

**NARRATIVES AND REPRESENTATIONS
OF SUFFERING, FAILURE,
AND MARTYRDOM**

**EARLY MODERN CATHOLICISM CONFRONTING
THE ADVERSITIES OF HISTORY**

Título: Narratives and Representations of Suffering, Failure, and Martyrdom:
Early Modern Catholicism Confronting the Adversities of History

Coordenação: Leonardo Cohen

Edição:

Centro de Estudos de História Religiosa
Faculdade de Teologia, Universidade Católica Portuguesa
Palma de Cima, 1649-023 Lisboa
secretariado.cehr@ft.lisboa.ucp.pt | www.cehr.ft.lisboa.ucp.pt



CATÓLICA
CEHR · CENTRO DE ESTUDOS
DE HISTÓRIA RELIGIOSA

BRAGA · LISBOA · PORTO

Conceção gráfica e Execução:

Sersilito-Empresa Gráfica, Lda. | www.sersilito.pt

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34632/9789728361938>

ISBN: 978-972-8361-93-8

Depósito legal: 476416/20

Tiragem: 500 exemplares

Edição apoiada por:

מרכז אפריקה על שם תמר גולן
THE TAMAR GOLAN AFRICA CENTRE



Grant Number 951/18

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	7
About the Authors.....	9
Abbreviations.....	11
Introduction.....	13

CAPUCHINS AND POOR CLARES

Exile and Immigration: Irish Nuns in Spain During the Early Modern Ages .. NERE JONE INTXAUSTEGI JAUREGI	37
The Martyrdom and Suffering of the Capuchins in the Kongo Kingdom in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries..... ROBERT PIĘTEK	49

EARLY MODERN MARTYRDOM IN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Early Modern Martyrdom and the Society of Jesus in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries..... CAMILLA RUSSELL	67
“To Spread All My Sweat, Blood, and Life”: Italian <i>Litterae Indipetae</i> Between 1690 and 1730..... ELISA FREI	101

JESUIT MARTYRDOM IN THE NEW WORLD

A Martyrdom Narrative as the Way of Dealing with the Tragedy of the
Huron Mission. 129
JOHN STECKLEY

Jesuit Missionaries' Suffering and Disappointment in the *Neue Welt-Bott* .. 141
PÄIVI RÄISÄNEN-SCHRÖDER

FAILURE AND FRUSTRATION: THE JESUITS IN JAPAN AND THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

From a Watchtower: Francisco Cabral's Envisioning of the Failure of the
Jesuit Japanese Mission (1593) 161
LINDA ZAMPOL D'ORTIA

Jesuit Emotions in the First Mission to Akbar, 1579-1582 177
JESSE SARGENT

CEREMONY, PERFORMANCE, AND DRAMA

"Shaking the Dust from the Feet": Ritual and Testimony among Jesuits and
Ethiopian Catholics (Seventeenth Century) 203
LEONARDO COHEN

Staging Martyrdom in Golden Age Theatre 217
DANN CAZÉS G.

MARTYRDOM AND THE SUPPRESSION OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

"They Were Among Us but Not of Us": Jesuit Emotions in the Portuguese
Empire at the End of the Eighteenth Century 249
SABINA PAVONE

A Martyred Society: The Suffering of Suppression and the Jesuit Factory of
Saints from the Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries. 265
ELEONORA RAI

Index 289

Figures. 315

FROM A WATCHTOWER:
FRANCISCO CABRAL'S ENVISIONING OF THE FAILURE
OF THE JESUIT JAPANESE MISSION (1593)¹

LINDA ZAMPOL D'ORTIA

And would that God had willed that the Father Visitor, when he left Japan, had not allowed [the use of] the honours and pomp that he did; because if he had been more moderate, maybe things would have not turned out as they did, which I nearly saw from a distance. And for this reason and for other similar ones, I was much displeased with him at that time, because he could never convince me it was well arranged. Rather, it reminds me that I wrote to Your Paternity what I thought, and in a letter I said these words: "If a remedy to this is not found, I foresee the coming storm, as it were from a watchtower".²

Francisco Cabral and Alessandro Valignano

The letter from which this passage is taken is one of a number written by Jesuits stationed in India which had the common aim of removing Alessandro Valignano from office as the Society of Jesus's Visitor to Asia.³ Written mostly

¹ The author is grateful to the Harold S. Williams fund of the National Library of Australia, which supported the research for this paper, and to Will Sweetman and Ana Fernandes Pinto for the helpful comments. Biblical citations are taken from the NRSVCE; except where stated, all other translations are the author's.

² Francisco Cabral to General Claudio Acquaviva, Cochin, 15th December 1593. In *DI*, vol. 16, 1984, p. 547.

³ On Alessandro Valignano, see M. Antoni J. Üçerler – Alessandro Valignano: Man, Missionary, and Writer. *Renaissance Studies* 17.3 (2003) 337-66.

in 1593, these letters represent the peak of the intervention of senior Jesuits of the Indian Province against Valignano, whose role would be changed to Visitor of Japan by the end of 1595. This article will consider the attempt of a long-time antagonist of Valignano, fellow Jesuit Francisco Cabral, to propose a competing vision for the evangelization of Japan to the General of the Order, Claudio Acquaviva. It will analyse Cabral's rhetoric by looking at his use of the textual canon and of his lived experience to support his interpretation of the Japanese mission as a failure, and his bid for the change of missionary policy to overcome the occurring crisis.

