourished together with curiosity culture and collecting—that is, the popular practice of accumulating exotic objects and *naturalia* for study and display in cabinets of curiosity, or other conservation or exhibit spaces—their meaning partially shifted to that of ethnographic research materials and a rare window onto a culture and society that defied easy categorization. In this respect, the screens’ reception history reveals a consistent and informed understanding of Japan prior to the crystallization of orientalist attitudes in subsequent centuries. In their varied reception, the screens represent an ideal centerpiece for interrogating the evolving and imprecise state of knowledge about Japan—and East Asia or “Indies” as a methodologically indivisible category—vis-à-vis its material culture as it was understood in Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Space and Meaning, Local and Universal

The events of 4 April 1585 outlined above are a critical moment in the history of the Azuchi Screens as well as a nexus point in a larger web of meaning and interactions within which this diplomatic gift was activated. In regards to the character of the screens, details surrounding their presentation are of great interest as much of the limited information that is already known about their character derives from newsletters, known as *avvisi*, containing firsthand and secondhand accounts of the day’s papal audience.⁸ Research into clarifying the

exact date and location of the audience—that is, a point contradicted by various accounts⁹—and the identities of those present as well as those interested in the events of that day has already helped ASRN to uncover new *avvisi* that bring to light new details on the presentation of the screens and some of their peculiarities, and continues to hold potential for discovering additional records. Among these recent discoveries is an unedited passage describing the screens as “two paintings on panels depicting the portraits of two important cities of the Kingdom of Japan, which have all the streets, and the buildings, [made] of cedar wood [...]”¹⁰ This description is especially noteworthy as it echoes other accounts in regard to the physical character of the screens as “wood” and thereby raises questions about their perceived and actual materiality as imported, hybrid objects.¹¹ Another account that has been

Castle,” pp. 482–84.

(3) Letter from Teodoro Panizza to Cardinal Luigi d’Este, 5 April 1585 (ASMo, Carteggio degli Ambasciatori Estensi in Roma); see Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, *Dai Nihon shiryō*, p. 246; Boscaro, “New Documents on the First Japanese Mission to Europe”; Erdmann, “Azuchi Castle,” p. 485.

9 Primary records conflate the date of the public consistory on 23 March 1585, the date of the presentation of gifts, and dates of other meetings between Gregory XIII and the Japanese delegates. A detailed and unedited description by an unidentified Jesuit father who attended the consistory (Milan, Venerabile Biblioteca Ambrosiana [hereafter VBA], manuscript D 490 inf., fols. 95rv–96r, entitled in the margin: “Delli Giaponesi”), together with the various manuscript diaries of the Vatican Palaces’ Master of Ceremonies for the year 1585 kept at the Vatican Library and the Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Holy Pope’s *Archivio Storico dei Cerimonieri Pontifici*, confirm that the screens were not presented at the consistory. *De missione* dates the presentation of gifts to “Thursday [...] Nones of April,” suggesting, per the ancient Roman calendar, on 5 April. However, the universal calendar for 1585 places 5 April on a Friday. Confirmation of Thursday being the day of the event can be found in Panizza’s letter (see n. 8) and in one of the newly discovered *avvisi* (see n. 10).

10 Discovered by Roux. Abovementioned letter from an unidentified Jesuit father, Rome, 23 March 1585 (VBA, D 490 inf., fols. 95rv–96r); *Avviso* from Rome, 30 March 1585 (*ibid.*, fol. 90r).

11 *Avviso* from Rome, 30 March 1585 (VBA, D 490 inf., fol. 90r): “Li Prencipi Indiani hanno portato [...] due quadri di tavole dipinti con li ritratti di due gran città del Regno del Giappone che hanno tutte le strade, e li edifici, di legno di cedro [...]” The possibility exists that the screens’ paintings, rendered on paper, were remounted on a wooden board. Another description, similar to *avviso* 2 (see n. 8), is contained in VBA, ms. P 251 sup., fol. 87r: “To donate to His Holiness and others, they [the Japanese delegates] brought various things from that country [...]. Among other things that they donated to His Holiness there was a painting, where is depicted the principal city of Japan, called Nabunanga [sic], which is two *braccia* [arm’s lengths] in height, [and] four or

8 The three previously known *avvisi* are:

(1) Letter from Annibale Ariosto to Cardinal Luigi d’Este, 25 March 1585 (Modena, Archivio di Stato di Modena [hereafter ASMo], *Avvisi e notizie dall’estero*, Roma, busta 3), extracts published in Schütte, “Die Wirksamkeit der Päpste für Japan,” p. 218; Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, *Dai Nihon shiryō*, pp. 266–67.

(2) *Avviso* from Rome, 30 March 1585 (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana [hereafter BAV], Urb. lat., 1053, fols. 145rv). Transcribed and discussed in Boncompagni Ludovisi, *Le prime due ambasciate dei giapponesi a Roma*, no. XV; Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, *Dai Nihon shiryō*, pp. 236–37; Wakakuwa, Shimbo, and Cavaliere, *Azuchi-chō*, pp. 8–9; Erdmann, “Azuchi

overlooked in modern scholarship is a mention in a 1585 booklet that highlights the pageantry and significance of the day's events, and records the transportation of the screens to the Vatican Palace. The ambassadors "brought their gift in a carriage, accompanied by the carriage of [Cardinal] San Sisto and other servants, and the pope had them sit and 'cover' [remain with their hats] next to him, a thing that made the persons who were there astonished, as he treated them as his sons."¹²

Likewise, the location of the "well-adorned loggia" where the screens—according to contemporary accounts—were initially placed is a critical point that has demanded investigation. This location is the starting point from which the screens' subsequent and unknown transmission might be traced and may allow for the identification of those who had access to these objects and whose writings or production require surveying. Yet, the question of the "well-adorned loggia" as a receptacle for such a multilayered object also reveals the utility of the screens to interrogate the context into which they were received.

The description of Gregory XIII's designs for the screens quoted above comes from one of three accounts that describe their presentation to the pope. This account, *De Missione legatorum Iaponensium ad*

five braccia in length" (*Per donare a Sua Santità et altri hanno portato varie cose di suo paese [...] fra l'altre cose che donorno a Sua Santità fu un quadro dove è depinta la città principale del Giappone detta Nobunanga quale è alto due bracia, e lungo quatro*). In another *avviso* dated 30 March (BAV, Urb. lat., 1053) that describes the presentation and character of the screens, it is mentioned that "[The Japanese Embassy] presented to the pope a painting on a very wide and thin piece of *tree-trunk* (*scorza d'arbore*) depicting their capital city, with many magnificent buildings" (*Hanno donato al Papa sopra una grand[issi]ma, et sottiliss[im]a scorza d'arbore il ritratto della loro Città prin[cip]ale ornata de molti edificij magnifici*). The meaning and translation of the expression "scorza d'arbore," tree-trunk, needs to be further scrutinized. The same term "scorza d'arbore" is used to describe the paper of the diplomatic letter sent by the daimyo of Bungo to the pope: "In the public consistory they presented also letters from the king of Bungii [*sic*], in the kingdom of Japan, written on a very subtle [or fine] tree rind [*scorza d'arbore*]" (*avviso* of Rome, 30 March 1585, VBA, D 490 inf., fol. 90r). This usage suggests that the expression may not literally describe tree bark.

12 Pinto, Okamoto, and Bernard, the editors of Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*, p. 184, quote this passage from the 1585 booklet *Breve Raguglio Dell'Isola del Giappone. Et di questi Signori, che di la son venuti a dar obedientia alla Santità di N.S. Papa Gregorio XIII* related to the private audience with the pope on 3 [*sic*] April: "[...] portarno il lor presente in carrozza, et cocchi da [Cardinale di] San Sisto accompagnati, et da altri servitori, et gli fece il Papa seder, et coprire appresso se, cosa che fece stupire, trattando con loro come Figliuoli."

Romanam curiam (On the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Court) is a Latin translation by Duarte de Sande (1547–1599) of a lost text written in Castilian around 1587–1589 by the Jesuit Visitor of Missions in the East Indies and mastermind behind the Tenshō Embassy, Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606).¹³ Valignano was not a firsthand witness to the embassy's activities in Rome, but was well informed about its progression through the boys' personal notes, the diary of their guide and caretaker Father Diego de Mesquita (1551–1614), and, presumably, additional input from Jesuit fathers.¹⁴ *De Missione* contains the most detailed description of the activities of that day, but the two other sources offer additional critical details. The second account, *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giapponesi* (Reports of the Visit of the Japanese Ambassadors), was written contemporaneously to the ambassadors' visit by Guido Gualtieri (ca. 1540–post 1592), professor of humanities and secretary of Latin letters of the Holy See during the pontificate of Sixtus V (1585–1590), and printed in 1586.¹⁵ It is a compilation of chronicles, *avvisi*, and printed booklets with reports or literary texts (such as poems, epigrams, and orations) on the topic of the boys' visit. The third source is *Tratado dos Embaixadores Japões* (Treatise on the Japanese Ambassadors) from circa 1592; it was not printed, but it is widely known through various manuscript copies.¹⁶ This report on the Japanese ambassadors' journeys by the Jesuit missionary Luís Fróis (1532–1597) is an organized compilation of sources that was done in preparation for Fróis's magnum opus *Historia do Japão* (History of Japan), and includes "memorials" and other notes by the Japanese boys, unedited or printed contemporary chronicles on their mission, information from the Jesuit network in their annual letters, as well as directly copied passages from Gualtieri's book.¹⁷

Together, these accounts offer a composite summary of the events of 4 April 1585 and, critically, provide the only known clues regarding the original placement of

13 Valignano, *De missione legatorum Iaponensium*. The Latin translation was first printed in Macau in 1590. English translation in de Sande, *Japanese Travellers*.

14 Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*, pp. xxiii–xxx.

15 Gualtieri, *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giapponesi*.

16 Fróis, *Tratado dos Embaixadores Japões*, ca. 1592. The most well-known manuscript copy is in Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, COD. 11098. Published and commented in Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*.

17 Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*, pp. xxiii–xxx.

the screens.¹⁸ According to them, the screens were to be placed in a location that is referred to as a “loggia named Gallery” (Valignano-de Sande) or “gallery” (Gualtieri, Fróis). This gallery is characterized as having “walls [...] hanging many ornaments and [...] covered with gold and a plethora of colors” (Valignano-de Sande) and that Gregory XIII “had himself built and decorated with well executed paintings of various cities and ‘countries’”¹⁹ (Gualtieri, Fróis) that were “of the world” (Fróis). Valignano further adds that the gallery in question was “a pathway for the private use of the pope which leads to [or toward] a truly elegant garden called Belvedere.” Gualtieri and Fróis also make it clear that one end of this pathway connected to the private residences of Gregory XIII, including a study and bedroom.

The naming of the space as a “gallery” and the various details about it (i.e., a loggia, adjacent to Gregory XIII’s private quarters, leading to the Belvedere garden, containing maps of countries and cities of the world as well as gold and color, and constructed during Gregory XIII’s papacy) leave two candidates for the original display location of the screens (figure 2): The Gallery of Maps (*Galleria delle carte geografiche*) and the Gallery of Cosmography (*Galleria della cosmografia*), also called the “Terza Loggia” (Third Loggia).

The first of these spaces, the Gallery of Maps (figure 3), has long been assumed to have been the initial home of the screens for several reasons. Built between 1578 and 1580, with its pictorial program completed toward the end of 1581, this loggia is not only Gregory XIII’s most famous architectural contribution to the Vatican, but it was also a project that he was highly invested in

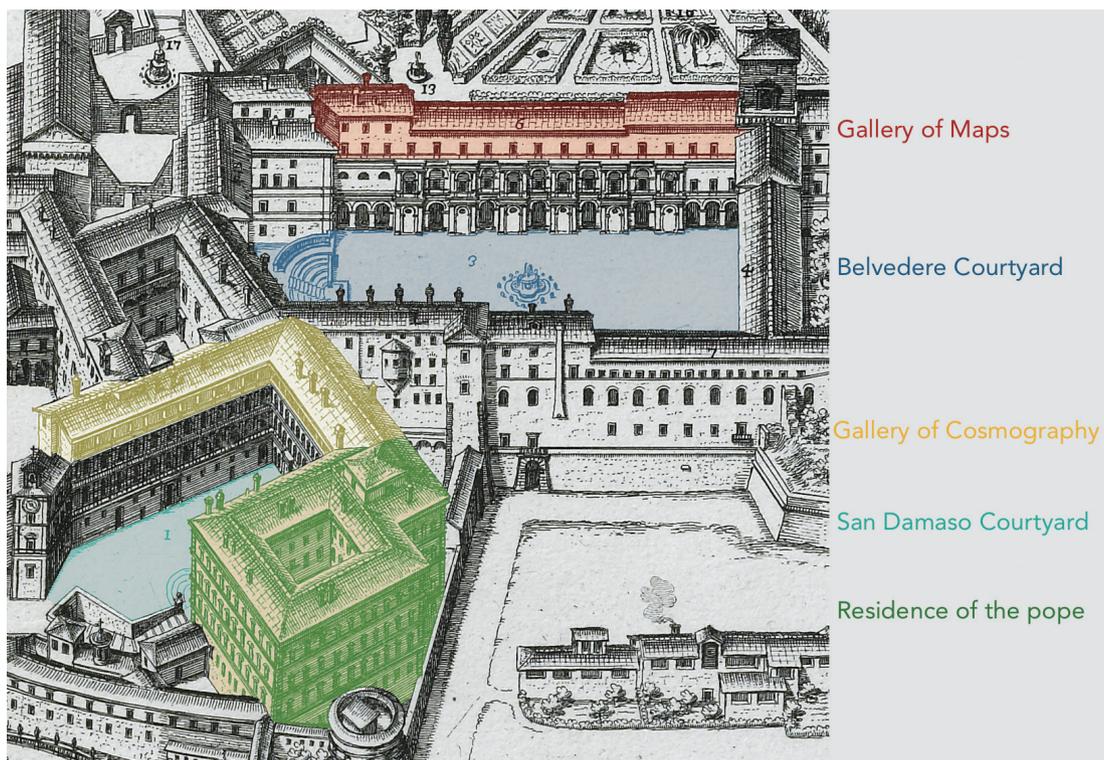


Figure 2. Giovanni Battista Falda. Detail from *Plan and Elevation of the Belvedere Garden of the Vatican Palace*. First published 1677; MCCM edition published ca. 1688. Etching. Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University. © Bruce M. White, 2008. Prepared by Erdmann.

¹⁸ Valignano, *De missione legatorum Iaponensium*, pp. 256–57; Gualtieri, *Relazioni della venuta degli ambasciatori giapponesi*, p. 90; Fróis, *Tratado dos Embaixadores Japões*, pp. 184–85, in Fróis,

La première ambassade du Japon en Europe.
¹⁹ See the discussion below in n. 25 concerning the translation of the term “paesi.”

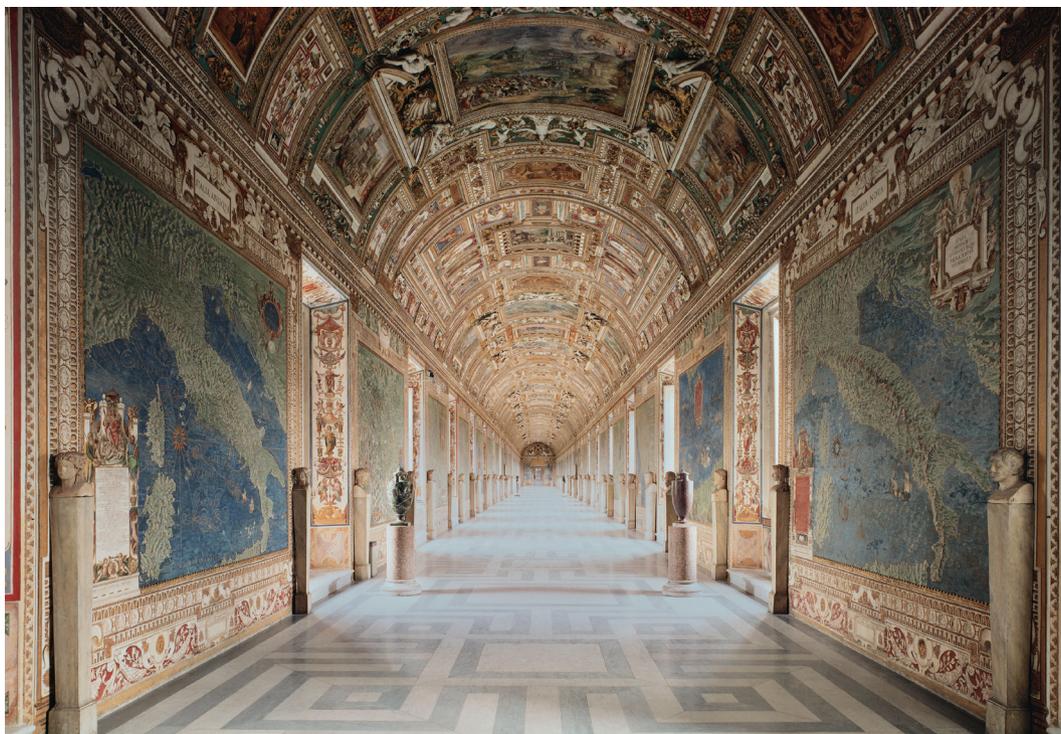


Figure 3. Ottaviano Mascherino; overall design and cartoons for maps by Egnazio Danti. Gallery of Maps, 1578–1581. Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Palace. 2024 © Photo Scala, Florence.

and associated with.²⁰ One hundred twenty meters long and six meters wide, the space is located on the west side of the Belvedere Courtyard and features forty maps depicting the Italian territories. These subjects, decorated with gold and rendered in vibrant colors, perfectly match both the Valignano-de Sande and Gualtieri descriptions. Beyond the association with Gregory XIII and its correspondence to the 4 April 1585 accounts, another reason that the Gallery of Maps has been identified as the space where the screens were exhibited is due to a copied map and letter, discussed in greater detail below, that place a key witness, the Flemish antiquarian Philips van Winghe (1560–1592), there in 1592.²¹ Although no evidence exists to confirm it, for lack of any other record of van Winghe visiting the Vatican Apostolic Palace, it is widely assumed that this visit was

the occasion when he saw the screens and sketched them.

The Gallery of Maps, however, fails to meet one characteristic: that the maps on display were “of the world.” This description of the maps comes from Fróis, who it bears reiterating worked with a range of sources including Gualtieri, but was not aware of Valignano-Duarte’s *De Missione*, and had never seen the Gallery of Maps.²² In this respect, Gualtieri’s text, based on his own experience inside the Vatican in the years immediately after the Tenshō Embassy’s visit, appears to be more authoritative. His language, scrutinized in light of contemporary sources, suggests that a key term that he deploys, “paesi,” while generally translated to “countries,” in fact refers to another common early modern meaning for this term: “landscapes” (or “villages”). It seems that in encountering this term, Fróis assumed the former meaning, and consistent with his writing that relies on

20 Gambi and Pinelli, *La Galleria delle Carte Geografiche*; Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*.

21 Letter from Philips van Winghe to Abraham Ortelius, Rome, 13 July 1592 (Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, PBL 2766), in Ortelius, *Abrahami Ortelii*, pp. 520–23. Reproduction and English

translation in van der Sman, “Dutch and Flemish Printmakers in Rome,” p. 264.

22 Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*, pp. xxvi–xxx.

others' work, proposed a broader reading of the term "paesi" that aligns with descriptions of the Gallery of Maps that circulated at the Roman court at that time.²³ Notably, although it included only maps of Italy, the program of the Gallery of Maps was often referred to as a cosmography ("cosmografia") in contemporary descriptions.²⁴ Fróis's choice to describe the maps as "of the world" thus appears to have been a derivation from texts of the sources he consulted and therefore attributable to shifting significations for the term "paesi" and "cosmografia."²⁵ In sum, comparative philological analysis between the sources shows that Fróis's statement cannot be seen as conclusive evidence to disqualify the Gallery of Maps as the initial display location for the screens.

The other candidate, the Gallery of Cosmography (figure 4), is the upper loggia of the three Loggias of San Damaso ("Logge di San Damaso") in the San Damaso Courtyard, which expands over two wings from different periods.²⁶ The western wing, built in the early 1560s (1560–1562 or 1565, depending on sources) by Pope Pius IV (1499–1565; r. 1559–1565) over Raphael's loggia, was decorated with fresco paintings of thirteen maps of countries and several city views from these countries, nominally located east of the Prime Meridian, but in fact located in Europe and Central Asia. Pius IV's "Third Loggia" was then expanded by Gregory XIII using the same architectural designs as part of the new northern wing of the San Damaso Palace. Conceived like the Gallery of Maps by the papal cosmographer Egnazio Danti (1536–1586), and executed between 1580 and 1585, the decoration program of the northern wing of the

Gallery of Cosmography originally featured twelve maps of the territories of America, Asia, and Africa, as well as at least twenty-seven views of cities in these territories. Further, the two wings of the gallery intersected with two monumental maps of the Western and Eastern Hemispheres, added in 1583–1585. These monumental maps remain, along with those of the western wing, but the original paintings of the northern wing are no longer extant. Annexed to the apartment of Gregory XIII and its "Sala Bologna," the Gallery of Cosmography meets several characteristics described in the 4 April 1585 accounts and, moreover, would have offered a thematically coherent space of display for the screens. There is also a tantalizing possibility that the map of Japan (included among the maps of Asia) was, like the other country maps, accompanied by a painting of an important local, thus Japanese, city. Unfortunately, records of the descriptive inscriptions accompanying the cities adjacent to the Japan map were deteriorated or otherwise made illegible already by the eighteenth century, when the decorative cycle was described by Taja and Chattard.²⁷ For lack of further historical records, it is not possible to confirm the identity of the cities adjacent to the Japan map.

While the question of which gallery served as the initial home of the screens remains, for the moment, unanswerable, this line of inquiry is nonetheless instructive in that it reveals a critical fact: the boys' gifts were not received in a vacuum. Quite to the contrary, assuming that the description of Gregory XIII's reaction to them is at all accurate, it seems that the location where the screens would be placed was, if not immediately obvious, laden with profound meaning. A pope of

23 Another example of Fróis's reworking of others' writings is his adaptation of Gaspar Coelho's 1582 Annual Letter ("Carta annua de Iapaõ [...] quinze de Feuereiro do anno de 82" mentioned in n. 5), discussed in Erdmann, "Azuchi Castle," pp. 131–33.

24 Examples are in the manuscript account "Memories on the Paintings and Buildings Done at the Vatican by Gregory XIII" (*Memorie sulle pitture e fabbriche [di Gregorio XIII] colli suoi disegni particolarmente fatte nel Vaticano*), last quarter of the sixteenth century, BAV, Boncompagni-Ludovisi, D.5, fols. 240r–241v, published by Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, pp. 615–16; Ciappi, *Compendio delle heroiche et gloriose attioni*, p. 7.

25 Gualtieri describes the "gallery" as featuring "varie città e paesi," normally translated as "various cities and countries." As mentioned, "paesi," translated as "countries," can also mean "villages," and in the early modern period, was also used for "landscapes." In this respect, the term may extend to include "cities and countries of the world." Notably, this broader reading of "paesi" more closely conforms with descriptions of the Gallery of Maps that circulated at the papal court at that time.

26 On the Gallery of Cosmography, see Taja, *Descrizione del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano*; Chattard, *Nuova descrizione del Vaticano*, pp. 349–57; Banfi, "La loggia della Cosmografia nel Palazzo Vaticano," passim; Hess, "Le Logge di Gregorio XIII in Vaticano" and "Le logge di Gregorio XIII nel Palazzo Vaticano," both published in Hess, *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien*, pp. 117–22, 123–28; Redig de Campos, *I Palazzi Vaticani*, p. 172; Cornini, De Strobel, and Serlupi Crescenzi, "Il Palazzo di Gregorio XIII," pp. 153–54; Meadows-Rogers, "The Vatican Logge and their Culminating Decoration"; Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*.

