EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF
KOREAN STUDIES

VOLUME 24, NO. 1 (2024), pp. 101–124.

Discovering Korea through Iberian Writings of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries[1]

JAIME GONZÁLEZ-BOLADO[2] Autonomous University of Barcelona

Abstract

This article analyzes ethnographic information about the Korean peninsula that can be found in texts produced by Iberian missionaries during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although Korea did not generate the same degree of interest as neighboring countries such as China and Japan in which Catholic missions had been established, members of religious orders were nevertheless able to acquire a remarkable knowledge of the topography, the climate, and the social and political system of the country. These ethnographic references have great relevance for the history of cultural interchange between Korea and Europe, since they were the basis on which European readers formed their initial image of Korea and its people.

Keywords: Korea, Spanish literature, cultural interchange, Jesuits, Imjin War

Introduction

The interactions between Koreans and Europeans that took place during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have as yet failed to arouse much interest among researchers, particularly when it comes to the Western literary testimonies of such encounters. The occasional brief analysis of early European impressions of Korea that does appear is mainly in research on the origins of the Catholic Church in Korea, such as that dealing with the controversial writings of Juan Ruiz de

Medina, S.J. (1927–2000).[3] As a step toward filling the lacuna, this article examines the first references made by Spanish and Portuguese missionaries to the Korean peninsula and introduces as yet unstudied sources.[4] I argue that the Imjin War (1592–1598) was a turning point for European interest in Korea, as it focused the attention of members of religious orders, particularly the Society of Jesus, which saw it as an opportunity to introduce Christianity into a kingdom that previously had been deemed inaccessible, as Father Visitor Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) wrote: "Without him [Hideyoshi] knowing it, God uses him as an instrument to open the door for the Holy Gospel also in *Coray* [Korea]."[5] With the end of the Japanese invasions, the focus in missionary accounts shifted from discovering more about the site of this immense conflict toward understanding the policies introduced by the Chosŏn dynasty that limited foreign access to the country.

This article primarily focuses on religious works because the majority of European references to Korea in this period are found in texts authored by members of religious orders, which meticulously document the proselytizing efforts of their fellow missionaries in China and Japan.[6] Thus far, only a handful of what may be deemed "secular" sources dealing with Korea, such as those by Rodrigo de Vivero y Velasco (1564–1634) and Francesco Carletti (1573?–1636), have come to light.[7] Moreover, whereas these secular texts mainly describe the geography of the country, religious texts that discuss Korea form part of a larger body of knowledge that is widely regarded as forming the foundation of ethnographic studies.[8] The authors of these texts belong to the national groups present in the East Asian missions, namely the Portuguese and the Spanish, among which Italians are also included to a lesser extent. These two nations had separate spheres of colonial, commercial, and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and most individuals saw themselves as part of the "enterprises," colonial or otherwise, undertaken by their respective nations. This was reflected in their textual production, even among supranational entities like the religious orders, such as the Jesuits, where members often expressed divergent views or positions on certain issues based on their nationality.[9] However, in relation to this research, no substantial difference is observed between Spaniards and Portuguese regarding the information about Korea, as these accounts were compiled in their capacity as missionaries with the ultimate purpose of gathering as much data as possible about a kingdom they aimed to convert.

The author of this article's line of enquiry is a continuation of the historiographical trend that emerged within East Asian history almost a century ago that notes the value of missionary sources in the study of premodern East Asian history. This tradition was initiated by renowned historians such as James Murdoch, George Sansom, Charles R. Boxer, and Donald F. Lach, but has failed to be built

upon by modern-day scholars (with a few notable exceptions, such as Lúcio de Sousa).[10] These historians defended the validity of missionary sources for the reconstruction of one of the most complex periods in Japanese history, even going so far as to argue that these sources could be used to assess the accuracy of East Asian ones: "… [the] collation of Japanese authorities with the letters of the Jesuits and other contemporary European documents serves to show that native writers are far from accurate in the data they give regarding early foreign intercourse."[11] Although caution must naturally be exercised when using non-Asian eyewitness accounts and interpretations of East Asian history due to the European proclivity for projecting their own religious prejudices onto native cultural realities, they nevertheless form a legitimate part of a careful analysis.[12]

During the Age of Exploration, East and Southeast Asia received growing attention from Spanish and Portuguese merchants, missionaries, and explorers, who were attracted for a wide variety of reasons ranging from the exoticism of Japan to the natural wealth of the Moluccas and the geostrategic value of the Philippines. But Korea, despite its significant role in the history of East Asia, was seldom mentioned in writings produced by European authors.[13] It is likely that the closed-door policy introduced by the Korean authorities to keep foreigners out, together with the devastation suffered in the course of the Imjin War, directed missionary attention toward places that offered greater economic and spiritual possibilities. However, it is impossible to study the history of East Asia, and especially Japan, without mentioning Korea, which is why in the histories, reports, chronicles, and letters that the missionaries dedicated to documenting their proselytizing efforts in the East, we find references to the geography, the climate, the political system, and the character of the Korean people.[14] These testimonies are of great interest, since they constitute the information that shaped the first image that existed of Korea in the imagination of the European literati.

Missionary Sources

Before discussing missionary references to Korea, which are of a type that Gruzinski defines as "vestiges, fragments, and splinters" of knowledge, it is worth briefly reviewing the sources of information from which Jesuits and members of the mendicant orders constructed their first images of the peninsula.[15] Prior to the outbreak of the Imjin War in 1592, which resulted in the arrival of the first Westerners in Korea and the establishment of a large colony of Korean slaves in Japan, there is no evidence of direct contact between Europeans and Koreans.[16] One of the few occasions during which Catholic missionaries may have been able to establish direct contact was during the arrival in the Japanese city of Yamaguchi

of a Korean embassy for the daimyo Ōuchi Yoshinaga 大内義長 (1532–1557) in 1552. At this time, the Jesuit brother Juan Fernández (1526–1567) preached twice a day in the streets of Yamaguchi, so John Bridges and Ruiz de Medina posit the possibility that members of this embassy may have been among those who listened to the Jesuit.[17] In addition, there was a Sino-Korean community of 2,000 people in Yamaguchi, so it is also possible that some of these may have offered information to the members of the Society of Jesus about their homeland.

Apart from this anecdotal contact, however, there is no evidence of a relationship between missionaries and the community of Koreans residing in China and Japan during the second half of the sixteenth century, so information obtained by European writers about Korea did not come from the Koreans themselves but from the Japanese, specifically from the inhabitants of Tsushima. The merchants of this island, located halfway between Korea and Japan, enjoyed a trade monopoly with the Korean peninsula for several centuries, a fact well known to the missionaries, as is attested by the Jesuit Gil de la Mata (1547–1599):

> *Coray* [Korea] is on the way to China and is [full] of warlike people, and so extraordinary is their way of proceeding that even though [Korea] is up to 60 *leguas* [leagues] from Japan, they wish to trade neither with Japan nor with any nation in the world. It is only from an island of Japan [Tsushima] that lies in the middle between them that three hundred men go every year to trade and do not return until other nations go there, and [even] these cannot walk freely throughout [Korea].[18]

Sō Yoshitoshi 宗義智 (1568–1615), the Lord of Tsushima, who had converted to Christianity and received the baptismal name Darío, maintained close relations with the members of the Society of Jesus, some of whom went to visit him and his wife Maria Konishi マリア小西 in their domain on several occasions during the last decade of the sixteenth century.[19] During these visits, the Jesuits, in addition to converting and baptizing a large number of Yoshitoshi's vassals, gathered information on topics such as the orography, the climate, and the economy of the island. Given that relations with Korea formed such an important part of the island's economy, it is very likely that much of the information that missionary received about the Korean peninsula, especially about its flora, fauna, and natural resources, came from the inhabitants of Tsushima.