The administration of the Jesuit Province of India at the turn of the 1590s was characterised by heightened tensions generated by an array of issues. Among these were the nationalistic tendencies that pitted the Portuguese missionaries against the Spaniards, exacerbated by the union of the two Crowns under Philip II of Spain (1580); the different opinions on the correct manner of governing the Society of Jesus in the province; the latter's relationship with the subordinate Vice-Province of Japan; and, finally, the persistence of the same few people holding the province's most powerful offices.

This last matter was what set in motion the initial attempt to have Valignano's authority curtailed, already in 1588. He had been Visitor to Asia between 1573 and 1583, and had then taken on in addition the office of provincial of India until 1587. This prompted the third Provincial Congregation (1588) to ask the General not to let visitors also have the role of local superiors.⁴ In practice, this meant removing Valignano from the office of Visitor.⁵ By 1593, a small but powerful group of senior Portuguese missionaries was pushing for the nomination of a new Visitor in Rome.⁶ Among other allegations, Valignano was accused of considering Portuguese missionaries to be incapable of assuming leadership roles, of aspiring to become a second general of the Society in India, of being arrogant enough to believe he was irreplaceable, of favouring a too lax style of governing, and of simply being in power for too long. This concerted effort that resulted in the removal of Valignano from the post of visitor of India in 1595 was only partially successful, as he was then nominated Visitor of Japan. Two missionaries appear

⁴ *DI*, Article 6, vol. 15, pp. 11-12. On this congregation, see *ibidem*, pp. 29*-31*.

⁵ "This Province in Congregation, unanimously, asked to Your Paternity [General Claudio Acquaviva] that Father Alessandro Valignano would not be visitor any longer", as clarified by Francisco de Monclaro, at the time procurator, in 1593, *DI*, vol. 16, p. 185.

⁶ See Markus Friedrich – "Government in India and Japan is different from government in Europe": Asian Jesuits on Infrastructure, Administrative Space, and the Possibilities for a Global Management of Power. *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4 (2017) 16. See also *DI*, vol. 16, p. 524, n. 58.

to have been particularly vocal regarding this question: Father Francisco de Monclaro⁷ and Father Francisco Cabral,⁸ author of the letter quoted above.

Francisco Cabral was an old opponent of Valignano. The pair had met in Japan in 1579, during Valignano's first visitation of the country. His arrival had initially been celebrated by Cabral, the local superior since 1570. Over time, however, disagreements on the reforms to be undertaken in the mission came to the fore. Valignano was worried by what he described as Cabral's lack of respect for both Japanese culture and Japanese people, and his strict and imperious way of governing the mission. Cabral in turn considered Valignano's reform of the method of evangelization, towards an accommodation to the local context, to be an inadmissible jeopardizing of the vow of poverty, and a betrayal of the Jesuit way of proceeding.⁹

Cabral had begun appealing to the General for permission to leave Japan in 1576, since he had news of the imminent arrival of a Visitor.¹⁰ His requests became more insistent with time, culminating when, in 1580, he listed seven reasons – in addition to his lack of virtue and inclination – why he should be allowed to return to India.¹¹ Unable to present an efficient opposition to the power of the Visitor, Cabral preferred to be removed, and to place as much distance as possible between himself and the Japanese mission.¹² Valignano, unable in turn to convince Cabral to conform to the new policies, was content to let him go.

The widespread unhappiness characterizing the Indian Province in the 1590s gave Cabral the occasion to return, in his correspondence with the General, to the topic of Valignano's misdeeds. He had already presented his grievances regarding some aspects of the Visitor's tenure; he was among the participants of the third General Congregation who unanimously asked for a limitation thereof. In 1591, as superior of the professed house in Goa, he requested a new visitor from Rome

⁷ Markus Friedrich – "Government in India ..., *cit.*, p. 16.

⁸ An overview of his life and work is available in Charles E. O'Neill and Joaquín María Domínguez, eds. – *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2001, vol. 1, pp. 590-1. For his life before Japan and a sketch of his character, see Joseph Franz Schütte – *Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan*. St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1980, vol. 1, pp. 189-96.

⁹ Valignano's reform and Cabral's objections are analysed extensively in Joseph Franz Schütte – *Valignano's Mission ..., cit.*

¹⁰ See his letter in Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, *Jap. Sin.* 8, I, 12v.

¹¹ Joseph F. Schütte – *Valignano's Mission ..., cit.*, pp. 376-78.

¹² On Cabral's loss of hope for the Japanese mission, see Linda Zampol D'Ortia – *The Cape of the Devil: Salvation in the Japanese Jesuit Mission Under Francisco Cabral (1570-1579)*. PhD Dissertation, University of Otago, 2017.

to moderate the excesses displayed by the provincial, Pedro Martins;¹³ Valignano could not be counted upon to intervene, as he was in Japan.¹⁴

Indeed, at the turn of the decade, the Visitor was deeply troubled by Japan, and hard-pressed to find a solution for the calamity that had hit the mission. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the emerging ruler of the country after the civil war of the *sengoku* period (1467-1573), had unexpectedly banned evangelization and decreed that Christian missionaries be expelled from the country. Valignano attempted to regain Hideyoshi's favour by organizing an embassy in the name of the Viceroy of India and by presenting him with rich gifts, in the hope of smoothing over the relationship and gaining permission to reinstate the mission.¹⁵

