

Shores of Matteo Ricci. Circularity of visual and textual sources and the Interrelation of the missionary experiences in Europe, Japan and China. Preliminary considerations

Angelo Cattaneo

CHAM, FCSH, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

Abstract

The integrated analysis of pictorial, textual and cartographic documents produced in China and Japan, in contexts connected to the Jesuit presence, highlights a remarkable and fecund circularity of meanings and interpretations between visual and textual sources. Even more importantly, this circularity concerns textual and cartographic sources drafted in China by Matteo Ricci, S.J., in collaboration with his Chinese interlocutors and, on the one hand, pictorial representations on *nanban* folding screens, designed by Japanese painters to describe or idealizing local contexts of interactions among the *nanbanjin* and Japanese people, and on the other, Jesuit textual sources on Japan. Despite current growing specialisms between the communities of scholars dealing with the Chinese and Japanese contexts, the vicissitudes and experiences occurred over the course of the 16th and 17th century, in particular the cultural mobility between Europe and East Asia, and *viceversa*, and within East-Asia, at the time of the European presence, led to a symbiotic development of concepts and ideas, expressed in both tangible and intangible cultural products. This paper highlights the need and opportunity that these connected contexts can be also studied from integrated perspectives pertinently, beyond limiting specialism. We do this by analyzing the migration and transformation of cosmographic and cartographic ideas and devices from Europe to China and Japan, showing their long-distance surprising transformative journeys, in space and time, from Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Early Modernity.

要旨

中国および日本で制作された絵画、文章、地図製作の資料の統合分析は、同地におけるイエズス会の存在の文脈に鑑み、視覚さらに文章による情報にあたることで、その意味と解釈において 顕著で肥沃な議論の循環性に焦点を当てる。さらに重要なことに、マテオ・リッチが、中国人の通訳の協力と得て、中国で草稿した文書と地図作成の情報源と、この循環性は関連を持つ。一方で、南蛮屏風に描かれた絵は、日本人画家が南蛮人と日本人間の相互作用の日本国内の文脈を表現したり理想化し描写した南蛮屏風、日本でのイエズス会文書源とも関連がある。中国及び日本の文脈を扱う学者コミュニティ間で現在、研究領域の専門化が進んでいるにもかかわらず、16世紀から17世紀に展開した変遷と経験は、特に、ヨーロッパ・東アジア間の文化的流入・逆行の中でもたらされた。東アジア内において、その時代はヨーロッパの存在が顕著であり、概念と主義の共生的発展が牽引され、有形および無形の文化的成果として表現されている。本稿で

は、これらの関連する文脈を、専門の枠を超えた統合的視点に立ち、適切に研究する必要性と機会を強調する。私たちは、ヨーロッパから中国や日本へ導入された宇宙図や地図製作の考えや装置の移行と変容を分析し、古代から中世、初期近代まで、空間と時間という点で、長距離の驚くべき変容の旅を検証することで、上記の主張へとつなげる。

Keywords キーワード

Western cosmography and cartography in China and Japan

Aristotelian natural philosophy and Christianity

Ricci's and Li's planispheres in China and Japan

Nanban folding screens and world map folding screens

Inculturation of Christian faith

中国と日本における西洋宇宙誌と西洋地図学

アリストテレスの自然哲学とキリスト教

中国と日本におけるリッチと李の星座早見盤

南蛮屏風と世界地図屏風

キリスト教信仰のインカルチュレーション

An early seventeenth-century *nanban* folding screen, currently held in the Nanban Bunkakan Museum in Osaka, displays a complex and detailed representation of a Jesuit residence in the outskirts of an unidentified, imaginary Japanese port city, inhabited by Portuguese and Japanese merchants and their multi-ethnic servants, Japanese women, Jesuit missionaries and novices, and also on the right margin, a Franciscan friar, interacting with a Japanese man [Fig. 1].¹ The Jesuit residence comprises a *nanban-ji*, a wooden Christian church, built in the architectural style of a Buddhist temple, with a cross on the top of the *kawara* 瓦 roof. In the front room (*zashiki* 座敷²) of the *nanban-ji*, a middle-aged Jesuit and a Japanese young man are seated one in front of the other, each of them holding a small size (seemingly western) book in their hands, in the act of reading or reciting a passage together. Another Japanese young man, wearing the black robe of the Jesuits

1 Hino Hiroshi 日埜 博司、南蛮屏風にあらわれる南蛮人について (Nanban byōbu ni arawareru nanbanjin ni tsuite - The representation of nanbanjin in nanban byōbu) 文学 Bungaku 52 (1984): 176-84. For its reproduction and brief description: Sakamoto Mitsuru (ed.), *Nanban byōbu shūsei* (A Catalogue Raisonné of the Nanban Screens), Tokyo, Chūōkōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2008 (In Japanese; summary and list of screens also in English), plate 3, pp. 30-31. For a recent historical reconsideration of nanban *byōbu*: Curvelo, Alexandra, *Nanban Folding Screen Masterpieces, Japan-Portugal, XVIIIth century*. Paris: Éditions Chandeigne, 2015.

2 Alessandro Valignano, S.J. (1538-1606) explains and uses this terms several times in his *Ceremoniale*. Cf. Valignano, Alessandro, *Il cerimoniale per i missionari del Giappone : Advertimentos e avisos acerca dos costumes e catangues de Jappão : importante documento circa i metodi di adattamento nella missione giapponese del secolo XVI : testo portoghese del manoscritto originale, versione letterale italiana*. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e letterature, 1946.