In addition to these testimonies from Tsushima merchants and diplomats, the other main sources of Korean knowledge for the Jesuits were ancient Chinese and Japanese books. As Father João Rodrigues (1561–1633) noted at the time, his fellow missionaries obtained their knowledge about the history of the Asian kingdoms from these ancient records: "We must bear in mind that the members of our Society who came … before Nobunaga began ruling … saw what was then

happening and heard and read in their ancient chronicles what had happened in times past."[20] Thanks to the conversion of Buddhist monks and scholars (*bonzos*),[21] the Catholic missionaries were granted access to the major works of Asian literature, both the originals and their interpretive traditions, such as the *Kojiki* 古事記 (712), the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720), and the *Sìshū Wǔjīng* 四書五經.[22] It is even possible that they may have had access to the *Zenrin kokuhōki* 善隣国宝記, a monumental collection of Japanese diplomatic documents dating from ancient times that had been collected by the Zen monk Zuikei Shūhō 瑞渓周鳳 (1391–1473).[23] In these works can be found references to Korea's historical relations with the surrounding kingdoms, an issue that, as we will see, was of great interest to the missionaries, who compiled a substantial amount of information about Korea in their texts, which, given the nature of their sources, reflect a distinctly Japan-centric perspective.

First Descriptions

The oldest known European reference to the Korean peninsula is one made in 1298 by Marco Polo in his *Book of Wonders*, where he uses the term *Cauli* or *Kao-li* to refer to a kingdom located to the east of China.[24] However, hundreds of years before the publication of the famous Italian's work, Arab historiography had already revealed the existence of the kingdom of *Al-Shila*, a clear reference to the Korean kingdom of Silla 신라 that ruled over the peninsula until 935. This name was used by Arab geographers during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages to designate an insular kingdom adjacent to China.[25] For example, the geographer Ibn Khurdādhbih (820–921) provides a rich description of *Al-Shila* in his geographical compendium *Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* (كِتَاب ٱلْمَسَالِك وَٱلْمَمَالِك The Book of the Routes and the Kingdoms), emphasizing, among its main features, its high mountains, pleasant climate, and abundance of gold.[26] His favorable depiction of Silla as an earthly paradise for Muslim visitors significantly enhanced its popularity among later medieval authors, establishing it as a recurring theme in Arabic travelers' accounts.[27]

Unfortunately, the era of transoceanic discoveries that the kingdoms of the Iberian peninsula embarked upon at the end of the fifteenth century did not draw upon the geographical knowledge accumulated by the Arab world about Korea and about East Asia more broadly. The influence of Arabic works in enriching Western culture is unquestionable, as is the fact that, during the Middle Ages, Christian scholars drew heavily from the scientific knowledge accumulated by Islamic civilization, particularly in Spain and Sicily, where intense translation efforts took place.[28] However, unlike fields such as mathematics and medicine—which

extensively borrowed from original Arabic texts and Arabic translations of Greek scientific works—there was no comparable direct connection between Arabo-Islamic geography and Europe. Arabic geographical works and maps generally did not circulate in the West, and most of their authors remained largely unknown to the Christian world, even when they lived and worked in Muslim Spain. As Marina Tolmacheva points out, the reasons for this lack of connection remain unclear.[29] It is possible that some geographical notions or major ideas from the vast body of literature produced by Muslim scholars eventually filtered through, but in fragments and largely unacknowledged, leading to the generalization that "Europe started completely from scratch in the discovery of the Asian world."[30] Therefore, a new body of knowledge began to be accumulated from the second half of the sixteenth century, thanks to direct contacts made by Europeans with the kingdoms of East Asia, which were recorded by the members of the Society of Jesus.

Within the framework of their proselytizing work in the East, the first descriptions of the Korean peninsula to which these missionaries had access were generated in the early years of the Japanese Mission (1549–1640). In 1548, the governor of Goa, García de Sá (?–1549), asked Father Nicolao Lancillotto (?–1558), the rector of the Colegio de San Pablo in the same city, to obtain from Anjirō アンジロ (?–1550), the first Japanese convert, information about his homeland. This resulted in a manuscript entitled *Mais enformação de Japão, a qual deu or padre Niqulao da orden de Jhū que soube do Japão que veio à India* (Further information about Japan, provided by Father Nicholas of the Jesuit Order, who learned about Japan upon arriving in India). In the eighth chapter, it states that the Japanese had contact with a nation located southeast of China called *Coree*, from which they imported silver, cotton, and marten skins. In this first detailed European description of Korea, the Italian priest makes the same mistake as the Arab scholars in describing the country as an island: "The Japanese also have dealings with other people, below the Chinese to the east, called *Coree*. There, they also take silver and mink skins, because there are a lot of people on that island … and they also bring cotton cloths."[31] Given that the Japanese were well aware that Korea was a peninsula, it cannot be ruled out that the Jesuits' attribution of an insular character to Korea might reflect lingering influences of that Muslim geographical knowledge that was largely unknown to the Europeans.

Motivated by the desire to collect as much information as possible with a view to potential evangelization of the peninsula, references to Korea in Jesuit writings increased during the last three decades of the sixteenth century. The architect of the first plan to convert the Korean territory was Cosme de Torres (1510–1570), the Superior of the Society of Jesus in Japan, who in 1566 commissioned the Portuguese Gaspar Vilela (1526–1572) to carry out the enterprise. Although this

project did not materialize due to the obstacles created by the continuous wars that plagued Japan, Vilela urged the General of the Society, Francisco de Borja (1510–1572), to make another attempt in the future with the help of the daimyo 大名 (here referred to as "kings"): "And easily and without much work you can go there with the help of the kings of Japan … because some king is known there, so that it is enough for us to have entry into that land." In the same letter, written on 4 November 1571, Vilela notes the fair complexion of Koreans and he draws a somewhat strange geographical link between Korea and Germany:

> From Japan, ten days' journey by sea, there is a kingdom called *Coria* [Korea], where I intended to go four years ago. This kingdom is the beginning of the great *Tartaria* [Tartary], [and] if you continue to go up, they say that you will arrive in upper Germany. They are a white people. I was intending to go there, but because of the wars on the road I did not go, and through this land you can go to the great city of *Poquiu* [Beijing], where the king of China lives.[32]

Early European references to the Korean peninsula are not limited to texts written by the missionaries who settled in Japan but can also be found in the writings of priests who carried out their proselytizing work in China. For example, the Augustinian Martín de Rada (1533–1578) is considered the first Westerner to identify the existence of the Chosŏn dynasty. From the information that he obtained from Chinese books acquired during his stay in Ming China in 1575, such as the *Guang yu tu* 廣輿圖—the oldest extant comprehensive atlas of China—he wrote a *Relación* in which he analyzed the tributary system that China maintained with its nearby kingdoms.[33] Specifically, de Rada focuses on the fact that diplomats of these vassal states, when visiting the Chinese imperial court, had to stay in preassigned districts. Among the kingdoms listed by the Spanish priest was *Chaussien*, an evident reference to the Chosŏn dynasty founded by Yi Sŏng-gye (1335–1408). However, the fact that de Rada considered *Chaussien* a different territory from Korea illustrates his limited knowledge:

> [The Chinese] do not admit foreigners either, although they say … in the court there are many different nations, and each one lives in its own neighborhood, and on their doors are written the name of the nation and the people [who live there]. They gave us a short time to see these nations there: *Cauchy*, *Leuquiu chienlo*, *Malaca*, *Tayni*, *Campuchi*, *Chaussien* [Chosŏn], *Tata, Cauly* [Korea], *Gitpon*, *Huyhue* … and they say that all of these nations pay *parias* [tribute] to the king of China.[34]

This information from de Rada is complemented by a legend about a Chinese sage that was published more than a century later in the Jesuit Juan Cortés de Osorio's (1623–1688) *Reparos historiales*. According to this legend, Kicius 箕子 (also known as Kija) was one of the traditional founders of the Korean kingdom; he was a

relative, possibly a nephew, of the last king of the Shang dynasty 商, who traveled to the northeast at the time of the Zhou 周 conquest of China in ± 1045 BC:[35]

> The third [Chinese dynasty] was called *Cheua*. It lasted 875 years and had 37 emperors. The first was called *Fao*. He distributed kingdoms and estates to the old families. To an uncle of his predecessor of the *Xanga* [Shang] family, who is called *Kicio* [Kija], he gave the kingdom of Korea, and from him are descended those who have reigned in that peninsula until now.[36]

