



Bulletin of Portuguese - Japanese Studies

ISSN: 0874-8438

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Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Portugal

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Bulletin of Portuguese - Japanese Studies, núm. 7, december, 2003, pp. 73-91

Universidade Nova de Lisboa

Lisboa, Portugal

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FATHER DIOGO DE MESQUITA (1551-1614) AND THE CULTIVATION OF WESTERN PLANTS IN JAPAN

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Introduction

This article aims to analyse the introduction of Western plants in Japan by Father Diogo de Mesquita (1551-1614) based on a letter, dated 28 October 1599, that he wrote to Father Juan de Ribera, Rector of the Jesuit College in Manila² (see Appendix). For the purposes of this specific study, Western plants are considered to be plants imported from Europe and America, such as fig trees, pear trees, peach trees, quince trees and olive trees.

It is probable that Mesquita had already referred to the introduction of these plants in Japan in prior correspondence. However, this letter is extremely important for our knowledge about the introduction and cultivation of Western botany in the Japanese archipelago owing to the kind of information that it provides.

In this document, Diogo de Mesquita mentions which plants were most appreciated by the Jesuits in Nagasaki and the kind of Western botanical specimens that he believed should be imported into Japan on a priority basis. In addition, this letter provides us with information about the places from where these plants were imported, the most suitable ways of transporting them as well as the kind of merchants who were involved in this trade.

In principle, we could be induced to interpret the introduction of Western botanical specimens into Japan, by Diogo de Mesquita, as a peripheral fact of the Jesuit presence.

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² Juan de Ribera (1565-1622) was born in Puebla de los Angeles and entered the noviciate in Rome in 1582. He left for the Philippines in 1595, where he would teach Theology and later became the Rector of the Jesuit College. He died in Manila on 5 June 1622. For further information about this Jesuit missionary see Carlos Sommervogel (ed.), *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus. Première Partie: Bibliographie*, Tome VI, Brussels, Province of Belgium, 1895, pp. 1767-1768.

In an initial analysis, this cultivation of Western plants in the Jesuit residence in Nagasaki could be interpreted solely as the consequence of a particular interest on the part of Father Diogo de Mesquita.

There is no doubt that Father Mesquita's interest in botany was of fundamental importance for the cultivation of Western plants on Japanese soil. However, despite the undeniable efforts of Father Diogo de Mesquita, it is also important to understand that the introduction of Western botanical specimens in Japanese territory was only possible due to the manner in which the Jesuits established their presence in Japan. The arrival of Western plants to the Japanese archipelago is a situation that can only be entirely understood when viewed within the framework of the network of contacts established by the Jesuits. In this context, the introduction of Western plants in Japan, more than merely being interpreted as an extraordinary phenomenon, should be viewed as a situation that reflected the kind of missionary presence that the Jesuits established, not just in Japan, but also in other areas where they carried out their missionary activities.

1. The integration of the circulation of plants within a network of Jesuit communications

Father Diogo de Mesquita introduced the cultivation of diverse plant species in Japanese territory by means of the Portuguese route (via the Cape of Good Hope) and, above all, by the Spanish route, through Manila. Therefore, the presence of the Society of Jesus in America and Asia was of fundamental importance for the world-wide circulation of different plants and fruit trees and, thus, it was within the scope of Jesuit missionary activity that Western botanical specimens were introduced in Japanese territory.

This circulation of plants was possible due to the existence of a network of communications established by the Society of Jesus at a global level. It was a network that minimised the distances between different continents and skirted the problems of Luso-Spanish rivalry in America and East Asia. This pan-regional and pan-national network put together by the Society of Jesus served, in large measure, to ensure the circulation of knowledge and information that were of relevance for the progress and maintenance of Jesuit missionary activities.

In this context, the correspondence between Mesquita and Juan de Ribera is incorporated within the dynamics of communications between Jesuits of the two *padroados*. For example, at the time when Mesquita wrote

to Ribera, in October 1599, the Visitor Alessandro Valignano³ himself would write a letter to the Rector of the Manila College. In this letter, dated 5 October 1599, Valignano informed Ribera of the recent baptism of forty thousand Japanese, as well as of the return of Friar Jerónimo de Jesus⁴ and the re-commencement of Franciscan missionary activities, with the consent of Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543-1616).

Thus, this was a network of contacts that had been consolidated for the purpose of sharing information and strategies. As we shall see later in this study, this very letter sent by Diogo de Mesquita in October 1599 to the Jesuit Rector in Manila dealt with an entire series of questions pertaining to Jesuit missionary activities.

Through this channel of communication, Valignano informed Ribera that he would receive a copy of his *Apologia*⁵ and, as a supplement to this instrument of action, Valignano would also send secret instructions concerning the manner in which Ribera could influence the authorities in Manila with regard to the question of the entry of the Franciscans from the Spanish *patronazgo* in Japan.⁶

3 Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606) was born in Chieti, Naples in 1539. In 1557 he obtained the title of Doctor of Law from the University of Padua and, in 1566, joined the Society of Jesus, continuing his studies in Physics, Theology and Philosophy. He left for Goa in 1573, in the capacity of Visitor for the East Indies, with full powers over all the missions from the Cape of Good Hope to China and Japan. From 1597 onwards, Valignano dedicated himself exclusively to the supervision of the Jesuit missions in Japan and China. For further information about Valignano's missionary activities see J.F. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits. Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth-Century Japan*, London/New York, Routledge, 1993 and Josef Franz Schütte, S.J., *Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan, Volume I: From His Appointment as Visitor until His First Departure from Japan (1573-1582)*. Part I: *The Problem (1573-1580)*, St. Louis, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1980 and Idem, *Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan, Volume I: From His Appointment as Visitor until His First Departure from Japan (1573-1582)*. Part II: *The Solution (1580-1582)*, St. Louis, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985.