Fig. 1 - Imaginary Japanese port city inhabited by the *nanbanjin* (merchants, their servants and slaves, and the missionaries) and Japanese people. One of a pair of *nanban* folding screens. Osaka, Nanban Bunkakan, early seventeenth century.

- probably a Japanese brother or maybe a *dōjuku* 同宿, an assistant of the mission³ - is bringing a cup of tea. Placed beside the *nanban-ji* there is a second building, the Jesuit residence as such. From inside a wooden grate window, a western Jesuit is talking with a Japanese middle-aged man, who is seated outside on the floor, wearing a *kamishimo* 袴 (vest and trousers) with a *kosode* 小袖 (a robe underneath them). Just beside, other four Japanese people, including a Japanese woman, are kneeling in the act of praying, and two of them, including the woman, are holding rosaries [Fig. 2].

As a whole, the pictorial representation captures a moment of serene daily life in the sociality of the missions in Japan, emphasizing the aspects of communication, dialogue, the “being together” among the Jesuits, their young Japanese acolytes as well as Japanese male and female adults, within the permeable and welcoming space of the Jesuit residence. The accent is also placed on shared cognitive objects: first of all, books, read and recited, but also a huge image hang on, or depicted on, a wooden panel placed on the left side of the external gate of the residence, facing the street outside of the wooden building [Fig. 3]. Decorated at the top with three indigo lotus flowers, the wall panel displays a huge geometric representation consisting of eight concentric circles that fully occupy the

³ *Dōjuku* 同宿 was the term that the Buddhists used for their novices. Jesuit missionaries used it to refer to “a lay acolyte who dedicated himself to evangelization by teaching the catechism and preaching.” Jesús López-Gay, S.J., “Las organizaciones de laicos en el apostolado de la primitiva misión del Japón,” *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 36 (1967): 3.31. See also: Fujikawa, Mayu, “Studies on the Jesuit Japan Mission,” Brill online Reference Work: http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/jesuit-historiography-online/studies-on-the-jesuit-japan-mission-COM_196472. I am particularly grateful to Fujikawa Mayu (I Tatti, Florence) for her advice and generous help.



Fig. 2 – A Jesuit residence, comprising a *nanban-ji*, a wooden Christian church, built in the architectural style of a Buddhist temple. The image captures a moment of serene daily life in the sociality of the missions in Japan. Detail from one of a pair of nanban folding screens. Osaka, Nanban Bunkakan, early seventeenth century.

left gate wall. By keeping to the proportion of the objects represented in the *byōbu*, the size of the circles would indicate a huge, nearly square object, about two meters in size.

What could be the object depicted by the Japanese painter(s) with geometric care and taste? The peculiar geometry of the concentric circles – an *unicum* in nanban folding screens – could refer to a celestial geocentric map, an exemplification of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic universe (*mundus*). For nearly 2000 years, from Antiquity until at least the mid-seventeenth century, when Copernicus', Galilei and Kepler's heliocentric paradigm slowly and with difficulty overstretched the geocentric one, the latter remained the longest lasting and most influential scientific theory ever in Western science. On the basis of Eudoxus of Cnidos, Calippus of Cizicus (fourth century BC), Plato (427-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC) developed their most influential physical conceptions of the universe in which the immobile Earth, made of the element earth and water, surrounded by the elements air and fire – which all together composed the sublunary world – was surrounded by eight groups of crystalline spheres that transported the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars,



Fig. 3 – Detail displaying an emblematic large object made of eight concentric circles that connotes a Jesuit residence within an imaginary Japanese port city. Detail from one of a pair of nanban folding screens. Osaka, Nanban Bunkakan, early seventeenth century.

Jupiter, Saturn, and the fixed stars.⁴ From the twelfth century, following the translation from Arabic into Latin of the *De caelo* of Aristotle, the number of spheres in heaven became the subject of very heated theological disputes that impacted western natural philosophy over many centuries. This relevant dispute in the Christian theology of creation focused on two main issues: one concerning the number of heavens according to the Bible, and

⁴ For the theory of the homocentric spheres in Plato, see *Timaeus* 31a, 36d; 38cd and 39a; in Aristotle, see for example *De caelo* I.9, 277 b 27-29. Eudoxus of Cnidos, using a group of three or four concentric spheres for every planet, was able to explain the motion of Mercury, Jupiter and Saturn along the zodiac. Calippus of Cizicus (fourth century BC) introduced some extra spheres for the Moon, the Sun, and Venus and Mars. The resulting models were worked out by Plato (427-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC) in order to develop their physical conceptions of the universe. For a general study of the doctrine of the homocentric spheres see G. Schiapparelli, "Le sfere omocentriche di Eudosso, di Callippo e di Aristotele," *Memorie del Reale Istituto Lombardo, Classe di Scienze matematiche e naturali* 13 (1875) (reprinted in *Scritti sulla storia dell'astronomia antica*, II, Bologna, 1926, pp. 126-141) and Duhem, *Le système du monde*, vol. 1, pp. 126-150.