27 Evidence for the inclusion of a Japanese city comes from two texts: Taja, *Descrizione del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano*; Chattard, *Nuova descrizione del Vaticano*. When Taja and Chattard published their detailed descriptions of the Vatican Palaces, in 1750 and in 1766 respectively, the map of Japan as well as the city views still existed. See also the details of the iconographic program in Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps* ("Appendix C: The Terza Loggia).



Figure 4. Northern wing of the Gallery of Cosmography, ca. 1582–1585. Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Palace. 2024 © Italia, Ministero della Cultura, Gabinetto fotografico.

the Counter-Reformation, Pope Gregory XIII worked significantly during his papacy (1572–1585) not only to strengthen Catholicism against the Protestant Reformation, but also to globally propagate the Christian faith by actively supporting missionary endeavors, and thereby offset the loss of believers due to the Reformation. A strong supporter of the Jesuits, he fostered their missionary activities in the farthest territories, and particularly in Asia, securing proselytizing monopolies as well as providing funding.²⁸ In the context of Japan, he supported the creation of seminaries in Nagasaki, Arima, and Azuchi. His engagement may even be seen as a critical impetus for Valignano's creating and finding Kirishitan daimyo sponsors for the Tenshō Embassy. Gregory XIII's interest in promulgating the Faith made him especially receptive to appeals for official recognition of Christianity in Japan as well as

for spiritual guidance and material assistance for the Japanese mission and its new converts.

Reaffirming papal temporal and spiritual authority and legitimizing the Church through various instruments—including the creation of narrative-laden monumental spaces that interacted with selected objects in his private residences and the apostolic palaces at the Vatican—was essential for the pope to enact a unifying force for Catholics around the world and instrumental in directing missionary activities. The several mural cartography programs that Gregory XIII commissioned for his residential and representation spaces in the Vatican Palaces, and especially the two galleries discussed above, were designed to convey Gregory XIII's territorial ascendancy, the global vision of the papal mission, and aspirations for the Universal Church. These spaces, elaborated through an iconographic program representing the Christian community as

28 On the Jesuit mission in Japan at the time of Gregory XIII, see Ucerler, "The Jesuit Enterprise"; Ucerler, "The Christian Missions"; Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits*; Elison, *Deus Destroyed*;

Ucerler, *The Samurai and the Cross*. For a historiography, see Fujikawa, "Studies on the Jesuit Japan Mission."

having no limits of geography, space, and time, envisioned the potential expansion of the Faith not only in the Papal States and Italy, but into the territories of all the continents.²⁹ The message of a Universal Church and Christian mission in the world that Gregory XIII sought to express, particularly in the Gallery of Cosmography, is significantly compatible with the underlying religious meaning embedded into the Japanese embassy. Gregory XIII's completion to Pius IV's project presented as immediately accessible to the imagination of its audience—and therefore as concrete and achievable—not only the spiritual reconquest of Protestant Europe, but, beyond this, the conversion of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The strong meaning of the Gallery of Cosmography, which featured a rare cycle of maps of the world for this period, was correlated to both its symbol of Universal Faith and as a modern scientific project showcasing updated knowledge in a moment of “discovery” of the New World and “unknown” territories.³⁰

Received and placed within this context, the gifts brought from Japan by the delegates—and especially the remarkable screens representing Azuchi that were offered by the powerful Nobunaga, a figure seen as a burgeoning ally to the Christian mission, and that depicted in detail the town and its Jesuit Seminary, and thus the reach of the Faith to the farthest corners of the globe—were highly coherent, speaking symbols of the pope's ambitions. From this perspective, the screens participated in the construction of a complex symbolic and physical matrix by offering a concrete touchstone that would animate the cartographic representation of Japan (and, possibly, a Japanese city) on the Gallery of Cosmography's walls. As such, and because their exceptionality commanded contemporary reaction, the screens offer critical insight into the history of the material presence of Japan and East Asia in Rome and Italy, as well as the practices of collecting and exhibiting exotic items and diplomatic gifts. Ultimately, the screens' distinct and unique set of meanings within the European context reveals much about how the West initially perceived Japan in the context of early encounters, and, reciprocally, how the West saw and constructed an image of itself. Beyond their reception as exceptional

ethnographic and hybrid artifacts, they represented one of many objects, books, accounts, and sketchings that contributed to shape European self-identity vis-à-vis East Asia during the First Global Age.

Scholarly Networks and Second Lives

As mentioned above, Philips van Winghe's now-lost sketches of the Azuchi Screens represent another key research thread and, as with the question of the screens' reception and placement, reveal the unique value of the screens as a vehicle for opening a wider discussion on the reception of Japanese objects in Europe during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The origins of these two images, as they are known to us today in print form (figures 5 and 6), can be dated between 1589 and 1592, when their Louvain-native author stayed in Rome and distinguished himself as a pioneer of Christian archaeology with a special focus on ancient pagan and early Christian remains.³¹ Van Winghe's contacts in Rome were numerous and powerful enough to have secured him access to the Vatican, but as noted above, the only recorded instance of his visiting its halls dates to 15 July 1592. This occasion is known via the aforementioned letter that van Winghe wrote to his close friend, the Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598), wherein he details that he had visited the Gallery of Maps “that morning” to copy, per Ortelius's request, its map of Lazio.³² Shortly after this letter was written, in early September 1592, van Winghe died from malaria. His belongings in Italy, including the notebook or loose sheets containing the sketches, were received in the later 1590s by Jérôme van Winghe (1557–1637), Philips's brother and canon of Tournai cathedral.³³ Roughly a decade later, Jérôme

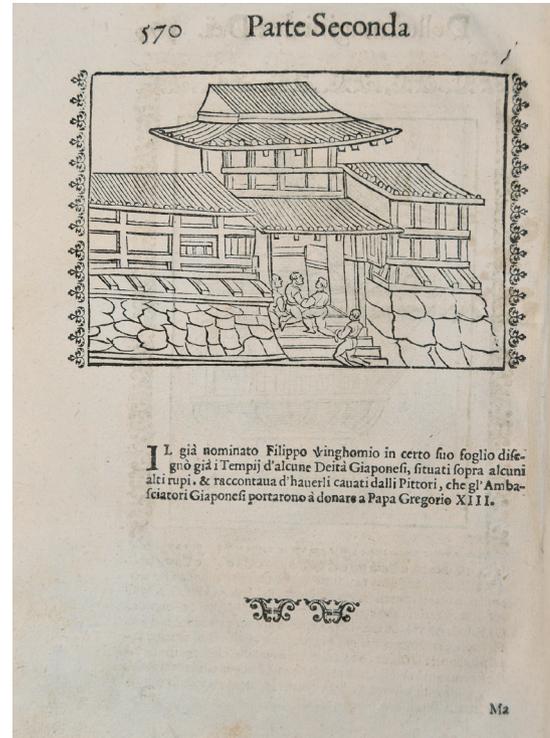
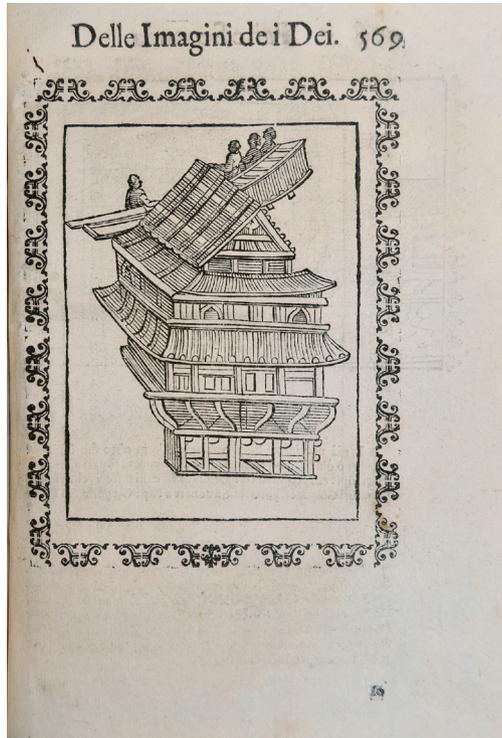
29 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, pp. 448–80; Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, pp. 237–44.

30 Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, passim.

31 Schuddeboom, *Philips van Winghe*, p. 272; Schuddeboom, “Research in the Roman Catacombs.”

32 Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, PBL 2766. Transcribed in Ortelius, *Abrahami Ortelii*, pp. 520–23. Reproduction of map and partial English translation in van der Sman, “Dutch and Flemish Printmakers in Rome,” p. 264.

33 Van Winghe's possessions came via at least two shipments that arrived separately in 1594–1595 and 1597–1598. The first shipment, and possibly the second, was received by Ortelius in Antwerp, then forwarded to Jérôme in Tournai. Therefore, it is possible that Ortelius kept some material that was pertinent to his work. See four letters from Jean L'Heureux and Nicolas De Vries to Ortelius dated between 1594 and 1597, published in Ortelius, *Abrahami Ortelii*, p. 586 n. 247; p. 606 n. 257; p. 631 n. 269; p. 730 n. 310.



Figures 5 and 6. Page 569 (left) and page 570 (right). Philip Esengren, copied from sketches by Philips van Winghe, in Pignoria "Second Part of the Images of Indian Gods" ("Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani"), *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* (*The Images of the Gods and Ancients*). Reproductions from the 1626 edition. Woodblock prints, 15.5 x 21.2 cm. 2024 © Private collection.

would introduce the sketches to his friend and correspondent Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637). This French polymath and central figure in early modern European intellectual history, in turn, forwarded them or copies of them to his friend Lorenzo Pignoria (1571–1631), based in Padua, identifying their subjects as a “temple of Japanese [people] at the peak of a mount extracted from the paintings that the Japanese ambassadors gave to Gregory XIII of blessed memory.”³⁴

Through this circuitous route and three decades after the presumed date of their creation, Pignoria, a prolific scholar and antiquarian with a varied career as a priest, librarian, curate, and canon, commissioned the painter,

engraver, and antiquarian Philip Esengren (known as Filippo Ferroverde in the Italian milieu, active early seventeenth century) to transform the sketches into print form for inclusion within the 1624 edition and second printing of Pignoria’s revised and expanded adaptation of the Greco-Roman mythology reference text originally produced by Vincenzo Cartari (ca. 1531–after 1569), known by its shortened title *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* (*The Images of the Gods of the Ancients*).³⁵ More specifically, these details of the Azuchi Screens were incorporated within an addendum to this text titled “Second Part of the Images of Indian Gods” (*Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani*), a philological catalogue-essay on several deities of the early modern “Indies”—that is, America and East Asia. The prints were accompanied by fifteen drawings of Japanese

34 Peiresc visited Tournai around 1606 when he saw at least one of van Winghe’s notebooks. He subsequently wrote to Jérôme to ask to borrow some of van Winghe’s drawings, and Jérôme obliged prior to August 1612. Schuddeboom, “Research in the Roman Catacombs,” p. 31 n. 16. Peiresc introduced the sketches to Pignoria in a letter dated 4 January 1616 (Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms. 1875, 308r–309r), transcribed in Maffei, *La riscoperta dell’esotismo nel Seicento*, pp. 338–41.

35 Pignoria, *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi*. On Pignoria and his work, see Sez nec, “Un essai de mythologie”; Volpi, “Lorenzo Pignoria e i suoi corrispondenti”; Maffei, *La riscoperta dell’esotismo nel Seicento*.

deities provided and extensively described by Girolamo Aleandro (1574–1629). Pignoria would add to Esengren's prints a short caption outlining the origins and subject matter of van Winghe's sketches: "The already mentioned Philips van Winghe in one of his [manuscript] folios, yet drew the temples of some Japanese deities, placed above some high cliffs. And he recounted that he copied them from the painters [*sic*] that the Japanese ambassadors brought to donate to Pope Gregory XIII."³⁶

Pignoria's addendum exemplifies the manner by which ideas about the East Indies, and Japan, developed out of the collaborative production of a wide-reaching circle of active scholars. A core circle of these scholars congregated, until 1601, around the great humanist Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (1535–1601) and his famed library in the vibrant university city of Padua, a hub for the exchange of ideas and knowledge. Members of the circle included Paolo Gualdo (1553–1621) and Aleandro, both of whom were, like Pignoria, men of the cloth, humanists, collectors, and antiquarians. The trio intensively collaborated with each other and with Peiresc, with whom they had a long-lasting friendship after his several-month stay in Padua. Additionally, Pignoria, Gualdo, and Aleandro all spent significant periods in Rome, where they forged relationships with scholar-antiquarians, missionary communities, and owners of collections of ancient objects and curiosities. In Rome, they joined the dynamic humanist circle around Francesco Barberini (1597–1679), the influential cardinal nephew of Pope Urban VIII (1568–1644; r. 1623–1644), to whom Aleandro was secretary of Latin letters from 1623. Strategically positioned, from Rome and Padua, they acted as disseminators of scholarly information and news on antiquities, intercessors, and dispatchers for their network.³⁷ The correspondence of the members of this network bears witness to their discussions on objects seen, acquired, or desired such as "antiquities"—that is, a category that included exotica, cult objects, art objects such as sculptures, as well as Roman

archeological artefacts—along with costumes, ancient customs, drawings of objects, as well as shipments of books, other objects and rarities.

Correspondence and other primary sources illustrate that Pignoria, Gualdo, Aleandro, and Peiresc collected and exchanged information and drawings on curiosities from the "Oriental Indies," as well as about the Tenshō (1585) and Keichō (1615) Japanese embassies to Europe, and Japanese culture more broadly. In 1614, Pignoria declared to Gualdo that he "may [himself] deserve the title of antiquary, mostly of the countries very far from our world."³⁸ At that time, he was actively searching for material on East Asia to substantiate his thesis that Egypt was the genetic origin of foreign, idolatrous religions, as well as to demonstrate remote connections between these and Christian traditions in the most distant regions of the world. For instance, Pignoria asked the astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) in 1612 to send him drawings and information on things that were "[not] Egyptian, but [rather] Indian, as well as of China, Japan, Burma, and similar regions of the East Indies, as of the West, like Peru, Mexico, and New Spain," and noted that he had seen paintings from the Indies in the Villa Medici in Rome.³⁹ He would issue similar requests to Gualdo, based in Rome and in close contact with the Jesuits. In addition to the sketches of the Azuchi Screens, Peiresc provided Pignoria with four drawings of an Indonesian kris handle from his collection and offered to furnish him with an image of a Chinese procession. Aleandro stands out within this group as he seems to have possessed some specialized expertise on Japan.⁴⁰ As mentioned, together with the aforementioned fifteen drawings of Japanese idols, he provided Pignoria with detailed descriptions of these images. These descriptions were presumably based on information derived from an, as yet, unlocated or lost correspondence with Aleandro.⁴¹

Since their rediscovery as primary documents related

36 "Il già nominato Filippo Winghomio in certo suo foglio disegnò già i Tempj d'alcune Deità Giaponesi, situati sopra alcuni alti rupi, & raccontava d'haverli cavati dalli Pittori [*sic*], che gl'Ambasciatori Giaponesi portarono a donare a Papa Gregorio XIII." Pignoria, *Le immagini de gli dei de gli antichi*, p. 570. Translation in English from Erdmann, "Azuchi Castle," p. 52.

37 On this network, see for instance Rizza, *Peiresc e l'Italia*; Volpi, "Lorenzo Pignoria e i suoi corrispondenti"; Weststeijn, "Art and Knowledge in Rome and the Early Modern Republic of Letters"; Miller, "The Antiquary's Art of Comparison."

38 Letter from Pignoria to Gualdo, 31 October 1614, *Lettere d'uomini illustri* 1744, pp. 164–67: "[...] portare forse il nome di antiquaro primo, ed in capite di que' paesi tanto remote dal nostro Orbe [...]," quoted in Volpi, "Lorenzo Pignoria e i suoi corrispondenti," p. 103.

39 Letter from Pignoria to Galileo, 12 October 1612, published by Favaro in Galilei, *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, XI, p. 389, quoted by Volpi, "Lorenzo Pignoria e i suoi corrispondenti," p. 103; Miller, "Taking Paganism Seriously," p. 94.

40 See Peiresc, *Correspondance de Peiresc et Aleandro*, vol. 1, p. 37; Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*, *passim*.

41 Peiresc, *Correspondance de Peiresc et Aleandro*, vol. 1, p. 37.

to the Azuchi Screens, the two prints based on van Winghe's sketches and incorporated in Pignoria's *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* have undergone only minimal scrutiny.⁴² To be sure, the haphazard character of these images, named here as *Page 569* and *Page 570* after the pages on which they respectively appear, and apparent incongruities in the accompanying text offer reason to doubt their worth as reliable primary documents. *Page 569* depicts an amalgamation of architectural forms that, at first glance, reads as unbalanced or truncated in a manner that suggests that the author(s) struggled to make sense of Japanese architecture and modes of representation.⁴³ *Page 570*, containing a two-level gate with four figures kneeling on steps ascending to its threshold, appears as comparatively more cohesive, but its authenticity likewise appears as suspect owing to the figures' European clothing and hair—that is, distinctly not Japanese and, as such, a clear

reworking of the original subjects. The caption on *Page 570* seems to reaffirm these hints of a culturally uninformed or ambivalent European audience as the structures are identified as “temples of some Japanese deities” and not a castle, the widely understood primary subject of the images, and one ostensibly unrelated to Nobunaga.⁴⁴ Further, the prints are almost certainly mirror images of the original sketches. Surviving originals and copies of originals of other images provided by Peiresc and included in the 1624 edition of *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* confirm that Esengren directly copied the original images (see figure 7 for corrected orientation) when carving his woodblocks and, consequently, when printed, the images were reversed.⁴⁵ As with the other shortcomings, this reversal suggests a lack of attention to detail and, in turn, that the images' value lies solely in their remarkable pedigree.⁴⁶

Yet, despite being a copy of a copy of the Azuchi

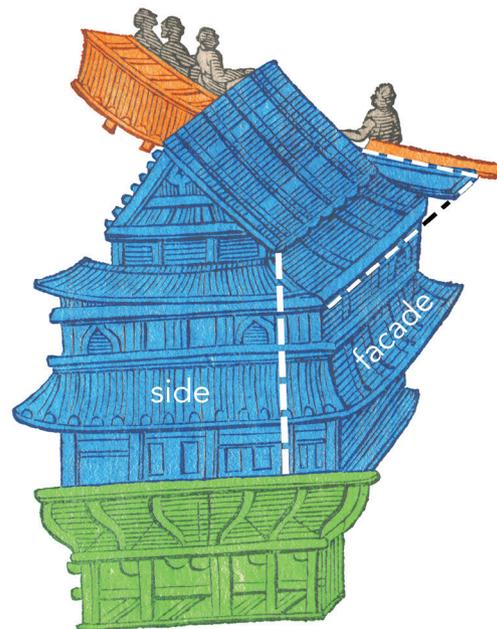


Figure 7. *Page 569* building reversed to original orientation, with added color and guidelines. Prepared by Erdmann, based on figure 5.

42 McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, p. 167; Miura, *Yomigaeru shinsetsu Azuchi-jō*, p. 93; Weststeijn, “Art and Knowledge in Rome.”

43 McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, p. 167.

44 Pignoria, *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi*, p. 570. Nobunaga is popularly known as having been antagonistic to religious groups and, consequently, associations between him and organized religion are often dismissed. Regarding this understanding and its reassessment, see Lamers, *Japonius Tyrannus*, pp. 163–64.

45 Based on comparisons between the depiction of Quetzalcoatl in

fol. 36v of *Codex Ríos* (BAV, Vat. lat., 3738) and fol. 58r of ms. 1564 (Rome, Biblioteca Angelica), attributed to Alfonso Chacòn, copied from now-lost original sketches by Philips van Winghe. Also compare Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc's drawings of *Raksasa on Indonesian kris* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des estampes Aa-54) with Pignoria, *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi*, pp. 86–88.

46 Weststeijn, “Art and Knowledge in Rome and the Early Modern Republic of Letters,” pp. 1–2.

Screens, comparison of the prints' buildings with analogous subjects and forms in Eitoku's oeuvre, namely the so-called Uesugi Screens (*Uesugi-bon rakuchū rakugai-zu byōbu* 上杉本洛中洛外図屏風, details in figures 1, 8, and 9) and *Scenes of Amusements around the Capital* (*Rakugai meisho yūaku-zu* 洛外名所遊楽図), reveal a remarkable degree of fidelity that allows for a provisional identification of their subjects and, in turn, a reassessment of their authors that is consistent with their well-documented scholarly approach to historical objects.⁴⁷ These two pairs of screens are, like the Azuchi Screens, examples of a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century genre of painting known as cityscape screens (*toshi-zu byōbu* 都市図屏風) that contain aerial views of urban spaces and well-known locales that are interspersed with gold-leaf or gold-paint-rendered ground and clouds. Eitoku's works represent some of the earliest surviving examples of the genre and possess unique stylistic treatment of various subjects that may be used to interpret the assortment of motifs in the two prints. Broken down (figure 7), *Page 569* may be read as three parts: a central two-level building with a tiled, hip-and-gable roof along with one background and one foreground structure that are both likely parts of a surrounding gate, wall, or corridor.

The precise character of the central building and that it is consistent with examples of Japanese Buddhist

architecture is discernable through comparison and knowledge of Japanese architectural norms. If one draws an imaginary line straight down from the gable's right corner, the side of the building on both levels is clarified as being three bays. This line corresponds to a key pillar within the structure that supports the gable end and marks the corner of the building's core (*moya* 母屋) and its second level. Running to the immediate right of this line on both the first and second levels is an apparent misreading in the form of an extending "half-bay." The origins of this mistake are easily appreciable if one compares the *Page 569* building to the depiction of the Golden Pavilion (Kinkaku 金閣) of Rokuonji 鹿園寺 (also known as Kinkakuji 金閣寺; see figure 8) in the Uesugi Screens. The angle at which the right side of the Golden Pavilion recedes—particularly on its second story—is so wide that, if not copied precisely, the foreshortening can easily be misread as a shortened bay. This reading is corroborated by the cusped windows (*kadōmado* 花頭窓). Only through a reimagining of the second-level extending bay—that is, the projection to the right of the imaginary line (figure 7)—as part of the façade is the adjacent window able to conform to the premodern norm of positioning these decorative elements in the outermost bays of a structure. Rectangles in the two rightmost bays of the first level suggest paneled doors and, above these doors, either



Figure 8. Same as figure 1. Detail of Golden Pavilion, Rokuonji (left screen, panel 2).



Figure 9. Same as figure 1. Detail of Imperial Palace (right screen, panel 6).

47 Regarding their scholarly methodology, see Miller, "Taking Paganism Seriously;" Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*. See also n. 65.



Figure 10. Same as figure 1. Detail of Hosokawa Palace gates (left screen, panel 3).

non-penetrating tie beams (*nageshi* 長押), overhead walls (*kokabe* 小壁), a transom (*ranma* 欄間), or a combination of these fixtures. The back-most (i.e., left-most) bay lacks these elements, but, as such, offers a noteworthy detail: the bays on the sides of temple buildings, in contrast to castle towers, are often characterized by architectural elements such as doors, windows, or plain walls that by themselves form an asymmetrical facade.