The 1593 Letters

It was particularly after Cabral's nomination as provincial of India in September of 1592, and in the wake of Monclaro's stand against Valignano,¹⁶ that Cabral's letters to Rome became more aggressive.¹⁷ In four missives dated 15th December 1593, and sent from Kochi, he extensively objected to the activities of the Visitor in Asia. In the first letter, the matter of the duration of Valignano's office was confronted again, and presented as a province-wide complaint:

Your Paternity should understand that this whole province suffers much and bears very heavily that Father Alessandro Valignano has been its visitor for twenty years; this is a tense topic of discussion in general, and the gravest Fathers are those who feel it the most,¹⁸ saying that nothing like this has ever happened since religious orders were founded ... how much more burdensome it is, for

¹³ The Provincial's manner of government was condemned by various missionaries in India. See *DI*, vol. 15, p. 378, n. 3.

¹⁴ See Francisco Cabral to the Assistant, Manuel Rodrigues, Goa, 3rd January 1591, *DI*, vol. 16, p. 578; and Francisco Cabral to the General, Claudio Acquaviva, Goa, 4th January 1591, *ibidem*, p. 589.

¹⁵ On Hideyoshi's ban, see George Elison – *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988, pp. 111-26. It has been pointed out, however, that the ban was not as unexpected as was represented in Jesuit sources. See Reiner H. Hesselink – *The Dream of Christian Nagasaki: World Trade and the Clash of Cultures, 1560-1640*. Jefferson: McFarlan, 2016, pp. 75-82. It was certainly an enormous setback for the mission and would lead to the crucifixion of the famous twenty-six martyrs of Nagasaki in 1597.

¹⁶ Markus Friedrich – "Government in India ...", *cit.*, pp. 16-7.

¹⁷ Cabral and Monclaro's accusations did not go unanswered; when Valignano returned from his second trip to Japan and was dramatically deposed as visitor to India in 1595, he took some time to compose a number of scathing letters to Acquaviva, where he describes how he had been attacked by "some old men". See *DI*, vol. 17.

¹⁸ These "gravest fathers" themselves (Monclaro, Cabral, Valerio de Parada, Jeronimo Cota, and Nuno Rodrigues) were often accused of holding power for too long as consultants of the provincial; see for example, *DI*, vol. 16, pp. 424, 826, 878, 897.

this Province, to suffer a visitor for twenty years, since it is so far from Your Paternity, and he is so authoritarian and independent in his decisions. Indeed, he commands from Japan that, even if Your Paternity orders something relative to the matters that he has arranged,¹⁹ Your Paternity's order must be suspended until he can be informed ... Particularly while being in Japan, [Valignano] cannot help this Province of India; on the contrary, he damages it, because he does not see its needs, nor can take care of them.²⁰

Cabral believed that Valignano would bring about the downfall of the Indian Province. He accused him of keeping for Japan the best men of the Indian Province, while using Goa as a dumping ground for the troublemakers. This not only aggravated the difficulties in finding suitable Jesuits for administrative roles in India, but was considered a waste of personnel, given that the missionaries in Japan could not preach openly after the ban on Christianity issued by Toyomi Hideyoshi. The Visitor was also accused of keeping part of the monetary contributions that Japan was supposed to give to Goa, while the latter still had to bear the totality of the expenses of the Asian missions in Europe.²¹

A solution Cabral proposed for this untenable situation was to acquiesce to the 1592 request of the Congregation of Japan to become a separate province.²² This proposition, however, had been met with irritation by the senior Jesuits of India.²³ Monclaro himself wrote a letter to the General against it, reminding him that the second Provincial Congregation of India (1583) had already declared its opposition of the separation of Japan and China,²⁴ and that for many years it had been considered "not licit" by the "superiors of this province, the Viceroy, and the kings of Portugal".²⁵ They believed that this partition would allow the missionaries (and the merchants after them) to reach Japan through the shorter Spanish route of the Acapulco-Manila galleon. This practice, prohibited by both King Sebastian of Portugal and King Philip II of Spain, would infringe upon the privileges of the

¹⁹ Wicki refers (*DI*, vol. 16, p. 524, n. 60) to Valignano's request (*DI*, vol. 16, p. 506) to limit of the power of the provincial of India to ensure that the general's orders were obeyed in Japan, on the basis that the latter was too different to be ruled in the same way. On this matter, see Markus Friedrich – "Government in India ...", *cit.*

²⁰ Francisco Cabral to the General, Claudio Acquaviva, Kochi, 15th December 1593, *DI*, vol. 16, pp. 524-25.

²¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 518-21.

²² See Valignano's suggestions for the implementation of the Congregation's petition in his letter to the General, Claudio Acquaviva, Macao, 12th January 1593, *DI*, vol. 16, pp. 91-97.

²³ Wicki mentions the instances of Monclaro, Cristobal de Castro, Jeronimo Xavier, and Gomes Vaz, *DI*, vol. 16, p. 416, n. 26.

²⁴ The Congregation, while expounding on the political consequences considered by Monclaro too, did state that the decision was taken "for the time being", *DI*, vol. 13, p. 323. The fourth Congregation (1594), however, requested that India and Japan and China not be separated, *DI*, vol. 16, pp. 642-45.