another concerning the consistency of the Bible with scientific descriptions of the celestial world. In the context of the assimilation and systematization of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* that had been accomplished by the Dominican Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, among others, the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic theory of the concentric crystalline spheres was integrated into Christian theology and natural philosophy.⁵ The Augustinian Johannes de Sacrobosco's *De Sphaera* (thirteenth century) – one of the most diffused and long lasting works of basic astronomy until the seventeenth century – popularized this doctrine.⁶

During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, despite Copernicus', Kepler's and Galilei's heliocentric visions, the majority of European scholars and natural philosophers kept conceiving the universe (*mundus*) as geocentric and generally assumed that there were ten or eleven celestial spheres placed above and around the sublunary world. As an example, both Christophorus Clavius' edition of Sacrobosco's *De Sphaera* (1st edition, Rome, 1570, a fundamental work for the scientific education of the Jesuits, in particular in the Roman College), and Alessandro Piccolomini's *La sfera del mondo* (1st edition, Rome, 1540) display eleven and ten spheres respectively [Fig. 4].⁷ These books were quite important also in Jesuit missionary contexts, in particular in Asia: they were among the very few Western books materially available to Matteo Ricci in China, when he started his mission and began to draw planispheres and introducing Western cosmology and cosmography to the Chinese people, around 1585.

Notwithstanding the inaccurate correspondence between the number of circles in the image of the *byōbu* of the Nanban Bunkakan in Osaka and that in sixteenth-century cosmographic diagrams, we see in the peculiar circular geometric structure of the image a significant congruity and consistency with western geocentric maps of the world or – through a process of metonymy – to a map of the world that also displayed diagrams of the geocentric universe, normally in one of the four corners. This was the case of the monumental 坤輿萬國全圖 *Kunyu wanguo quantu* (Complete map of the myriad nations of the world) designed by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and the astronomer and mathematician 李之藻 Li Zhizao (1565-1630), printed with woodblocks in Beijing in 1602.⁸ This oval

5 Grant, Edward, "How Theology, Imagination, and the Spirit of Inquiry Shaped Natural Philosophy in the Late Middle Ages," *History of Science* 49.1 (2011):89-108.

6 Thorndike, Lynn, *The Sphere of Sacrobosco and Its Commentators*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949.

7 *Christophori Clavii Bambergensis In Sphaeram Ioannis de sacro Bosco Commentarius*. Rome : apud Victorium Helianum, 1570, p. 72. *La sfera del mondo di m. Alessandro Piccolomini di nuouo da lui ripolita, accresciuta, & fino a sei libri, di quattro che erano, ampliata, & quasi per ogni parte rinnouata & riformata*. Venice: Giovanni Varisco e compagni, 1566, p. 37.

8 D'Elia, Pasquale M., *Il mappamondo cinese del P. Matteo Ricci S.I. (Terza edizione, Pechino, 1602), conservato presso la Biblioteca Vaticana ... Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1938, 73-93; D'Elia, Pasquale M. , 'Recent Discoveries and New Studies (1938-60) on the World Map in Chinese of Father Matteo Ricci S.I.', *Monumenta Serica*, 20 (1961), 82-164; Theodore N. Foss, 'La cartografia di Matteo Ricci', in M. Cigliano, ed., *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi ricciani (Macerata-Roma, 22-25 ottobre 1982)* (Macerata: Centro Studi Ricciani, 1984), 177-96; Theodore N. Foss, 'A Western Interpretation of China: Jesuit Cartography', in Charles E. Ronan, S.J. and Bonnie B.C. Oh, eds., *East**



Fig. 4 - The sublunary world and the geocentric *mundus* made of ten spheres, from Christophori Clavii Bambergensis *In Sphaeram Ioannis de sacro Bosco Commentarius*. Roma, apud Victorium Helianum, 1570, p. 38 and 72

planisphere, comprising six panels, measuring all together c. 200 × 400 cm, the most famous of the 'Ricci's maps' and the only one to have been preserved (four copies and a fragment), displays a geocentric diagram in the upper right corner [Fig. 5; Fig. 6]. The *Kunyu wanguo quantu* was derived from several revisions of the first map of the world designed for Ricci with Chinese text and printed with woodblocks between 1584 and 1585 in Zhaoqing and entitled 輿地山海全圖 *Yudi shanhai quantu* (Complete map of the mountains and sea of the earth). The *Kunyu wanguo quantu* itself was later reprinted and also copied several times in manuscript form by Chinese, Japanese and Korean scholars. In particular, it circulated pervasively in Japan, in both manuscript and printed copies and became one of the principal sources of Japanese world map nanban folding screens, such as a pair magnificent folding screen also held at the Nanban Bunkakan, in Osaka [Fig. 7].

In the upper right corner of the *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, and in Japanese world map screens derived directly or indirectly by it, there are geocentric diagrams of the *mundus*,

Meets West: The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1988: 209-51; Day, John D., 'The Search for the Origins of the Chinese Manuscript of Matteo Ricci's Maps', *Imago Mundi*, 47 (1995), 94-117. For the most re-edition of the planisphere, translated into Italian: Mignini, Filippo (ed.), *La cartografia di Matteo Ricci*. Rome: Libreria dello Stato, Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2013. For a partial, digital re-edition of D'Elia's edition of Ricci's and Li Zihao's 1602 planisphere:



Fig. 5 - Matteo Ricci, Li Zhizao, Zhang Wentao, *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, or 'Map of the Ten Thousand Kingdoms of the Earth', xylograph on six panels of Chinese paper, 182x219 cm, Beijing, 1602, University of Minnesota, James Ford Bell Library.