Amongst the works produced by missionaries preaching in China we must not forget the works of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci 利瑪竇 (1552–1610), particularly his *Kūnyu Wànguó Quántú* 坤輿萬國全圖 (A Map of the Myriad Countries of the World). This world map drawn in 1602 by Ricci with the help of fellow Jesuit Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607) is one of the first European cartographic documents in which the Korean peninsula is accurately represented.[37] Unlike the great European maps of the time, such as the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* by the Flemish Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598) in which Korea is omitted, Ricci uses information from Chinese records to correctly represent the Korean territory and its position as a tributary state of China within its neo-Confucian *Weltanschauung*.[38]

As we have observed, most of the earliest European references to Korea are contained in the works of missionaries, and particularly those of the Jesuits. There are two main reasons for this. Thanks to a rigorous training based on institutional discipline and a careful choice of personnel, the Society of Jesus was one of the most highly intellectually sophisticated groups in Europe, and this enabled its members to gain a better understanding of the territories that they were trying to convert. Missionaries, and particularly the Jesuits, displayed in their works what Joan-Pau Rubiés defines as a "scientific curiosity," an analytical interest in the different aspects of the societies they encountered and an application of methods and theories that can be considered, as we mentioned above, the seeds of an ethnological science.[39] By contrast, the European merchants and diplomats exhibited a more practical aim in their writings and focused on the kingdoms of East Asia that offered them economic or political benefits. This explains why only a few secular texts referring to Korea have come to light. One of the most important among them is the work of the Italian traveler Francesco Carletti. In his description of his eight-year journey around the world, he provides new details about Korea, probably based on information obtained from the five Korean slaves he bought during his stay in Japan in 1597.[40] One of the most interesting references in Carletti's work is the list he provides of the provinces of Korea, something unprecedented in the European records: "The country of Korea is said to be divided into nine provinces, which are *Cioscien*, head of that kingdom and

the name of the royal city. The others [are] *Quienqui*, *Conguan*, *Honliay*, *Cioala*, *Hiension*, *Tioncion*, *Hanquien*, *Pianchin*."[41]

The Imjin War: A Window into Korea

It was one of the darkest periods in Korean history that brought about not only the first recorded occasion of a European setting foot on their land but also a proliferation of descriptions of Korea in Iberian texts. In 1592, the Japanese hegemon Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–1598) set out to conquer the Korean peninsula as the initial step in a much more complex plan that had the subjugation of the entire continent as its final objective.[42] Under the pretext of offering spiritual relief to the Christian converts among the Japanese soldiers who were fighting in Korea, the Spanish Jesuit Gregorio de Céspedes (1551–1611) spent six months visiting the fortresses that the Japanese had built on the southern coast of the peninsula, likely to gain firsthand knowledge of the conflict, which was a significant concern for the missionaries. Four manuscripts that he wrote during this time (27 December 1593–8 June 1595) have survived. They contain a brief comment on the Korean climate: "The cold in Korea is very severe and beyond comparison with that of Japan," and a short description of Ungch'ŏn Castle 熊川倭城:

> The fortress of *Comungai* is impregnable and great defensive works have been erected there, which are admirable considering the short time in which they were completed. They have built high walls, watchtowers and strong bastions … . All are well built and spacious. Houses with stone walls have been built for the chiefs.[43]

The scale of Hideyoshi's invasions, collectively known as the Imjin War, is reflected in the considerable attention paid to it in European texts of the period. The authors of these texts inserted various references to Korea in order to familiarize their European readers with the site of the invasions. The best example of this narrative technique can be found in *Historia de Iapam* by the Portuguese Jesuit Luis Fróis (1532–1597), which contains numerous references to different aspects of the peninsula and its inhabitants.[44] However, the superiors of the Society of Jesus considered the length of this work to be excessive and it languished in oblivion in the Jesuit Indian archives until the middle of the twentieth century, when it was published by the historian Josef Wicki (1904–1993). Since Fróis's manuscript was unknown to Western readers until the twentieth century, I will draw upon information collected in the work of another Jesuit, Luis de Guzmán (1544–1605), which was widely known and read in its time. De Guzmán used Fróis's manuscript as reference material for his work, and when his *Historia* was published in 1601

it made a definitive contribution to the image of Korea that was formed among the literate classes in the territories of the Spanish Empire, including members of religious orders, courtesans, and royal officers.[45]

Guzmán begins his exposition of the characteristics of the Korean peninsula with an enumeration of its geographical peculiarities, during which he repeats the same mistake as his predecessors in describing Korea as an island. But he succeeds in describing the Korean natural environment in greater detail, reporting, for example, the existence of a fluvial border (an obvious reference to the Yalu River) separating China and Korea: "These two kingdoms are divided only … by a mighty river that is three *leguas* [leagues] wide."[46] The other nations that he describes as bordering Korea are the Tartars and the *Orancays*,[47] "with whom they usually have many encounters and skirmishes." In addition, one of the most notable aspects of Guzmán's work is that it contains one of the first European references to Cheju Island (*Coraysan*),[48] where "there are very large mountain ranges and rough peaks," unlike the peninsula, "which is usually flat"—an erroneous characterization that contrasts with the overall accuracy of Jesuit reports.[49] It also provides descriptions of some of the main Korean cities of the time including a particularly relevant presentation of the fortress-city of Pyongyang, where the Japanese Christian daimyo Konishi Yukinaga 小西行長 (1555–1600) sheltered in the winter of 1592:

> Lord Augustine [Konishi Yukinaga] with the other Christian lords and knights arrived at a city called *Pean* [Pyongyang], the head of a main province in that kingdom, and from there it was only two days to the border of China. This city was very large and surrounded by a good stone wall which, although it was not higher than two fathoms, was so wide that men on horseback could ride on it. Because of this and other comforts that it provided, Lord Augustine determined to fortify himself there, providing it with the maintenance and [other things] necessary for spending the winter there with his people.[50]

Regarding the Korean flora and fauna, Guzmán listed the different plants and animals that could be found on the peninsula at that time: "Much rice, wheat, and fruit, such as pears, apples, figs, and chestnuts, are harvested. There is a great abundance of honey … and many beautiful horses, cows, tigers, and various other fierce animals are bred." In regard to the Koreans, the Jesuit gives a positive description of their character: "They are docile and good-natured people, commonly fair-skinned and in possession of great spirit."[51] This information is not a trivial matter, as race and skin color were factors that members of the Society of Jesus used to establish hierarchies among the peoples they encountered, and were decisive elements in determining whether a people were considered civilized. Thus, the missionaries consistently distinguished between the dark-skinned

peoples of Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia, on the one hand, and the so-called white or fair-skinned peoples of China, Japan, and Korea, on the other. By using this categorization, Guzmán positioned the Koreans as an ancient civilization, similar to that of their neighboring countries, to whom the concept of "barbarism" in the classical Aristotelian sense could not be applied. In fact, Guzmán went so far as to rank the Koreans above the Chinese and Japanese, believing they had the character most suited to accepting Christianity. This opinion was shared by the Dominican Juan Diego Aduarte (1570–1636), who considered that the Koreans represented a midpoint between the Chinese and the Japanese:

> And so [the Koreans] share the good understanding and acuity of the Chinese [but] without their deceit, as they are mostly farmers. And they share some of the bravery of the Japanese but without their ferocity, and so they occupy a commendable middle ground that is much more receptive to our Holy Law.[52]

This favorable assessment of the Korean people was most likely due to the European missionaries' desire to begin proselytizing in that land, with Aduarte claiming that "the kingdom of Korea … promises a great and highly advantageous conversion … [because] the people are of a very good and plain nature without duplicity or deceit."[53] In addition to this favorable evaluation of their character, Guzmán also notes their martial skills displayed during their struggle to expel the Japanese invaders from their land. These skills included dexterity with the bow, their naval power and artillery, and their ability to use firearms. As a counterpart, he identified their major weakness as the fragility of their bladed weapons, with the exception of their halberds.[54]

Concerning the social structure of the Korean peninsula, Guzmán pays attention to the figure of the monarch and his opulent residence in Seoul,[55] the capital of the kingdom: "They have their natural king, who is highly respected by all. He usually resides in the main city of that kingdom, where he has sumptuous and beautiful palaces." Guzmán makes no mention of any of the other classes that made up Chosŏn society, and they are also ignored by other missionary authors, with the exception of the Portuguese João Rodrigues, who draws a succinct comparison between the Japanese courtiers 公家 (*kuge*) and warriors 武家 (*buke*) and the Chinese and Korean elites: "The same division of orders of *fidalguia* [nobility] existed in ancient China … and also in the kingdom of *Corai* [Korea]."[56] Although this contains an element of truth, it does not recognize the influence of Confucianism on Korean society, which resulted in academic training and ability being rewarded more highly than in neighboring countries, or the fact that in Korea a civil aristocracy (*yangban*) stood at the head of a caste system composed mostly of peasants (*sangmin*) and low-born commoners (*ch'ŏnmin*).