The *Page 569* building sits between foregrounded and backgrounded structures that possess details that suggest truncated surrounding walls or gates. These details include the obscuring of the bottom half of the figures in the background—that is, a mode of rendering figures exclusive to those situated within walled courtyards in Eitoku’s other works (figure 9)—and two sets of three elongated “S” and mirrored “Z” shapes in the foreground—that is, a form repeated only in Eitoku’s rendering of *eburi-ita* 柄振板 (figure 10), cusped wooden decorative boards that are attached to the ends of wall roofs where a wall connects to a gate. These attributes and the positioning of the *Page 569* building between surrounding walls, along with the notable

absence of decorative elements typical of castle architecture such as finial *shachihoko* 鯨鯨—that is, a type of dragon possessing an arched carp body and tiger-like face—together clarify the structure as *not* martial in nature, but as consistent with examples of Japanese Buddhist architecture.

Additional details offered in the caption on *Page 570* and in Peiresc’s 1616 letter to Pignoria allow for an even more precise identification.⁴⁸ Both descriptions characterize the buildings as located atop precipitous ledges. This added detail is critical as it narrows down the list of possible sites to one: Sōkenji 惣見寺. Sōkenji stands out amongst the many religious institutions that might be reasonably imagined to have been depicted in the screens on account of its location on the southwest ridge of the mountain that Azuchi Castle crowned. In other words, Sōkenji is the only site in the immediate vicinity of Azuchi Castle where religious structures were seated atop steep rock foundations. Owing to both the *Page 569* building’s character as well as a lack of

⁴⁸ See n. 34 and n. 35.

correspondence with any other structure known to have been situated within Sōkenji's precinct, the identity of the *Page 569* may be further specified as the Bishamon Hall (Bishamondō 毘沙門堂), a structure that was renamed as the Main Hall (*hondō* 本堂) of Sōkenji in the centuries after Nobunaga's death.⁴⁹ Following from this identification, the identity of the gate in *Page 570* may also be tentatively posited. Considering the lower angle of its ground plane—that is, a detail that, based on comparison with buildings in the lower register of the oldest surviving cityscape screen to feature a castle and a work that is regularly theorized as a derivative of the Azuchi Screens, the Mitsui Memorial Museum's Jurakutei Screen (*Jurakutei-zu byōbu* 聚楽第図屏風, figure 11), suggests a lower position within the overall composition of the screens—the gate in *Page 570* may be provisionally named as the Dodo Bridge Gate (Dodobashimon 百々橋門), a structure that originally checked the entrance path to Sōkenji.⁵⁰

The fact that the prints are identified as “temples of some Japanese deities” testifies to a critical point: they were almost certainly understood as such. All three key actors, van Winghe, Peiresc, and Pignoria, in the creation and collecting of these images were each focused in their research on religious artifacts and cross-cultural interaction. While van Winghe was almost exclusively focused on Western subjects, he had many contacts within the Jesuit community and friends with universal humanist interests, and was well positioned to know the most cutting-edge information on Japan. Noteworthy also is that he corresponded regularly with Ortelius, a figure deeply invested in researching global culture in the making of his magnum opus, the world atlas *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570), and the author of the 1595 edited map of Japan after Luís Teixeira (fl. last quarter of the sixteenth century), and for whom he collected maps and other material on every part of the world.⁵¹ Further, in van Winghe's only surviving notebook appears a list of the seminaries and colleges that Pope Gregory XIII erected in Japan, including Azuchi.⁵²

Closer examination of van Winghe's work also suggests that his interest in the Azuchi Screens stemmed from their potential as touchstones for comparison between Christianity and other religions.⁵³ In particular, van Winghe's sketch of the Mesoamerican god Quetzalcoatl in the Vatican Library's *Codex Ríos* (ca. 1566), drafted during the same period as he sketched the Azuchi Screens, allows for a better understanding of the presence of the “Indies” in his studies. A copy of this now-lost original sketch of Quetzalcoatl survives in a manuscript volume ascribed to the historian Alonso Chacón (1530–1599) kept at the Biblioteca Angelica (*Manoscritto* 1564), and includes peripheral notes by van Winghe wherein he explains that in their ceremonies, Mesoamerican people used bread and water, as well as incense, and draws a parallel with the Christian cult. Copies of other sketches by van Winghe in Biblioteca Angelica's *Manoscritto* 1564 and in the Vatican Library's *Ménéstrier Codex* (Vaticani Latini 10545), a bound copy of one of van Winghe's notebooks and other folios ascribed to Peiresc, show that the Quetzalcoatl image was associated with a “cult and food” category, with images of Roman pagan and Christian objects featuring commensals.⁵⁴ The interest of antiquarians in the newly explored territories is known to be also connected to efforts to demonstrate connections between foreign religions and Christianity. Likely the “temples of some Japanese deities” from the Azuchi Screens, as described by Pignoria and Peiresc, were drawn by van Winghe with a similar intent, that is, as a documentation of Japanese religious rites for comparison with Christian rites.

In the case of Peiresc and Pignoria, both were actively interested in foreign religions and well read on the subject as a consequence of their grappling with the implications for a Christian universe of the tsunami of cultural artifacts brought in by traders and missionaries.⁵⁵ In particular for Pignoria, depictions of Japanese temples would have been of special interest as they could serve as a touchstone to test a popular thesis and one at the heart of his project revising *Le imagini de gli*

49 The name of the hall is in Ōta, *Shinchō-kō ki*, p. 373. Regarding the nature of the hall, see Okagaki and Asakawa, “Hotoke o koeru Nobunaga.”

50 Yamamoto, “Kanō Eitoku no shōgai,” pp. 270–71.

51 Meganck, *Erudite Eyes*.

52 Philips van Winghe, *Notebook* (Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium [hereafter KBR], ms. 17872–3), fol. 64v; Takemoto, “Azuchi byōbu” o egakinokoshita Furandoru-jin,” pp. 81–82.

53 Roux, “An ‘Antiquity’ from Japan.”

54 Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, ms. 1564, ascribed to Chacón, who like van Winghe, was involved in the first Christian archeology initiatives in Rome at the end of the sixteenth century; *Ménéstrier Codex*, BAV, Vat. lat., 10545 (reproduction available on DigiVatLib).

55 Miller, “Taking Paganism Seriously”; Mulsow, “Antiquarianism and Idolatry”; Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*; Wyss-Giacosa, “Through the Eyes of Idolatry.”

dei de gli antichi, that foreign religions and religious practices, including of “those people [...] comprised under the general name of the East Indies,” were derivatives of ancient Egypt⁵⁶ and that the “Demon” also imitated the work and language of God to seduce idolatrous societies, as far as in Japan.⁵⁷ In contrast, Europe was unique owing to its embrace of Christianity, but sometimes “Our Lord God, with His mercy, made great inroads for the preparation of the Gospel

[Evangelization] in some of these countries [of the New World].”⁵⁸ Pignoria summarizes: “Indeed, in all these, it seems to me that I see great diversity: in some, the spirit of the Egyptians, and of the ‘Orientals,’ in some [others], things of our [Western World’s] making,” and agrees with an author who “believes that at other times the Japanese had knowledge of the Christian law [...] but then Idolatry obscured this light, of which in these statues [of Japanese deities] some vestige remains.”⁵⁹

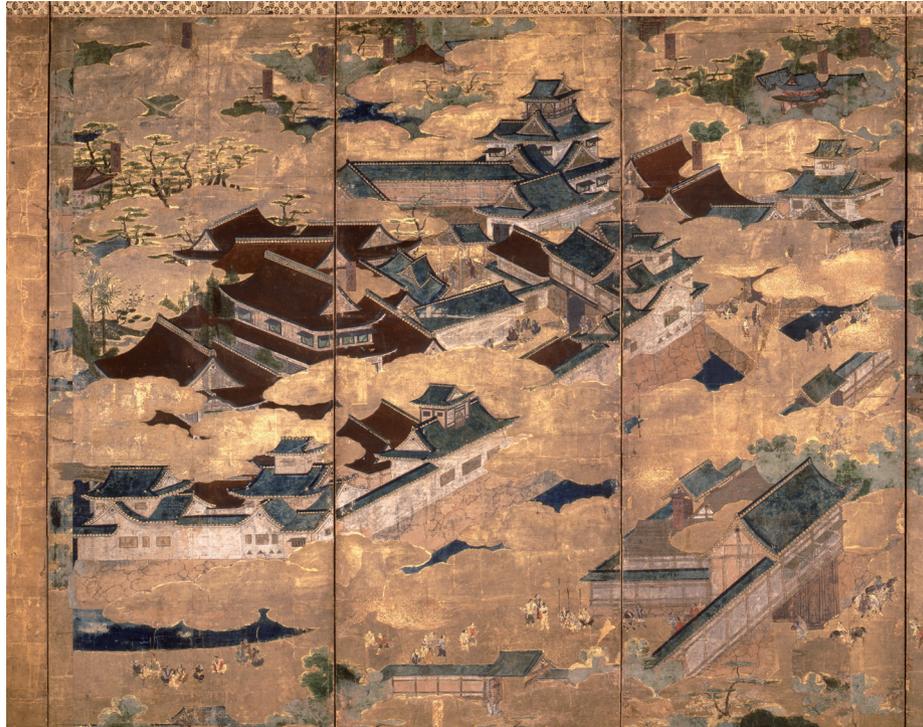


Figure 11. Anonymous. *Jurakutei*. Azuchi-Momoyama period, late 16th c. Folding screen. Ink, colors, and gold on paper. 156 x 355 cm. Mitsui Memorial Museum, Tokyo. Detail of panel 5.

56 Pignoria, “Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani” (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 546: “Ne lasciarono quieti gl’Egitti que’ popoli, che scoperti & domati alla memoria de’ nostri Padri dalla valorissima natione Portoghese, sono compresi sotto ’l nome generale d’Indie Orientali [...]” Another clear statement in this sense can be found on p. 564: “Et in somma per tutto questo, che chiamavano nuovo mondo, tanto nell’Occidente quanto nell’Oriente, io ho avvertito tanto la conformità fra le superstizioni Egittiane, & quelle del Paese, che ho avuto a maravigliarmi alcune volte.”

57 Pignoria, “Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani” (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 553, states: “[...] non sarà fuor di luogo il mostrare, come il Demonio, Simia [sic] di Dio s’andò avvantaggiando per imitare la più segnalata attione, che uscisse mai dalle mani divine [...]” Therein, page 572 is a Japanese example coming from Aleandro’s description of a

Japanese idol: “Di questo Idolo io non saprei che mi dire, se non che pare, che’l Demonio si sia servito della maniera delle imagini nostre, per imprimere ne gl’animi della Gentilità di quei paesi, li suoi inganni.” Pignoria brings other examples from the “New World.” For instance, on p. 555 he illustrates how the myth of the conception of Quetzacoatl as found in the *Ríos Codex* revisits the Biblical narrative of the Annunciation to the Virgin by Archangel Gabriel.

58 Pignoria attributes for instance the presence of the cross in an image of Quetzacoatl to God’s “preparation of the Gospel.” Pignoria, “Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani” (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 558: “[...] nostro Signore Iddio, per sua misericordia, fece strada grande alla preparation dell’Evangelio in alcuno di questi paesi.”

59 Pignoria, “Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani” (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 585: “In questi tutti

Almost certainly of interest for Pignoria, and very possibly for Peiresc as well, was the location of the Japanese temples depicted in the Azuchi Screens, precisely characterized by both the scholars—who seem to have been building on accompanying notes to van Winghe’s sketches—as being “at the peak of a mount” or “placed above some high cliffs.”⁶⁰ Indeed, Pignoria explains in his treatise on the “Indian” gods that the location of “the temples of the ‘Ethnics’” was “obstinately in the woods or on the peaks of mounts, where the horror and the site would invite the superstitious people to the cult of their false deities.”⁶¹ One contemporary source may further account for these scholars’ fascination with these particular details of the Azuchi Screens as well as may confirm the identity of the buildings posited above: Fróis’s story of Nobunaga’s alleged apotheosis. This famous and still prevalent myth derives from a 1582 report written by Fróis in the wake of Nobunaga’s assassination and published in Europe almost immediately after its arrival in 1585.⁶² To make sense of the chaos brought on by Nobunaga’s end and loss of an ally whom the Jesuits had previously lauded, Fróis blamed Nobunaga’s hubris for his demise and cited as evidence for this charge the refurbishment of a two-level structure within Sōkenji where visitors could come to pray to a stone that held Nobunaga’s “divine body” (*shintai* 神体).⁶³ As a consequence of this report, Sōkenji—which survived the destruction of Azuchi Castle after the assassination of Nobunaga—was elevated to being arguably the most famous Japanese temple in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe. Republished in multiple books, Fróis’s dramatic

account offers a possible basis for van Winghe to have been drawn to this structure that illustrated pagan ritual activity in such a striking manner over all others within the Azuchi Screens. Assuming that he was able to link the images to Fróis’s account, Pignoria would have seen in these images not only exemplary visual records of the architectural and site attributes of the pagan temples, but also invaluable windows onto Japanese religious rituals that would enrich his compendium on religious iconography, some of which he could have linked to the living gods that were the pharaohs.⁶⁴ To be sure, further evidence is required to demonstrate that either was able to make the link between Nobunaga, Sōkenji, and the screens. What is worth noting at this point however is that the dynamic collaborative environment in which these figures operated allows for careful consideration of this possibility.

Van Winghe and Pignoria’s scholarly backgrounds and the legibility of the prints reveal that these images have more to offer than being mere symbols of the age. First, and as related to ASRN’s inquiry into the nature of the screens, they reveal the potential value of van Winghe’s original sketches. Van Winghe was known for being a meticulous and reliable draftsman—indeed, his skill was part of the reason that Ortelius requested his help in obtaining a copy of the Lazio map.⁶⁵ However, there is good reason to believe that the print version of his sketches falls short of his reputation. Pignoria himself confessed disappointment in the preface to the 1615 edition of *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* that the volume’s prints were not adequately faithful reproductions.⁶⁶ Whether he felt this way about the newly

mi pare di vedere gran diversità, in alcuni lo spirito delli Egitti, & delli Orientali, in alcuni cose di nostro fare. [...] L'autore [...] vuole che altre volte habbiano avuto i Giapponesi notizia della legge Christiana; & è pensiero molto verosimile; ma che poi l'Idolatria poi oscurasse questo lume, del quale in queste statue ne rimanesse alcun vestigio.”

60 See full quotations and references above, n. 34 and n. 35.

61 Pignoria, “Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani” (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 555: “gl’Ethnici Tempii [...] ritengono ostinatissamente i boschi & le cime de’ monti, dove l’horrore & il sito invitavano i superstitiosi al culto delle false loro Deità.”

62 Fróis, “Carta do padre Luis Froes.” In *Cartas*, 2.1, fol. 62r.

63 Fróis’s account is inconsistent with other records, including those written by Fróis himself; see Lamers, *Japonius Tyrannus*, pp. 217–24.

64 Van Winghe had or gained knowledge about the Azuchi Screens when he encountered them. Per Peiresc and Pignoria’s descriptions of the sketches (n. 34, n. 35) it is clear that van Winghe knew they were brought by the Japanese delegates. It is also clear he

had some knowledge of the Jesuit mission in Japan as he included a list of seminaries established in Japan by Gregory XIII, including the one at Azuchi, in his abovementioned notebook (KBR, ms. 17872-3, fol. 64v). Takemoto, “Azuchi byōbu,” pp. 81–82. This mention suggests that he had access to additional information on the screens that circulated in contemporary reports. For Pignoria’s part, the story of Nobunaga’s hubris, which Fróis compares with the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, would have held special interest as one of the main goals in including Japanese iconography was to argue that it was born of the ancient world, particularly Egypt; see Wyss-Giacosa, “Through the Eyes of Idolatry,” pp. 125–39.

65 Regarding van Winghe’s skill as a draftsman, see Oryshkevich, “Through a Netherlandish Looking-Glass,” *passim*; Schuddeboom, “Research in the Roman Catacombs,” pp. 23, 25. Pignoria’s intentions are outlined in the title and preface to the 1615 edition: Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, unpaginated preface.

66 Per Pignoria, blame was not to be laid on him or Ferroverde, but on “the negligence of a few dozen carvers.” Pignoria, *Le vere e*

included prints in the 1624 edition or if he actively sought to correct this shortcoming in the same edition is unknown. Nonetheless, in his admission lies a hint that flaws such as the Europeanized figures may not be van Winghe's doing, but victims of the process of transforming the images into prints. Additionally, it is a near certainty that the original sketches were accompanied by notes by van Winghe, as in the case of his studies of the god Quetzalcoatl's image. The existence of these notes is known via Peiresc and Pignoria's parallel descriptions of the buildings as atop steep rocks as well as the copious explanatory notes and sketches that may be found in van Winghe's surviving notebook.⁶⁷

The promise of more detailed sketches and additional notes has prompted, much like the screens themselves, significant research regarding their fate. It has been heretofore presumed that these manuscripts, which included the sketches of the Azuchi Castle screens, were donated by Jérôme van Winghe to the Tournai Cathedral and then subsequently dispersed during the French Revolution or destroyed by bombs during the Second World War. Recent investigation, however, shows that the history of van Winghe's manuscripts is much more complex.⁶⁸ The known remaining works authored by van Winghe's own hand—the so-called *Notebook* entitled *Inscriptiones sacrae et profanae collectae Romae et in aliis Italiae urbibus*, a report on the death of Sixtus V, and a treaty on the Holy Cross—bear no *ex libris* (a label of provenance typically found in the first pages of a volume) to indicate that the Tournai Cathedral Library ever owned them. This fact is remarkable as many, if not most, known volumes that came from Jérôme van Winghe's collection and were donated to the cathedral possess this mark. As Jérôme regularly shared van Winghe's work prior to his own death and often spoke in his correspondence with Peiresc about his hopes for his brother's work to be published, it seems entirely likely, also in light of his correspondence, that a percentage of van Winghe's study notes and other manuscripts were dispersed to this end.⁶⁹ They were donated to humanist friends who were willing to take over van Winghe's research, or see to the

publication of the materials, and thus reborn into a new path. Indeed, most of van Winghe's work reached us through copies, as his notes and drawings were extensively used and shared by antiquarians and humanists of his and the next generation.

This question of the provenance of van Winghe's work relates directly to the second point raised by the fidelity and scholarly foundations of *Page 569* and *Page 570*: the screens were not isolated objects but represent one point in a complex web of gathering and sharing knowledge that was the Republic of Letters, this intellectual community that ushered in the Enlightenment, and, as such, they offer a remarkable test case. The prolonged and character-filled process of van Winghe's sketches becoming prints outlined above is a narrative that suggests that it was a minor miracle that these images exist at all. However, the prints should not be understood as anomalies, but rather as testaments to the vibrancy of this network as it was first evolving. Similarly, the wealth of research avenues related to the fate of van Winghe's sketches is a testament to the network's continued vibrancy into the next century. Further, within this wide-reaching and active matrix of information sharing, the screens and their proxy in van Winghe's sketches stand out as unique. First, their fame as connected to the much-celebrated Tenshō Embassy allows them to be easily identified and assessed. Second, their significance evolved within the network's discourse from diplomatic gift to window into Japan's paganism. In these ways, the screens simultaneously represent a fixed but floating point that allows for tracking the evolution and spread of information related to Japan and East Asia among its members, and through long-reaching connections with the intermediaries as well as owners of objects from the "East Indies," such as missionaries, merchants, travelers, religious houses, and collectors. While ongoing, this line of inquiry reveals great potential not only for discovering the fate of van Winghe's sketches, but also for mapping connections that might serve to bring to light other objects of interest related to Japan and beyond as well as identifying a nexus of knowledge creation.

Conclusion

This article has sought to demonstrate that even in absentia, the Azuchi Screens hold unique scholarly value as a nexus connecting disparate strands of

novae imagini, unpaginated preface; Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*, pp. 103-104.

67 KBR, ms. 17872-3.

68 Roux, *The Humanist-Antiquarian Philips van Winghe*.

69 Schuddeboom, "Research in the Roman Catacombs," pp. 23-25; Miller, "The Antiquary's Art of Comparison," pp. 61-62.

collecting practice and intellectual currents in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe. The cast of historical figures listed above who crossed paths in one way or another with the screens is outstanding. Their interest and engagement with the screens, even when these objects were inaccessible, is direct testament not merely to Eitoku's skill as a painter, but the fact that these images held a unique multifaceted appeal that was compounded by an evolving, intersectional pedigree. Gifted to Jesuit missionaries, they were initially diplomatic tools used by Valignano to convince the pope of the merits of the Jesuit project in Japan and educate about the nature of a distant land. Gregory XIII reified Valignano's designs by placing them in either the Gallery of Maps or Gallery of Cosmography, but in doing so further built upon this meaning in both calculated and unexpected ways. Included among other representations of topography, the screens were put in dialogue with their palatial surroundings and thus elevated as symbols of Gregory XIII's Universal Church. Concurrently though, the screens in situ were also reborn as "curiosities," a category of foreign or exotic object that attracted the gaze of van Winghe either as part of his interest in finding comparative touchstones for his work on early Christianity or as research materials for his friends. Inadvertently and with the help of the next generation of scholars in Peiresc and Pignoria, his encounter with the screens gave them a second life in print form as an ostensible window onto Japanese religious practice. This compounding and remaking of meaning arguably has recurred in the present day as the screens' quasi-mythical nature has made them an irresistible query for Japanese authorities, as well as professional and amateur scholars alike. This recent reincarnation, however, is a topic for another paper. Yet, herein the old and new intersect. Research into the screens has revealed their value as not in their material character, but an unparalleled pedigree that brings together a wide range of seeming disparate topics under one roof and sheds light on the distinct, but intertwined nature of Jesuits, the Vatican, and scholarly endeavors in the early modern era.

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Violation: Murasaki's Challenge to the Scholarly Consensus on Sexual Assault in *The Tale of Genji*

SEAN O'REILLY

Is rape always wrong in every cultural context, no matter the time or place? Or is it a mistake to impart modern-day feelings of outrage over such acts if they occurred in long-ago civilizations? Is there any way of uncovering what ancient cultures actually believed about acts that today would fit the definition of rape if they do not appear to be widely condemned in the social commentaries of that time? Let us examine a test case.

A young stepfather of about twenty-two spends day after day with his adopted daughter, who is roughly thirteen or fourteen, laughing, talking, and playing various games. It is clear their relationship is quite good, as they are relaxed and happy in each other's presence in their well-established roles as father and daughter, just as they have been for years. They are not legally father and daughter, since he always intended to marry her someday, but she does not seem to understand what exactly that will entail. They are so comfortable with each other they often sleep in the same bed, though platonically. Yet one such evening, as the night wears on, the father can no longer restrain his desire and, seizing his protesting daughter, drags her kicking and screaming into the world of adulthood by raping her.

Although this may sound like the plot of a horror—or at any rate, a horrifying—story, it is in fact paraphrasing a memorable episode from the ninth chapter,

“Aoi,” of one of the most famous books in the history of world literature, *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語, completed ca. 1000). It describes the character usually referred to simply as “Genji” (or Hikaru Genji, meaning “The Shining [Prince] of the Minamoto Clan”) in his role as surrogate father to a girl named Murasaki (later called Murasaki no Ue or “Lady Murasaki”), whom he had been bringing up and educating to be the perfect wife for him. But though she may have been aware on an intellectual level that she was destined to marry Genji, Murasaki viewed and trusted him as her father. She was clearly not prepared for the physical reality of this marriage, as her extremely strong reaction to Genji's behavior demonstrates. Some—including no less an authority than Royall Tyler himself, in his cautionary essay on Heian sexuality¹—have argued against reading this passage with any modern-day moral outrage. Others, such as established scholar Margaret Childs, have deployed moral relativism to shield the beloved “shining prince” of the tale from any moral condemnation and from accusations of statutory rape.² In addition to powerful declarations

1 Tyler, “Marriage.”

2 Childs attempts to resolve potential cognitive dissonance here by claiming that legal concepts of statutory rape do not apply to Murasaki because they are meant to “protect those who are

that Genji “never coerces a woman to have sexual relations with him,”³ Childs even subtitled an early version of her 1999 article on the subject with the unequivocal “Genji, at Least, Was no Rapist.”⁴ Scholars like Tyler and Childs were reacting to an earlier generation of critics who had denounced Genji as a rapist,⁵ and pushed hard at the pendulum, eventually succeeding—in my opinion far too well—in swinging it away from “rapist” in a more sympathetic direction.