derived from Clavius's edition of the *De Sphaera* of Sacrobosco. The image with the concentric circles depicted on the gate of the Jesuit residence, in the nanban byōbu – that we interpret as a reference to a western geocentric map of the universe – constitutes an important documental visual testimony that matches with textual narratives developed in archival textual sources written by the Jesuits to describe their missionary practices in China and Japan. In particular, it provides a visual dimension to Matteo Ricci's descriptions of his use of maps and cosmography in the development of his missionary practices in several Chinese cities, since at least 1585 as well as also to similar practices brought forward in Japan, in particular by Carlo Spinola, S.J., and documented in the *anua* of 1606.⁹

Matteo Ricci described his vicissitudes and the complex encounter with the Chinese civilization and people in a manuscript, written in Italian, entitled *Della entrata della Compagnia di Giesù e Christianità nella Cina* (On the entrance of the Society of Jesus and Christianity into China). After Ricci's death in Beijing in 1610, this work was eventually brought to Rome by Nicolas Trigault S.J., and despite serving as one of the major sources of Trigault's *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas suscepta ab Societate Jesu. Ex P. Matthaei Riccii eiusdem Societatis commentariis Libri V* (Augsburg, 1615),¹⁰ it remained forgotten for

⁹ Frison, Daniele, "Il contributo scientifico del gesuita Carlo Spinola nel Giappone del primo Tokugawa, *Il Giappone* 49 (2009), pp. 21-56. For Spinola's biography: Frison, Daniele, *as vocem*, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (2018), forthcoming.

¹⁰ *De Christiana expeditione apud sinas suscepta ab Societate Jesu. Ex P. Matthaei Riccii eiusdem Societatis commentariis Libri V: Ad S.D.N. Paulum V. In Quibus Sinensis Regni mores, leges, atque instituta, & novae illius Ecclesiae difficillima primordia accurate & summa fide describuntur* (The Christian Expedition among the Chinese undertaken by the Society of Jesus from the commentaries of Fr. Matteo Ricci of the

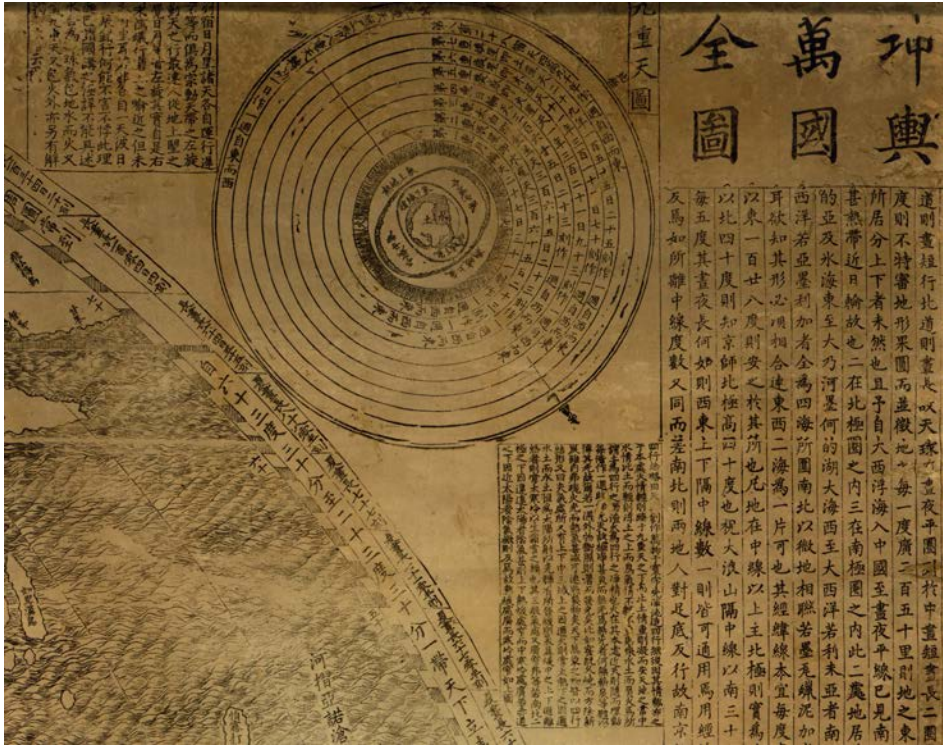


Fig. 6 - Upper left corner of the *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, displaying the sublunary world surrounded by ten heavenly spheres. The diagram combines the sublunary world and the geocentric *mundus* of Christopher Clavius' edition of the *De Sphaera* of Sacrobosco (Rome, 1570). Matteo Ricci, Li Zhizao, Zhang Wentao, *Kunyu wanguo quantu* or 'Map of the Ten Thousand Kingdoms of the Earth', xylograph on six panels of Chinese paper, 182x219 cm, Beijing, 1602, University of Minnesota, James Ford Bell Library.

four centuries until Pietro Tacchi Venturi, SJ, discovered it in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (Jesuit Roman Archive) in 1909 and published it in 1911.¹¹ Ricci's account was again published by Pasquale D'Elia, S.J., in 1942 as the first volume of the *Fonti Ricciane*, and republished in 2000.¹²

same Society, in five books: dedicated to Pope Paul V. In which the customs, laws, and principles of the Chinese kingdom and the most difficult first beginnings of the new Church there are accurately and with great fidelity described authored by Fr. Nicolas Trigault, Flemish, of the same Society). Augsburg, 1615.