²⁵ Francisco de Monclaro to the General, Claudio Acquaviva, Goa, 26th October 1593, *DI*, vol. 16, p. 196.

Padroado Real and imperil the trade rights of the Portuguese crown. Monclaro, however, admitted that, if not for this impediment, this separation would be a good solution for liberating India from the burdens of Japan.²⁶ Cabral did not have any of his scruples, and suggested the division of the two missions as an excellent solution.

It was in the third letter that Cabral tackled the topic of the Japanese mission and his past opposition to Valignano.²⁷ In addition to supporting his bid to have the Visitor removed, just like the other letters of the set, the specific aim of this text was to persuade the General to order a change of missionary policy in Japan and, fundamentally, a return to Cabral's policies of the 1570s. As such, this letter is part of the long controversy that began with the meeting of the two missionaries, and later evolved into a personal conflict, and an object of gossip when they became the two highest authorities in the province.

There was another concern not explicitly mentioned by Cabral, but that appears between the lines of these letters: that the storm that had hit Japan might extend to India too. It is not by chance that he started by mentioning the trouble he had personally incurred with the Viceroy in procuring the presents for Hideyoshi at Valignano's request. Already in his first letter, he interpreted the connection between the two missions as no more than a complication for Goa and, by extension, himself. Cabral's preoccupation with the Japanese mission, therefore, is fuelled by this apprehension, too, which is also a probable reason behind his supporting the creation of a separate Province of Japan.

Considering the importance these objectives held for the letter's author, it is perhaps not surprising that the letter appears to be rather carefully arranged. The text is more focused, and displays a more polished rhetoric, and thus a diminished tendency to slip into ramblings, than other letters by Cabral. The time of writing – a moment when Cabral believed it possible to intervene successfully in the matters of Japan – was another incentive for this judicious planning. He also felt that the Visitor's opinions held much more sway over the General than his own;²⁸ as he wrote in a vitriolic letter addressed to the Portuguese Assistant three years later, "I understand perfectly that, in the end, in these matters I am [like] Cassandra because, for Our Father General, half a word of Father Alessandro (as he himself boasts) is more important than all these truths."²⁹

²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 196-98.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 541-51.

²⁸ While it was true that the two men enjoyed a personal connection and a deep respect for each other (*DI*, vol. 14, p. 3*), this does not necessarily mean that Acquaviva disregarded all viewpoints that did not agree with Valignano's; he heard clearly, for example, the pleas to put a stop to the many expenses of the Visitor. See Claudio Acquaviva, General to Alessandro Valignano, Rome, 16th January 1595, *DI*, vol. 17, pp. 39-41.

²⁹ Cabral to the Assistant, João Alvares, Goa, 10th December 1596, *DI*, vol. 18, p. 625. On Valignano's statements about the credit he enjoyed with Acquaviva, see also *DI*, vol. 14, p. 290; and *ibidem*, pp. 735-36.

Therefore, to support as strongly as possible his position against the policies actuated in Japan, Cabral appealed to the two sources of authority at his disposal: the textual canon and his own experience.

Canon and Experience as Sources of Authority

Anthony Pagden, discussing rhetorical devices used to legitimate early modern recountings of the peoples of New Spain,³⁰ highlighted the importance of these two modes of authorization: the first derived from “an understanding of the world ... dependent upon the interpretation of a determined canon of texts: the Bible, the Church Fathers, and a regularly contested although in practice restricted corpus of ancient writers”.³¹ The other represented an “appeal to the authority of the eye-witness, to the privileged understanding which those present at an event have over all those who have only read or been told about it It was evidence that ‘these things are within my understanding, that is from the experience and sight I had of them.’”³² Both devices were therefore part of the rhetorical toolkit of the early modern writer of the New World. However, it was not simple to attain a resolution of the tensions emerging between canon and experience, and attempts in this sense characterized these texts past the 1650s.³³

When it came to written texts, therefore, direct experience, especially eyewitnessing, granted authority to portrayals of the newly encountered populations and territories, over competing representations.³⁴ Unsurprisingly, it also played an influential part in the policymaking of the missions of the early modern Jesuits, whose humanistic formation facilitated assessments based on empirical evidence.³⁵ Valignano himself was fond of stating that it was not possible to really understand the matters of Japan unless one had experienced the country; even being familiar with India was not enough to grant clarity regarding the peculiarities of the archipelago.³⁶ This reasoning would not only justify his “rather nonchalant attitude towards instructions sent from Rome”,³⁷ but also his endeavour to limit the influence that the Jesuits of India could exert over Japan.

³⁰ See especially Anthony Pagden – *European Encounters with the New World*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1993, pp. 54-55.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 51. Pagden quotes Jean de Lery's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil autrement dite l'Amérique* (1585).

³³ Anthony Pagden – *European Encounters ...*, *cit.*, p. 56.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 55-57.

³⁵ Peter A. Dorsey – Going to school with savages: Authorship and Authority among the Jesuits of New France. *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55:3 (1998) 403-05.