On the surface, resistance to the use of labels like “rape” is not without merit. For example, there is no evidence that eleventh- and twelfth-century Japanese readers batted an eye at the scene in question. In T. J. Harper’s analysis of “Genji Gossip,”⁶ among the lists of forty-eight *koto* 事 (matters), there was no mention at all of Murasaki’s forced sexual encounter with Genji or subsequent distress, despite several categories that

incompetent to consent to sexual relations... [but] Murasaki has reached the appropriate age for sexual intimacy” before continuing, “although she is described as still naïve” and finishing off with “The point, then, is that there is no reason to assume that Genji would not have been able to gain Murasaki’s consent.” Childs, “The Value of Vulnerability,” p. 1073. Genji cannot have raped Murasaki, because (1) she was at least thirteen, the age defined in the Heian 平安 era (794–1185) as maturity, and (2) Genji was skilled in the art of persuasion/sexual coercion, so whatever sexual activity they undertook was ipso facto consensual. It would seem, in this view, that there is simply no way for a skillful and persuasive lover to rape anyone, at least if the person is thirteen or older!

3 Childs, “The Value of Vulnerability,” p. 1062.

4 To be fair to Childs, her argument evolved from that initial 1998 statement (a polemic challenge to then-prevalent criticism of Genji as a rapist). However, even in the final and more persuasive 1999 version, the nucleus of the argument defending, among various other male aggressors, Hikaru Genji from accusations of violation, such as that “subtle but significant differences” to the nature of love exist that make the application of modern-day morality inappropriate to the world of Genji (and in particular, that the vulnerability of Murasaki no Ue and others like her was a highly prized and sexually desirable trait, thereby potentially excusing Genji from wrongdoing), remains unchanged. Childs, “The Value of Vulnerability,” p. 1059. While Childs’s broader reading of East Asian literature may support her overall conclusion, and even though she may be correct that the highly charged term “rape” has been bandied about too quickly in some respects in discussions of, for example, premodern Japanese literature more generally, I argue that the specific example of Genji and his conduct towards Murasaki—and more importantly, the narrator’s detailed description of Murasaki’s distress afterwards—is worthy of greater scrutiny.

5 Childs identifies an early 1990s surge of rape accusations against Genji and surmises they were inspired by Edward Seidensticker’s translation, with its unsympathetic portrayal of Hikaru Genji. Childs, “The Value of Vulnerability,” p. 1062.

6 Genji Gossip refers to supplementary materials (conversational in tone rather than works of serious scholarship), for example lists of

seemed likely candidates: Disgusting Deed (*nikushi koto* 憎し事), Heartbreaking Scene (*ito oshiki koto* いと惜しき事), Anguish (*kokoro gurushiki koto* 心苦しき事), Deplorable Thing (*urameshiki koto* 恨めしき事), or Deplorable Deed (*wabishiki koto* わびしき事). In fact, Genji showing the adult Murasaki only the outside of his letter from Lady Akashi—an act symbolic of his refusal to reveal to Murasaki the substance and nature of his relationship with Akashi—was apparently considered much more deplorable (*urameshiki*) than whatever happened to Murasaki sexually.⁷

We might thus be tempted to conclude that the practice of young girls sleeping with somewhat older men was deemed perfectly natural by Heian 平安 (794–1185)-era society. “Natural” here refers to Roland Barthes’s sense of cultural values (myths) being almost invisible and indeed utterly unquestionable. There is only one problem: the text does not support this dismissal of our moral concerns. *The Tale of Genji*, far from being a key exemplar of moral and cultural relativism, might in fact be more of a universal condemnation of at least certain types of sexual acts and situations: they are presented as neither invisible nor unquestionable. The author of *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (ca. 973 to 1014 or 1025), whose sobriquet of Murasaki, incidentally, probably came from the close association in readers of later centuries between the author (whose exact name is unknown) and Murasaki no Ue herself, chooses not to portray young Murasaki’s rape in the same generally permissive or even sympathetic-to-Genji tone as was used for his other sexual encounters.

I will argue in the following close analysis of the text of chapter 9 that the author intended to suggest, by painting such a vivid picture of Murasaki’s sense of violation, that what happened to her was indeed wrong. And by implication, so was the apparent callousness of mid-Heian society towards the feelings of young girls in general.

Whether Murasaki Shikibu was writing from experience, having herself endured such a shocking and distressing event, is unknown. But what is clear is that in this chapter she seems much more sympathetic to young Murasaki than to Genji, who comes off as a blustering, ignorant buffoon with his knowing smiles to

superlatives, produced by later Heian-era enthusiasts (mostly or entirely women) of the original novel.

7 Harper, “Genji Gossip.”

Koremitsu, his right-hand man, not to mention his callous treatment of Murasaki, including feigned bewilderment at her outrage. The author presents, as Genji's only excuse for his assault on Murasaki's childhood world, the claim that her charm at length overwhelmed him and he could no longer help himself. If the author had really wanted the reader to be convinced by this sophistry, it was certainly within her rhetorical powers to describe Genji's action in a more flattering, or at least a less condemnatory light (as she had done in most, perhaps all other cases of sexual coercion involving Genji). The author choosing not to do so here is telling, especially in light of the fact that she makes a concerted effort to make young Murasaki's feelings intelligible to her audience and render believable her sense of violation.

Before looking closely at the text, some general background might be helpful. Genji's initial interest in Murasaki stemmed from the fact that she greatly resembled his secret, forbidden love, Fujitsubo, a consort of Genji's father, the retired emperor. Fujitsubo is a conscious or unconscious stand-in for Genji's longing for his own late mother, Kiritsubo, permanently out of reach, and in fact, Murasaki is Fujitsubo's niece. This chapter, "Aoi" (the name of Genji's wife, which comes from a vine-flower that Royall Tyler translates as "Heart to Heart"),⁸ actually features all four of the women with whom Genji is most strongly connected over his entire life: his secret and forbidden lover Fujitsubo (with whom Genji had an illegitimate son who would later become Emperor Reizei 冷泉天皇 (950–1011, r. 967–969), his mistress the Lady of Rokujō, his wife Aoi, and the young Murasaki.

Over the course of the chapter, the other women gradually move out of reach for Genji, until only one is left: Murasaki herself. Fujitsubo, as the favorite of His Eminence, his father, the retired emperor, is now—just like his deceased mother Kiritsubo—definitely off-limits, as she is described as being “with His Eminence constantly, without a break, to the extent that she was like a commoner” (*ima wa, mashite himanau, tada udo no yō nite, soi owashimasu o* 今は、ましてひまなう、ただ人のやうにて、そひおはしますを)⁹ making it quite unlikely Genji would be able to find any time to

meet with her intimately, as indeed he proves unable to do. Bitter jealousy between his mistress and his proper wife flares into the open in a battle of carriages in which Rokujō is humiliated.¹⁰ She subsequently seems to have possessed Aoi and caused her a great deal of distress, perhaps leading directly to Aoi's death soon after the birth of a son, later named Yūgiri.

By dying, Aoi has of course placed herself out of Genji's reach. Rokujō's possible role in Aoi's death makes continuing to consort with her very difficult for both Genji and she herself. This leaves only Murasaki, the one person who cannot run away, who has no support, no other adult figure, and certainly no lover (like Fujitsubo does) to rely upon, and is moreover unlikely to die suddenly. Especially if we consider the principle of proximity in determining attraction, it comes as no surprise that Genji—who in the period of mourning after Aoi's death even abstains from dallying with the servants as he usually did—is filled with desire for Murasaki. To a certain extent, then, the author has provided a subtle narrative explanation for the timing of Genji's decision to switch from “father” to “husband” mode. But does the author condone this sudden and irreversible change?

The Days of Innocence

It is worth looking at the passage just before Genji's sexual assault on Murasaki in some detail to set the scene for the fateful moment. In it, Genji shows considerable paternalism towards his ward.

On the day of the festival, Genji removed himself to his house on Nijō Avenue, and it was from there that he went out to see the festival. Crossing over to the west wing, he had Koremitsu bring the carriage around, asking “Gentlewomen, will you be going then?” and smiled as he gazed upon the young lady Murasaki, who had arranged her appearance in a most lovely way.

monogatari, vol. 1, and in consultation with Tyler's notes in *The Tale of Genji*. This is my translation of lines 3–4 of Yamagishi, *Genji monogatari*, p. 305.

¹⁰ Though “jealousy” is perhaps not the best word, Childs argues that women's feelings of resentment towards female rivals in texts like *The Tale of Genji* are not sexual jealousy per se but rather insecurity over their potential loss of status or face if the rival succeeds in usurping their place with the male lover. Childs, “Coercive Courtship,” p. 120.

⁸ For the Aoi chapter in translation, see Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, pp. 162–90.

⁹ Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the author, from the Japanese text presented in Yamagishi Tokubei's *Genji*

“Come with me, my lady. We shall see the festival together,” he declared, and then noticing that her hair was even more beautiful than usual, he stroked her tresses, saying “It would appear you have not had it cut for a long time. Today is probably an auspicious day to have it trimmed,” whereupon he summoned a learned scholar of the almanac [of divination], and had someone ask him about the proper time for hair-cutting.

Meanwhile, “Gentlewomen, you come out first” he called, and observed the pleasant air the children all had. The edges of their entrancing hair, all cut across in a gorgeous line, stood out vividly against the wandering pattern of their hakama. “I shall cut your hair myself,” he declared, but soon exclaimed, “There are places where it is just so thick; I wonder how long it will eventually grow?” and was at some difficulty in cutting it.

“Those with very long hair still seem to have somewhat shorter forehead locks, but your complete lack of stray strands just won’t do at all!” he said [in jest], and finishing his trimming, he uttered the wish for “a thousand fathoms,” something that left Shōnagon [Murasaki’s nurse], who was observing, both moved and humbly grateful.

*The depths unmeasured of the thousand fathoms weed,
miru of the sea;*

*To see where their growth will end is a joy reserved to me
he said, whereupon she wrote down this reply on a scrap,
A thousand fathoms? I know not if they are so deep,
since the changing tide*

Ebbs and flows so restlessly, and will not settle on a side
And her appearance as she wrote such a skillful poem was both young and fetching, so that he thought it splendid.¹¹

Why is Shōnagon “grateful” if not for Genji’s intimate involvement with young Murasaki, teasing her a little and going so far as to stroke her hair, and above all for his paternalistic condescension in cutting her hair personally? To Shōnagon, who (as we shall see below) is scheming to place her young mistress first in Genji’s heart, these are signs of his enduring interest in Murasaki as a potential wife.

Yet what would they mean for Murasaki? It is a different kind of paternalism that the child must have seen in his actions, because she viewed him as her father, and

in his innocent fondling of her hair and his teasing, she saw only fatherly indulgence. How could she be expected to understand the physical requirements of her future marriage to Genji? Could a girl of thirteen or fourteen,¹² who moreover had long been accustomed to viewing this man as her father, expand her mental parameters to conceive of the dramatic change that was to take place in their relationship?¹³

When Genji hints in his poem about that coming change by employing the pun on *miru* みる, which refers both to a kind of seaweed and to the concept of “seeing” and thereby possessing a woman—since in Heian society women went to great lengths to avoid being seen by men and to be seen was thus a deeply intimate experience¹⁴—does she understand just what it will mean for her to be “seen” by Genji, an event that is rapidly approaching? Can we read her poetic reply as evidence of tacit understanding of what is coming, and of an awakened sexual jealousy against the other women with whom Genji has amorous relations, or should we rather view it as a more innocent exercise in poetic wit, expressing platonic jealousy that her father’s attentions are too intermittent? In the absence of any evidence for the former, and given the abundance of support for seeing her as a “young” child attached to her father, we must assume the latter.

In this stage of their lives, early in the chapter, Murasaki is still manifestly a child. Genji himself has one wife plus one secret mistress and one (more or less) open mistress among whom he divides his affections; thus, in a sense, Genji has no need of Murasaki as a wife yet, so he makes no effort to rush the ostensibly happy event along. He is temporarily content to wait—though given the circumstances and Murasaki’s extreme youth I hardly think this “patience” is worthy of praise as proof of his moral quality, as Tyler argues¹⁵—but after the disaster with Aoi and the taint of Aoi’s death hanging over his relationship with Rokujō, his outlets for both

¹¹ This section begins on p. 311, line 9, of Yamagishi, and continues until p. 313, line 9.

¹² There is some confusion over how to express her actual age given the premodern Japanese convention of children being counted as one year old at the moment of birth and advancing one year in age each New Year’s Day.

¹³ Murasaki’s powerlessness is only accentuated in light of her own biological father Prince Hyōbu’s lackluster effort to locate her after Genji kidnaps her. I am grateful to the anonymous peer reviewer for pointing out that Murasaki’s tragic isolation is greater due to the failure of her biological family to protect her.

¹⁴ Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, p. 169n.

¹⁵ Tyler, “I am I: Genji and Murasaki,” p. 443.

sexual and emotional gratification have dwindled to nothing. It is a very different Genji, therefore, who returns home to Nijō from the palace late one night a few weeks after Aoi's death, and looks in on Murasaki.

The Surrogate Wife

In the next portion of the passage from chapter 9 that culminates in his sexual assault of Murasaki, we witness Genji plotting to replace Fujitsubo (and Aoi) with his erstwhile daughter.

Changing his robes, Genji crossed over to the west wing. He saw that the seasonal change [of robes and decorations to winter style, which occurred on the first day of the tenth month in the lunar calendar]¹⁶ had brought to the room's furnishings a fresh brightness unclouded by melancholy, and the attire and appearance of the young ladies of noble birth as well as the girls was arranged in a matching manner pleasing to the eyes. He thought the exquisite way Shōnagon was treating him had no aspect that troubled his heart at all.

The young lady [Murasaki] was very beautifully dressed. "Long it has been since I was here last, and I find you so incredibly adult-like!" he said, and when he lifted up her little curtain to gaze upon her, her graceful air of embarrassment as she looked aside was flawless. The sidelong glances she gave him in the lamp-light, the arrangement of her hair, and all her other features showed that she [Murasaki] would come to resemble perfectly, without a single aspect different, the one [Fujitsubo] for whom his heart longed; and looking upon her, Genji was most pleased.¹⁷

We have already seen how Fujitsubo was off-limits given her constant attendance on the retired emperor, and indeed it was mostly because of her resemblance to Fujitsubo, essentially beyond his reach even then, that Genji had originally adopted Murasaki, intending from the very start to have the next best thing to his secret, forbidden lover: a younger, more pliable look-alike who best of all could be his and his alone. And now, he sees that dream coming true before his very eyes: when he

ends his weeks-long absence from Nijō, during which he was grieving at the house of his parents-in-law for the departed Aoi, he sees that Murasaki has come to resemble Fujitsubo down to the last detail, and since Fujitsubo is a grown woman, one must assume this means that to his eyes at least, Murasaki is now sexually mature.

Innocence Shattered

Once Genji establishes—in his mind at least—Murasaki's suitability as a sexual partner, he soon thereafter acts upon his desire and makes her his newest wife.

Coming up close beside her, he spoke of his period of distress and worry, and of other matters, saying "I do long to speak freely with you of the happenings of recent days, but as I think it would be unlucky to do so, I shall go to another place and rest for a little while before returning. From now on, you will see me so ceaselessly that you will come to find me repellent" (*itowashū sae ya, obosaren* いとはしうさへや、おほされん).

Hearing this, Shōnagon was happy, yet she still thought him unreliable. "He has so many peerless ladies with which he has trysts that a troublesome one from among them might rise up and take the place of my mistress" she thought, revealing her mean and scheming heart.

Crossing over to the other side [the east wing, to his own apartments], Genji surrendered his legs over to the lady called Chūjo to be massaged, and then fell asleep. The next morning, he sent a letter to the apartments of the young master, his son. Looking upon the moving reply plunged him back into unending grief. He now had nothing at all to do, which made him apt to stare off into space, yet he remained too melancholy to make up his mind to resume his casual trysts.

The young lady had been arranged to perfection, something he was pleased to note, and because to his eyes (*minashi* 見なし)¹⁸ she had reached an age no longer

¹⁶ Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, p. 186n.

¹⁷ See Yamagishi, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, from line 7 to line 12 of p. 344.

¹⁸ As the author of *The Tale of Genji* is, for the time being, limiting description of the scene to Genji's perspective, this could be interpreted as an endorsement of the male gaze: Genji sees evidence of Murasaki's physical maturation (even if she does not or cannot appreciate what that might mean) and chooses to act on it. But if the author were content to leave the viewer with the impression that progression to a sexual relationship was not only inevitable (which, given the

ill-suited for marriage, he tried occasionally hinting at his intentions, but she appeared not to understand his meaning.¹⁹

His days were free, and he spent them with her, passing the time playing Go and the character radical guessing-game; and as the days passed thus, her endearing, fetching disposition, and her beautiful, graceful gestures she displayed while in the midst of play, were such that for Genji, given the months and years he had held off while she was still a child, when she had only a child's charms, it became more than he could bear (*shinobigataku narite* しのびがたくなりて), and so even though it pained him to think of the distress this would cause her (*kokoro gurushi keredo* 心苦しけれど)...²⁰

Note that the rape itself is never described or even referred to directly; the reader is left to surmise what had happened solely based on this suggestive unfinished sentence, combined with the sudden shift (discussed below) after this point to a very distressed Murasaki.

In the passage above, clearly Genji thinks he has observed a change in his young lady, something to convince him she has become a woman and is ready to experience the particulars of married life. But perhaps it is only his recent loss, the grief of which he experiences again when he gets the reply to his letter to his son's apartments, that suddenly repaints Murasaki from child to woman, from object of fatherly affection to object of lust. And even if she is showing obvious visual signs of puberty, that certainly does not indicate anything about her mental state. In any case, whether his suggestive behavior took the form of flirtatious comments or body language, since it appears to have gone completely over her head, it was obviously not enough to help Murasaki

change her mental parameters regarding Genji's identity to her. Thus, she is still incapable of seeing him in a romantic light when he suddenly finds himself unable to endure his desire any longer and acts upon it. And so, as it turns out, his prediction that she would come to find him repellent (*itowashū*) was all too accurate.

Yet the most shocking aspect of this situation is not Genji's act itself, but the fact that he did it despite knowing it would upset Murasaki. He cannot pretend he was unaware it would cause Murasaki distress; the author is careful to include the comment "even though it pained him" (*kokoro gurushi keredo*), referring to the emotional sympathy Genji feels for Murasaki as he acts on his desire. It is therefore hard to see in Genji's behavior anything but an act of callous sexual gratification—after a relatively long period of abstinence from all sexual activities, in fact—that he knew beforehand would distress her. He knows she is not ready to accept him as a lover on her own terms—he knows this, but he indulges himself anyway.²¹

The *Merriam-Webster* dictionary defines rape as follows: "Unlawful sexual activity and usually sexual intercourse carried out forcibly or under threat of injury against the will usually of a female or with a person who is beneath a certain age or incapable of valid consent." Except for the single word "unlawful" it seems this modern Western definition fits Genji's act here perfectly. Murasaki definitely did not consent, and given her traumatized reaction, it seems likely she protested Genji's advances, but he continued anyway, making this a case of forceful sexual assault upon someone who had not given consent.

Many scholars, notably Childs, have strongly objected to using a modern dictionary's definition of an act that was surely understood differently in Heian Japan. Such critics essentially argue for the relativism of concepts like "rape" or "sexual assault" as well, but while

predilections of the male protagonist, it may very well be) but also in some sense "natural" and unobjectionable, all she had to do was have the narrator continue to describe things in a manner sympathetic to or at least neutral towards Genji's conduct. Instead, as we shall see below, we are given insight into Murasaki's mental and emotional state, shifting reader sympathy away from Genji in this instance.

19 Note that this lack of understanding is not the same thing as what Childs identified as the sexual enticement of vulnerability: Murasaki embodies innocence and perhaps weakness, but not a knowing vulnerability/fear, neither distress (feigned or genuine) nor coldhearted refusal, but mere puzzlement. Childs, "The Value of Vulnerability," p. 1064.

20 See Yamagishi, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, from line 12 of p. 344 to the final line of p. 345.

21 Here I must differ substantially from Childs's analysis of this crucial episode; to Childs, his years of restraint, patiently waiting until Murasaki has reached puberty (Childs further cites in Genji's favor the fact that many others assume disapprovingly he consummated their relationship years earlier, allegedly illustrating his great restraint in not doing so), is evidence of his kind-heartedness, whereas to me everything hinges on Genji's understanding that even at her current age sex would cause her great distress and was something she could not yet fully comprehend. The author is careful to draw the reader's attention to Genji's awareness of the serious consequences of his act, making the interpretation Childs attempts more difficult to sustain. Childs, "The Value of Vulnerability," p. 1071.

Childs or others may be able to excuse the majority of Genji's sexual acts in the tale, no apologist has yet delivered a convincing explanation for the case of Murasaki no Ue.²² There is ample evidence in this very passage for the universality of the consequences of rape as well as for the ethical knowledge that certain acts are moral transgressions. Genji, after all, is described as aware that what he was doing would hurt Murasaki deeply—and thus, presumably, that it was morally indefensible, a fundamentally unloving act—but chose to proceed anyway. Moreover, Murasaki's virulent reaction (analyzed below) to Genji's violation shows that the consequences of rape were very real for her, and the author's choice to include her reaction makes it more difficult to explain away the real-life consequences of such a transgression.

The issue is not whether Heian society viewed sex between thirteen-year-old girls and men—or even whether physical coercion/rape could in that society be seen—as permissible, whatever moral implications that might have.²³ The key issue, rather, is that some members of Heian society as conceived of by the author, up to and including Genji himself, were aware that under some circumstances, such as when the other person was too young to understand completely what was happening, to groom a girl or very young woman and then force her

to have sex would cause great distress. Genji consciously transgressed when he seized Murasaki in his arms that night. The traumatized Murasaki shows us ample evidence of the seriousness of Genji's violation with her reaction.

Childhood Lost

In the final portion of the passage describing—however obliquely—Genji's sexual assault on Murasaki, the point of view shifts to her thoughts and feelings on the incident, detailing how her childlike love for Genji turned, at least temporarily, to hate.

What could have happened? There was no outward sign that would allow anyone to tell that the nature of their relationship had changed (*hito no, kejime mitatematsuri waku beki on naka ni mo aranu ni* 人の、けぢめ見たてまつり分くべき御仲にもあらぬに), yet there came a morning where the gentleman (*otoko kimi* をとこ君) rose early, but the lady (*onna kimi* 女君) did not rise at all. Her ladies-in-waiting murmured in concern, “What can be ailing her, to keep her thus from rising? She must not be feeling her usual self.”

As Genji crossed over to his own apartments, he placed an inkstone box inside her curtain. In a break between people [i.e., when no one was around], she made a great effort (*karōjite* からうじて) and raised her head, and noticed that there was a knotted letter (*hiki musubitaru fumi* ひき結びたる文) on her pillow.

When she innocently (*nani kokoro naku* 何心なく) pulled it open and looked at it, she found:

How senseless it was, to have a barrier between; the nights piled up

Yet still we lay—intimate, but with a robe between us

It looked as though he had written it playfully. That he had *this* kind of heart she had never dared think, and so she could not help but feel revolted (*asamashū obosaru* あさましう思さる) as she thought, “Why ever did I blindly put my faith in one whose heart would cause my own such pain?”