¹¹ Tacchi Venuturi, Pietro, ed., *Opere storiche del Padre Matteo Ricci, S.I.*, vol. 1, *Commentarj della Cina*. Macerata: Giorgetti, 1911.

¹² *Fonti ricciane; documenti originali concernenti Matteo Ricci e la storia delle prime relazioni tra l'Europa e la Cina (1579-1615)*, 3 vols. Ed. e commentati de Pasquale M. d'Elia sotto il patrocinio della Reale



Fig. 7 – World map nanban folding screen displaying a map of the world derived, indirectly, from Matteo Ricci, Li Zhizao, and Zhang Wentao, *Kunyu wanguo quantu*. The title, in Latin, is instead a clear reference to western maps of the world (*orbis terrarum*). One of a pair of nanban folding screens. Osaka, Nanban Bunkakan, early seventeenth century.

In *Della entrata*, the 與地山海全圖 *Yudi shanhai quantu*, designed in 1585, was described by Ricci as ‘the best and most useful work that could be done in that time, to persuade China to give credit to the things of our holy faith.’¹³ From this description it becomes clear that the meaning of the large printed planispheres designed by Ricci went beyond the geographical and scientific contents which might be (mis)understood as their main significance in today’s paradigms. The words used by Ricci to describe his cartographic endeavors call for a fresh reconsideration of the Christian educational and spiritual significance of cosmography that can perhaps better explain the work of Ricci and his European and Chinese confrères. At the same time, they help to understand why the Japanese painters depicted the object with the concentric circles with such a great prominence, to the point of connoting the Jesuit residence.

Circularity of meanings and interpretations

From the theoretical point of view, we observe here a remarkable and fecund circularity of meanings and interpretation not only between visual and textual sources, but also, and even more importantly, between sources drafted in missionary contexts in

accademia d’Italia. Rome, Libreria dello Stato, 1942-1949. Ricci, Matteo, *Della entrata della compagnia di Giesu e Christianita nella Cina*, ed. Piero Corradini. Macerata: Quodlibet, 2000.

¹³ *Della entrata*, ed. D’Elia, *Fonti Ricciane*, i, 208.

China by a Catholic missionary and representations designed in Japan by local painters to describe, imagining, idealizing local contexts of interactions and sociality among the *nanbanjin* and Japanese people.

Cosmography was a relevant part of Christian natural philosophy.¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, in the first part of the *Summa theologiae*, distinctly defined these connections among cosmography, natural philosophy and Christian dogmas: “The very order of things created by God shows the unity of the world. For this, world is called one by the unity of order, whereby some things are ordered to others. But whatever things come from God, have relation of order to each other, and to God Himself, as shown above.¹⁵ According to a tradition that persisted until the beginning of the modern age and was revitalized in missionary contexts, in particular in Asia and by the Jesuits, the composite field of knowledge of cosmography included and integrated elements of Christian cosmology (the Earth situated within the creation story), astronomy and Ptolemaic astrology (the Earth placed in relation to the heavenly world of planets and stars), Aristotelian natural philosophy (the Earth placed in relation to other elements of the sublunar world, i.e. water, air and fire), and universal geography.¹⁶

In the context of the Catholic missions in Japan and China, within competitive interactions developed locally with both Buddhist monks and Confucian *literati*, the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic-Christian cosmography – I quote from Hui-Hung Chen – “paved the way for the comprehension of the Creator’s significance. It was an embodiment of the Renaissance tradition of cartography as the graphical representation of the universe, which included the idea of understanding nature through mathematical science as well as of

14 See at this regard Gerard Mercators’ emblematic *Atlas siue Cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi et fabricati figura*. Dusseldorf: Albertus Busius, 1595 and *Chronologia. Hoc est temporum demonstratio exactissima, ab initio mundi, vsque ad annum Domini 1568. Ex eclipsibus et obseruationibus astronomicis omnium temporum, sacris quoque Biblijs, ... summa fide concinnata*. Koln: apud haeredes Arnoldi Birckmanni, 1569. See the proceedings of the conference “Les méditations cosmographiques à la Renaissance,” organized and edited by Jean-Marc Besse, Marie-Dominique Couzinet, Franck Lestringant, published in *Cahiers V.-L. Saulnier* 26 (2008).

15 *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Second and Revised Edition, 1920, literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, p. I, q. 47, a. 3. The original quotation in Latin runs: “Ipse ordo in rebus sic a Deo creatis existens, unitatem mundi manifestat. Mundus enim iste unus dicitur unitate ordinis, secundum quod quaedam ad alia ordinantur.” See *S. Thomae Aquinatis Summa theologiae*, cura et studio sac. Petri Caramello cum textu ex recensione leonina, pars prima et prima secundae, Turin: Marietti, 1952, p. 334.