³⁶ Markus Friedrich – “Government in India ...”, *cit.*, p. 6.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

Cabral was one of the few Jesuits living in India who could boast a long tenure in Japan, and as such he could call forth an authority similar to Valignano's on the subject: he purposefully drew attention to it three times in his missive to the General. Nuno Rodrigues, a senior missionary partial to the opinions of Monclaro and Cabral, depicted efficiently the weight that both Cabral and Valignano's experiences had on the debates regarding the missionary policies of Japan:

Regarding Japan and its progress, the Father Provincial [Cabral] writes to Your Paternity with such efficacious reasons and evidence from his experience, that he seems to persuade me completely, and I have no evidence against him. And I remember sometimes writing and saying in Rome to Your Paternity that I could not understand the manner of proceeding of Ours [in Japan], which appeared to be so foreign to some points of the doctrine of Christ, and his Gospel, and the examples of the Saints, who converted the world with the humility and poverty of Christ. When I mentioned this to the Father Visitor, he presented me with many reasons, which did not convince me. He then told me that I could not talk about this matter [of Japan], because I have no experience of it; and that he wrote so to Your Paternity, and that I should say so in Rome, as I did. Therefore now I have nothing else to add, than what the Father Provincial says, and that is demonstrated by experience.³⁸

Cabral's appeals to experience not only legitimized his writing about Japan to the General, but became a precaution against possible accusations of insubordination: as it gave him knowledge of the "real" situation in Japan, it would have been remiss of him not to speak out regarding what he felt was best for the mission. Thus, together with the love he declared for the Society of Jesus, experience allowed him to frame his move against the Visitor as a duty; even if it meant disagreeing with his superior (and attempting to have him removed), he was still formally operating within the bounds of Jesuit obedience.³⁹

Cabral, however, had not been in Japan for approximately ten years at the time of the redaction of this letter. He managed to overcome this lack of recent direct experience, when necessary, by referring to other eyewitnesses, who had provided him with information on the events. These were (or were presented as) trustworthy Jesuits, whom he named and knew personally: Father Gil da Mata, the procurator of the Japanese mission; Brother André D'Oria, who had accompanied him back to India; and Father Luis Frois, the Japanese mission's interpreter. In a slight lapse that highlights how out of touch with the mission he might have

³⁸ Nuno Rodrigues to the General, Claudio Acquaviva, 20th November 1593, *DI*, vol. 16, pp. 396-97.

³⁹ Silvia Mostaccio – *Early Modern Jesuits Between Obedience and Conscience During the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581-1615)*. Farham: Ashgate, 2014, p. 68.

actually been, Cabral also refers to some not further identified “fathers of Japan” when presenting the actual reason behind the persecutions against Christianity. The transmission of information provided by eyewitnesses was still rhetorically effective, even if not as effective as presenting himself as an eyewitness.⁴⁰ Still, as Cabral had added, the General could easily ask Gil da Mata, who was travelling to Europe soon, for confirmation of these details.

The other source of authority utilized by Cabral, as many before him, was the textual canon that formed the basis of his worldview: he cited directly, or made allusions to, passages of the New and Old Testaments, the *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus de Varagine,⁴¹ and the *Epistulae ad Familiares* by Roman orator Cicero. As rhetorical tools, quotations, too, lend authority to the speaker in the eyes of a reader who belongs to the same cultural milieu, particularly if taken from an established and/or religious canon. They are used often to prevent a disputation of the argument raised, and while they generally do not comprise its totality, they carry out an important supportive function.⁴² Cabral's quotations mostly fall under this category.

No tensions between canon and experience, of the sort highlighted by Pagden, are found in Cabral's argument. He was not preoccupied with the natural world, or the legal status of conquered people, as were Pagden's Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo and Bartolomé de Las Casas, but only with (re)proposing a well-trodden path of religious life. To do so, he was careful to select passages of the Gospels that could support his proposed reforms, and according to those, he interpreted some events that he had witnessed in Japan, choosing to disregard others which did not fit in his analysis.⁴³

The Third 1593 Letter

After therefore presenting his case for discussing the matter in the form of experience, Cabral moved to lay out his charges: the main recrimination was that Valignano appeared “to be wanting to be in charge of everything, without leaving anything to God.”⁴⁴ As a result, Cabral now feared that God would abandon the Visitor (and the whole mission), and he could already see this playing out in

⁴⁰ Antony Pagden – *European Encounters ...*, cit., p. 80.

⁴¹ Composed in the thirteenth century, it was the famous book on the lives of saints that Ignatius of Loyola had read before his conversion, known as *Flos Sanctorum* in its Spanish version. See George E. Ganss ed. – *Ignatius of Loyola ...*, cit., pp. 15-16.

⁴² Christopher D. Stanley – *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul*. New York, London: T&T Clark International, 2004, pp. 12-13.

⁴³ For example, Cabral's recounting to the General completely omits the pervasive feeling of isolation from Europe and lack of edification of the mission during his tenure.

⁴⁴ *DI*, vol. 16, p. 542.

Valignano's inability to have Toyotomi Hideyoshi lift the ban on the preaching of Christianity.