At noon Genji crossed over to the west wing, and said “It seems you are feeling out of sorts; how do you feel now? I shall be lonely if we do not play Go today,” but sneaking a glance in at her only caused her to pull the bedclothes over her head even more where she lay. Her ladies-in-waiting withdrew as he approached her; he said, “Why are you treating me so poorly? The

22 Indeed, Childs argues persuasively in her analysis of Genji's kidnapping of (and “limited aggression” towards) another of Genji's sexual conquests, Utsusemi, that, far from definitive evidence of rape, there are textual grounds to conclude that Genji was ultimately unsuccessful in having sex with her at all. Childs, “The Value of Vulnerability,” p. 1066. But the author's ambiguous treatment of the situation with Utsusemi only enhances the shocking and unambiguous nature of how she chooses to describe Genji's assault on Murasaki.

23 Childs, very much to her credit, acknowledges countervailing textual evidence in *Genji monogatari*, with the author describing the shining prince as at least occasionally consciously considering coercion/rape as one possible tactic in his seductions. But while Childs uses Genji's sexual encounter with the daughter of the former governor of Akashi as proof of Genji's fine character (since he ultimately decided not to use this tactic), we might equally well use it as evidence, not only that Genji was capable of rape, but also that the author/narrator wished to alert the reader to this aspect of his personality rather than leave everything ambiguous and open to interpretation, as she had done with Utsusemi. Childs, “The Value of Vulnerability,” p. 1069. This is in line with Childs's own evolving position on the issue of rape. She points out, “Even if they [Genji and his two sons] renounce rape... the very fact that they consider it implies that rape may not have been uncommon,” but I would counter that Genji et al. are also being signaled in the text as willing to consider rape. Childs, “Coercive Courtship,” p. 121.

unthinkable (*omoi no hoka ni* 思ひのほか) has happened: you have taken a dislike to me (*kokoro uku* 心憂く), haven't you. How strange your gentlewomen must be thinking this," and pulling back her covers, he found that she was completely soaked in sweat, even down to her forelocks (*ase ni, oshi hitashite, hitaigami mo, itō, nure tamaeri* 汗に、おしひたして、額髪も、いたう、ぬれ給へり).

"My, my," he exclaimed, "what a mess. You act as though it were such a serious matter!" (*kore wa, ito, yuyushiki waza zo yo* これは、いと、ゆ々しきわざぞよ). He tried all manner of ways to calm her down, but she genuinely seemed to look on him with great bitterness (*ito, tsurashi* いと、つらし), and uttered not even a single word in answer (*tsuyu no on irae mo shi tamawazu* 露の御いらへもし給はず, literally "granted not so much as a drop of dew [in response]").

He said resentfully, "Alright now, do not cry—from now on, you will not be seeing me anymore. I am so embarrassed [at the way you're treating me]" (*ito hazukashi* いと恥づかし), and so on, and opened the ink-stone box, but found nothing inside when he looked, prompting him to think "How juvenile her attitude is!" (*waka no on arisama* 若の御有様) and look upon her as adorable (*rōtaku* らうたく). Yet though he spent the entire day with her behind her curtains, trying to console her, she would not relent (*toke gataki on keshiki* とけがたき御気色), making her seem all the more adorable (*itodo rōtage nari* いとどらうたげなり).²⁴

In this one episode, the author's sympathy seems to shift over to Murasaki entirely. The passage gives us insight into her point of view and also focuses throughout on her suffering, offering a strong contrast to the portrayal of Genji's other sexual escapades, which are described more neutrally even in cases of what Childs calls "assault and kidnapping" that appear to stop only just short of outright rape.²⁵ At the very beginning of this passage, the author shows us Genji and Murasaki were indeed used to sleeping in the same bed, as his later poem hints, with the line *hito no, kejime mitatematsuri waku beki on naka ni mo aranu*, meaning "there was no outward sign that would allow anyone to tell that the nature of their

relationship had changed." Since they were of course sleeping in the same bed that night, but we are told that nothing had changed, this indicates that they had been sleeping in the same bed regularly. Once again, since Murasaki has until this night clearly not been thinking of Genji in a sexual manner, their erstwhile platonic intimacy was part of their father-daughter relationship, a childhood environment of love and safety that Genji destroyed that night.²⁶

The author demonstrates the sexual nature of the encounter, despite the oblique language of the passage, by describing Genji and Murasaki as a man (*otoko*) and woman (*onna*), which was a literary convention in romantic episodes. Yet this "woman" is still in reality a child and finds the once-shining figure of her surrogate father, Genji, for whose undivided attention and company she had longed in their earlier poetic exchange, utterly repulsive (*asamashū*) because of what he has done to her. Filial love has turned to visceral hate, as evidenced by her attempt to hide from him under the covers—a flimsy shield against his unwanted presence, but the only one she had, given that she was a dependent in his household and there was no one she could rely upon except for him.

Furthermore, the author draws explicit attention to the physiological symptoms of her distress, as shown in the description of her profuse sweating. This should not be interpreted merely as the natural result of being under the covers; she is described as "completely soaked" (*oshi hitashite... itō, nure tamaeri*), a condition that sounds more like evidence for psychological distress than merely being too hot. She also feels listless; she raises her head only after a great effort (*karōjite*), suggesting that at the very least, she is severely depressed.

Yet what can Murasaki really do? She is a girl of thirteen or fourteen, forced to have sex with someone who had more or less signaled from the beginning that he meant to marry her. Her naivete made one of the only resistance strategies available to female characters in Heian-era literature, namely extreme passivity,

24 See Yamagishi, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, from line 1 of p. 346 to line 7 of p. 347.

25 Childs identifies Genji's forcefulness towards Utsusemi and Oborozukiyo as two such moments. Childs, "The Value of Vulnerability," p. 1062.

26 As Childs argues, Genji's attraction to many of his lovers (including Utsusemi and even Lady Rokujō herself) hinged upon their playing hard to get, but this logic does not apply in Murasaki's case, as she was too childlike to know how to play this game; perhaps something darker and more primal inspired his desire for this child-woman than the courtly dance of romance, the "game of moans." Childs, "Coercive Courtship," p. 132.

unavailable as well: if one cannot understand the nature of the coming threat, how can one be expected to cold-shoulder the potential assailant in a conscious effort to dissuade the assault?²⁷ Who would listen to her objections that she had not been ready? And here, completely in Genji's power, in his Nijō house, her home for years now, to whom could she appeal, anyway? Shōnagon, ostensibly her closest companion, was desperately hoping Genji would do exactly what he did, because it would guarantee Murasaki's future—and her own. Indeed, it is this aspect of the situation, Murasaki's powerlessness, that is particularly heartrending, because she is still a dependent of Genji when it happens.²⁸ She certainly cannot run away, because she has nowhere to go and no one to aid her in escaping, anyway.²⁹ So what can she actually do to show her displeasure?

Her only weapon is to refuse to give Genji the satisfaction of her company, and this she does with a vengeance. She will not get out of bed, categorically refusing to participate in Genji's world; when he shows his hateful face, she tries to hide, then when even that last flimsy defense is stripped from her, she refuses to speak; but most of all, she utterly confounds the strong cultural expectation for the woman in such a situation to write a poem in response to the man's love poem. Earlier in the chapter the author showed us that Murasaki is perfectly capable of writing poems, and writing them well, and that poetic exchange occurred partly to set up this new, failed moment, when Genji writes her his flippant "Why

did I wait this long?" poem and she dramatically refuses to follow suit.³⁰ For her, it is no laughing matter, no happy moment to be celebrated by a literary exchange.³¹

And lest the reader be tempted to agree with Genji's later claims that Murasaki is just being childish, that she is making something out of nothing, the author chooses to have the narrator offer insight into Murasaki's inner state, what Murasaki herself is thinking. All of a sudden, the author takes us inside the mind of this character who until now had been little more than a pretty, well-behaved prop for Genji to trot out and admire, a stand-in for Fujitsubo. It is at this very moment of crisis that the author chooses to let us hear Murasaki's thoughts, and so in a sense, it is out of this moment of crisis that the character of Murasaki is in fact born. We discover that she is a real person for whom Genji's action has had real consequences; we hear her bitterly remonstrating over her folly in putting her faith "in one whose heart would cause my own such pain" and looking upon Genji with revulsion (*asamashū*). This moment of psychological agency for Murasaki is fascinating, and it is not the last time in the chapter she demonstrates that she is more than just a foil.

Genji's reaction to her behavior is at best insensitive, and at worst, a deliberate attempt to exculpate himself by blaming her for overreacting. He continuously tries to laugh off her behavior, disingenuously commenting "It seems you are feeling out of sorts" before going on to declare, "I shall be lonely if we do not play Go today," trying to shame Murasaki into relenting and forgiving him. He continues his gaslighting tactics of feigning surprise at her reaction and trying to make her feel guilty by asking, "Why are you treating me so poorly?" As if he doesn't know! He continues to pretend not to understand the cause of her malady with the expression *omoi no hoka*, meaning "surprising" or "[it is] unthinkable," implying that the fact she has taken a dislike to him (*kokoro uku*) is unexplainable or astonishing. And

27 Childs provides evidence that somewhat older women/female characters did attempt, and at least one succeeded at, this extreme passivity strategy, but Murasaki would have needed to understand exactly what was coming in order to deploy this tactic effectively. Childs, "The Value of Vulnerability," p. 1074. Since she is unable to use any of the existing defensive strategies—being too young to understand them or indeed what is about to happen—it is very hard to see (especially in light of her outraged reaction to his assault) any hint of "consent" here.

28 As Childs points out of Murasaki, "Her status is... totally dependent upon Genji's love." Childs, "Coercive Courtship," p. 134.

29 This is where Childs's analysis, while convincing for women not entirely under the thumb of the male lover, cannot really apply to Murasaki: as she points out, lovers like Genji usually seem to conclude that literal rape "is not a good strategy for winning her heart," but what of someone like Murasaki, without any viable option, nowhere to run, no other would-be protector to turn to but him? Childs, "The Value of Vulnerability," p. 1076. She must have gritted her teeth and stayed with her rapist, both father and husband, and somehow forgave him. In Childs's own words, "the connections leading from desire to rape, to pity, and then to a loving attachment meant that a woman might, on occasion, salvage something worthwhile from having suffered a sexual assault." Childs, "The Value of Vulnerability," p. 1078.

30 As Childs points out, a written poetic reply, in matters of the heart, was *de rigueur*, as not preparing one "was immature, rude, insensitive, or cruel" especially (as here, with Genji) when the man was of very high rank. Childs, "Coercive Courtship," p. 127.

31 It is possible that a woman dramatically deciding not to reply in writing on the morning after may have been, or was in the process of becoming, a demonstration of extreme distress; Childs found one other example of a woman in another written work, *The Confessions of Lady Nijō* (*Towazugatari* とはすがたり, ca. 1307), who refused to answer a love letter after the wedding night, in her case because she was deeply in love with someone else at the time. Childs, "Coercive Courtship," p. 128.

he notches up the guilt by reminding Murasaki of what her ladies will think if she keeps giving him the cold shoulder.

Genji tries to laugh away the physiological evidence of her distress (her profuse sweating, and presumably ample tears as well) by suggesting she is making a big deal out of nothing. He complains “You act as though it were such a serious matter!” (*kore wa, ito, yuyushiki waza zo yo*), and proceeds to try to fix the mess he well knows he created by employing various methods to cheer her up—none successful, of course. He finally resorts to threatening to stop visiting her completely, blaming her for his embarrassment, though since he goes on to spend the entire day with her after this, one wonders if he said it in more of a mock-serious voice than a genuinely reproachful one.

He also manages to interpret her obvious anguish and resentment toward him as making her more endearing, her refusal to write him a poem in response endearingly childish. Again and again she is described, in Genji’s eyes, as “adorable” (*rōtashi*), and the more she refuses to yield to his efforts at reconciliation, the dearer she becomes.³² This suggests that despite his awareness that his act would cause her distress, he has decided to believe his own arguments that she was overreacting, and that what happened was no big deal. Indeed, there is every indication to believe that the next passage, in which they are served baby boar cakes, implies he sleeps with her again that night, since he stays in the west wing

all day and night, even though given her reaction after the first night it is impossible to imagine her relenting willingly the second night either. Given that his presence had become hateful to her, night two must have only exacerbated her sense of betrayal, yet that night we see Genji going out and ordering wedding cakes for night three (the final night in the loose ceremony of a Heian-era courtly marriage), giving his trusted right-hand man Koremitsu a knowing smile (*hohoemite no tamau on keshiki* 頬笑みてのたまふ御気色)³³ as he does so.

And then we have the worst emotional betrayal of all:

As Genji wore himself out trying to cajole Murasaki out of her silence, he felt for the first time what someone who steals a woman must feel, which was most pleasant. “The degree to which she moved me in years past has become just one aspect of how I feel. The human heart is so distressing!” He could not help but feel that now, the idea of being apart from her for even one night was too much to bear.³⁴

Here we have Genji reveling in the psychological consequences of forcing a (very young) woman into a sexual relationship against her will. The resistance, the anger: it is what he imagines men who carry off women must experience, and he finds that thought most pleasant (*ito okashikute* いとをかしくて). What is it that has caused Genji to fall more deeply in love with her? It is her resistance, and the depth of her outrage! This is as far from a consensual relationship as one can get, nor can her lack of consent be dismissed essentially as coquettishness, or an inability to say either yes or no without putting one or both of them in an awkward position, as Tyler (and to some extent Childs) try to argue, because it is too long-lasting and heartfelt.³⁵

Murasaki does not soon forgive Genji his betrayal. Even on the occasion of her Donning of the Train ceremony (*onmogi no koto* 御裳着の事, a key coming-of-age ceremony for young women), she still has not relented:

[B]ut the young lady now thought of him with the most unparalleled dislike, thinking only with bitterness that

32 This focus on Murasaki’s traumatized reaction as a key component of her appeal to Genji might *prima facie* seem to fit nicely with Childs’s overall argument about the importance of (a show of) vulnerability of sexual relations and attraction in Heian literature, but then again, there is nothing coquettish about her angry reaction to his betrayal. Childs argues her anger stems not from the sex itself but from the discovery that he had intended to convert her into a bride all along, thus spoiling the seductive nature of the sexual encounter from her perspective. Childs, “The Value of Vulnerability,” p. 1071. As the narrator does not describe their first night together at all, this is certainly one possible reading of the situation, but the strength of her sustained anger would seem to suggest this is a lot more than mere pique over Genji’s long-term secret (?) plan. Murasaki’s outrage can thus support a reading not merely of sexual coercion the night before but, potentially, of literal sexual violence. It is hard to imagine the narrator describing such an assault in any detail, not if the reader is meant to retain any empathy for Genji, so the absence of an explicit description of rape is not, in my view, evidence of absence (proof it did not occur). The author of the tale does seem to feel deep ambivalence, and indeed a kind of moral condemnation about this moment, as expressed by the narrator’s extended description of Murasaki’s reaction the morning after the encounter.

33 Yamagishi, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, final line of p. 347.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 348, lines 7–10.

35 See Tyler, “Marriage.”

“those years in which I placed my trust for everything in him, twining myself around his little finger, now bring my heart only disgust,” and indeed, she refused to meet his glance. She could not bear his jests (*tawabure* 戯れ), which brought her great pain, and was silent, plunged into dark thoughts (*warinaki mono* わりなき物), not at all as she used to be. Witnessing this changed appearance of hers, Genji found it both amusing and heart-wrenching, and he said resentfully, “The years I thought of you [tenderly] have not turned out as I hoped, and I find it most painful that your attitude has not increased in familiarity toward me,” and with that came the New Year.³⁶

Once again, here we see Genji attempting to defuse her disgust by laughing it off, but his jests are not well received by Murasaki. He continues to alternate between trying to dismiss her outrage as overreaction through his jesting, and trying to shame her into giving up her cold-shoulder campaign, even as he alternates between finding her antics amusing and painful. But once more, the strongest condemnation of Genji is not necessarily his act itself, but his tendency to gaslight her and specifically to treat her distressed reaction as a joke. She is sunken in silent depression (plunged into dark thoughts), and her childlike innocence is gone forever, yet Genji finds this at least partially amusing. There are few things more universally reprehensible than a person taking pleasure in another person’s suffering, but it seems that in a sense, this is exactly what Genji does here.

The author may have chosen this narrative tack possibly out of a strategy to make the character of Genji more realistic and believable. He is shown as capable of behavior that is borderline unforgivable—and the narrator explicitly draws our attention to this in chapter 4, apologizing for giving the reader such a negative impression of Genji. Exploring Genji’s moral nadir gives him room to grow (which he arguably does throughout the middle of the book) as he reflects on the karmic weight of his misdeeds, regarding his misfortunes later in life as just desserts. What fun would it be to read a long story about a character who is perfect and therefore need never change, after all? But can—or should—Genji’s later personal growth erase moral outrage over his treatment of Murasaki, especially as it

is an outrage apparently shared by the author/narrator, who this time offers no apology for showing Genji at his worst?

Indeed, far from striking a forgiving tone or even simply minimizing the extent of his crime by pivoting away from Murasaki’s reaction to it, the passage above signals the persistence of Murasaki’s hatred towards Genji. We are told that he continued to spend his days with her, pleading with her to relent but to no avail, until the New Year. We know that the baby boar cakes were eaten on the first day of the boar in the tenth month of the luni-solar calendar, meaning somewhere between the first and the twelfth day, and the rape occurred the night before, so we can narrow down the time frame to between the first and the eleventh day of the tenth month as the beginning of her withdrawal, which has not changed even by the first day of the first month, probably about eight weeks later.³⁷ By chapter 10 of *The Tale of Genji*, they have at last reconciled, but one thing is clear—her resentment was no short-lived flight of fancy, nor can it easily be dismissed, as Tyler and Childs try to do, as merely an obligatory refusal to consent initially, coupled by a little pouting to show her high quality.³⁸

Ultimately, the virulence and length of her negative reaction to Genji’s act are precisely what separates this situation from others in which the woman seems reluctant to acquiesce in romantic situations. That Murasaki was not merely putting on a coy show of reluctance is clear from the physiological (her profuse sweating) and psychological (sunken in dark thoughts) evidence and from the extraordinary duration of her obstinacy in refusing to warm to Genji afterwards. If we can grasp the acute nature of Murasaki’s distress, we will avoid falling victim to an excessive cultural relativism that might dismiss contemporary concepts like rape as inapplicable, as all part of the culture of the time and thus above moral reproach. Even the compelling claims of scholars such as Tyler and Childs—arguing that for a female virgin, sexual assent was not up to her but rather her father—cannot excuse Genji, as he essentially had kidnapped Murasaki, removing her father’s opinion from consideration and seeking to fill that role himself: at a stroke, he became both assenting father and

36 Yamagishi, *Genji monogatari*, vol. 1, p. 351, lines 2-8.

37 For a note about the practice and dating of eating baby boar cakes, see Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, p. 187n.

38 Tyler, “Marriage”; Childs, “The Value of Vulnerability.”

deflowerer.³⁹ While it is no doubt important not to project twenty-first century notions of morality on eleventh-century literature, it would nonetheless behoove us to rise above a permissive relativism to take note of the textual evidence of the author's own engagement with this issue.

Conclusion

My purpose in this article has been less to vilify Genji than to draw out the echoes of young Murasaki's anguish, to highlight the hints the author has left us of the real consequences, be it ever so culturally permissible, of sexual violation. That Murasaki was later able to forgive Genji despite her suffering at his hands is strong evidence of her resilient and forgiving nature (or possibly of Genji's success in grooming her), not proof that she was never upset in the first place or that those feelings were somehow invalid. I hope her young voice, crying out in fear and dismay as her childhood was forcibly ended, will not be drowned out by those too ready to dismiss her life story as merely an amoral relic of the ancient culture of Japan.

*Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Imprison her soft hand, and let her rave
— John Keats, "Ode on Melancholy"*

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³⁹ Childs cites Tyler to make the case that sexual relations cannot be rape if the woman's father gave his blessing, but that argument cannot adequately excuse Genji in this instance. Childs, "Coercive Courtship," p. 119.

“A Ship Arrived from an Unknown Country on a Fire-Bird Day”: Another Look at the *Teppōki*

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ALTHOUGH the Venetian merchant Marco Polo (ca. 1254–1324) mentions Japan in his *Travels*, the first Europeans to come to Japan were Portuguese. They reached India at the end of the fifteenth century and in 1511 established a stronghold in the strategic port of Malacca. From there they became active in trading in Southeast Asia and China, especially in the silver, silk, and pepper trades. In the 1540s they arrived in Japan.¹ Among the accounts of such arrivals, the most famous and detailed is the *Teppōki* 鉄砲記 (An Account of Firearms), which describes how Portuguese traders introduced firearms (*teppō* 鉄砲) to Tanegashima 種子島, an island just south of Kyushu, in 1543.² Thus it is an important historical document describing a significant event in the transition from

Japan’s medieval to early modern period—the arrival of Europeans and with it the start of the widespread manufacture of firearms in Japan.³

Since the end of the nineteenth century a vast literature has been written about the *Teppōki*. This article looks at a few of the issues often discussed, especially the relation between the European and Japanese accounts of the first Portuguese-Japanese contact, questioning whether they refer to the same event, and the identification of a translator on board the ship that brought the Portuguese. I also present an argument that even though the *Teppōki* was written over sixty years after the event, its author must have utilized a source written in 1543, which supports its reliability.⁴

I would like to express my thanks to members of an online Japan history forum with whom I discussed issues brought up in this paper. The author takes responsibility for any errors.

- 1 See Boxer, *Christian Century*, who discusses Japanese-European relations, especially commercial activity, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Haneda and Oka, in *A Maritime History of East Asia*, address maritime activity in East Asia from 1250 to 1800, both that of Asians and that of Europeans. Matsuda, in *Nanbanjin no Nihon hakken*, discusses European and Japanese relations in Japan.
- 2 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frames 7–12). For English translations, see Tsunoda et al., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, pp. 317–21; Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 36–42.

- 3 For a discussion of European culture in Japan in this period, see for example, Toby, *Engaging the Other*, pp. 106–20, 129–41; Cooper, *Southern Barbarians*; Smith, *Japan: A History in Art*, pp. 148–60; and articles in Nakajima, *Nanban, Kōmō, Tōjin*.
- 4 This article can cover only a small part of the relevant literature. In English, the subject is discussed in the classic works of Murdoch (*History of Japan*, pp. 33–43) and Boxer (*Christian Century*, pp. 24–27), and in detail in the recent book by Lidin, *Tanegashima*. Many Japanese historians have written on the *Teppōki*; one of the earliest is Tsuboi in his 1892 articles “Teppō denrai-kō” and “Teppō denrai-kō (shōzen).” Most claims have been stated and rebutted multiple times. I bring up only a few representative works.

The *Teppōki* and Similar Japanese Accounts

The *Teppōki* was written in 1606 by Nanpo Bunshi 南浦文之 (1555–1620), a Zen monk who often served the Satsuma 薩摩 domain in southern Kyushu as an envoy and writer of diplomatic letters. It was commissioned by Tanegashima Hisatoki 種子島久時 (1568–1611), the lord of Tanegashima. He was the son of Tanegashima Tokitaka 時堯 (1528–1579), the lord at the time of the arrival. It was published in 1625 in the *Nanpo bunshū* 南浦文集 (Nanpo's Works).

