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dated 29th September 1594, in ARSI, *Jap.-Sin.*, 12/I, c.184v : by a perhaps not entirely fortuitous coincidence, one can read one of the depositions to which Tellechea Idígoras refers, in which he expresses great esteem for the “pobreça e aspera vida” [simplicity and frugal lifestyle] of the Franciscans and their “desprecio del mundo” [detachment from the world]). However, he does not hesitate to criticize their methods of proselytism (see FROIS, *História de Japam*, ed. J. WICKI, 5 Vols., Lisbon 1976-1984: cited here Vol. V, pp. 456-457). It is possible that some unforeseeable successes could have resulted from the Jesuit experiment, were it not for the fact that the *sakoku* showed an iron resolve, along with other bloody waves of persecution, that would prove to be an enduring implacability that hastily terminated projects and smothered any last hopes. The dialectics between acculturation, faith, martyrdom and the singular *nicodemismo* of the *kakure kirishitan*, would reappear several times over a wide span of time. Here, to complement the enlightening texts of Tellechea Idígoras, I would add that already at the time of the incident of the martyrdom of Nagasaki, a sudden emergence of mystique was to take place, even within the Jesuit fold, with regard to detachment from the world and the sacrifice of one’s life for the faith. While, in 1603, Gabriel de Matos S. J. would inform his superiors of a “tempestuous and instable

Japan”, at the same time he added that “the book of *Contemptus mundi* has been translated and printed in the language and script of Japan, which is greatly admired and widely utilized by the Japanese” (ARSI, *Jap.-Sin.*, 54/III, cc. 218r e 224v; About the text and Japanese receptivity, see LAURES, *Kirishitan bunko*, pp. 55-57). At the same time, treatises on the martyrdom proliferated (*ibid.*, p.90). An ancient tension of a strangely religious nature still prevailed. This continued to be true even though it was subject to various ramifications from diverse cultures and societies. More than any mere contextualization, this provides a fascinating *leit motif* that finds a resounding echo in the documents presented by Tellechea Idígoras.

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#### Conrad Totman,

*A History of Japan*  
(Malden (Mass.) - Oxford,  
*Blackwell Publishers, 2000*)

This book was published recently and it is included in the collection *The Blackwell History of the World*. The author has had a long career in American universities teaching Japanese history, and has published some relevant studies specially on Early Modern Japan

among which I would like to highlight his excellent biography of Tokugawa Ieyasu<sup>1</sup>.

A *History of Japan* gives a global perspective of Japanese history from its beginnings until present times. It is divided into four parts: I - Beginnings (pp. 9-32), which includes an important introduction on the role played by Geography in shaping the biosystem that sustained Japanese civilization; II - The age of dispersed agriculturalists (400 BCE-1250 CE) - (pp. 33-138); III - The age of intensive agriculture (1250-1890) - (pp. 139-306); IV - The age of industrialism: early decades (1890-present) - (pp. 307-528); finally it ends with an *Epilogue* (pp. 529-543) and several appendices.

The author opted an unusual division of periods of Japanese history, too centered on economic issues. Agriculture was, in fact, extremely important in Japan. The islands of the Rising Sun were isolated from the world almost throughout their history, and for a long time the fortune of a landlord was expressed in *koku* - the quantity of rice that his domains could produce every year. However, it seems to me that the evolution of Japanese society was deeply influenced by other factors such as culture, religion, politics and warfare, a combination of which specifically shaped different eras.

The author is aware of this, because within each part of the book he pays special attention to political

and cultural issues. Therefore the main divisions of this work seem to result from an *a priori* conception of History, and not from the subject that is studied, which becomes clearer when Totman reduces Japanese history to three "facets" - "production, distribution and representation" (p. 11). History is always a much more complex phenomenon which is not subordinated to a single aspect of daily life.

Nevertheless it is not my intention to discuss this work as a whole, but only the part that concerns Portuguese-Japanese relations in the 16th and 17th centuries. Unfortunately, this is a subject which is largely ignored by the author and the few references he makes have important mistakes.