One aspect of Korean culture that is noticeable for its absence in Guzmán's description—and indeed in most European texts from this time—is clothing. However, a manuscript preserved in the archive of the Real Academia de la Historia (BRAH) in Madrid contains a description of Korean clothing that the Japanese took as war booty and sold in Nagasaki. Thanks to this manuscript we know that the Europeans highly rated the sewing skills of the Koreans, which made their garments appear to be made from a single piece of cloth:

> They say that the ordinary dress worn by the Koreans is in the manner of China, with sleeves that reach the ground …. And we have been amazed to see some linen items of clothing that have come to Nagasaki from those lands, because the subtlety of the sewing is such that it cannot be discerned (even when examined closely) as if it is all in one piece.[57]

Guzmán also dedicates space to Korean vernacular architecture: "The houses of the cities are usually covered with tiles … [and] are usually kept warm inside with mats of beautiful workmanship, because the land is very cold, and in some parts during the winter they use stoves."[58] Lastly, he notes a reclusive attitude and a strong desire to keep foreigners out, a characteristic that as we will see below was highlighted in other Western texts.

> [The Koreans] are greatly zealous in guarding their kingdom and do not allow trade with foreigners, except with the merchants of the Island of *Ceuxima* [Tsushima]. And even though *Taycosama* [Hideyoshi] made a request to pass through their kingdom to enter China, they refused him. This was the reason that he decided to declare war on them.[59]

Guzman's work shows the largely positive image of Korea that emerged in the writings of the members of the Society of Jesus during the late sixteenth century. However, the Jesuits' picture of a flourishing gentile civilization characterized by a remarkable amount of natural resources, technological accomplishments, and an ideal nature and disposition to embrace Christianity would be developed and somewhat modified in subsequent years by secular authors. After the Japanese invasions, the Europeans realized that access to the Korean peninsula would be impossible, so in the few works that they produced, the Mediterranean merchants and royal agents emphasized a Korea that was hostile to foreigners, thus rendering diplomacy and trade impossible.

The "Impregnable" Kingdom

One of the most enduring stereotypes associated with Korea is that of the "hermit kingdom," a title coined by William Elliot Griffis in his work *Corea: The Hermit*

Nation.[60] According to this late nineteenth-century Orientalist snapshot of Korea, the kingdom, for much of its existence, obstinately refused to open its doors to the outside world. Certainly, the Imjin War and the subsequent Manchu Invasions (1627, 1636–1637) forced Korea into a relatively reclusive stance. However, despite the destruction generated by those conflicts, the periods during which Korea turned inward were brief and anomalous. The Korean peninsula had long and meaningful contacts with China, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, and the Ryukyu Kingdom, but immersed in this Sino-centric system of international relations, it did not perceive any advantage or necessity for contact with countries outside the Chinese sphere of influence and locality.[61] Interaction with European powers offered unequal relations, domination, and the possible introduction of an ideology potentially disruptive of the political and the social order based on Neo-Confucian ideology.[62] For this reason, the Chosŏn dynasty applied a policy of limiting the access of unexpected foreigners to the country, which was recorded in the writings of the Catholic missionaries and Iberian merchants who attempted to disembark at Korean harbors during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In August 1578 the first "documented physical presence of a European off the Korean coast" occurred when a typhoon swept the Portuguese ship *San Sebastián* toward the Korean coast during its journey from Macao to Nagasaki.[63] The vicissitudes that befell this ship are recounted in texts produced independently by two passengers: the Italian Jesuit Antonio Prenestino and his co-religionist Alfonso de Lucena (1551–?).[64] According to their accounts, a debate broke out among the crew about whether they should attempt to land and send someone to Japan for help or try their luck on the open sea without their rigging and foremast, which had been damaged in the storm.[65] Finally, Prenestino reports that fear of the Koreans and rumors of an attack they had mounted on a Portuguese sampan made them decide to continue their journey without setting foot in Korea.[66]

> We realized that this second land was not the land of Japan as we thought, but Korea … which is inhabited by barbaric and inhuman people, who do not wish to trade with us at any price. And they say that in the past a Portuguese junk desired to land there, but these fierce people took their boat and all who were in it. And they were lucky to get away without being burned alive.[67]

During the seventeenth century, a perceived isolationism became the key element of Korean cultural identity for Europeans, with this first Western reference to the "unsociable" attitude of Koreans toward foreigners soon being joined by many others, including that of the Spaniard Pedro Morejón (1562?–1634). Although he did not consider native Koreans to be violent and intractable ("because it is one of the most well-inclined and capable nations in the whole East"), Morejón highlighted the inaccessibility of the Korean peninsula to outsiders in order to

call attention to the extraordinary nature of the presence of Gregorio de Céspedes in Korea during the Imjin War: "But the law of not admitting foreigners is so rigorous that until now it has not been possible. It was only when *Taicosama* [Hideyoshi] made war against them that one or two Fathers could be there with the Japanese."[68]

In the European mind, Korean isolationism appears to have been connected with the vassalage of Korea to Ming China, a relationship that often recurs in their writings: "Korea, which is ruled by China;"[69] "Many rulers around him recognize the king of China and pay tribute to him, like Korea;"[70] "He [the Chinese emperor] has already subjected the kingdom of Coria to pay him tribute."[71] In this context, the Augustinian Juan González de Mendoza (1545–1618) enumerates the various Chinese laws that restricted its citizens from going abroad, as well as those that prevented the entry of foreigners to their lands. Such regulations were, in Mendoza's opinion, the reason for Europe's lack of knowledge about the Eastern nations:

> The law that is inviolably kept … [is] that no subject of his [the Chinese emperor] should sail outside the kingdom without his license. And to go to the provinces [of China] to deal, buy, or sell, they [the sailors] must give guarantees to return within the term that is indicated or face the penalty of being expelled from the kingdom. And likewise, no foreigner may enter, either by sea or by land, without express permission from [the emperor] or from the governors of the ports or places where they arrive. And they [the governors] should consider carefully when granting this [license] and notify the king [the emperor] of it. For both these reasons, and the fact that this law has been kept so inviolate, we have known only a little about this great kingdom and its grandeur in recent years.[72]

The French Jesuit Nicolás Trigault (1577–1628) noted that these Chinese restrictions on the presence of foreigners were also applied in Korea, where "almost the same laws are used." For Trigault, this law did not reflect merely a "certain fear or horror of foreign nations that have quietly taken root," as they were also applied to citizens of "friendly" (that is, other Asian) nations.[73] He provides further details of the regulations concerning uninvited foreigners applied by the Chinese and Koreans, describing how foreigners who already resided in their kingdoms were prohibited from living in border areas and were continuously suspected of being spies: "[The Chinese] do not allow any foreigner to live within the limits of their kingdom if they try to return to their land or if it is suspected that they have any communication with foreign kingdoms. Moreover, no foreigner is allowed to enter the interior of the kingdom."[74]

The relationship of vassalage that China maintained with Korea and many East Asian countries generated considerable interest among Jesuit essayists, because it

was a system of subordination very different from the European feudal archetype with which they were familiar. The missionary, scientist, and musician Diego de Pantoja 龐迪我 (1571–1618) revealed that on one occasion he asked the Chinese why their emperor received tribute from their neighboring kingdoms but showed no interest in conquering or ruling them directly. The answer he received, which for Europeans he described as a "paradox," was that "they do not lack power but … they do not even think about expanding their empire more than it is," and that "even if all these kingdoms were given to them, they would not take them … because it would be one of the greatest miseries (particularly for the mandarins and important people) to have to leave their kingdom to go elsewhere."[75] To exemplify this indifference, he cited the example of the Imjin War, noting that the Chinese marched to Korea with a large force (over 100,000 soldiers according to modern sources),[76] but that after achieving their objective of expelling the Japanese, they left without showing any desire to remain on the peninsula: "The kingdom remained in the hands of the Chinese for two or three years. After this, they left Korea completely without a backward glance, because there was no one who wanted to go there to rule over it."[77]