According to the *Teppōki*, “in the water-rabbit year of the Tenbun era [*Tenbun mizunoto-u* 天文癸卯], on the twenty-fifth day of the autumnal eighth month, a fire-bird day [*hinoto-tori* 丁酉]” (23 September 1543), a large ship arrived at Nishinomura 西村 in Tanegashima. It was not known what country it came from. It had a hundred strange-looking passengers, and it was not known what country they came from. A Chinese scholar on board named Gohō 五峯 (Ch. Wu Feng), who communicated with the village headmaster by writing on the sand with a cane in Chinese, identified them as “western Southern-barbarian traders” (*nishi Nanban shu no koko* 西南蛮種之賈胡). The Chinese called the lands to its south, that is, Southeast Asia, the “Southern-barbarian region” (Ban 蛮 [Ch. Man] or Nanban 南蛮 [Ch. Nanman]), and the Portuguese were based in Malacca on its western edge.⁵ Two days later the ship came to the island capital of Akaogi 赤尾木. The traders were led by two men with Portuguese names, and they sold two firearms to the local lord, Tokitaka. The ship was in Akaogi at least until the festival of the ninth day of the ninth month (7 October), but it is not stated when it left. Under Tokitaka's direction, the island's ironworkers eventually mastered the technique for manufacturing firearms, with the help of a Portuguese ironworker who arrived the next year. The *Teppōki* emphasizes that it was from Tanegashima that the manufacture of firearms spread to the rest of Japan.

By Nanpo's time, firearms were important in war, and “*tanegashima*” had become a popular term for firearms.

Later Edo-period works also refer to this event. The *Tanegashima kafu* 種子島家譜 (Tanegashima House Chronicle)⁶ gives an account that reads like a shortened version of the *Teppōki*. It seems to be based either on the *Teppōki* itself or on its sources. It states that a ship arrived from an unknown country with strange passengers, who are identified as Nanban merchants, and the next year a Nanban ship arrived with an ironworker who helped perfect the techniques for manufacturing firearms. There is also an account in the 1633 *Kunitomo teppōki* 国友鉄砲記 (An Account of the Kunitomo Firearms)⁷ that explains how firearms came to be manufactured in Kunitomo in Ōmi 近江国 Province (present-day Shiga Prefecture). It seems to be based on the *Teppōki*, even in the dialogues, though with some additions. It says that the ship was from the Nanban country and carried over a hundred Southern-barbarian traders. This seems to have been the standard Japanese understanding of the arrival of Portuguese throughout the Edo period. Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866), a German who lived in Japan from 1823 to 1828, quotes a long passage from a Japanese annal which gives an account of the first Portuguese-Japanese contact. It has many verbal similarities with the *Teppōki* and the other accounts, even to the names of the two Portuguese from the “nan-ban” ship. Siebold specifies that this ship was a Portuguese ship.⁸

Although their exact date of compilation is unclear, there are also documents preserved in Tanegashima itself that mention the event. A list of heirlooms called the *Tanegashimaki* 種子島記 includes a description of a “Nanban gun” (*Nanban tsutsu* 南蛮筒) that “the captain of the Nanban ship” (*Nanban senchō* 南蛮船長) presented to Tokitaka.⁹ The genealogical records of two island families also mention the visit.¹⁰

5 The characters 西南蛮 are sometimes translated into English in this passage as “southwestern barbarian” (*seinan Ban*), but Ban and Nanban refer specifically to the region south of China, and Malacca is more likely to be referred to as being in the “western Southern-barbarian region” rather than in the “southwestern Southern-barbarian region.” Different terms are used for the other “barbarian” areas surrounding China—those to the east, including Japan, as Tōi 東夷 (Ch. Dongyi), those to the west as Seijū 西戎 (Ch. Xirong), and to the north as Hokuteki 北狄 (Ch. Beidi).

6 See bk. 2 of the *Tanegashima kafu*; facsimile in Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 189, English translation on pp. 45–46; Japanese translation in the *Tanegashima kafu*, vol. 1, p. 1.29. The *Tanegashima kafu* incorporated the *Tanegashima fu* 種子島譜 (Tanegashima Chronicle), which covered Tanegashima history until 1611 and was completed in 1677.

7 Text in Hora, *Tanegashima-jū*, pp. 502–7; also in Lidin, *Tanegashima kafu*, pp. 190–94, translation on pp. 130–38.

8 Siebold, *Manners and Customs*, pp. 256–57.

9 See the *Tanegashimaki*, quoted in Tokoro, *Hinawajū*, pp. 246–47.

10 See the Yaita 八板 family genealogy and the Tokunaga 徳永 family

The above records almost all give the date for the arrival of the ship as the eighth month of Tenbun 12.¹¹ Tenbun 12 is the same year as that given in the *Teppōki*, “the water-rabbit year of Tenbun,” that is, 1543.¹² For naming years, the year-count and the cyclic-year designations were freely interchanged or used together; there was no question of confusion.¹³ However, the *Teppōki* is the only source that gives the cyclic *day* of the arrival, a fire-bird day.

The accounts written after the *Teppōki* use the term “Nanban,” not the “western Nanban” used in the *Teppōki*. In the decades following the arrival of the Portuguese in Japan, “Nanban” came to refer especially to the Portuguese and Spanish. For example, in 1606, the year he wrote the *Teppōki*, Nanpo wrote to the “Nanban ship captain” of Luzon.¹⁴ “Nanban” is also used as a prefix with many items associated with the Portuguese, notably screens depicting the arrival of Portuguese ships (*Nanban byōbu* 南蛮屏風) and various foods.

European Accounts

There are also European accounts of Portuguese arriving in Japan around 1543. Two state that Portuguese arrived in Japan in 1542. One account is found in the 1563 *Tratado dos Descobrimentos* (Treatise of Discoveries) of António Galvão (ca. 1490–1557), the Portuguese governor of Malacca from 1536 until 1540, which gives brief accounts of European discoveries of various places in the world through 1555.¹⁵ Galvão generally gives the

year, a brief account of the discovery with the names of the people involved, the name of the place discovered, and its latitude.¹⁶ According to him, in 1542 three Portuguese fled on a “junk” (Pt. *junco*; from Ch. *chuan* 船, via Malay *jong*) from Diogo de Freitas (fl. mid-sixteenth century), the “capitão de hū nauio” (captain of a ship) in Siam, intending to go to “Lianpo [Ningbo 寧波], which is at thirty degrees plus latitude [the correct latitude].” They were blown off course and saw an island named Sipangas, “which is at thirty-two degrees.” No other description of the place is given. A similar but more detailed account of a visit to Japan is given in the *Decada quinta da Asia* (Fifth Decade in Asia) written by the official historian of Portuguese India, Diogo do Couto (1542–1616). It states that in 1542 three merchants were blown by a typhoon to “Nipongi,” which is known as “Ipaō,” and were hospitably received.¹⁷ There is no description of the place. The names given are the same as those in Galvão, but these were said to have a load of skins and other commodities for trading, and their original destination was “Chincheo” (Quanzhou 泉州), a city on the Chinese coast opposite Taiwan.

There is also a 1545 letter of the Spaniard Garcia de Escalante Alvarado (fl. mid-sixteenth century), passing on what he heard from Freitas.¹⁸ Two Portuguese merchants trying to go from Siam to China in a junk were blown to a Lequios (Ryukyu) island¹⁹ and were treated well because of Ryukyuan friends they had met in Siam. Some other Portuguese merchants upon hearing this went to Ryukyu on a junk, but were not allowed to land. Escalante does not date these, but based on the time-frame of when he could have met Freitas given the sailing seasons, the visits were probably in 1542 and 1543.²⁰

genealogy quoted in Shimizu, *Nichi-Ō kōshō no kigen*, pp. 30–31, 34.

11 The *Kunitomo teppōki* dates the arrival to Tenbun 8 (1539).8.25; Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 190.

12 In Japan years are named in the order of the sexagenary cycle (further explained below) introduced from China, and this was the accepted East Asian standard. Tenbun 1 (1532) was a water-dragon (*mizunoe-tatsu* 壬辰) year. As water-dragon is the twenty-ninth pair in the cycle and water-rabbit is the fortieth, “Tenbun 12” and “Tenbun water-rabbit” therefore refer to the same year, that is, 1543. The Tanegashima genealogies both give “Tenbun 12, water-rabbit” as the year, and Siebold informs his readers that “the twelfth year of the *Nengo Tenbun*” was 1543.

13 For instance, Nanpo gives the year of his 1606 writing of the *Teppōki* as “Keichō 11, fire-horse” (*Keichō jūichinen hinoe-uma* 慶長十一年丙午). Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frame 12).

14 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 2 (frames 91–93).

15 Galvão, *Descobrimentos*, ff. 75–76 (frames 166–67); English translation in Galvano, *Discoveries*, pp. 229–30.

16 The Portuguese regularly recorded latitudes. For instance, Jorge Alvarez (fl. mid-sixteenth century) says he stayed in a port at N 32° 4' 3"; see Kishino, “Aruvaresu no ‘Nihon hōkoku,’” p. 103. A later Portuguese *roteiro* (log) states that Tanegashima is at 30½ degrees; see Boxer, *Christian Century*, p. 127.

17 Couto, *Decada quinta*, ff. 183–84 (bk. 8, ch. 12; frames 398–401). See also the translation in Boxer, *Christian Century*, pp. 24–25. The book was published in 1612, but was finished in 1597; *ibid.*, p. 454 n. 18.

18 For the background and a translation see Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, pp. 18–21, 25–27.

19 Ryukyu was then a kingdom on the chain of islands south of Japan (now Okinawa Prefecture). It was a major actor in the trade of the area.

20 Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, pp. 30–31.

The relationship of these three accounts is unclear. One theory is that Galvão's account and Couto's account were misunderstandings of the visits to Ryukyu that Freitas reported to Escalante. Also, some have claimed that the visits to Ryukyu mentioned by Escalante were actually visits to Japan and were the same as those mentioned by Galvão and Couto. It is to be noted that none of these accounts mention firearms.

European Accounts and the *Teppōki*

It is commonly understood that the visit described in the *Teppōki* and the visit in Portuguese accounts, in particular that of Galvão, were the same event, and arguments have been based on this supposition.²¹ Thus, the visit of the Portuguese in the *Teppōki* is often described as the arrival of a few Portuguese in a Chinese ship.²² What the Japanese and European accounts have in common is that some Portuguese arrived in Japan around 1542–1543. However, there are significant differences.

To start with, though it is often “assumed”²³ that the men in the Portuguese accounts landed in Tanegashima, the texts do not specify this. These sources state only that the men arrived in “Sipangas” or “Nipongi.” Also, Galvão states the island they arrived at was at thirty-two degrees latitude; however, Tanegashima is at about 30° 30'.²⁴ Thus, there seems to be no clear reason why the Portuguese accounts would refer to Tanegashima. Moreover, one would have to say the latitude Galvão gives is mistaken.

As for Escalante's account, Georg Schurhammer argues that the information that Escalante got directly from Freitas about the visit to Ryukyu was correct and

that the later accounts by Galvão and Couto are confused versions of that, so Portuguese visited Ryukyu in 1542 and Tanegashima in 1543.²⁵ Many historians have agreed, though some say the visit in Escalante's account was to Japan, not Ryukyu.²⁶

Escalante's account of the visits to Ryukyu, however, does not match the *Teppōki* in a number of important respects. Unlike Escalante's narrative, there is no indication that the Portuguese in the *Teppōki* had friends from Tanegashima. Also, while the *Teppōki* says the arrival of a Portuguese iron worker the next year was very welcome, Escalante states that the Portuguese in the second trip were not allowed to land. So, it is unlikely that the visit in Escalante's account refers to the *Teppōki* visit. In that case, if the accounts by Galvão and Couto are based on the same information that Escalante got from Freitas, as is put forward by some scholars, their descriptions would not concern the *Teppōki* visit either. Therefore, there is little reason to identify any of the three European accounts with the arrival of the Portuguese in Tanegashima, and they probably refer to different events.

Another important difference in the accounts is the date. For the year of arrival, both Galvão and Couto give 1542, but the *Teppōki* and the other Japanese accounts give 1543. In Japan, 1543 is widely accepted as standard and is one of the dates memorized by school children.²⁷ However, scholarly opinion about the year has gone back and forth, usually under the assumption that European and Japanese accounts refer to the same event.²⁸ James Murdoch considers that 1542 is more likely, because it “seems to have been the date generally accepted by the missionary writers.” Okamoto Ryōchi cautiously accepts 1542, though he does not rule out

21 Nakajima, “Sairon,” pp. 47–48 (Nakajima disagrees with this understanding). Some examples are Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 16, and *passim*; Murai, “Teppō denrai saikō,” p. 110; Udagawa, *Shinsetsu*, pp. 10, 44.

22 Cooper, *Southern Barbarians*, p. 24; Lidin, *Tanegashima, passim*; see also the 1977 children's picture book by Ishikawa, *Teppō ōsawagi*.

23 Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 18, 32; see also Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 144 (*de arō to suitei serareru* “であろうと推定せられる); Tokoro, “Teppō denrai,” p. 60 (*to omowarete iru* “と思われる”).

24 It is possible that Galvão assumed this latitude from other accounts of Japan; thirty-two degrees is given by Escalante for the 1544 visit to Japan of Pero Diez (fl. mid-sixteenth century); see Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, p. 28.

25 Kishino gives a summary of Schurhammer's work in his *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, pp. 30–32. Schurhammer noted that if the Spaniard Escalante wrote that the voyage was to Ryukyu, not to Japan, to avoid crediting the Portuguese with the discovery of Japan, he would not have wanted to credit them with the discovery of Ryukyu either. Schurhammer's work may be found in his “O descobrimento do Japão pelos portugueses no ano de 1543,” in *Anais da Academia Portuguesa da História*, 2. Série, vol. 1, Lisbon, 1946.

26 Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 144; Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, pp. 20–21; Boxer, *Christian Century*, p. 27; Nakajima, “Kaiiki kōeki,” p. 50.

27 Murai, “Teppō denrai saikō,” p. 1107; NHK TV program “*Buratamori* フラタモリ,” episode on Tanegashima, aired 3 June 2023.

28 For this, see Nakajima, “Kaiiki kōeki,” pp. 33–35; *ibid.*, “Sairon,” pp. 41–42.

1543 completely, and Matsuda Kiichi suggests that several trips to Tanegashima were treated in the *Teppōki* as one.²⁹ Those who accept 1542 suggest several reasons for the 1543 of the *Teppōki*. The year of the long-ago event could have been misremembered by the elderly men who were Nanpo's source.³⁰ An original date of 1542 could have been changed to 1543 for some reason, such as to make it the year that Tokitaka assumed leadership of Tanegashima³¹ or to emphasize that his father Shigetoki 恵時 (1503–1567) was living with him in Akaogi, even after the tumultuous events of the first part of 1543.³² But as I discuss below, the day of the arrival given in the *Teppōki*—"the twenty-fifth of the eighth month, a fire-bird day"³³—was a fire-bird day only in 1543 in that century, a fact that apparently has not been pointed out before, so that year seems certain. Again, the most obvious solution is to conclude that the European accounts refer to a different event or events, probably occurring in 1542, and that several visits by Portuguese took place around that time.

Another major difference in the European and Japanese accounts concerns the passengers on board the ship that arrived in Japan. On the one hand, Galvão's account says three men fled from Siam and reached Japan in a junk. Apparently, these three were the only Portuguese aboard. Couto's and Escalante's Portuguese also traveled in a small group from Siam. On the other hand, the ship in the *Teppōki* had over a hundred passengers whose shape was strange and whose language was unintelligible. Moreover, it was not known from what country they came (*Izure no kuni no hito naru ya shirazu* 不知何國人也).³³ They were certainly not Chinese, and were identified by Gohō, the

abovementioned Chinese scholar on board, as traders from western Nanban. They are considered as a unified group from the same country, and their customs and attitudes are described: they have some knowledge of rank, but do not know proper eating etiquette, do not use chopsticks, and do not understand writing. Later, two of the men are identified as the "leaders of the traders" (*koko no osa* 賈胡之長), which also suggests that the hundred traders came as a group. Since the ship was in the island capital of Akaogi from 8.27 until at least 9.9, their behavior as traders and leaders could be observed. So, they were not just a few Portuguese among a mixture of Chinese and perhaps other peoples. As I argue below, Nanpo had a contemporary source, and even if he supplemented it with the memories of elderly men and what Tanegashima Hisatoki, the commissioner of the work, had heard from his father Tokitaka, it seems unlikely that only two or three strange-looking Portuguese would have come to be remembered as being over one hundred in number.

That being said, the *Teppōki* is often interpreted in the light of Galvão to mean that the ship was a Chinese junk with only a few Portuguese aboard. For instance, Olof Lidin throughout his book on Tanegashima simply assumes that the boat was a junk with two, and only two, Portuguese, and even adjusts his translations to fit this assumption.³⁴

Another problem with claiming the visits in the Portuguese and Japanese accounts are the same is that the names given for the Portuguese do not match. The *Teppōki* has characters that are most reasonably read as "Murashukusha" 牟良叔舍 and "Kirishita da Mouta" 喜利志多侘孟太, while Galvão has "Antonio da Mota," "Francisco Zeimoto," and "Antonio Pexoto."³⁵ The only duplication is the common Portuguese surname da Mota. There have been various attempts to reconcile the names, but they do not seem particularly successful,³⁶

29 Murdoch, *History of Japan*, p. 43; Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 293; Matsuda, *Nanbanjin no Nihon hakken*, p. 69.

30 Shimizu, in *Shokuhō seiken*, pp. 34–41, and in *Nichi-Ō kōshō no kigen*, pp. 39–40, mentions this and some other possibilities. See Nakajima's response in "Kaiiki kōeki," p. 66 n. 22; "Sairon," p. 75 n. 61. There is a problem within the *Teppōki* of matching the date of the year firearms were finally manufactured on Tanegashima (two years after the first visit) with the mention of the firearms on a tribute ship to China that left Tanegashima in 1543 or 1544. For more on this see Murai, "Teppō denrai saikō," pp. 1115–18, 1121–22, and Nakajima's response in "Kaiiki kōeki," pp. 54–61.

31 Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 158.

32 In the third month of that year there was a revolt against Shigetoki, and he had to flee Tanegashima, but Tokitaka remained. Shigetoki returned in the fourth month. See *Tanegashima kafu*, bk. 2 (vol. 1, pp. 1.28–1.29); English translation in Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 43–45.

33 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frames 7–8).

34 He translates the *Teppōki*'s "Fune no kyaku hyaku-nin amari. Sono katachi ruisezu. Sono kataru tsūsezu" 船客百余人其形不類其語不通 as, "There were some hundred people on board, [among whom there were those] whose physical features differed from ours, and whose language was not understood" (his brackets); Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 36. See also his similar translation of the corresponding passage of the *Tanegashima kafu* on p. 45 and his "the (two) western barbarians" in the *Kunitomo teppōki* on p. 140. If there were only two Portuguese on board, one has to wonder who they were the leaders of.

35 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frame 8); Galvão, *Descobrimientos*, f. 76 (frame 167).

36 See suggestions in Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 157; Lidin,

and therefore it seems unlikely that the Portuguese in the *Teppōki* and in Galvão were the same.

The description of the ship in the European and Japanese accounts also appears to be different. In the European accounts the Portuguese rode on a “junk” from Siam. The *Teppōki* states that a “large ship arrived and it was not known what country it came from” (*Hitotsu no ō-fune ari. Izure no kuni kara kitareru ka shirezu* 有一大船不知自何國來). It would be natural to judge the origin of a ship by its appearance, so this suggests that the appearance of the ship was different from those they were used to. “It was not known what country it came from,” is the same phrase which, as mentioned above, was used for the strange passengers, who were definitely not Chinese. Therefore, it is not likely to have been a Chinese ship with Portuguese on board.

The people of Kyushu were undoubtedly used to Chinese ships. The Portuguese captain Jorge Alvares (fl. mid-sixteenth century) wrote that in 1546 sixty Chinese boats in one Japanese harbor had been lost in a storm.³⁷ The *Teppōki* states that merchant ships from the north and south frequently visited the island capital of Akaogi. Furthermore, on Tenbun 9 (1540).6.26 a Chinese ship (*tōsen* 唐船) had arrived at Takezaki no Ura 竹崎ノ浦, the port of Nishinomura where the *Teppōki* ship first arrived.³⁸ Therefore, it is unlikely that a Chinese junk would have been described as coming from an unknown country. Rather, the *Teppōki* seems to treat this ship as being from the same country as the passengers, that is, a Malaccan or Portuguese ship, and it was understood as such in the *Tanegashima kafu*. As was noted above, the other Edo-period accounts state that it was a Nanban ship. Therefore, it was most likely a Portuguese-style carrack, although in this period a ship from the stronghold of Malacca might also have been a junk. The term “junk” refers to a wide type of Asian boat, but they are typified especially by square sails made with bamboo sticks woven into a pattern with bamboo twigs and leaves inserted. Pictures show the sails secured to a number of horizontal crossbars.³⁹ For a short time after the Portuguese conquered Malacca in 1511, they usually

chartered junks for the pepper trade between Malacca and China. Then they gradually came to buy junks, but by the mid-sixteenth century they began voyaging to Japan in ships with a rounded bottom known in Portuguese as *nau* (carrack).⁴⁰ As mentioned earlier, Galvão describes Diogo de Freitas as captain of a *nau*, in contrast to the *junco* that the three Portuguese fled on, so it is certain that there were carracks in East Asia in 1542, and it would not be surprising if one had arrived in Japan the following year. Therefore, the strange ship was probably a carrack, or perhaps a Malaccan junk with characteristics notably different from the junks that came from China.

Nakajima Gakushō, a historian of East Asia, though not identifying the Tanegashima visit with that of the European accounts, says that the ship was probably a Chinese junk.⁴¹ He points out that many merchants, including Europeans, took passage on Chinese ships. A Portuguese named Pero Diez (fl. mid-sixteenth century) visited Japan on a Chinese ship in 1544,⁴² and it is well known that Francis Xavier (1506–1552) arrived in Japan in 1549 on a Chinese junk.⁴³ From this, Nakajima concludes it is more likely that the first Portuguese arrived in Tanegashima on a Chinese junk than on a Portuguese ship.⁴⁴ However, he does not explain why a Portuguese ship would be *unlikely*, and though he admits that a “large ship” could be either a Chinese- or Portuguese-style ship, he does not discuss the statement that it came from an unknown country. The cases he mentions involved only a few Europeans, and of course some scattered Portuguese could have arrived in Japan earlier without leaving a record in Japan. But it seems that a group of over a hundred passengers from Malacca would be more likely to arrive on a Portuguese ship than on a Chinese ship.

The arrival of a Portuguese ship in 1543 would not be surprising. The Portuguese captain Jorge Alvares arrived in Yamagawa 山川 in the Satsuma 薩摩 domain (part of present-day Kagoshima Prefecture) in 1546, and there appear to have been two other Portuguese ships in

Tanegashima, pp. 16–17; Tokoro, “Teppō denrai,” pp. 61–63.

37 This appears in his report written for the Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier (1506–1552), translated in Kishino, “Aruvaresu no ‘Nihon hōkoku,’” p. 105.

38 *Tanegashima kafu*, bk. 2 (vol. 1, p. 1.28).

39 Haneda and Oka, *A Maritime History*, pp. 33–34, 37 fig. 1.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 148–49. The Portuguese developed carracks when they started sailing in the Indian Ocean, influenced by Islamic ship-building techniques.