16 Brincken, Anna-Dorothee von den, “Mappa mundi und Chronographie,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 24 (1968), pp. 118-186; Smet, Antoine de, “Les géographes de la Renaissance et la cosmographie,” in *Album Antoine de Smet*, Brussels: Centre national d’Histoire des Sciences, 1974 (Publ. du Centre national d’Histoire des Sciences, IV), pp. 149-160; Gautier Dalché, Patrick, “Pour une histoire du regard géographique. Conception et usage de la carte au XV^e siècle,” *Micrologus* 4 (1996), pp. 77-103; Cattaneo, Angelo, « European Medieval and Renaissance Cosmography: A Story of Multiple Voices,” *Asian Review of World Histories – The Official Journal of The Asian Association of World Historians*, Vol. 4, Issue 1 (January 2016), pp. 35-81 – DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12773/arwh.2016.4.1.035>.

understanding Heaven by visualization and sensibility.¹⁷ This way, Aristotelian-Ptolemaic natural philosophy provided the epistemological basis on which the conception and discernment of the Christian *Deus* as Creator could be grounded.

Together with the notions and dogmas of the existence of the immortal soul, and the history of salvation and resurrection, the notion and explanation of the Creation – in the form of the scholastic-Aristotelian theory – was one the three pillars of the selective Christian theological and philosophical discourse brought forward within the Jesuit missions of Japan and China.¹⁸ The main objective of the missionaries was the evangelization and the salvation of the Japanese and the Chinese, but profound cultural and philosophical differences opposed to an immediate transmission of the Christian religion. Christianity had its roots in the very notion of creation of the universe, from which all other dogmas and articles of faith were deduced. Instead, Japanese and Chinese cultures, Confucianism and Buddhism, do not recognize a creator.¹⁹

Matteo Ricci's, Pedro Gomez's, Fucan Habian's, Carlo Spinola's presentations and explanation of the round Earth within the spherical heavens composed of several celestial spheres – the core of the very notion and understanding of the universe, created by God – stand both at the center of their criticism either of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, or Shinto, while at the same time being one the pillars of their negotiation of the Christian message with these systems of beliefs.²⁰ According to the missionaries, Buddhism, Daoism, or Shinto, and even Confucianism – despite its moral consistency, according to

17 Chen, Hui-Hung, "The Human Body as a Universe: Understanding Heaven by Visualization and Sensibility in Jesuit Cartography in China," *The Catholic Historical Review* 93.3 (2007), pp. 517-52 (in particular 537-41). See also Mangani, Giorgio, "Misurare, calcolare, pregare. Il mappamondo ricciano come strumento meditativo," in Mangani, Giorgio, *Cartografia morale, Geografia, persuasione, identità*. Modena: Cosimo Panini, 2006, pp. 123-134.

18 See at this regard Pedro Gomez, S.J., *Compendium catholicae veritatis*; Jp. Kōgi Yōkō (講義要); c. 1590, whose three parts include the *De Sphaera*, *De Anima* and a Christian doctrine, in Latin. The second and third parts were translated into Japanese by Pedro Morejon, S.J. The *Compendium* was "the most extensive Jesuit text in Japanese we have extant, [...] seemingly the basis for theological education in the Japanese Jesuit colleges," cf. Paramore, Kiri. *Ideology and Christianity in Japan*. London: Routledge, 2009: 23. Modern edition: Gomez, Pedro, S.J. *Compendium catholicae veritatis*, in Ohara Satoru 尾原悟 (ed.) *Iezusukai Nihon korejio no kōgi yōkō* イエズス会日本コレジヨの講義要綱, 3 vols. Tokyo: Kyōbunkan, 1997-1999. On Gomez's *De Sphaera*, based on Francisco Titelmans' (1502-1537) *Compendium philosophiae naturalis*, see Ryuji Hiraoka; Akihiko Watanabe, "A Jesuit Cosmological Textbook in 'Christian Century' Japan: *De sphaera* of Pedro Gomez (Part II)," *SCIAMUS* 16 (2015): 125-223.

19 Huan Ping, *Matteo Ricci: Si yuan xing lun* (Trattato sui quattro elementi); *Ri qiu da yu di qiu, di qiu da yu yue qiu* (Il disco solare è più grande del globo terrestre e questo è più grande del disco lunare); *Jing tian gai* (Trattato sulle costellazioni); *Bian xue yj du* (*Dispute postume*). PhD Dissertation, Università degli studi di Macerata. Facoltà di lettere e filosofia 2010, pp. 10-16.

20 Paramore, Kiri, "Early Japanese Christian Thought Reexamined. Confucian Ethics, Catholic Authority, and the Issue of Faith in the Scholastic Theories of Habian, Gomez, and Ricci," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 35.2 (2008): 231-262; Paramore, Kiri. *Ideology and Christianity in Japan*. London: Routledge, 2009 (in particular ch. 1, "Japanese Christian thought: doctrinal diversity or civilizational clash?" and ch. 2, "Japanese Confucianism and Japanese Christianity: parallels and interactions," pp. 10-50).

Ricci quite compatible with and similar to Stoicism²¹ – were likely incapable of explaining the foundations and origins of the universe. Their unclear understanding of the notion of the spherical earth placed at the center of the spherical universe was among the reasons that brought missionaries to regard these local beliefs intellectually poorer and totally incapable to lead human beings to salvation. Within a circular way of arguing, by lacking a clear understanding of the origins and shape of the universe, ignoring that the universe had been created by God, and adding that they were also weaker, if not entirely wrong, in explaining and detailing from a mathematical perspective the way the heavens functioned (with severe distortion of the calendar), to the Catholic missionaries Buddhism, Daoism, or Shinto were manifestly idolatries that originated from the devil to confuse and divert men from salvation. According to Ricci, Confucianism was instead a form of natural religion that, though incomplete and distorted, provided the ground for a solid foundation of a new Christianity.