By citing Gil da Mata as his source, Cabral explained that the Visitor had organized an embassy in the name of the Viceroy of India, bringing many valuable presents and a large retinue to Kyoto, hoping to persuade the ruler of Japan to allow the Jesuits to evangelize in the country again. As a response, not only had Hideyoshi refused to even discuss the matter during the visit, but he had destroyed the church and the houses of Nagasaki as well. The expense of the embassy had been astronomical, stated Cabral, citing the numbers given by his witnesses (Mata, d'Oria, and Frois), and it had all been for nothing. At the same time, a Dominican monk, Juan Cobo,⁴⁵ had headed an embassy sent from the Philippines to the same Hideyoshi; Cobo had brought a miserable present, "half, or a dozen, of rusty swords", and yet he had been shown much favour by the ruler.⁴⁶

Cabral concludes the first section of his letter, focused on the inability of the Visitor to solve the problems of the mission, thus: "From which [events] it can be clearly seen that it is God who moves the hearts, and holds them in His hand, to incline them as He pleases, and not the schemes, racket, and pomp, with which [Valignano] believed he could dissuade [Hideyoshi] from what he had done". Here, Cabral is evoking the authority of the canon by referring to the image of Prov. 21, 1:⁴⁷ "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will". After this reference, Cabral expounds the central tenet of his missionary policy:

I don't think that there is harm in resorting to human means to serve God, together with divine ones. However, they have to be accommodated and conform to the same work of conversion, founded in humility, poverty, and great trust in God and mistrust in our own artifices, because this was how God Himself blessed the Apostles, when He sent them to convert the world: I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves, etc. [Mt. 10, 16]

The images that follow this quote are an elaboration of the subsequent verses of the same Gospel: the suffering of the Church and the blood shed for its cause will be the seed of future conversions.⁴⁸ A final allusion closed the first part of the

⁴⁵ Cabral erroneously identifies the monk as an Augustinian friar. See *DI*, vol. 16, p. 544. N. 15. On Cobo's embassy and its role in rising the ire of Hideyoshi against the Jesuits in Nagasaki, see Reiner H. Hesselink – *The Dream ...*, *cit.*, pp. 97-98.

⁴⁶ *DI*, vol. 16, pp. 543-44. Cf. José Luis Álvarez-Taladriz, ed. – *Apología de la Compañía de Jesús de Japón y China (1598)*. Osaka: Eikodo, 1998, p. 227, n. 14.

⁴⁷ *DI*, vol. 16, p. 544, n. 18.

⁴⁸ Cf. Mt 10.17-23.

missive, this time to the *Legenda Aurea*'s Heraclius: the emperor of the Byzantine Empire, bringing back the Holy Cross to Jerusalem, found the gate of the city closed; only when he left behind his sumptuous clothes, imitating Jesus's humility, was he miraculously let through.⁴⁹

Cabral opened the following section by linking these ancient examples to the missionaries' present situation – a connection supported by his experience: according to “what [he had] seen in Japan”, a successful mission is obtained by respecting the Institute and the rules of the Society of Jesus, which are conformed to the poverty of Christ. God would then help the missionaries by bringing about conversions.⁵⁰ The words “I have seen” [*tenho visto*] used here reinforce the narrative, and therefore the testimony, by literally presenting Cabral as an eyewitness.⁵¹

Introducing finally what first-hand experience had taught him, he quickly summarised his first years in Japan:⁵² he had been sent there to remove the silk garments used by the missionaries, as they were prohibited by the Constitutions. He believed that, as consequence of the reintroduction of the black cotton cassock, the behaviour of the Japanese authorities became much more favourable towards them, and Christianity earned more respect.⁵³ The consequent increase in the number of converts was interpreted as a clear sign of God's approval.⁵⁴

Cabral emerged therefore as successful and victorious over the faction that supported the use of silk, who anticipated that the reform would have halted the conversion of Japan. The objective of this recounting, in Cabral's own words, was to reveal how their complaints were only “imagined or feared setbacks, and

⁴⁹ See Barbara Baert – *A Heritage of Holy Wood: The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004, pp. 369-371.

⁵⁰ This had always been the central tenet of Cabral's policy for evangelization. See Linda Zampol D'Ortia – *The Cape of the Devil ...*, cit.

⁵¹ Reiner H. Hesselink – *The Dream ...*, cit., pp. 75-76.

⁵² On Cabral's first years in Japan, see Liam M. Brockey – Authority, Poverty, and Vanity: Jesuit Missionaries and the Use of Silk in Early Modern East Asia. *Anais de História de Além-Mar 17* (2016) 188-95; on Cabral's specific procedure to gain experience in relation to Japanese attitudes towards religious garments, see Linda Zampol D'Ortia – Purple Silk and Black Cotton: Francisco Cabral and the Negotiation of Jesuit Attire in Japan (1570-73). In *Exploring Jesuit Distinctiveness: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ways of Proceeding within the Society of Jesus*. Ed. by Robert A. Maryks. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016, pp. 137-55.

⁵³ In Reiner H. Hesselink's words, “The Jesuits had tried, in the beginning, to work by themselves to spread their message, but had met with very little success. When they changed direction, in the early 1560s, and became interpreters and agents for, as well as manipulators of, the trade brought by the Portuguese, the numbers of baptisms had begun to rise, but simultaneously the order's involvement in the dangerous game of power politics in the final stage of Japan's civil war brought complications they were unable and unwilling to face”. Reiner H. Hesselink – *The Dream ...*, cit., p. 82.

⁵⁴ *DI*, vol. 16, pp. 545-46. This section also contains another direct quotation from Ōtomo Yoshihige, lord of Bungo, who would later convert and become one of the pillars of Japanese Christianity. Ōtomo is cited as appreciating the change in garments, which “makes the Jesuits look like members of a religious order now, instead of merchants”.

untrue”,⁵⁵ just like those of some missionaries who were now corresponding with the General.⁵⁶ The correct way to proceed was instead that delineated by 1 Cor. 2, 2, quoted verbatim at the end: “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified”.