41 Nakajima, “Sairon,” pp. 58–59.

42 Kishino, *Seiōjin no Nihon hakken*, p. 27.

43 For some other individuals and small groups, see Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 99–100.

44 Nakajima, “Sairon,” p. 59.

Japan at the time,⁴⁵ so there is no problem with a Portuguese ship having come to Tanegashima three years earlier. Matsuda Kiichi, however, argues that if the Portuguese first arrived on a Portuguese ship, one would expect there to be some Portuguese record of it and so this probably was not a Portuguese ship.⁴⁶ But even if Galvão knew about a 1543 visit to Tanegashima, he would not have mentioned it, as he only mentions the first (European) visit to a particular region/country, which, according to him, in the case of Japan took place in 1542 when three Portuguese fled Siam. Furthermore, C. R. Boxer gives a year-by-year detailed account of what is known about Portuguese merchants visiting Japan from 1555, about the time the Portuguese “captain-major” system started, a system in which the right to conduct voyages and reap their profits was granted by the king. He makes statements like, “There were apparently two Portuguese ships which went to Hirado that year [1555], but we only have definite information concerning [one carrack],” and, “A statement in one of the lists of the Captain-majors that a certain Aires Betelho visited Hirado in his ship that year [1560] lacks confirmation from any other source and so should be treated with reserve.”⁴⁷ Therefore, we cannot assume we have complete information about Portuguese ships in 1543. Therefore, it is hard to argue that the ship was not a Portuguese ship, especially as it seems strange that a Chinese junk would be described by the phrase, “it was not known what country it came from.”

Thus, from the differences discussed above in terms of the locations, years, passengers, and perhaps the ships themselves, there seems little positive reason for identifying the voyages in Galvão or the other European accounts with that in the *Teppōki*.

The best argument for identifying the visit in Galvão with that in the *Teppōki* is the fact that the Jesuit João Rodrigues (1561–1634), who was in Japan between 1577 and 1610, does identify them in his church history *História da Igreja do Japão* (History of the Church of

Japan), written 1614–1634.⁴⁸ He explicitly quotes Galvão’s *Descobrimientos*, stating that three Portuguese, giving the same names as Galvão, arrived in Japan in 1542. He further states that the ship reached an island called Tanegashima where the Portuguese taught the people how to use arquebuses, that from there their use spread throughout Japan, and that the names of the Portuguese were still preserved—statements which clearly agree with the *Teppōki* account.

Rodrigues’s statements probably are based on accounts handed down by earlier Jesuits in Japan. Xavier arrived in Japan in 1549 and at the end of 1551 departed the Kyushu province of Bungo 豊後 (roughly corresponding to present-day Ōita Prefecture) for India on the ship of the Portuguese merchant Duarte da Gama, stopping at Tanegashima on the way. The next year, a group including the Jesuit Balthasar Gago (1515–1583) arrived at Tanegashima on the same ship on their way to Bungo.⁴⁹ During their stays in Tanegashima, Xavier and Gago undoubtedly heard of the Portuguese who had arrived at Tanegashima some years before bringing firearms, and that visit would have been well known among the later Jesuits in Japan. Therefore, when they read about the 1542 visit to Japan in Portuguese sources such as Galvão, it was natural for them to assume it was the same as the Tanegashima visit that they knew about.

However, one doubts that Xavier or Gago had learned and transmitted the details of the visit such as the year and the names of the Portuguese involved, and that Rodrigues had compared them with those in Galvão. In a 1552 letter, Xavier says that the Portuguese had discovered the Japanese islands eight or nine years before, so he was somewhat vague about the date.⁵⁰ Note also that Rodrigues quotes Galvão, not Jesuits in Japan, for his date and names, which are different from those in the *Teppōki*. In fact, if one accepts that the ship arrived in 1543, as many historians do, one has to say

45 Alvarez states that a Portuguese ship was lost in a storm; Kishino, “Aruvaresu no ‘Nihon hōkoku,’” p. 105. A 1548 letter of Anjirō (d. circa 1551) (see Frois, *Nihon-shi*, pp. 18–19) suggests that two Portuguese ships besides Alvarez’s were also in Japan in 1546; see Okamoto, *Nichi-Ō kōtsū-shi*, p. 311. Anjirō was probably the first Japanese Christian convert. His name appears variously in the Jesuit writings. Matsuda’s translation of Frois’s *Nihon-shi* uses “Yajirō” 弥次郎.

46 Matsuda, *Nanbanjin no Nihon hakken*, p. 69.

47 Boxer, *The Great Ship*, pp. 21–26.

48 Rodrigues, *This Island of Japan*, pp. 63–64. This is a translation of Rodrigues’s *História da Igreja do Japão*. The translator, Cooper, notes that Rodrigues seems to have drawn on European sources in addition to Galvão here (p. 63 nn. 5, 7). This passage is translated also in Murdoch, *History of Japan*, pp. 33–34.

49 Frois, *Nihon-shi*, pp. 80–81 n. 20, 105 n. 7, 107, 111 n. 5; Pacheco, “Xavier and Tanegashima”; *Nihon Kirisutokyo rekishi daijiten* 日本キリスト教歴史大事典 (Kyōbunkan, 1988), s.v. “Tanegashima” (by Matsuda Kiichi 松田毅一).

50 Letter no. 96 of 29 January 1552; see Xavier, *Zen shokan*, vol. 3, pp. 169–70.

that Rodrigues either ignored the year remembered in Tanegashima or did not know it, which weakens his identification. Therefore, it is hard to say that Rodrigues's work proves that the visits were the same.

Another account of the introduction of firearms is given by the Portuguese merchant-adventurer Fernão Mendes Pinto (ca. 1509–1583). In a 1582 interview and also in his semi-autobiographical adventure novel *Peregrinação* (Pilgrimage) he claims to be one of the first three Portuguese to visit Tanegashima.⁵¹ Pinto was in Asia from about 1526 to 1558, and it is certain that he was in Japan early. There he met Xavier, and he may have visited Tanegashima. He had probably also read Galvão's account. However, though Pinto's work shows a knowledge of Asian marine travel and of Japan and certainly draws on his experiences, much of it is clearly made up. Many of his adventures are improbable, he puts himself at the center of any event, and he claims to have been in China or perhaps in Burma between 1542 and 1544, the period when the Portuguese reached Tanegashima. Most historians agree that he was not on the ship that introduced firearms.⁵²

According to Pinto, three Portuguese, including himself, arrived at Tanegashima from China on a junk belonging to a pirate (*cossayro*). One of them gave a firearm to the lord of the island, after which firearms spread throughout Japan. There are similarities with the *Teppōki* account: Portuguese arrived in the town of the lord (*o naotoquim*; probably from Tokitaka's earlier name of Naotoki 直時) of Tanegashima, the lord was impressed by the firearm(s) they had; he obtained a firearm(s); and he had them manufactured. However, these are general matters that would have soon been widely known in Japan. Importantly though, the details that Pinto gives do not match the *Teppōki*. In the 1582 interview he gives the date of arrival as 1541, and the date in the book is vague. He states that there were only three non-Chinese on the pirate ship. In particular, the descriptions of the arrivals are different. The *Teppōki* states that the ship arrived first in the harbor of Nishinomura, and it was not known where it came from until the village headman asked a Chinese scholar. It

came to the capital two days later. In contrast, according to Pinto, when after a battle with another junk and then a storm the pirate ship finally arrived in sight of land, they told the official boats that came to meet them that they were from China. They were shown the port in which they were to anchor, which was clearly that of the capital since the lord of the island came out to the ship two hours later. It was he who first noticed the three strange-looking visitors. Given these differences, although Pinto's account may well have used his own experiences in Japan, it does not seem to reflect any particular details about the event recorded in the *Teppōki*, and even if it does, we do not know which ones they are. For example, Pinto's stating that he arrived in Tanegashima on a pirate ship is not evidence that the first Portuguese did so, especially because to say that he arrived on a merchant ship would probably have been too tame.

Thus, to summarize, the sixteenth-century accounts of Galvão, Couto, and Escalante state that in 1542 two or three Portuguese arrived somewhere in Japan or Ryukyu on a Chinese ship, whereas the *Teppōki* states that in 1543 a ship with over a hundred Portuguese arrived at Tanegashima and introduced firearms to the island. The early Portuguese sources do not indicate that they arrived at Tanegashima, and the details in the number of people involved, the date, and the type of ship are different from those in the *Teppōki*. For later sources, it is unclear whether Rodrigues had sufficient basis to identify the accounts in Galvão and the *Teppōki*, and Pinto is not trustworthy. Therefore, one should be careful about using the Portuguese sources when interpreting the *Teppōki*.

Identification of the Translator Gohō

According to the *Teppōki*, one of the passengers on the ship was a Ming scholar (*Daimin jusei* 大明儒生) named Gohō, who was able to communicate with the people of Tanegashima in written Chinese. He was apparently the only one on the ship who could write in Chinese. Recent Japanese scholarship often states that this Gohō was the famous Chinese pirate leader Wang Zhi 王直 (Jp. Ōchoku) (d. 1557) and that the junk that brought the Portuguese with the firearms was his ship,⁵³

51 Pinto, *Peregrinação*, esp. ff. 159–62 (frames 324–32); English translation, Pinto, *Travels of Mendes Pinto*, pp. 272–78. A first draft was ready in 1569, but it was only published in 1614. For the 1582 interview, see Boxer, *Christian Century*, pp. 22–23.

52 Rodrigues, *This Island of Japon*, p. 64; see also p. 64 n. 2; Boxer, *Christian Century*, pp. 18–28; Lidin, *Tanegashima*, pp. 102–29.

53 Murai, "Teppō denrai saikō," pp. 111–15; Udagawa, *Shinsetsu*

since there are Chinese references to Wang Zhi being called Wu Feng 五峯 (the Chinese reading for Gohō).⁵⁴ At that time, the Ming court officially allowed only a few tribute ships for trading, but many mariners engaged in a mixture of private trade, smuggling, and piracy, and they are usually referred to as “Japanese pirates” (*wakō* 倭寇), though they were not all Japanese. Wang Zhi was a major leader of one of these *wakō* groups. He was from Huizhou 惠州 in southeast China. From 1540 he opened up a smuggling route from his base in Guangdong 廣東, linking Southeast Asia and Japan. In 1544 he formed a smuggling group that included Japanese and then the next year established himself in Hirado just off the western coast of Kyushu, so he had the opportunity to familiarize himself with Tanegashima. However, the depiction of Gohō in the *Teppōki* is not what we would expect of Wang Zhi and his *wakō* ship.

Wang Zhi had close ties with Japan and his *wakō* band included a considerable number of Japanese,⁵⁵ so one would expect a ship of his to have Japanese speakers on board, but the ship of the *Teppōki* apparently had none. The Gohō of the *Teppōki* is described as a scholar. There is nothing in the *Teppōki* to suggest that he was the owner or captain of the ship.⁵⁶ When they first landed in Nishinomura, the village headman happened to meet Gohō (*gū ni au* 偶遇), and asked him about the passengers by writing in Chinese in the sand. If Gohō was the owner, one would expect the headman to have sought him out. The ship was at Tanegashima for at least two weeks, and during this time apparently Gohō behaved like a scholar rather than like a *wakō* or a ship’s captain, who would have been treated as such by the crew and would have had various responsibilities to carry out during the stay. The mere fact that he could write Chinese would not have made the people of Tanegashima think he was a scholar, as Chinese and

Japanese in ports normally communicated by writing.⁵⁷

The *Teppōki* states that in Akaogi, where the ship sailed after its arrival in Nishinomura, there was a monk of the Lotus sect (Hokke 法華) whose background is described in detail.⁵⁸ He was versed in the classics and could write Chinese well, and he corresponded with Gohō through writing. It is stated that Gohō felt him to be a kindred spirit (*dōruisō* 同氣相), but he is not the kindred spirit one would expect of a *wakō*. One would assume he was the main translator for Gohō during the stay in Akaogi and so would have had the opportunity to know what kind of person Gohō was.

Later, it is said that the two Portuguese head traders explained the use of the firearm using “double translation” (*jūyaku* 重訳). Apparently Gohō translated their port lingo, which as experienced traders they would have known, into written Chinese, then someone, probably the monk, translated his Chinese into spoken Japanese for Tokitaka. However, while we would not expect a scholar to know much about firearms and so he would have needed to translate the traders’ explanation, we would expect that a *wakō* chief could have explained the use of firearms himself, without the need of a “double” translation.

Thus, if we claim that Gohō was Wang Zhi, it seems we have to question everything in the account that mentions Gohō, except the name Gohō. We could posit that Nanpo, or his source, wanted to hide the fact that *wakō* were involved, but then why would he leave Gohō’s name in? Also, as discussed above, it would be strange if Wang Zhi’s Chinese ship was described as being from an unknown country. Of course, when we claim that Wang Zhi and Gohō are not the same person, we have to conclude that they probably just happened to have the same name,⁵⁹ and this might be questioned. But saying the two are the same person also has its problems.

Udagawa Takehisa takes the identification of Gohō and Wang Zhi a step further and even claims that it was Wang Zhi, not the Portuguese, that brought firearms to

teppō denrai, pp. 44–46; *ibid.*, *Heiki kōryū-shi*, p. 138; Nakajima, “Kaiiki kōeki,” pp. 51–53; *ibid.*, “Sairon,” pp. 60–61; Haneda and Oka, *Maritime History*, pp. 154–55.

54 See Murai, “Teppō denrai saikō,” pp. 1110–13, quoting the 1565 *Riben yijian* 日本一鑑 (Jp. *Nihon ikkan*) of Zheng Shungong 鄭舜功 (Jp. Tei Shunkō) and the 1562 *Chouhai tubian* 籌海圖編 (Jp. *Chūkai zuhen*) of Zheng Ruoceng 鄭若曾 (Jp. Tei Jakusō).

55 Haneda and Oka, *Maritime History*, p. 155.

56 He was not understood as such in the Edo-period traditions about the visit. In fact, the *Kunitomo teppōki* states that he asked the Nanban traders to let him ride on their ship (*Nanbankuni no kojū ni binsen motomeki* 南蛮国買人求便船); Hora, *Tanegashima-jū*, p. 503; Lidin, *Tanegashima*, p. 191.

57 See Alvares in his report in Kishino, “Aruvaresu no ‘Nihon hōkoku,’” p. 111.

58 Nanpo, *Nanpo bunshū*, bk. 1 (frame 8). He would have been important as the person whose words were actually reported in the dialogue between Tokitaka and the Portuguese.

59 Nakajima, “Sairon,” p. 60, comments that it is not impossible that Nanpo, or his source, used the name of someone they had heard of to represent a Chinese merchant, but in his discussion he takes Gohō and Wang Zhi as being the same person.

Tanegashima. He claims that the *Teppōki* was written sixty years later, so its historical value is not high, and because Galvão shows that the Portuguese arrived in a junk, Gohō was Wang Zhi. He moreover says that since the matchlock guns (*hinawajū* 火繩銃) in Japan are of Asian type, not European type, they are not the type one would expect if the Portuguese introduced European matchlocks, and since Southeast Asia was in the *wakō* trading area, it was they, in particular Wang Zhi, and not the Portuguese on his ship, who introduced firearms to Tanegashima.⁶⁰

It is clear that the firearms associated with Tanegashima are not of European type. The firearms expert Tokoro Shōkichi investigated the provenance of guns from Tanegashima.⁶¹ He noted that the firing mechanism did not match that of European matchlocks, including those from Spain and Portugal, or those that came to East Asia overland via Turkey. However, in a New York Metropolitan Museum catalog, he found a similar one. As a result, he concluded that the Tanegashima firearms were similar to those that originated in Malacca and Java and were found in Malaysia and Southeast Asia, but not similar to those from farther west or those of China. He referred to them as “Malacca-type.”⁶²

However, it does not follow from an Asian connection that the Portuguese could not have brought the original matchlocks. Even if Southeast Asia was within the trading area of the *wakō* from east China, the Portuguese had established a base in Malacca in 1511, and it had been the center of their trading area for decades. It was they who are the most likely people to have had the Malacca-type matchlocks for trading, and so are more likely than the *wakō* to have been the source of the Tanegashima matchlocks. It is natural that the Portuguese traders who arrived in Tanegashima would sell Malacca-type matchlocks—in fact, more natural than if they had sold European matchlocks. Furthermore, all the Tanegashima accounts state that the Nanban merchants brought them.

The Cyclic Day, a “Fire-Bird” Day

Whether Nanpo used an early record or not has been argued back and forth. Some argue that as he wrote the work sixty years after the event, it is unreliable. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that since the Tanegashima family asked him to write it, it is probable that they gave him old records handed down in the family.⁶³ I have not come across an argument that he *must* have had a contemporary record, though. However, I believe that the date Nanpo gives for the arrival of the first ship is evidence that he did have a record from that year, or at least an extract of one.

Nanpo wrote that the ship arrived at Tanegashima “in the water-rabbit year of Tenbun, on the twenty-fifth day of the autumnal eighth month, a fire-bird day” 天文癸卯秋八月二十五日丁酉 (23 September 1543). “Fire-bird day” (*hinoto-tori* or *teiyū* 丁酉) is usually dropped from the date in translations,⁶⁴ and I have not seen any discussion about its relation with the year, so apparently it has not been used in arguments. However, 8.25 was indeed a fire-bird day that year, so this is important evidence about the arrival of the ship and the reliability of Nanpo’s source.

In East Asia, an unchanging cycle of sixty pairs of characters (*eto* or *kanshi* 干支, lit., “stem-branch”)⁶⁵ was used as the standard for naming years and days. Its use for years is best known, but its use for days goes back to the earliest Chinese writings we have, the oracular bones of the thirteenth century BCE; its use for years started almost a millennium later. The *Teppōki* states that the day the ship arrived was a “fire-bird” day. Cyclic days are used along with month-day dates such as 8.25, similar to saying “Sunday, 23 September.” They were indicated on virtually all calendars, from the earliest Chinese and the earliest Japanese calendar exemplars that we have, and they are still shown on some of the more detailed calendars. They were important in everyday life for determining hemerological notations, one of the major traditional uses of the calendar.

60 Udagawa, *Shinsetsu teppō denrai*, pp. 44–46; *ibid.*, *Heiki kōryūshi*, pp. 137, 142–43; see the English exhibition explanation in the National Museum of Japanese History (Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan 国立歴史民俗博物館 or Rekihaku): www.rekihaku.ac.jp/english/exhibitions/project/old/061003/img/061003_e.pdf.

61 Tokoro, “Teppō denrai”; *ibid.*, *Hinawajū*, pp. 239–49.

62 Tokoro, “Teppō denrai,” pp. 47–50; *ibid.*, *Hinawajū*, pp. 247–49. He accepted that the Portuguese brought them.

63 For example, Nakajima, “Sairon,” pp. 55–56.

64 Lidin, completely misunderstanding, takes the indication of the day 丁酉 to be an indication of the hour, “dawn (Hinoto Tori ‘cock’ hour)” (*Tanegashima*, p. 36; note also that the cock [bird] hour is the sunset hour, not the dawn hour). Apparently the meaning was not made clear in the works he consulted.

65 The first character in the pair is from the ten-element stem (*kan* 干) cycle, and the second from the twelve-element branch (*shi* 支) cycle. The first pair in the sixty-cycle is wood-rat (*kinōe-ne* 甲子).

The day cycle is similar to the Western seven-day week in that it repeats without regard to the starts of years or months, so a given month-day date occurs on different cyclic days in different years. However, in the Western calendar the yearly change is regular—each year the weekday is one day later, except that every four years it is two days later because of the leap year. In contrast, in the Chinese lunisolar calendar, the year-to-year correspondence of month-day dates and cyclic days is very irregular. The calendar is calculated using a multi-step calendar procedure (*rekihō* 曆法), which includes constants and tables.⁶⁶ The first day of the month is determined by the time of the new moon (*saku* 朔), so the month lengths change from year to year, and besides, there is an intercalary (leap) month (*uruuzuki* 閏月) every two or three years. From 1540 to 1545 the cyclic days of 8.25 were wood-monkey (the twenty-first pair of the cycle), earth-rabbit (sixteenth), water-rabbit (fortieth), fire-bird (thirty-fourth), water-dragon (twenty-ninth), and wood-rabbit (fifty-second). Therefore, the cyclic day of a particular date can be known only by calculating the calendar of that year, which is no easy task. Calendars for each year were calculated by trained calendarists and then copied and distributed. The Satsuma domain probably calculated its own calendar from early on. The Ryūkyū kingdom is said to have gotten its calendars before 1465 from Japan, presumably from Satsuma.⁶⁷ Tanegashima would have gotten its calendars from Satsuma.

As such, without an official calendar of a year, there was no way of knowing the cyclic day of a given date, and calendars were normally not kept after use. Therefore, Nanpo's use of the correct cyclic day for 1543.8.25 shows that he used a record that goes back to that year, when a calendar would have been available.

What kind of record that specified cyclic days would he have had? Cyclic days were traditionally used in official annals, but not many other records give them. The Chinese "Twenty-four Standard Histories" (*Ershisi shi* 二十四史) give the cyclic days of dates, as do the Japanese "Six Histories" (*Rikkokushi* 六国史; the court annals through 887) and the *Azuma kagami* 吾妻鏡 (Azuma Mirror) of 1180–1266, so it would be natural for an official record in Tanegashima to have cyclic days.

66 For the calculation method for the calendar then being used in Japan, see Uchida, *Rekijitsu genten*, pp. 511–16.

67 *Ryūkyū-koku yuraiki*, bk. 4, ch. 1 Personnel (*jinjimon* 人事門), sec. 5 Calendar (*koyomi* 曆); p. 115 in *Teihon Ryūkyū-koku yuraiki*.

Also, they were often recorded in diaries. However, most other documents do not give cyclic days.⁶⁸ For example, in the material relating to the Tenbun era (1532–1555) in a collection of Satsuma documents, the only items to have cyclic days are from a diary; accounts, letters, and birth/death records do not have them.⁶⁹ Nanpo gives the cyclic day in only a few cases in the *Nanpo bunshū*, so he did not think it was necessary for a proper date and would not have tried to find the cyclic day if it was not in his source. Therefore, his source for the account of the arrival of the ship on 1543.8.25 was most likely an official log or a diary from that year, and he just used the date as it was written, which included the cyclic day.

The day of the arrival of the ship at the capital of Akaogi is also given with the cyclic day, "the twenty-seventh [of the eighth month], an earth-boar [*tsuchimoto-i* 己亥] day." This suggests that the source was probably an official log or a diary at Akaogi that recorded the report received from Nishinomura on the twenty-fifth, and then recorded the ship's arrival in Akaogi on the twenty-seventh.

The third date in the *Teppōki*, twelve days after the arrival at Akaogi, has a cyclic day that directly connects with firearms. "That year the Double-Nine Festival [*chōkyū no setsu* 重九之節, i.e., 9.9]⁷⁰ was on a metal-boar [*kanoto-i* 辛亥] day,⁷¹ and this was chosen as an auspicious day [*ryōshin* 良辰] for testing." Certainly, a metal-boar day would be very suitable for trying out a metal weapon that could kill a field-ravaging boar.⁷² The festival was on a metal-boar day only in 1543 in that century, so the event must have taken place in that year.

68 Similarly, most dated modern documents do not give the day of the week, despite their importance in daily life.

69 Kagoshima-ken Ishin Shiryō Hensanjo, *Kagoshima-ken shiryō*, pp. 712–928. The diary of Hongō Tadasake 北郷忠相 (fl. mid-sixteenth century) is quoted on pp. 729, 869–72. The cyclic day on p. 926 is also probably from his diary, as he is mentioned in the account a few days later.

70 In the date he gives at the end for his writing of the *Teppōki*, Nanpo does not use the term "Double-Nine Festival," but rather the term "Double-Yang Festival" (*chōyō setsu* 重陽節), which suggests that in the account he was directly quoting the wording of his source. "Double-Yang" refers to nine as the highest *yang* 陽 (odd) numeral.

71 While in China the 亥 (Ch. *hai*) branch is often associated with "pig," in Japan it is definitely associated with the wild boar (*inoshishi*), and is read as the abbreviated form *i*.

72 In fact, from the seventeenth century to the present day, killing field-ravaging boars has been one of the few legitimate uses of firearms; Howell, "The Social Life of Firearms."