The major error is the confused way in which the Portuguese are considered "Iberians". It is true that Portugal is part of the Iberian Peninsula, but it has its own specificity due to a unique culture and a history of more than 8 centuries as an independent country. Even when it was under the rule of Spanish kings (1580-1640) its empire was kept totally independent of the Spanish one, controlled only by Portuguese officials, and Japan was precisely one such area where the two nations had a keen rivalry during these 60 years.

In the 17th century, both Portugal and Spain faced the newborn empires of Protestant Northern Euro-

pean powers, but that is not enough to assume that the two Iberian countries have a common history, even in Japan. Totman refers the “Portuguese Jesuits” as “one aspect of the Iberian elite’s global pursuit of luxury goods and glory” (p. 207). The Portuguese expansion, and the European one in general, cannot be reduced to such a restricted definition, both in regard to the expansion or in the case of the role of the Jesuits:

1 - Portuguese expansion does not have very much in common with the Spanish one, specially from the 15th to the 17th centuries. The Portuguese created a maritime empire, while the Spaniards built a territorial one in America and in the Philippines, and these different models, obviously, gave rise to many other differences. Furthermore, Portuguese expansion was not a movement of an elite, but a dynamic action which involved almost all groups of Portuguese society, and they were not merely seeking “luxury goods and glory”. Once again, it is important to stress that a historical phenomenon is always a complex whole that cannot be reduced to one or two reasons.

2 - It is also important to note that the fathers of the Society who worked in the Portuguese Patronage and the traders who used the Macao-Nagasaki route did not have very much in common with the merchants and the missionaries who came to Japan from the Philippines, apart from

the fact that both aimed to convert Japan to Christianity. However they did not even agree as to the missionary methods and both Macao and Manila aimed to secure a monopoly of Euro-Japanese trade. The “Portuguese Jesuits” never used the Spanish route by America and the Pacific Ocean; they preferred to sail via the Portuguese Empire routes, despite the fact that they took one more year to reach the islands of the Rising Sun - so, they did not view themselves as Iberians. For the same reason it is not correct to say that, after the Shimabara rebellion, Tokugawa Iemitsu suppressed “all remaining Iberian connections”. Trade between Japan and the Philippines had ended by the 1620’s; in fact, what Iemitsu did was to forbid the coming of Portuguese vessels from Macao.

There is a large bibliography that explains those global differences, and many authors have explained the Iberian rivalry in East Asia, specially in Japan. There is also an enormous amount of documentation, much of it printed, that clearly shows this. The article of Pedro Lage Correia and the book review of Annibale Zambarbieri, included in the present volume are two excellent examples of this reality.

To confuse different nations may be seen as a bad knowledge of European history, but the author omits the role of the “Iberians of Portugal” in Japanese history, which is surprising, because most of the general studies like this one, such as the books

of Francine Hérail<sup>2</sup>, Michel Vié<sup>3</sup>, John W. Hall<sup>4</sup> or the *Cambridge History of Japan* emphasize the importance of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1543 and their contribution for the modernization of the country. This importance has also been stressed by many other authors like Charles Boxer<sup>5</sup>, Geoffrey Parker<sup>6</sup>, Léon Bourdon<sup>7</sup>, George Elison<sup>8</sup> (who considers that for the first time Japanese history got an international dimension<sup>9</sup>), or Ronald Toby, not to mention the important work of religious historians, such as Johannes Laures, Josef Franz Schütte, Georg Schurhammer, Juan Ruiz-de-Medina, Diego Yuuki, Hubert Cieslik, Doroteus Schilling, Arnulf Hartmann, Bernward Willeke or Jesús Lopez Gay. The Japanese themselves recognize this influence, as has been expressed by a large number of historians, such as Inoue Mitsusada, Ienaga Saburo, Anesaki Masaharu, Ebisawa Arimichi<sup>10</sup>, Matsuda Kiichi<sup>11</sup> or Nakayama Shigeru<sup>12</sup> and even by Emperor Akihito in an article he signed for *Science*, in 1992<sup>13</sup>.