The Watchman

The excerpt below, translated in its entirety at the beginning of this contribution, represents the rhetorical pinnacle of Cabral’s letter. It makes explicit the transparent reference to Valignano in the letter’s preceding lines, as someone who “imagined setbacks” and reiterated his lack of moderation in the use of human means. According to this interpretation, the Visitor’s policies caused the 1587 ban on Christianity. And, as he reminded the General, Cabral had foretold it: “It reminds me that I wrote to Your Paternity what I thought, and in a letter I said these words: ‘If a remedy to this is not found, as it were from a high watchtower, I foresee the coming storm.’”

The letter Cabral refers to in this passage was the one he had addressed to the General in 1580, which listed the seven reasons he should be allowed to leave Japan. In it, he had first foreseen the future troubles of the mission:

The seventh [reason] is because since God Our Lord in his mercy showed me many favours, in the preservation and growth [in numbers] both of the converts and of those of the Society, I wish now to leave this obligation. Because until now we lived in poverty and need, as it was a necessity, for both the inner and outer man and for the growth of conversion. But now since three or four years ago we proceed with more liberality, and expenses, and with people who are not very used to the works and necessities of the land, and to its many temptations and freedoms. So that as it were from a watchtower, I foresee the coming storm.⁵⁷

Among the quotations used in Cabral’s third 1593 letter, the reference to his 1580 writing stands out for its peculiarity. It is the only overt citation with no apparent connection to sacred texts: it is indeed a quotation of Cabral himself, quoting Cicero.

⁵⁵ *DI*, vol. 16, p. 547.

⁵⁶ In addition to the motivation adduced by Cabral, the detailed narrative of these events wanted to show not only his diligence in unmasking the sinning Jesuits, but also his good judgement and his discernment – all qualities that a good Jesuit leader should possess. See John W. O’Malley – *The First Jesuits*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 81.

⁵⁷ Transcribed fully in Josef F. Schütte – *Valignano’s Missionsgrundsätze Für Japan, 1; Teil 2. Die Losung, 1580-1582*. Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1958, pp. 501-2.

The overall passage invited the reader to consider Valignano's initial error of introducing pomp in the Japanese mission; by extension, it also invited consideration of the mismanagement of the General, who did not heed Cabral's warning. Thus in this passage Acquaviva is urged not to repeat the same error again. The specific sentence, in Latin in both letters ("*tanquam ex aliqua alta especula [sic] prospicio tempestatem futuram*"), comes from the epistolary collection, *Epistulae ad Familiares*. The citation does not entirely respect the original, which read, "I foresaw the coming storm, as it were from a watchtower".⁵⁸ Cicero was remembering his past foresight of events, which in the end came to pass, as a way to console himself and his interlocutor. Cabral instead originally foresaw the coming storm and is now reminiscing his prevision, but with no particular consolation. All considered, this quotation could just have an esthetical function, or may simply reinforce values shared by both reader and writer.⁵⁹ However, I would suggest that the use of the motif of the watchtower might be alluding to more than initially meets the eye.

In the first place, the watchtower (*specula*) was a popular metaphor for central governance and good vision. The seat in Rome of the Jesuit generals, for example, could be compared to a vantage point, the tower: as the whole Society of Jesus corresponded with him, the Jesuit General had a supposedly perfect vision of the happenings in the Order, and could therefore make the best decisions for it. For example, in 1602 Acquaviva wrote that "the Roman Curia is sitting on a high tower and is thus able to take in the status of the entire Order with one single glance".⁶⁰ Cabral was, quite obviously, not in Rome, nor did he appear to be in any central position that granted him special vision (if anything, the reverse is true). However, as was implied in the letter of 1580, and painstakingly made explicit in that of 1593, he had a clear advantage: it was experience that granted him access to that vantage point, from which he, correctly, saw the storm approaching.

A search in the textual canon – more specifically, the Bible – points to an additional reading of the motif of the watchman.⁶¹ A powerful metaphor is found in the Book of Ezekiel: in Ez., 3 and Ez., 33, for example, the watchman is invested with the critical role of warning the people against the incoming punishment of

⁵⁸ "Tamquam ex aliqua specula prospexi tempestatem futuram", Cic., *Fam.* 4.3.1. (Perseus Project, perseus.uchicago.edu).

⁵⁹ Christopher D. Stanley – *Arguing with Scripture ...*, cit., p. 14. On the attitudes of the Society of Jesus towards Cicero, see Robert A. Maryks – *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits: The Influence of the Liberal Arts on the Adoption of Moral Probabilism*. Farham: Ashgate, 2008.

⁶⁰ Markus Friedrich – Governance in the Society of Jesus 1540-1773. Its Methods, Critics, and Legacy Today. *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 41:1 (Spring 2009) 9-10. From this passage it is also possible to evince that the Ciceronian expression "*tamquam ex specula*", used by Acquaviva in the Latin version of his letter, was quite well known.