This is the kind of association someone might remember.⁷³

One can draw several conclusions from the specification of the cyclic days in the *Teppōki*. First, it seems certain that the ship arrived in Tanegashima in 1543, as the twenty-fifth of the eighth month was a fire-bird day only in that year in that century. If Nanpo had gotten his information from elderly men who had misremembered an event in 1542 as being in 1543, in the very unlikely event that they remembered the cyclic day, they would have remembered the cyclic day of 1542.8.25, which was a water-rabbit day, not the fire-bird day of 1543. Similarly, neither Nanpo nor an earlier source could have changed an original 1542 year to 1543, because they would not have known the correct cyclic day. Furthermore, the Double-Nine Festival was on a metal-boar day only in 1543.

Second, it is especially important to note that the only ones who could have known that 1543.8.25 was a fire-bird day were those who had a 1543 calendar. Therefore, at least concerning the first visit of the ship, Nanpo must have had a record from 1543, or an extract from one, which supports the reliability of the *Teppōki*.

Finally, the date may also confirm information about the kind of ship. Since only day-by-day records normally give the cyclic day, it is likely that the record was a log or diary, which would have recorded the information it received on that date. An entry about the arrival of a ship would normally have given its origin, what port it arrived at, and probably some other information about it, such as the type of passengers and who made the report. If the ship in this case was a Chinese ship, it could have immediately been identified, and the entry would have described it as such. But “it was not known where it came from” would more likely describe the report of a ship whose origin was at first not known, but whose passengers turned out to be from “western Nanban.”

Conclusion

There are several contemporary Spanish and Portuguese references to a visit to Japan or Ryukyu, and it is often

assumed that they refer to the visit to Tanegashima described in the *Teppōki*. However, the relationship among them is unclear, and there seems to be no reason why they should refer to a visit to Tanegashima rather than to any other place in southwest Japan. Furthermore, details are different from those in the *Teppōki*. The years are different, the number of Portuguese involved is different—three as against a hundred—and the ship does not seem to have been the ordinary “junk” mentioned in the European accounts. So, the European accounts probably refer to a different voyage, or voyages, than to the one of the *Teppōki*, ones which left no record in the place visited.

This article also looked at the recent proposal that the scholar Gohō mentioned in the *Teppōki* was the *wakō* captain Wang Zhi, who was active in Kyushu at this time. The activities of Gohō are those of a scholar rather than of a *wakō* captain established in the area, so it is likely that they are not the same person, and the ship was not Wang Zhi’s ship. Furthermore, the matchlocks left on Tanegashima were of a type made in Malacca, where the Portuguese had had a stronghold for thirty years, so there is no problem in agreeing with all the Japanese sources that it was the Portuguese who brought them, not *wakō*.

In particular, this article presents an argument that Nanpo had access to a source from 1543. He could have known that 1543.8.25 was a fire-bird day only from a record written that year, when a calendar for the year would have been available. Furthermore, such a record would have recorded some basic facts about the ship and its passengers, which would imply that the outline of the account of the arrival of the ship in the *Teppōki* is trustworthy.

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Morgan Pitelka, Reiko Tanimura, and Takashi Masuda. *Letters from Japan's Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Correspondence of Warlords, Tea Masters, Zen Priests, and Aristocrats.* Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2021.

BOOK REVIEW BY PATRICK SCHWEMMER

MANY unique and rewarding linguistic challenges await the student of Japanese history and culture. Who can forget the thrill of successfully following a long, sinuous sentence in *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari* 源氏物語) as it twists and turns on axes of mood, aspect, honorifics, benefactives, and other constructions that have no Indo-European (or sometimes modern Japanese) equivalent? Meanwhile, it is for the best that we non-native speakers repress the memory of all our hours at Japanese academic conferences earnestly hanging on every word, poring over jumbo A3 handouts black with tiny text, understanding half, two thirds, three quarters, until finally we can keep up. But perhaps the highest peak of visual interest and linguistic challenge, if not usually of literary beauty, is the corpus of medieval diaries, letters, and other historical documents handwritten in extremely cursivized logographic quasi-Chinese script. Such documents are traditionally mounted on ornate hanging scrolls, and when displayed in the alcove of a tearoom their contemplation functions as an ancestor ritual in the anthropological sense.

To read them, not only must we jump around according to pan-Asian conventions for reading Han

text non-sequentially in any given vernacular (*kanbun kundoku* 漢文訓読),¹ we must do so with characters that are at least as abbreviated as your average kana (*mu* 武→む, etc.). Sinitic verbal prefixes, which become verbal suffixes when read as Japanese, as well as sentence-ending graphs and honorifics, are reduced to simple, schematic brushstrokes attached to the top, bottom, or corners of the character for a verb or noun, so that the resulting writing system may have more in common with the radically agglutinative and non-sequential Aztec hieroglyphs, or some early cuneiform inscriptions, than with Chinese writing.² For example, a conglomeration looking something like 成 is read from center, to top, to lower left: *na-sare sōrō* 被^レ成候. I learned to read these texts via direct oral transmission, at a Japanese university, in Japanese, with Kodama Kōta's dictionary of cursive script in hand.³ However, many instruction manuals now exist in Japanese under keywords like *komonjo* 古文書 (old documents),

1 Lurie, "Introduction," p. 15; Kornicki, *Languages, Scripts, and Chinese Texts*, p. 157.

2 Whittaker, *Deciphering Aztec Hieroglyphs*, p. 90; Nissen, *Archaic Bookkeeping*, pp. 106, 123.

3 Kodama, *Kuzushiji yōrei jiten*.

kuzushiji 崩字 (collapsed characters), *hentai kanbun* 変体漢文 (nonstandard Han text), or *sōrōbun* 候文 (texts with *sōrō* [for the copula]). In the English-speaking world, the UCLA/Waseda Hentaigana App,⁴ Laura Moretti's Summer School in Japanese Palaeography in Cambridge, and websites such as Tom Conlan's (komonjo.princeton.edu) have provided many new and exciting resources in this general area, but I know of nothing substantial in print for the beginning reader of this particular kind of document.

Nothing, that is, until now: Morgan Pitelka, Reiko Tanimura, and Takashi Masuda have produced an English-language collection of letters between notable late Muromachi- to early Edo-period (16th–17th c.) personages with photos, transcriptions, translations, and historical essays, geared toward learners and organized around the theme of the elite cultural networks that connected warriors, clerics, courtiers, merchants, and artisans in the culture of civil war. Working through it is an inspiring experience, and it is well worth the price of US\$20.

The collection is prefaced with three very helpful introductory essays. Morgan Pitelka's general historical introduction hits all the traditional notes while sometimes gesturing toward updates and adding his own spin. He includes from William Wayne Farris⁵ the fact that Japan's population was growing steadily throughout the "middle ages" (p. 2) but nevertheless allows Jeffrey Hall's⁶ high-modernist interpretation of the "unification" to dominate (p. 5), with its old Cold War concern to enshrine Japan as an honorary member of the white chivalric-capitalist West.⁷ Pitelka brings his unique insights on the first Tokugawa shogun Ieyasu (徳川家康, 1542–1616), "the power of bodies in motion" (p. 6), and conversely the power of art objects to be historical actors, ideas more fully explored in his classic *Spectacular Accumulation*. Another area where an

explicit historiographical update would have been possible is the comparison to the European Renaissance (p. 9): it is long established that Europe's own "unification," as well as its entry into and eventual domination (though only by 1800) of an already dynamic and "modern" Afro-Asiatic economy, was made possible not by any rediscovery of a Greco-Roman heritage but by the appropriation of capital networks and innovative science and technology from the Islamic world, as well as mountains of stolen resources and labor from Africa and the Americas.⁸ This means that Japan's "Renaissance" was consummated first and more truly a *Renaissance*: what new light might this inversion shed on the documents in this book? In any case, Pitelka has prioritized brevity here.

Reiko Tanimura, a leading member of the Japanese Society for Studies of Chanoyu (i.e., the tea ceremony), brings an essay brimming with knowledge of the archive as she weaves the writers of the letters in the collection into short thematic narratives. On the topic of food, a major point is that the (male) warlords of medieval Japan take pride in cooking for one another and sending ingredients as gifts, with no suggestion that cooking is a menial or feminine occupation (p. 13): it is not spelled out, but this is remarkable because cooking is largely seen as menial and feminine in Japan today, and even those who oppose this view usually assume it to be "traditional" rather than a quirk of westernized, industrial modernity. Indeed, Jesuit missionary Luís Fróis (1532–1597) says more explicitly: "In Europe, women ordinarily prepare meals; in Japan, men do the cooking, and noblemen consider it something excellent to go into the kitchen to prepare food."⁹ Tanimura's essay has a section on kinship that is mostly about how distressing it must have been for the nuclear family that we know best today to be separated by practices like hostage taking (p. 15), but I would be curious to know what we can learn from these documents about the no less real ties bound or loosed in polygynous marriage,

4 "The Hentaigana App," alcvps.cd.h.ucla.edu.

5 Farris, *Japan's Medieval Population*, pp. 170–71.

6 Hall, "Japan's Sixteenth-Century Revolution."

7 For hints at other possibilities, see Amino, "Muen, Kugai, and Raku"; Graeber and Wengrow, *Dawn of Everything*, p. 326; Scott, *Against the Grain*, p. 211; Horne, *Race War!*, p. x.

8 Frankopan, *Silk Roads*, p. 219; Frank, *ReOrient*, p. 166; Saliba, *Islamic Science*, p. 22.

9 Fróis, *Striking Contrasts*, p. 76.

adoption, or the tonsure, which are less familiar to us in industrial society. Sections follow on identity groups like courtiers, warriors, and women, but perhaps the highlight is the section on tea culture: clearly the dense tissue of allusions and associations between our rich cast of characters (and, one suspects, much of the structure of the collection) is the fruit of Tanimura's countless hours spent communing with her ancestors in the way of tea through the traces of their brushes.

Finally, we have a wide-ranging general introduction to the topic of letter writing in traditional Japan by Takashi Masuda, an appraiser, collector, and all-around connoisseur of calligraphy and paleography, and the author of many guides to these materials in Japanese. Written in an accessible style with an international audience in mind, the essay nevertheless proceeds according to a recognizably (modern) Japanese logic and sequence of thought that beginning readers will find refreshing as they learn the details of ink, brush, paper, and everything else that went into the production of the documents, as well as what must be kept in mind when reading them. This includes even their authenticity, and one suspects that Masuda was responsible for the fun idea of including a counterfeit letter in this collection: for tea master Sen no Rikyū 千利休 (1522–1591), we get to compare one real letter and one fake, the latter nevertheless being a copy of an authentic original that is not extant, so that it is still valuable as a historical source. Likewise, we have one early and one late letter by cultural impresario Hon'ami Kōetsu 本阿弥光悦 (1558–1637), so that we may compare his calligraphic style at different times in his life. Touches such as these keep the reading experience fresh.

Some elements in the Masuda essay are redundant with the notes and guides situated immediately before and after the main body of the collection, but this may be a blessing as those really only gesture toward the skills needed to read the documents, and this connects to the book's one shortcoming: a lack of methodological coherence. The central challenge in producing a book in English on these materials is that the one textbook available in English for learning non-sequential *kanbun* reading is Sydney Crawcour's ancient, half-handwritten,

and extremely rare one.¹⁰ Accordingly, the first question our authors faced was surely whether they were going to write this book as its sorely-needed successor, so that anyone who truly needed the English would be covered. Evidently having decided against this, they provide only one example at the beginning of the collection with a full transcription into sequential order and a few remarks on the nature of *kanbun* in the “Notes on Transcription” at the end of the book (pp. 187–89), and otherwise it is sink or swim.

So far so good, as most people learn this in Japanese anyway, and here is a great collection with quick-and-ready English translations and commentary—but no: as declared in the foreword, this book is “intended primarily as a text for undergraduate students” (p. vii). Accordingly, the authors have resorted to idiosyncratic *furigana* 振り仮名 glosses in an attempt to obviate the need for ordinal reading marks (*kunten* 訓点) or indeed any grammatical or orthographic explanations that would move the book closer to textbook territory. Accordingly, the foregoing example 成 (which actually occurs at the end of line 9 on p. 92) would become 被成候—except that *sōrō* (and only that word) is rendered throughout in modern *kana* spelling (そうろう), apparently in consideration of the hoped-for undergraduate reader. The authors gloss every *dzi* and *dzu* (ぢ, づ), every repeater mark (いろゝゝ), even every katakana in the transcription (に, は). To avoid explaining the optional nature of voicing marks (*dakuten* 濁点) in premodern writing, they even supply these by means of glosses, as in つはき. All of which begs the question: who is this book for? Who are these Anglophone undergraduates who are starting to read cursive *hentai kanbun* but do not know their katakana? Nevertheless, none of this prevents anyone from enjoying the collection, and in this age of the University of Tokyo New York Office, the Yanai Initiative,¹¹ or indeed this journal, when Anglophone and Japanophone Japanology are

¹⁰ Crawcour, *An Introduction to Kambun*.

¹¹ Uniqlo CEO Yanai Tadashi has set up a fund for academic exchanges, most notably faculty teaching exchanges, between Waseda University in Tokyo and the University of California, Los Angeles (www.waseda.jp/culture/en/about/yanai/).

being cross-pollinated, methodological experimentation is surely welcome, and indeed Pitelka calls this book “experimental” in his interview about it on the New Books Network Podcast.¹²

One case in which embracing the collection’s catachrestic nature even further might have been productive is the final transcription, of a letter by the “Tokugawa Empress” Tōfukumon’in 東福門院 (1607–1678), also a central figure in Elizabeth Lillehoj’s great study whose influence is felt in this book.¹³ Tōfukumon’in writes in a kana-heavy feminine hand, but she uses several Sino-Japanese terms, proper names, and other words that are not so easy to identify when written only phonetically: *hakuryōdai* 柏梁台 (the cypress pavilion [of Emperor Wu of Han, known as a venue for poetry: here a byword for a poetry session]); *yaito* 灸 (moxa); *doiyō* 土用 (the late summer hot season), and so on. So as long as we are keeping the *furigana* column full, what if the authors had provided these kanji as glosses on the *kana*: 柏^く梁^{りやう}台^{たい}, 灸^いと^と, と^とよ^よう? I wrote these in, myself.

Finally, this writing system is so cursive that it partially renounces the claim to record language fully, so that even if we could ask the original letter writer whether by a given twist and flick of the brush they meant *nite sōrō*, *no sōrō*, or *nite*, they might well neither know nor care. Nevertheless, I did find a few errors: the line numbers given on pp. 55–56 are all too high by two, except that the first reference to the first line is correct, and the second reference to the first line should be to line a. In the two letters by women (docs. 6 and 23), liberal use is made of the verb *mairasu*, but rather than kana it is written with the most cursive version of the kanji for *mairu* 参. The *mu* 厶 on top reduces to a few bumps, barely slowing the brush’s downward movement, and then the two legs of the *dai* 大 element and the *sanzukuri* 彡 combine into a clockwise *no* の -shaped loop that is so big here that we are left with two almost vertical swishes—which could just as easily be

read *yuku* 行. (See Kodama.) Conversely, the *tsuki* in *katatsuki* (shoulder jutting) at doc. 7, line 1; *cha* (tea) at doc. 15, lines 6 and 7; and *katahe* (our friend [Roku]) at doc. 19, line 11, are all in kana, not kanji: 肩つき, ちや, かたへ. At doc. 7, line 3, there is no *sōrō* 候 after *mōsu* 申 (as there is in the following line), and the next character is not *sunawachi* 則 but *bun* 分, followed by a small *ni* 二, so a new sentence begins: *Mōshibun ni* 申分_ニ (My proposal is [to buy this tea caddy from you].) At doc. 21, line 6, *go-onshin no gi* 御音信之儀 should be rather *go-onshin no go* 御音信之期 ([I feel bad for not writing] at this time when you’ve been writing to me [in Edo so insistently]). Words are transcribed on the wrong line at doc. 7, line 10; doc. 13, line 3; and doc. 23, lines 4 and 8. Pitelka speaks in his interview of the pleasures of reading these letters communally in study groups, and indeed these minor errors provide a few opportunities for students to be initiated into this social practice of checking others’ transcriptions.

Pitelka, Tanimura, and Masuda are here very much revealing a secret society ritual in the anthropological sense,¹⁴ writing down and publishing its secrets for the first time in a foreign language (or anyway, one even more foreign than modern Japanese). Whereas the natives of Europe or the prosperous farmers of Vanuatu sculpt precious materials around the skulls of honored ancestors for display and use in ancestor rituals, in Japan the personality of a great historical figure is thought to inhere in the traces of their writing brush (see Masuda’s essay, p. 32). This is the context in which the letters in this collection will have been preserved: mounted with precious materials on hanging scrolls and contemplated in tea gatherings. Even outside the world of tea ceremony, reading this type of document has been a rarefied art taught mostly by direct transmission, so this book renders a great service to the field by democratizing this knowledge. I hope that it will also help to spread the associated social practices of reading to an Anglophone world increasingly bereft of social practices, but that is up to us teachers.

12 Li and Pitelka, “Letters from Japan’s Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.”

13 Lillehoj, *Art and Palace Politics*.

14 Smith, “The Power of Secret Societies,” p. 51.

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David Johnson. *The Stage in the Temple: Ritual Opera in Village Shanxi*. Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2022.

BOOK REVIEW BY WEI LIU

DAVID Johnson's *The Stage in the Temple* centers around Southwestern Shanxi village opera, commonly referred to as *Za Operas* (*zaju* 雜劇) by local people and known as Gong and Drum *Za Operas* (*luogu zaxi* 鑼鼓雜戲) or Cymbal (*nao* 鑊) and Drum *Za Operas* by specialists. These theatrical performances are deeply entrenched in the region's history, serving as integral components of village rituals aimed at invoking blessings and safeguarding against various threats such as inclement weather, diseases, and banditry. The current scholarship on Shanxi opera largely focuses on its popularity in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, and when discussing village ritual/opera in premodern China in general, the research on the politics of ritual/opera emphasizes its civilizing mission of rectifying customs and inculcating orthodox values among commoners (*jiaohua* 教化).¹ Johnson's work, however, aims to counteract elite bias by tracing the almost invisible operatic tradition to the Song dynasty (960–1279) and unveiling the lived reality of villagers in premodern China's rural world (mainly from the Song dynasty to the near present). It underscores the importance of acknowledging and preserving

the voices of ordinary villagers, a perspective often overshadowed by the written records of the classically educated and legally privileged elite. Divided into three parts, the book features Johnson's analysis of Shanxi village opera scripts, summarizing their plots, discussing main themes, and investigating their sources. Additionally, it delves into the little-known history of southwestern Shanxi village opera and scrutinizes correlated village opera performances and their settings. Johnson's book provides invaluable insight into the cultural transmission of the scripted performance tradition in premodern rural China.

In the first part of the book, Johnson analyzes five scripts from Southwestern Shanxi villages—namely, “Presenting Incense,” “The Banquet at Hongmen,” “The White Ape Leads the Way,” “Changban Slope,” and “The Fire Assault Stratagem.” He discovers that most *Za* Opera scripts share similar historical-military themes and belong to “an archaic, ritualized tradition that was quite separate from the main line of development of opera in north China” (p. 33). Further, he examines three scripts from Xinzhuang Village—“Thrice Inviting Zhuge Liang,” “Attacking Yanzhou,” and “Xue Gang Assaults the Court.” He observes that, except for “Thrice Inviting,” whose values are faultlessly orthodox, the other scripts convey ambiguous, amoral, and sometimes cynical or subversive messages. After analyzing

¹ Li, *Opera, Society, and Politics in Modern China*, pp. 34-47; Liu, *Confucian Rituals and Chinese Villagers*.

eight scripts in Part One (five from Southwestern Shanxi villages and three from Xinzhuang Village), Johnson argues that the eight scripts do not clearly reflect the conceptual world of their audiences and they do not resonate with the realities of the lives led by their village audiences because of the ambivalent message they often convey. For instance, while some scripts convey a sense of antiauthoritarian sentiment, they do not portray the action in villages with the explicit intention of critiquing the sociopolitical status quo.

In the second part, Johnson posits that *Zaju* opera can be traced back to the Song dynasty. He cites stone inscriptions and tomb findings to attest to the opera's popularity in the countryside during Song and early Jin times (1115–1234). He also references local actors and theater scholars who acknowledged that *Zaju* may belong to a very old, village-based tradition of ritual opera, often overlooked in the sources and outside the mainstream of Chinese opera. Additionally, he points to a *Nuo* 傩戲 Opera (a masked religious performance of exorcism) script that is virtually identical to the first half of a fifteenth-century chantefable, demonstrating that an Anhui village ritual opera script remained substantially unchanged for five centuries. This evidence supports the notion that Shanxi village *Zaju* scripts dating from the eighteenth century could have originated in the thirteenth century or even earlier.

In the third part, Johnson admits that modern scholarly reports on rural ritual opera performances are likely composite narratives based on incomplete information about a tradition in terminal decline. However, he maintains his belief that further research will reveal a consistent structure of village opera across North China. After scrutinizing eyewitness accounts of *Za* Opera, *yuanben* 院本, *Dui* 隊戲 Opera, *Sai* 賽 Opera, and *Tiao* 跳戲 Opera, he cautiously generalizes that these various forms of ritual opera were integral to village ceremonial life, highly valued by the villagers, and shared a significant number of elements. The right to perform in an opera was hereditary, with the responsibility for a particular role becoming a traditional privilege of a specific family.

In the conclusion, Johnson revisits intriguing questions, such as why village opera consistently explores military-historical stories. He explains that, on one hand, these narratives serve as thrilling spectacles depicting life struggles and reflecting peasant wisdom. On the other hand, they function as proper offerings to the gods, with villagers not being the intended

audience. Consequently, they provide limited insights into villagers' conscious attitudes and values. Johnson ultimately concludes that the local opera genres examined in this book exhibit striking similarities across different locations, including characters identified by name rather than role-type, unconventional makeup compared to mainstream patterns, villagers serving as performers, exclusive use of percussion as musical accompaniment, and rudimentary vocal techniques. These characteristics are indicative of drama at a very early stage of development emerging from storytelling, suggesting that village opera genres in North China share a common early origin, spread widely, and underwent minimal changes over the centuries. The popularity of ritual operas in the religious life of the villagers underscores people's desire to express gratitude to higher powers and seek blessings and protection through the offering of operas.

Johnson's book constitutes a significant contribution to illuminating the often-ignored history of village opera and the rural milieu in premodern China, as well as villagers' values and beliefs communicated in ritual operas, or in his own words, "vernacular ideology."² His revelation of local opera genres persisting over centuries with minimal change serves as a compelling case study in the transmission of scripted performance tradition and the folk beliefs embedded in it. Johnson's analysis of opera scripts, colophons, and eyewitness accounts of performances unveils a dynamic interplay between cultural mnemotechnics: ritual repetition and textual interpretation, to borrow Jan Assmann's terminology.³ Ritual, characterized by repetitive forms, aims to preserve essential meaning and bring individuals in alignment with the eternally divine cosmic life. Conversely, in the age of writing, texts necessitate interpreters to rejuvenate their meanings through the art of hermeneutics. While ritual underscores repetition, texts foster variation and innovation. Interestingly, through ritual repetition and textual interpretation, ritual operas produce a repertoire of orientations that can shape participants' responses to everyday events⁴ and tableaux that form a cultural vocabulary used by people in all walks of life (p. 58), demonstrating the interpenetration between scripted performances and

2 Johnson, "Popular Values and Beliefs," p. 73.

3 Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, pp. 79–86.

4 Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p. 169.

people's everyday communication both verbally and bodily.

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VOLUME 9, SPRING 2024

ISSN 2433-4855 (PRINT)
ISSN 2433-4391 (ONLINE)