Lastly, it should be mentioned that although most missionary writers limited themselves to merely describing the political ties between Korea, China, and other Asian nations, a minority devised plans for a military assault on these territories. Despite the fact that both the Hispanic Monarchy and the Society of Jesus were strongly in favor of forging diplomatic relations with Eastern countries through embassies and the presentation of gifts, some of their members inclined toward a more aggressive policy and devised plans to carry out utopian expeditions of conquest in this region of the world. For example, we find the megalomaniacal project of the Jesuit Alonso Sánchez (1547–1593) to conquer China,[78] the far-fetched plan of Gaspar Coelho (1530–1590) to gain control of Japan with the help of a few thousand Spanish soldiers from the Philippines and the assistance of Christian lords from Kyūshū,[79] and the proposal elaborated by Rodrigo de Vivero y Velasco to attack Korea. A Creole from New Spain who came to occupy the post of interim governor of the Philippines, Vivero presented to the King of Spain Felipe IV (1605–1665) the idea of a possible alliance with the Japanese emperor to jointly attack the Korean peninsula, under the pretext of introducing Catholicism in a territory inaccessible to missionaries:

> In this [matter], the friendship of the emperor with the King, our Lord, could be beneficial in attempting such an enterprise [the conquest of Korea]. Although there is no doorway into Japan but that of the Holy Gospel, in *Coria* [Korea] by means of this path and the path of weapons, his Majesty could have a very strong

> hope, with the friendship of the emperor of Japan as its main foundation, as without friendship [this enterprise] cannot be undertaken or even imagined.[80]

This plan illustrates the ignorance of secular authors about the political situation that existed in Japan: for centuries, the emperor of Japan had been relegated to a symbolic figurehead with no political power and, isolated from the outside world within the confines of the court, was in no position to provide aid for such a venture. However, Vivero's texts contributed to expanding the knowledge of Korea that existed in the Spanish Empire and provided new information about the geographical coordinates of the Korean peninsula: "Between China and Japan exists a sleeve of land called *Coria* [Korea] at 34 degrees and extending up to 40 degrees, so this land has to be contiguous to China and in such close proximity that only an arm of the sea as wide as an arquebus shot separates them."[81]

Final Notes

Unlike other Asian nations such as China, Japan, the Philippines, and the Moluccan Islands to which Spanish and Portuguese authors dedicated complete works, this survey has shown that Korea was seldom mentioned in missionary texts, and that any such references were always linked to the discussion of other territories. Nevertheless, since it was impossible to elaborate a history of East Asia, especially a history of Japan and China, that excluded the Korean peninsula, some references can be found in the works of Western merchants and missionaries. After initial interest, the difficulty of accessing the peninsula, particularly in the centuries after the Imjin War, caused European essayists to lose interest in Korea and focus on other kingdoms that offered greater potential for trade and evangelism.

However, it is nonetheless possible to draw certain conclusions about the nature of references to Korea in European texts. There is, for example, a notable difference between the treatment given to Korea by secular and religious authors: while the merchants, explorers, and government administrators focused their attention on practical matters, such as the physical location of the Korean peninsula on the globe and its policy of isolationism, the missionaries, following their new narrative models of Renaissance Humanism, drew attention to more eclectic and positive aspects. Taking the writings of Guzmán, Aduarte, and Morejón as an example, we can observe a tendency among European missionaries to accentuate the positive values that, in their opinion, the Korean territory and its inhabitants possessed, such as their affable character and the predisposition shown by Koreans who lived in Japan to accept Christianity. All of this was aimed at providing their superiors in Rome and Madrid with compelling reasons for a

potential mission to Korea; this ultimately proved impossible and the Catholic Church was not founded in Korea until several centuries later.

Notes

1. Acknowledgments: A shorter version of this article was presented at the VI Encuentro Internacional de Jóvenes Investigadores en Historia Moderna held on 17 March 2022 at the University of Santiago de Compostela. This research received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program, as part of the project "Aftermath of the East Asian War of 1592–1598" (No. 758347).
2. Autonomous University of Barcelona, Postdoctoral Researcher, Address: Autonomous University of Barcelona, Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Translation, Interpreting and East Asian Studies, 08193, Bellaterra/Barcelona, Spain – Phone: 66780824 – Email: jaime.gonzalez@uab.cat.
3. Ruiz de Medina argues that the baptism of Peter Yi Sung-hun (1756–1801) should not be viewed as marking the birth of the Catholic Church in Korea as several Japanese Christians who took part in the invasions of the country during the Imjin War proselytized their Korean slaves. About this controversy: Pierre-Emmanuel Roux, "The Prohibited Sect of Yaso: Catholicism in Diplomatic and Cultural Encounters between Edo Japan and Chŏson Korea (17th to 19th Century)," in *Space and Location in the Circulation of Knowledge (1400–1800)*, eds. Marion Eggert and Dennis Würthner (Frankfurt-Main: PL Academic Research, 2014), pp. 119–141.
4. The term "Iberian" denotes the countries of Spain, Portugal, and their European and overseas territories. Part of the time period covered by this article (1581–1640) includes the period when the Spanish and Portuguese crowns were unified (the so-called Iberian Union), but even before this time, texts written by missionaries and traders in East Asia often consisted of a mixture of Spanish, Portuguese, and sometimes the Italian languages. See Jean-Frédéric Schaub, "The Union between Portugal and the Spanish Monarchy (1581–1640)," in *The Iberian World 1450–1820*, eds. Fernando Bouza, Pedro Cardim, and Antonio Feros (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), pp. 126–142.
5. Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu [ARSI], Rome, Japonica-Sinica [Jap. Sin.], 49, fol. 390.
6. There are notable exceptions. See, for example, Vibeke Roeper and Boudewijn Walraven, eds. *Hamel's World: A Dutch-Korean Encounter in the Seventeenth Century* (Amsterdam: SUN), 2003.
7. Francesco di Carletti, *Ragionamenti di Francesco Carletti fiorentino sopra le cose da lui vedute ne' suoi viaggi si dell'Indie Occidentali, e Orientali come d'altri paesi* (Florence: Giuseppe Manni), 1701; Rodrigo de Vivero, *Relación del Japón.* (Barcelona: Red Ediciones), 2020. Some studies about these secular sources: Elisabetta Colla, "16th-Century Japan and Macau Described by Francesco Carletti (1573?–1636)," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 17 (2008): 113–144; Manuel Romero de Terreros, "Relación del Japón (1609), por Rodrigo de Vivero y Velazco, Introducción y notas" *Anales del Museo Nacional de México* 1 (1934): 67–111.
8. Joan-Pau Rubiés, "The Spanish Contribution to the Ethnology of Asia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Renaissance Studies* 17.3 (2003): 418–419.
9. M. Antoni J. Ucerler, *The Samurai and the Cross: The Jesuit Enterprise in Early Modern Japan* (Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 107–108.
10. George Sansom, *A History of Japan (1334–1615)* (Tokyo: Tuttle), 1974; Charles R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan (1549–1650)* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 1967; Donald Frederick Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago, IL and London: University

of Chicago Press, 1965–1977); James Murdoch and Isoh Yamagata, *A History of Japan during the Century of Early Foreign Intercourse (1542–1651)* (Kobe: Office of the Chronicle, 1903) II volumes; Lucio de Sousa, *The Portuguese Slave Trade in Early Modern Japan: Merchants, Jesuits and Japanese, Chinese and Korean Slaves* (Leiden: Brill), 2018.