⁶¹ Wicki suggests Is. 21.5 (*DI*, vol. 16, p. 547, n. 34). Is. 56-66 and Jer. 6.17 might be other options. See Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer – The Watchman Metaphor in Isaiah LVI-LXVI. *Vetus Testamentum* 55:3 (2005) 378.

their sins by God: if they will not heed him, their punishment will be terrible; but if the watchman does not fulfill his task, he will be considered guilty himself.⁶² In these passages, thus, the role of the watchman comes close to that of the prophet.⁶³

Casting himself as the watchman then, in 1580, Cabral established that the coming storm was not simply a drawback for the mission, but a punishment from God; the later repetition of the same quote demonstrates in his intentions how those who did not heed his warning indeed suffered God's wrath. The role of the watchman and the prophet were already close in the canon he alluded to, but in 1593, by self-quoting, Cabral did everything to make them overlap completely, short of explicitly stating he was blessed with prophetic powers. His experience, based on what he had seen in Japan, allowed him now to see better than everyone else, and foresee future events.⁶⁴

The Solution

After delivering his rhetorical lunge, Cabral proceeded to describe to the General how the policy of the Visitor not only caused the fiasco that was his embassy, but was also the cause of the initial ban on Christianity. It was, fundamentally, a complete failure. Valignano's excessive flaunting of luxury⁶⁵ and of military power, in the form of their fortified cities of Nagasaki and Mogi and of armed vessels, had made Hideyoshi fear them and compare them to the so-called "bonze of Osaka".⁶⁶ As a reaction, he had expelled them from the country.⁶⁷ This was therefore not a persecution *in odium fidei*, because Hideyoshi did not care about religion at all; as such, it is implied, it could not be compared to the oppression that he had described referring to Mt. 10, which produced martyrs. In Cabral's opinion, this persecution was simply the consequence of Valignano's wrong policies, and once those were righted, a solution could be easily found.

Indeed, continued Cabral, if the General was resolute and did not capitulate in front of the Visitor's excuses, this could be a great opportunity to re-establish the correct manner of evangelization. The destruction of the houses and church of

⁶² Daniel Bodi – *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra*. Freiburg/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag / Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1991, pp. 263-4.

⁶³ Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer – *The Watchman ...*, *cit.*, p. 381.

⁶⁴ Monclaro had a similar interpretation of experience, see *DI*, vol. 16, p. 196.

⁶⁵ Cabral omitted the fact that he himself never stopped receiving the profits of the silk trade that supported the Japanese mission, deciding instead to rationalize them as "alms of the carrack".

⁶⁶ Honganji's abbot Kenryo (1543-1592) and his followers of the Ikkō school of Buddhism had been important political players during the civil war. See Shizuka Kinryū – *The Ikkōshū as Portrayed in Jesuit Historical Documents*. In *Rennyō and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism*. Ed. by Mark Laurence Blum and Shin'ya Yasutomi. Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 72-82.

⁶⁷ *DI*, vol. 16, pp. 547-48. Jesuit sources from Japan generally agree with this interpretation, but focus on being seen as a military threat, rather than an economic one.

Nagasaki was a good pretext to make a show of the Jesuits' poverty and to refuse to offer any more presents to the Japanese. If these, and the relative pomp, were not necessary anymore, Cabral believed then that a real imitation of Christ could be introduced. This reform, however, could not be carried out while Valignano was governing the mission, as he had "a spirit so great and magnificent" that he was always intent on artifices so that "important things seem[ed] small instead to him".⁶⁸ With this statement, this letter too made its contribution to the bid to remove Valignano from his post of visitor, following the general objective of the other letters sent by the senior missionaries in India.

Strengthened by the preceding demonstration that his experience allowed him to "see" the future, Cabral boldly concluded:

If we follow [the Institute], I myself guarantee that neither [Hideyoshi] nor all the devils of Hell will be able to hurt us, except when it is advantageous for us, as I believe this persecution to be. Because I believe absolutely that it was a great mercy of God, for us and for the [Japanese] Christians. For us, because this will ... be an occasion to lose trust in our artifices ... and for the Christians because, the more they are persecuted, the more they will be helped by God, as we saw Him doing since the primitive Church until now. And I believe that all of Japan has to become Christian, but this according to the plans of God, not according to ours, when they deviate from and leave our Institute and our rules.⁶⁹

A final *captatio benevolentiae* closed the letter, asking forgiveness for the impudence shown in writing such a letter to the General. Cabral adduced, as reasons that spurred him, his love for the Society of Jesus and the sake of Japan, a country with which, he declared, he had just as much experience as those who lived there.

Conclusion

The discussions surrounding the people and cultures with which Europeans came in contact in the sixteenth century were characterized by a tension created between the Western worldview based on the textual canon inherited from tradition, and the new experiences that the explorers and traders lived in these foreign lands. In the Jesuit mission to Japan, the importance of experience in particular was enhanced by Visitor Alessandro Valignano, effectively marginalizing the missionaries in India in the debate surrounding the correct strategy of evangelization. At a time when the policies of the Visitor appeared

⁶⁸ *DI*, vol. 16, p. 550.

⁶⁹ *DI*, vol. 16, pp. 550-51.

to have failed, Francisco Cabral, by referring to his own experience, was able to intervene in the controversy and to attempt to sway the opinion of the General, with the final objective of having Valignano removed. To support his argument in his correspondence and to gain additional credit in the eyes of his superior, Cabral continuously referred to the textual canon and made use of motifs originating from said canon, while at the same time being careful not to provoke any tensions between these two modes of authorization.