These assumptions and their political-religious epistemology spread and even turned into a literary trope in Jesuit letters and reports, like in this eloquent “Annual letter from Japan” of 1605. Carefully studied by Daniele Frison, it reports a cosmographic theatrical dispute that took place among the Jesuits (probably, Carlo Spinola and the Japanese Christian convert Fukan Habian, the author of the *Myōtei Dialogues* in 1605 and, after his recantation of Christianity, of *Deus Destroyed* in 1620, the hidden main characters²²), the shogun Tokugawa Hidetada and some bonzes. These are a few passages, translated into English from the original manuscript in Portuguese:

With the arrival to Miaco [Kyoto] of the son of the Kubō [Tokugawa Hidetada, son of the Kubō 公方 Ieyasu] from Quantó [Kantō 關東] to take the rank of Xogun [...] there were numerous visits to our homes [the missions], especially in that of Miaco [Kyoto], moved out of curiosity, as already mentioned, to see new things and some instruments we have in the house to show the movements of the planets and other European instruments ever seen in Japan; and with this occasion many of them listened to us and were baptized. [...] The Japanese listen to us

²¹ See Ricci’s “On friendship” (*Dell’amicizia*), composed by Ricci in Nanchang, in November 1595, originally in Italian and later translated and printed in Chinese. Modern edition (Chinese and Italian): Ricci, Matteo, *Dell’amicizia*. Ed. by Filippo Mignini. Macerata : Quodlibet, 2005. This work aims at showing the moral compatibility and similarity between Greco-Roman and Christian Humanism with the Confucianism. It’s worth recalling Ricci’s definition of Confucius as “another Seneca”. “On friendship” was written in the very moment in which Ricci decided to assume the posture, habits and status of a Confucian *litteratus*, literally taking off the clothes and abandoning forever the posture of Buddhist bonze that for almost fifteen years, with Michele Ruggieri had kept, since their entrance in China in 1579 and 1582, respectively. See also Ricci, Matteo, *Dieci capitoli di un uomo strano ; seguito da, Otto canzoni per manicordo occidentale*. Ed. by Filippo Mignini. Macerata: Quodlibet, 2010. The *Dieci capitoli* was originally conceived and printed in Chinese in 1608.

²² See the classic work: Elison, George. *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 257-291 and Baskind, James; Bowring, Richard (eds and translators), *The Myōtei Dialogues. A Japanese Christian Critique of Native Traditions*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

with great interest and curiosity about astrology and mathematics and they take us into great consideration; and this causes great discredit and loss of earnings to their *bonzes* [Buddhist monks], because the things that we teach about the movement of the Sun, the Moon and the planets, the representation of the elements, and other teaching dealing with methereology, thus being in complete accordance with reason and experience, just make them fall into the truth of these and make them realize how absurd are the opinions and stories of their *bonzes*.²³

The reference to the shogun Tokugawa Hidetada invites one to reconsider the complete veracity of the episode, in favor of a probable emphatic literary transformation through which the Jesuits active in Japan aimed at communicating to their *confrères* in Europe the prestige of their interlocutors and therefore, implicitly, the success of their mission. Nevertheless, while also taking into account a certain degree of literary construction, it is relatively simple to recognize in this passage of the *Annua de Iapam* the same circular argument that links through a red line Buddhist scientific, eschatological and moral inconsistencies, a trope also developed by Ricci to contrast his Chinese Buddhist interlocutors.

At the same time. It is still worth recalling that, in Japan, cosmographic concepts whipped up great debates not only in the period of the Jesuit presence, but also after their expulsion in 1614, as exemplified in a work such the *Kenkon Bensetsu* 乾坤弁説 (Commentary on the Heavens and Earth), a treatise on Aristotelian cosmology and cosmography, translated into Japanese in 1643 by a former Portuguese Jesuit, Christovão Ferreira (1580-1650), who apostatized and took the Japanese name of Sawano Chūan.²⁴ The treatise, recently studied into details by José Miguel Pinto dos Santos and Henrique Leitão, was translated on the orders of Inoue Masashige (1584-1661), Inspector General against the “Pagans,” that is the Christians, was also commented on by Mukai Genshō (1609-1677), a distinguished Confucian scholar of Nagasaki, who discussed and compared Aristotelian theory in the light of Confucianism.²⁵

²³ *Annua de Iapam do anno de 1605*, ARSI, Jap. Sin. 55, ff. 274v-275v. See Frison, “Il contributo scientifico del gesuita Carlo Spinola nel Giappone del primo Tokugawa,” pp. 15-16, and note 73 for the transcription.

²⁴ Cieslik, Hubert, S.J., “The Case of Christovão Ferreira,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 29 (1974), 1, pp. 32-40.

²⁵ Hiraoka Ryuji, “The Transmission of Western Cosmology to 16th Century Japan,” in Saraiva, Luís and Jami, Catherine (eds), *The Jesuits, The Padroado and East Asian Science (1552-1773)*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2008, pp. 81-98. For the first translation into a European language of the *Kenkon Bensetsu*: José Miguel Pinto dos Santos, *A Study in Cross - Cultural Transmission of Natural Philosophy: the Kenkon Bensetsu*. Ph.D Dissertation. New University of Lisbon, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, 2012.