11. Murdoch and Yamagata, *A History of Japan*, II, 1903, p. 41.
12. Rubiés, "The Spanish Contribution," 2003, p. 418.
13. Different terms have been used throughout history to designate the Korean peninsula. The modern term "Korea" is an exonym adopted by European missionaries from the Japanese reading of the sinograms that form the name of the Koryŏ dynasty 고려, which ruled the peninsula between 918 and 1392. Based on this sound, Europeans began to use a variation of the word *Coria*, such as *Coray*, *Corai*, or *Coree*, which are the main terms that can be found in their writings.
14. The importance of the Korean peninsula for ancient Japan as a source and conduit of economic and cultural advances such as rice cultivation, Buddhism, and the writing system was recognized by Europeans: "According to what can be inferred from their books and stories, these islands [Japan] were populated partly by way of *Caray* or *Coria*, and from Chinaś mainland." Pedro Morejón, *Historia y relacion de lo svcedido en los reinos de Iapon y China, en la qual se continua la gran persecucion que ha auido en aq[ue]lla Iglesia, desde el año de 615 hasta el de 19* (Lisbon: Juan Rodriguez, 1621), fols. 59v–60.
15. Serge Gruzinski, "Las imágenes, los imaginarios y la occidentalización," in *Para una Historia de América*, ed. Alicia Hernández Chávez (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1999), volume I, p. 503.
16. There is evidence of contact between people of the Middle and Near East and Koreans during the Middle Ages. See: Jin Han Jeong, "Islamic Studies of Korea in Medieval Scripts: Medieval Muslims' perception of Korea 'as a Muslims' Paradise' and the Influence of Ancient Civilizations' Golden Island in the Sea East of the Eastern End of the World," *European Journal of Korean Studies* 21.1 (2021): 323–333.
17. John Bridges and Juan Ruiz de Medina, *The Catholic Church in Korea: Its Origins (1566–1784)* (Rome: Istituto Storico S.I., 1991), p. 35.
18. ARSI, Rome, Jap. Sin., 11 II, fol. 281.
19. ARSI, Rome, Jap. Sin., 31, fol. 94; 52, fol. 200v.
20. Michael Cooper, ed., *João Rodrigues's Account of Sixteenth-Century Japan* (London: Hakluyt Society, 2001), p. 128.
21. The Jesuits used the term *bonzo* to refer to Japanese churchmen in general, both Buddhist and Shinto.
22. Jaime González-Bolado, "Apuntes del Antiguo Japón en los Documentos Jesuitas de los siglos XVI y XVII," *Nuevas de Indias* VI (2021): 194–195.
23. Nam-lin Hur, *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the danka System* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 46.
24. Ernesto de Laurentis, *Evangelización y prestigio. Primeros encuentros entre España y Corea* (Madrid: Verbum, 2008), p. 23.
25. Lee Hee-Soo has identified at least seventeen Muslim scholars who mention the kingdom of *Al-Sila.* Lee Hee-Soo, "Early Korea–Arabic Maritime Relations Based on Muslim Sources," *Korea Journal* 31 (1991): 21–32.
26. William Elliot Griffis, *Corea: The Hermit Nation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), p. 2.
27. Jeong, "Islamic Studies," 2021, p. 328.
28. For comprehensive insights into the broader influence of Arabic scholarship on late medieval European thought, see: William W. Brickman, "The Meeting of East and West in Educational History," *Comparative Education Review* 5.2 (1961): 82–89; David C. Lindberg, "The Transmission of Greek and Arabic Learning to the West," in *Science in the Middle*

Ages, ed. David C. Lindberg (Chicago, IL, and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 52–91.

29. Marina Tolmacheva, "The Medieval Arabic Geographers and the Beginnings of Modern Orientalism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27.2 (1995): 144.
30. Laurentis, *Evangelización*, 2008, p. 25.
31. The original manuscript is preserved in the Municipal Library of Elvas [BME], cod. 5/381, fols. 92–94v. A complete transcription can be found in: Juan Ruiz de Medina. *Documentos del Japón* (Rome: Instituto Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús, 1990), fols. 71–6v.
32. Juan Ruiz de Medina, *Orígenes de la Iglesia Católica coreana desde 1566 hasta 1784* (Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I, 1986), p. 20. The original document in Portuguese is preserved in the ARSI, Rome, Jap. Sin. 7 III, fol. 80v.
33. Dolors Folch, "Martín de Rada's Book Collection," *Sinología Hispánica China Studies Review* 6.1 (2018): 12.
34. *Relaçion Verdadera de las cosas del Reyno de TAIBIN por otro nombre china y del viaje que a el hizo el muy Reverendo padre fray Martin de Rada provinçial que fue de la orden del glorioso Doctor de la yglesia San Agustin. Que lo vio y anduvo en la provinçia de Hocquien año de 1575 hecha por el mesmo 1575*, Bibliothèque Nationale de Francia en Paris, Fonds Espagnol, 325.9 (MF 13184), pp. 15–30. Digitalized by Dolors Folch Fornesa and Alexandra Prats.
35. Keith Pratt, *Everlasting Flower: A History of Korea* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2006), p. 18.
36. Juan Cortés de Osorio, *Reparos historiales apologeticos dirigidos al Excelentissimo Señor Conde de Villavmbrosa, Presidente del Consejo Supremo de Castilla, &c. propvestos de parte de los missioneros Apostolicos del Imperio de la China, representando los descvidos, qve se cometen en vn libro, que se ha publicado en Madrid, en grave perjuizio de aquella Mission* (Pamplona: Tomás Baztan, 1677), 163v.
37. Ricci's is not the first European map in which Korea is represented. In 1595, the Flemish Arnold Florent van Langren (1580–1644) published within a cartographic compendium of the globe a map of Asia titled *Exacta et accurata delineatio cum orarum maritimarum tum etiam locotum terrestrial quae in regionibus China […] nec non insulae Japan et Corea* that features an island called Korea, to which is attached the epigraph "isla de los ladrones" (island of thieves).
38. Kevin N. Cawley, "Matteo Ricci and Korea: Korea and Matteo Ricci," in *Scorci Di Corea/ Glimpses of Korea*, ed. Roberto Bertoni (Dublin and Turin: Trauben, 2013), p. 61.
39. Rubiés, "The Spanish Contribution," 2003, pp. 418–419.
40. Carletti, *Ragionamenti*, 1701, pp. 39–40. The best known of these five slaves is Antonio Corea (1578?–1626), who traveled together with the Italian to Holland and then to Rome, where he lived, thus becoming the first Korean to visit Europe.
41. Carletti, *Ragionamenti*, 1701, pp. 39–40.
42. Kenneth R. Swope, *Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War (1592–1598)* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press), 2019.
43. Biblioteca da Ajuda, Ms. 49–IV-57, fols. 278v-280 [First Letter]; fols. 280v-282 [Second Letter]. About Céspedes see: Park Chul, *Testimonios Literarios de la Labor Cultural de las Misiones Españolas en el Extremo Oriente: Gregorio de Céspedes* (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores), 1986; Ralph M. Cory, "Some Notes on Father Gregorio de Céspedes, Korea's First European Visitor" *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 27 (1937): 1–55.
44. Luis Fróis, auth., and Josef Wicki, ed., *Historia de Japam* (Lisbon: Ministerio de Cultura e Coordenação Científica – Biblioteca Nacional), 1976–1984.
45. It is worth noting that the written culture of the early modern Spanish literate minority was not something completely alien to the illiterate majority. There were, as Bartolomé Bennassar points out, some "intermediaries" between the oral and visual culture and the written one, such as *autos sacramentales*, theater, and poetry. Thus, we can conclude

that the works analyzed in this article would have been read by the literate minority, but some fragmented versions and pieces of information may well have reached wider Spanish society. Bartolomé Bennassar, *La España del Siglo de Oro* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1984), pp. 271–283, cited in Antonio Viñao Frago, "The History of Literacy in Spain: Evolution, Traits, and Questions," *History of Education Quarterly* 34.4 (1990): 573–599.