Unfortunately, Totman ignores the problem: he does not explain how fire arms were introduced in the battle field. Likewise, he does not mention the introduction of new technologies, new scientific knowledge, specially of Geography, Astronomy or Medicine, new words, new commodities or even new gastronomic habits. The founding of Nagasaki by the Portuguese is also not

mentioned, despite the importance that that city would have in subsequent centuries. The embassy of the young representatives of the Christian *daimyô* to the Pope (1582-1590) has also been ignored, despite being a subject that young Japanese learn today in Primary School.

These are just a few examples of the importance of the Portuguese presence in Japan - it was the first time that Japan was opened to massive foreign influence since it had adopted much of Chinese civilization some eight centuries before.

There are other historians, who share Totman's vision about the relatively minor importance of the Portuguese impact in Japan, such as Richard Storry<sup>14</sup>, George Sansom<sup>15</sup> or Edwin Reischauer<sup>16</sup>. They cite the lack of material evidences left by the *nanbanjin* and especially the absence of references in Japanese sources. However, this is a wrong perspective because it ignores the fact that most of the texts produced by the Portuguese were destroyed during the anti-Christian persecutions and also forgets that the chronicles reporting the facts of the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th were written a few decades later when Christianity was forbidden and the Portuguese had been banned from Japan and therefore they were not a subject to be mentioned in the chronicles. Despite this there are continued references to them until the 19th century in the successive anti-

Christians laws that the *Edo bakufu* issued throughout its existence.

Likewise, we can get an idea of the significant role of the Portuguese in Japanese history while traveling within the country today. From Tanegashima to Kyoto there are hundreds of statues and memorials commemorating the action of the Jesuits and of the Portuguese traders. I am not speaking about remains of buildings or old artifacts which were left by people in the Past, I am referring to evocations which have been made in recent decades by present day Japanese society. There does not exist such a profusion of monuments in such a widely dispersed area of the country remembering any other foreign people in Japan.

The Portuguese presence in Japan is an important issue to understand Japanese history in the dramatic years of the end of *sengoku jidai*. The biography of Oda Nobunaga, for instance, can not be done without considering his personal relation with the Jesuits and the way he used many rare objects that were brought by the missionaries, at the same time in which he was changing warfare in Japan by the correct use of firearms.

Unfortunately none of these questions are explained correctly or sufficiently in Totman's book.

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1 Conrad Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun*, Union City, *Heian*, 1983.

2 See Francine Hérail, *Histoire du Japon des origines à la fin de Meiji*, Paris, *Publications Orientalistes de France*, 1986.

3 See Michel Vié, *Histoire du Japon*, Paris, PUF, 1983 (original, 1969).

4 See John Whitney Hall, *Japan. From Prehistory to Modern Times*, Ann Arbor (Michigan), *Center for Japanese Studies - The University of Michigan*, 1991.

5 See C.R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, Manchester, *Carcamet*, 1993.

6 See Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution, Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*, Cambridge, *Cambridge University Press*, 1989.

7 See Léon Bourdon, *La Compagnie de Jésus et le Japon. 1547-1570*, Paris, *Centre Culturel Portugais*, 1993.

8 See George Elison, *Deus Destroyed, the Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge (Mass.)-London, *Harvard University Press*, 1988.

9 See Idem, "The Cross and the Sword: Patterns of Momoyama History", in *Warlords, Artists & Commoners. Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, Honolulu, 1981, pp. 55-86, p. 60.

10 For the works of these four scholars, I am following Henrique Leitão and José Miguel Pinto dos Santos, "O Kenkon Bensetsu e a recepção da cosmologia ocidental no Japão do séc. XVII", in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, Braga, *Faculdade de Filosofia da UCP*, Tomo LIV-2, 1998, pp. 285-318.

11 See Matsuda Kiichi, *The Relations Between Portugal and Japan*, Lisbon, *Centro de Estudos Histórico Ultramarinos*, 1965.

12 See Nakayama Shigeru, *A History of Japanese Astronomy. Chinese Background and Western Impact*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1969.

13 See *Science*, vol. 258, 1992, p. 578.

14 See Richard Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, London, *Penguin Books*, 1972.

15 See George Sansom, *Histoire du Japon*, Paris, *Payot*, 1986.

16 See Edwin O. Reischauer, *Histoire du Japon et des Japonais*, 2 vols., Paris, *Éditions du Seuil*, 1973.

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