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RESEÑA DE "DIÁLOGO SOBRE A MISSÃO DOS EMBAIXADORES JAPONESES À
CÚRIA ROMANA" DE DUARTE DE SANDE

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for such a text, in what concerns a better understanding of the personality of Cristóvão Ferreira not much was gained in relation to previous works. But I also feel that Proust's emphasis on the importance of intellectual aspects and on the complex variety of influences that could affect a seventeenth century Jesuit is challenging and deserves attention.

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Duarte de Sande, S. J.

Diálogo sobre a Missão dos Embaixadores Japoneses à Cúria Romana, (pref., translation from Latin and notes by Américo da Costa Ramalho), Macao, Comissão Territorial de Macau para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses – Fundação Oriente, 1997, 353 p.

In 1590, the work entitled *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam Curiam ...* was printed and published by the missionary centre of the Jesuits in Macao.

After its first edition, this work had been partially translated and re-edited, but only in 1997, with the present edition of *De Missione Legatorum*, we can count on the first integral translation of this source on a modern language such as Portuguese. This meritorious work is due to Prof. Américo da Costa Ramalho, who, during the translating process had also

studied all the facts concerning the text and his author. The Portuguese edition appears with a preface that resumes the most pertinent conclusions of such study.

Upon Alessandro Valignano, S. J., Visitor of the Japanese mission and the mentor of this work, it completed a trilogy of printed books, planned for the conversion of Japan, as he defended among the students of the local seminaries, to whom he had begun to write some words of presentation. After having made all efforts to teach them the principles of the Christian faith, namely writing the *Catechismus Christianae Fidei in quo Veritas nostrae religionis ostenditur et sectae Iaponenses confutatur*, printed in 1586, and also after having promoted the publication of *Christiani Pueri Institutio*, written by João Bonifácio, S. J., and edited in 1588, work which Valignano believed illustrated the good virtues concerning costumes, it remained to present to the Japanese people the European civilisation, unfortunately unknown in the far-east.

Since the beginning of the Padroado's missions in Japan, the distance that separated the two civilisations had contributed to some misunderstandings, mostly because of the lack of a political, social and cultural framing of the foreign missionaries that approached the Japanese territory. As a matter of fact, those men were often seen with some discredit. For instance, when they preached the Christian poverty, not easily attractive, they were equalised to lower classes, losing their social influence.

One of the concerns of the missionaries was to find a way to supply the absence of European structures, such as royalty or papacy, on their material or spiritual strength and richness, looking for a sound judgement of their greatness among the Japanese society. We can say that, due to this circumstance, Alessandro Valignano, S. J., had promoted a well known project - an embassy, representing the Japanese local power with stronger links to Christianity and that it was available to send a small legacy of obedience to the Pope, following the European tradition. The choice relapsed on four young princes of Kyushu, future authors of the book: Mâncio Ito, nephew of ÔtomoYoshishige, *daimyô* of Bungo; Miguel Chijiwa, nephew of the *daimyô* Arima Harunobu, *daimyô* of Arima and of Ômura Sumitada, *daimyô* of Ômura; and two relatives of the *daimyô* of Ômura, Juliano Nakaura and Martim Hara. They left Nagasaki in February 1582, made contact with the Portuguese overseas dominions, the splendour of Europe, and they returned to the Far East in 1587-1590, stopped over in Macao, arriving at the same port of Nagasaki in July of 1590.

The Jesuits, proud of the success of this embassy, intended that the Japanese should be informed by the ambassadors themselves, of the favourable reception they had met in Europe, and the remarkable things they had seen on their voyage, which itinerary is fallen along thirty-four colloquies, on the humanistic stile. During their standing in Macao, Duarte

de Sande, S. J., based on their travel's notes, had the opportunity to compose the Latin text, in dialog form, presenting as interlocutors the young ambassadors and two cousins of Miguel: Lino, from Omura, and Leão, from Arima, who had played the roll of suspicious Japanese curios about European news.

The book contains a very stimulant description of the state of Europe, often compared with the state of Japan, giving some account of the differences. Nothing was left behind. From the several forms of government - monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic - passing by the pomp and magnificence of the European Princes, the splendour of their Court, their richness and power, the manners, customs, and the way of life of the nobles, and also the flourishing condition of trade and commerce, without neglecting matters such as slavery, or the way of carrying on war in Europe, both by sea and land. All these subjects merited complex development. We can either find some anthropological remarks. For each place, the ambassadors have reserved a large description, about the urbanism, or the local power. In Europe, they had been particularly in Lisbon, Évora, Vila Viçosa, Madrid, Pisa, Florence, Rome, Naples, Padua, Verona, Mantua, Cremona, Milan, Genoa. On the power and authority of the Pope at Rome, they emphasised the magnificence of his Court, the several audiences the ambassadors had of Gregory XIII, who died soon after their arrival and the ceremonies observed

upon the election of Sixtus V, his successor.

As the young Japanese mention on the colloquies, their statement has not been exclusively verbal, since they had brought with them many instruments, books and maps to better illustrate the extent of European knowledge.

Regarding the strong use of adjectives, it is clear to understand that we are in front of an apologetical view of Europe, and, above all, an apologetical view of Christianity, that is presented as the source of every greatness, in opposition of Paganism, which compromised the straight prospering of civilisation in Japan.

If it is comprehensible that the great majority of the attention goes to the western topics, it is also true that a brief account of Oriental Civilisation was not forgotten, including the Kingdom of China, the closest neighbour of the ambassadors.

To conclude the appreciation of the work, only a few words about this particular edition.

Concerning the translation, the competence and the large experience of the latinist avoids any suspicion. We have also to underline the honesty of proceeding, for instant, when the translator made some subjective choices, mostly in what concerns the modernisation of the vocabulary, what is always clearly signed.

Along the complex and prolix report of this interesting embassy, the reader can be sure of founding a signifi-

cant work of annotation, where it provides all kinds of information, since biographical reports about many personages, probable sources of certain arguments, other contemporary opinions about certain subjects, monetary equivalencies, geographical and urbanistic information, etc.

For the intrinsic interest of this source and the erudition of the translator, all confirms its value to the story of the portuguese-japanese encounter.

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BÉSINEAU, Jacques

Au Japon avec João Rodrigues 1580-1620, Lisbon-Paris, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1998, pp.240 + 8 with pictures.

In the post face, Michael Cooper, the great João Rodrigues' biographer, considers this book an "abridged version of João Rodrigues' biography". He is quite right in his qualification, because we feel that on reading it. Another main characteristic is given by Bésineau himself, when he calls attention for his idea of putting this Jesuit's life into the Japanese happenings and we must add the the Portuguese connections with Niponic islands in the second part of 16th century and in the first quarter of the 17th.