46. Luis de Guzmán, *Historia de las missiones qve han hecho los religiosos de la Compañia de Iesvs para predicar Sancto Euangelio en la India Oriental y en los reynos de la China y Iapon* (Alcalá de Henares: Viuda de Juan Gracián, 1601), volume II, p. 426.
47. This term derives from the Uriankhai 兀良哈, a name used in Ming China to designate the ethnic groups that resided in the Turko-Mongolian region. However, the Chinese used the same characters to designate the inhabitants of Manchuria, the Jurchen 女真語. This confused Guzmán, as it was in fact the Jurchen and not the Uriankhai who inhabited lands to the north of the Korean peninsula and carried out regular incursions into the territory of the Chosŏn dynasty.
48. Further details about Cheju Island can be found in the Real Academia de la Historia, such as the distance between the island and the peninsula and the lack of snow on its mountains: "This kingdom of *Corai* [Korea] has an island in its southern part called *Coraisan* [Cheju], which they say is fifty *leguas* [leagues] out to sea, although it does not seem so distant. [In this island] there are many mountain ranges that are very famous for their height, and they are so high that the snows have never been able to cover them. BRAH, Cortes 2679, Legajo I, Nº 69, fol. 9v.
49. Guzmán, *Historia*, 1601, pp. 501–502.
50. Guzmán, *Historia*, 1601, pp. 517–518.
51. Guzmán, *Historia*, 1601, pp. 501–502.
52. Juan Diego Aduarte, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de Filipinas, Iapon y China, de la Sagrada Orden de Predicadores* (Zaragoza: Domingo Gascón, 1693), Volume I, p. 470.
53. Aduarte, *Historia*, 1693, p. 470.
54. Guzmán, *Historia*, 1601, p. 502.
55. The reigning monarch in Korea during the Imjin War, and therefore Guzmán's contemporary, was King Sŏnjo (1552–1608).
56. João Rodrigues, *Arte Breve da Lingoa iapoa tirada da arte grande da mesma lingoa para os q[ue] começan a aprender os primeiros principios della* (Macao: Collegio da Madre d[e] Deos da Companhia d[e] Iesu, 1720), 84v.
57. BRAH, Cortes 2679, Legajo I, Nº 69, fols. 10–10v.
58. Guzmán, *Historia*, 1601, p. 502.
59. Guzmán, *Historia*, 1601, p. 502.
60. Griffis, *Corea*, 1894.
61. John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1968.
62. Keith Pratt, *Everlasting Flower*, 2006, p. 156.
63. Laurentis, *Evangelización*, 2008, p. 45.
64. Just three months after this incident, Prenestino wrote a report that was collected in Fróis, *Historia*, 1981, II volume, pp. 503–516; Lucena, however, would take more than forty years to record the events in his memoirs: Alfonso de Lucena, auth., and Josep Franz Schüte, ed., *Erinnerungen aus der Christenheit von Omura. De algunas cousas que ainda se alembra o P. Alfonso de Lucena que pertenecem à Christiandade de Omura (1578–1614)* (Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I, 1972), p. 311.
65. Laurentis, *Evangelización*, 2008, p. 46.
66. Boxer identifies this event as the one suffered in 1577 by the captain of the *San Sebastian*, Domingo Monteiro, who was swept away by a storm to Korea, where the natives attacked and killed his crew and stole his boat. If this incident is true, then Diego Monteiro and not

Gregorio de Céspedes would be the first Westerner to have set foot in the country. Charles R. Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon: Annals of Macao and the Old Japan Trade (1555–1640)* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudios Históricos Ultramarinos, 1959), pp. 38–39.

67. Fróis, *Historia*, 1981, II, p. 512. Another English translation of this fragment can be found in Bridges and de Medina, *The Catholic Church*, 1991, p. 39.
68. Morejón, *Historia*, 1621, fol. 12l.
69. Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola. *Conqvista de las Islas Malvcas al Rey Felipe III N[uestr] o S[eñ]or* (Madrid: Alonso Martín, 1609), p. 337.
70. Diego de Pantoja, *Relacion de la entrada de algvnos Padres de la Co[m]pañia de IESVS en la China, y particulares sucessos q[ue] tuuieron, y de cosas muy notables que vieron en el mismo Reyno* (Seville: Alonso Rodriguez Gamarra, 1605), pp. 123–123v.
71. Álvaro Semedo, *Imperio de la China i cultura evangelica en èl, por los religios de la Compañia de Iesus* (Madrid: Juan Sánchez, 1642), p. 143.
72. Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia de las cosas mas notables, ritos y costu[m]bres del gra[n] Reyno de la China, sabidas a si por los libros de los mesmos Chinas, como por relacion de los Religiosos, y otras personas que han estado en el dicho Reyno* (Medina del Campo: Santiago del Canto, 1595), p. 61v.
73. Nicolás Trigault, *Istoria de la China i cristiana empresa hecha en ella por la Compañia de Iesvs. Que, de los escritos del Padre Mateo Richo, compuso el Padre Nicolas Trigavlt, flamenco, ambos de la misma Compañia* (Seville: Gabriel Ramos, 1621), fol. 30v.
74. Trigault, *Istoria*, 1621, fol. 30v.
75. Pantoja, *Relacion*, 1605, fols. 123–123v.
76. Swope, *Dragon's Head*, 2019, p. 8.
77. Pantoja, *Relacion*, 1605, fol. 123.
78. Boxer, *The Christian Century*, 1967, pp. 257–259.
79. Reinier H. Hesselink, *The Dream of Christian Nagasaki: World Trade and the Clash of Cultures (1560–1640)* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2016), pp. 73–74.
80. Vivero, *Relación*, 2020, p. 41. Another transcription of this text can be found in Laurentis, *Evangelización*, 2008, p. 42.
81. Laurentis, *Evangelización*, 2008, p. 42.

References

Aduarte, Juan Diego. *Historia de La Provincia Del Santo Rosario de Filipinas, Japón y China, de La Sagrada Orden de Predicadores* (History of the Province of the Holy Rosary of the Philippines, Japan, and China, of the Order of Preachers). Zaragoza: Domingo Gascón, 1693.

Argensola, Bartolomé Leonardo de. *Conqvista de Las Islas Malvcas al Rey Felipe III N[uestr]o S[eñ]or* (Conquest of the Moluccas Islands for King Philip III). Madrid: Alonso Martín, 1609.

Boxer, Charles R. *The Christian Century in Japan (1549–1650)*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967.

——. *The Great Ship from Amacon: Annals of Macao and the Old Japan Trade (1555–1640)*. Lisbon: Centro de Estudios Históricos Ultramarinos, 1959.

Brickman, William W. "The Meeting of East and West in Educational History." *Comparative Education Review* 5.2 (1961): 82–89.

Bridges, John and Ruiz de Medina, Juan. *The Catholic Church in Korea: Its Origins (1566–1784)*. Rome: Istituto Storico S.I., 1991.

Carletti, Francesco di. *Ragionamenti Di Francesco Carletti Fiorentino Sopra Le Cose Da Lui Vedute Ne' Suoi Viaggi Si Dell'Indie Occidentali, e Orientali Come d'altri Paesi* (Reflections

of Francesco Carletti of Florence on the Things He Saw during His Journeys to the West and East Indies and Other Countries). Florence: Giuseppe Manni, 1701.

Cawley, Kevin N. "Matteo Ricci and Korea: Korea and Matteo Ricci," in *Scorci Di Corea/Glimpses of Korea*, ed. Roberto Bertoni. Dublin and Turin: Trauben, pp. 59–85, 2013.

Chul, Park. *Testimonios Literarios de la Labor Cultural de las Misiones Españolas en el Extremo Oriente: Gregorio de Céspedes* (Literary Testimonies of the Cultural Work of the Spanish Missions in the Far East: Gregorio de Céspedes). Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1986.

Colla, Elisabetta. "16th-Century Japan and Macau Described by Francesco Carletti (1573?–1636)." *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 17 (2008): 113–144.

Cooper, Michael, ed., *João Rodrigues's Account of Sixteenth Century Japan*. London: Hakluyt Society, 2001.

Cortés Osorio, Juan. *Reparos Historiales Apologeticos Dirigidos al Excelentissimo Señor Conde de Villavmbrosa, Presidente Del Consejo Supremo de Castilla, &c. Propvestos de Parte de Los Missioneros Apostolicos Del Imperio de La China, Representando Los Descvidos, Qve Se Cometen En vn Libro, Que Se Ha Publicado En Madrid, En Grave Perjuizio de Aquella Mission* (Historical Apologetic Objections Addressed to the Most Excellent Lord Count of Villavumbrosa, President of the Supreme Council of Castile, etc. Presented on Behalf of the Apostolic Missionaries of the Empire of China, Highlighting the Errors Found in a Book Published in Madrid, to the Serious Detriment of That Mission). Pamplona: Tomás Baztan, 1677.