The *compositio loci* and the roots of the Jesuit cosmographic mind

As a conclusion to these brief and preliminary reflections, there is a further and crucial element that deserve to be highlighted, or at the least mentioned. The sixteenth century was marked by the development and deployment of spiritual practices that were rooted in the tradition of spiritual exercises, largely inherited from antiquity and the Middle Ages. Geography and cosmography were mobilized within these meditative practices and this was also done through references to maps and globes. Spiritual meditation found a key instrument in globes and maps of the world, especially with respect to Saint Ignatius' *compositio loci* (composition of place), a form of visual and spatial imagination for facilitating the meditation and the personal encounter with Jesus and the mysteries of the Catholic faith.²⁶ Maps could help to locate the stories narrated in the Bible, to visualize the vicissitudes of Christ and the apostles. Following examples derived from Antiquity, for instance Macrobius' commentary on the *Dream of Scipio*, they also make it possible to look at the world from above through the construction of a point of view, of a high observatory, that permits a distant view of the things of the world. This latter practice tends to generate a moral perspective, either in the form of the vanity of worldly matters or in the form of contemplation of the creation. Well beyond their geographical or technical contents, these ideas transformed cosmography and cartography into powerful meditative tools, especially for the concretization of the *compositio loci*.²⁷

A brief consideration of some passages from the 'Second week' of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola clearly shows the use of contemplation of the world within the practice of *compositio loci*, a key part of the contemplative practices developed by Saint Ignatius to help people deepen their relationship with God.

26 Nicolas Standaert eloquently writes: 'At the start of the first meditation in the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius advises that one should 'see the place', and he calls this 'prelude' or preliminary the 'composition'. He describes the process as follows: "It should be noted here that for contemplation or meditation about visible things, for example a contemplation on Christ our Lord (who is visible), the "composition" will consist in seeing through the gaze of the imagination the material place where the object I want to contemplate is situated. By "material place" I mean for example a temple or a mountain where Jesus Christ or our Lady is to be found-according to what I want to contemplate. Where the object is an invisible one, as is the case in the present meditation on sins, the composition will be to see with the gaze of the imagination, and to consider, that my soul is imprisoned in this body which will one day disintegrate, and also my whole composite self (by this I mean the soul joined with the body), as if exiled in this valley among brute beasts". (Exx 47)'. Cf. Nicolas Standaert, 'The Composition of Place: Creating Space for an Encounter', *The Way*, 46/1 (Jan. 2007), 7-20 (7-8). See also Michel de Certeau, 'L'espace du désir ou le "fondement" des *Exercices spirituels*', *Christus*, 77 (1973), 118-28; and Pierre-Antoine Fabre, *Ignace de Loyola: Le Lieu de l'image: Le problème de la composition de lieu dans les pratiques spirituelles et artistiques jésuites de la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle*. Paris: Vrin, 1992.

27 Mochizuki, Mia, "A Global Eye: The Perception of Place in a Pair of Tokugawa World Map Screens," *The Japan Review* 29 (2016): 69-119. Ead. "グローバルな眼：徳川家《万国絵図屏風》における場所の認識," 『美術史論叢』第32号、2016年3 (Mochizuki, Mia, "Global na Me: Tokugawa-ke Bankoku Ezu Byobu ni okeru Basyo no Ninshiki," Bijutsushi Ronsō: Tōkyō Daigaku Bungakubu Bijutsushi Kenkyūshitsu [The University of Tokyo Studies in Art History]) kiyō 32 (March 2016), 100-152.

[102] Here, it is how the Three Divine Persons looked at all *the plain or circuit of all the world, full of men*, and how, seeing that all were going down to Hell, it is determined in Their Eternity, that the Second Person shall become man to save the human race, and so, the fullness of times being come, They sent the Angel St. Gabriel to Our Lady.

[103] Second Prelude. The second, a composition, seeing the place: here it will be to see the great capacity and *circuit of the world, in which are so many and such different people*: then likewise, in particular, the house and rooms of Our Lady in the city of Nazareth, in the Province of Galilee.²⁸

The terms 'circuit of the world' (a translation of the Spanish expression 'redondez de todo el mundo', in Latin, *orbis terrarum*) clearly refers to the Earth as observed from above but at the same can refer to a map of the world, such as Ortelius' *Typus orbis terrarum*, or Ricci's and Li's *Kunyu wanguo quantu*. In this context, it is important to underline that until very recent times, planispheres and globes were the only cognitive objects that allowed the visual contemplation of the entire Earth, created by God: for this reason they both constituted privileged vehicles of meditation.

Here it is not at all suggested that, in the contexts of the Jesuit missions of China and Japan maps and cosmography were a form of spiritual exercises. It is instead suggested that they could be better understood when considered from the perspective of being at the same time cognitive objects transmitting geographic and scientific knowledge and a meditative viaticum. It is a theme that goes back very far into the history of Christian medieval preaching and more importantly informed the meditative practices of the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus.

Ricci and his Chinese collaborators and interlocutors, Pedro Gomez and Spinola, and their Japanese interlocutors, the Japanese painters that depicted the magnificent Jesuit residence in the nanban folding screens in the Nanban Bunkakan of Osaka, all seems to show awareness of the importance of cosmographical concepts and images as identitarian *viatica* on which the inculturation of the Catholic Christian faith in God creator of the universe could be grounded or at least attempted.

²⁸ Ignatius of Loyola, *Exercitia spiritualia*. Rome: IHSI, 1969, pp. 222-225.