Cory, Ralph M. "Some Notes on Father Gregorio de Céspedes, Korea's First European Visitor." *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 27 (1937): 1–55.

Fairbank, John King, ed. *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Folch, Dolors. "Martín de Rada's Book Collection." *Sinología Hispánica, China Studies Review* 6.1 (2018): 1–26.

Fróis, Luís. *História de Japam* (History of Japan). Lisbon: Ministerio de Cultura e Coordenação Científica – Biblioteca Nacional, 1976–1984.

González-Bolado, Jaime. "Apuntes Del Antiguo Japón En Los Documentos Jesuitas de Los Siglos XVI y XVII." *Nuevas de Indias* 6 (2021): 186–213.

González de Mendoza, Juan. *Historia de Las Cosas Mas Notables, Ritos y Costu[m]Bres Del Gra[n] Reyno de La China, Sabidas a Si Por Los Libros de Los Mesmos Chinas, Como Por Relacion de Los Religiosos, y Otras Personas Que Han Estado En El Dicho Reyno* (History of the Most Notable Things, Rites, and Customs of the Great Kingdom of China, Known from the Books of the Chinese Themselves, as Well as from Accounts by Missionaries and Other People Who Have Been in That Kingdom). Medina del Campo: Santiago del Canto, 1595.

Griffis, William Elliot. *Corea: The Hermit Nation*. 4th ed. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894.

Gruzinski, Serge. "Las Imágenes, Los Imaginarios y La Occidentalización," in *Para Una Historia de América*, ed. Alicia Hernández Chávez, volume I. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, pp. 498–567, 1999.

Guzmán, Luis de. *Historia de Las Missiones Qve Han Hecho Los Religiosos de La Compañia de Iesvs Para Predicar Sancto Euangelio En La India Oriental y En Los Reynos de La China y Iapon* (History of the Missions Made by the Members of the Society of Jesus to Preach the Holy Gospel in the East Indies and in the Kingdoms of China and Japan). Alcalá de Henares: Viuda Juan Gracián, 1601.

Hesselink, Reinier H. *The Dream of Christian Nagasaki: World Trade and the Clash of Cultures (1560–1640)*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2016.

Hur, Nam-lin. *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Jeong, Jin Han. "Islamic Studies of Korea in Medieval Scripts: Medieval Muslims' perception of Korea 'as a Muslims' Paradise' and the Influence of Ancient Civilizations' Golden Island in the Sea East of the Eastern End of the World." *European Journal of Korean Studies* 21.1 (2021): 323–33.

Lach, Donald Frederick. *Asia in the Making of Europe*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1965–1977.

Laurentis, Ernesto de. *Evangelización y Prestigio. Primeros Encuentros Entre España y Corea*. Madrid: Verbum, 2008.

Lee, Hee-Soo. "Early Korea–Arabic Maritime Relations Based on Muslim Sources." *Korean Journal* 31 (1991): 21–32.

Lindberg, David C. "The Transmission of Greek and Arabic Learning to the West," in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. David C. Lindberg. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 52–91, 1980.

Lucena, Alfonso de (auth.) and Schüte, Josep Franz (ed.). *Erinnerungen aus der Christenheit von Omura. De algunas cousas que ainda se alembra o P. Alfonso de Lucena que pertenecem à Christiandade de Omura (1578–1614)* (Memories of Christianity in Omura: Reflections by Father Alfonso de Lucena on Aspects of Omura's Christian Community (1578–1614)). Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I, 1972.

Morejón, Pedro. *Historia y Relacion de Lo Svcedido En Los Reinos de Iapon y China, En La Qual Se Continua La Gran Persecucion Que Ha Auido En Aq[ue]lla Iglesia, Desde El Año de 615 Hasta El de 19* (History and Account of What Happened in the Kingdoms of Japan and China, Detailing the Great Persecution That Has Occurred in That Church, from the Year 1615 to 1619). Lisbon: Juan Rodriguez, 1621.

Murdoch, James and Yamagata, Isoh. *A History of Japan during the Century of Early Foreign Intercourse (1542–1651)*. Kobe: Published at the Office of the "Chronicle," 1903.

Pantoja, Diego de. *Relacion de La Entrada de Algvnos Padres de La Co[m]pañia de IESVS En La China, y Particulares Sucessos q[ue] Tuuieron, y de Cosas Muy Notables Que Vieron En El Mismo Reyno* (Account of the Arrival of Some Fathers of the Society of Jesus in China, and Specific Events They Experienced, Along with Noteworthy Observations Made in the Kingdom). Seville: Alonso Rodríguez Gamarra, 1605.

Pratt, Keith. *Everlasting Flower: A History of Korea.* London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2006.

Rodrigues, João. *Arte Breve Da Lingoa Japoa Tirada Da Arte Grande Da Mesma Lingoa Para os q[ue] Começan a Aprender os Primeiros Principios Della* (Brief Art of the Japanese Language Extracted from the Great Art of the Same Language for Those Who Begin to Learn Its First Principle)). Macao: Collegio da Madre d[e] Deos da Companhia d[e] Iesu, 1720.

Roeper, Vibeke and Walraven, Boudewijn, eds. *Hamel's World: A Dutch-Korean Encounter in the Seventeenth Century.* Amsterdam: SUN, 2003.

Roux, Pierre-Emmanuel. "The Prohibited Sect of Yaso: Catholicism in Diplomatic and Cultural Encounters between Edo Japan and Chŏson Korea (17th to 19th Century)," in *Space and Location in the Circulation of Knowledge (1400–1800): Korea and Beyond*, eds. Marion Eggert and Dennis Würthner. Frankfurt-Main: PL Academic Research, pp. 119–141, 2014.

Rubiés, Joan-Pau. "The Spanish Contribution to the Ethnology of Asia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." *Renaissance Studies* 17.3 (2003): 418–448.

Ruiz de Medina, Juan. *Documentos Del Japón (1547–1557)*. Rome: Instituto Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús, 1990.

——. *Orígenes de La Iglesia Católica Coreana Desde 1566 Hasta 1784*. Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I., 1986.

Sansom, George. *A History of Japan (1334–1615)*. Tokyo: Tuttle, 1974.

Schaub, Jean-Frédéric. "The Union between Portugal and the Spanish Monarchy (1581–1640)," in *The Iberian World 1450–1820*, eds. Fernando Bouza, Pedro Cardim, and Antonio Feros. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 126–142, 2020.

Semedo, Álvaro. *Imperio de La China i Cultura Evangelica En Èl, Por Los Religios de La Compañia de Iesus* (The Empire of China and the Evangelical Culture within It by the members of the Society of Jesus). Madrid: Juan Sanchez, 1642.

Sousa, Lucio de. *The Portuguese Slave Trade in Early Modern Japan: Merchants, Jesuits and Japanese, Chinese and Korean Slaves.* Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Swope, Kenneth R. *Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War (1592–1598)*. Oklahoma, OK: University of Oklahoma Press; Reprint edition, 2019.

Terreros, Manuel Romero de. "Relación del Japón (1609), por Rodrigo de Vivero y Velazco, Introducción y notas." *Anales del Museo Nacional de México* 1 (1934): 67–111.

Tolmacheva, Marina. "The Medieval Arabic Geographers and the Beginnings of Modern Orientalism." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27.2 (1995): 141–156.

Trigault, Nicolás. *Istoria de La China i Cristiana Empresa Hecha En Ella Por La Compañia de Iesvs. Que, de Los Escritos Del Padre Mateo Richo, Compuso El Padre Nicolas Trigavlt, Flamenco, Ambos de La Misma compañía* (History of China and the Christian Mission Undertaken There by the Society of Jesus: Composed by Father Nicolás Trigault, Flemish, Based on the Writings of Father Matteo Ricci, Both Members of the Same Society). Seville: Gabriel Ramos, 1621.

Ucerler, M. Antoni J. *The Samurai and the Cross: The Jesuit Enterprise in Early Modern Japan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022.

Viñao Frago, Antonio. "The History of Literacy in Spain: Evolution, Traits, and Questions." *History of Education Quarterly* 34.4 (1990): 573–599.

Vivero, Rodrigo de. *Relación del Japón* (Account of Japan). Barcelona: Red Ediciones, 2020.