4 Jerónimo de Jesus (? – 1601) was born in Lisbon but took the habit in a Franciscan convent in Cordoba. He left from Seville in January 1593, arrived in Manila in May 1594, and subsequently disembarked in Japan in August of the same year. In the aftermath of the Franciscan martyrdom of 1597, he left Japan in October, and later returned after Hideyoshi's death, in July 1598. For further information about the activities of this Franciscan missionary see Lorenzo Pérez, O.F.M. (ed), *Fr. Jerónimo de Jesus, Restaurador de las Misiones del Japon. Sus Cartas y Relaciones (1595-1604)*, Florence, Typ. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1929.

5 See the letter from the Visitor Alessandro Valignano to the Rector Juan de Ribera, Shiki, 5 October 1599, Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus (ARSI), *Jap.Sin.*, 13 II, fls. 315-316v. Also see J. F. Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84. This *Apologia* is the *Apologia en la qual se responde a diversas calumnias que se escribieron contra los Padres de la Compañía de Japon y de la China*, written by Valignano between 1597 and 1598, with a view to contest the Franciscan evangelical activities in Japan. About this *Apologia* see my study entitled *A concepção de missão na Apologia de Valignano. Estudo sobre a rivalidade entre jesuítas e franciscanos no Japão (1587-1597)*, Lisbon, 2001 (Masters dissertation in Modern History presented at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon).

6 See the letter from the Visitor Alessandro Valignano to the Rector Juan de Ribera, Shiki, 20/24 November 1599, ARSI, *Jap.Sin.*, 13 II, fls. 356-356v, and also J. F. Moran *op. cit.*, p. 85.

Thus, there existed a network of communications that went beyond the geographical limits of each area. Valignano himself stated that the reflections of the Jesuit José Acosta, who pursued his missionary activities in Peru and Mexico, on the issue of mendicant evangelical activities, published in *De Procuranda Missiorum Salute* (Salamanca, 1588), were of great importance for the criticism made by the Jesuit Visitor with regard to Franciscan evangelical activities in his *Apologia*. In much the same way, Acosta assimilated information provided by Jesuit letters written in East Asia to write his *História natural y moral de las Indias* (Seville, 1590).⁷

This network of Jesuit contacts is of fundamental importance to understand the arrival of Western plants, which sometimes came to Japan from places as far off as Peru. It is precisely this transcontinental network of communications that enabled the circulation of intellectual information and also allowed the circulation of these plants from the Spanish Americas to Nagasaki, via Manila.

Likewise, in the context of commercial activities between Nagasaki and Manila, this transportation of plants did not represent a marginal or extraordinary situation, but was instead a routine part of trade between the two cities.

The majority of this trade was carried out by Japanese Christians and Portuguese merchants.⁸ In Mesquita's letter to Juan de Ribera, the Jesuit

7 José de Acosta (1539-1600) was born in Medina del Campo and entered the noviciate in 1554. In 1571 he went to the Hispanic American colonies where he subsequently became the Jesuit Provincial in Peru. He later returned to Spain, where he was Visitor for Aragon and Andalusia and was Rector of the college in Salamanca. About Acosta's sojourn in Peru (1572-1586) and in Mexico (1586-1587) and the information he received about missionary activities in East Asia and the Chinese and Japanese civilisations by means of Jesuit correspondence see Fermin del Pino Diaz, "El misionero español José de Acosta y la evangelización de las Indias Orientales" in *Missionalia Hispanica*, Volume XLII, Madrid, 1985, pp. 275-298. For the *História natural y moral de las Indias* see José de Acosta, *História natural y moral de las Indias*, José Alcina Franch (edition and introduction), Madrid, Historia 16, 1987, especially the introduction, pp. 7-44. With regard to Acosta's influence on the preparation of Valignano's *Apologia*, see my article entitled "Alessandro Valignano's Attitude Towards Jesuit and Franciscan Concepts of Evangelization in Japan (1587 - 1597)" in *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies*, Volume II, June 2001, pp. 100-102.

8 Till the early years of the 17th century most of the commercial contacts between Japan and the Philippines were established by Portuguese merchants from Nagasaki. From 1609 onwards, after the first contacts made by D. Rodrigo de Vivero Velasco, former Governor of Manila, with Tokugawa Ieyasu and Tokugawa Hidetada, Spanish merchants began to have a more active participation in trade between the Japanese archipelago and the Philippine islands. With these contacts, Ieyasu intended to establish commercial routes between the Spanish world and the Japanese region of Kantô. By means of a good relationship with the Spanish, Ieyasu, likewise, intended to benefit from Spanish experience in America to exploit Japan's silver mines more profitably. It was in this context, in his bid to establish contacts with the Spanish authorities, that Ieyasu accepted the Franciscan presence in Japan from the final years of the 16th century. However, at the end of the 16th century, the Portuguese merchants of Nagasaki still had a

father mentioned that the plants were transported from Manila in the ships of Portuguese merchants based in Nagasaki. Therefore, this circulation of Western plants was possible due to the fact that it was incorporated in a well-established commercial network. Thus, Diogo de Mesquita benefited in this manner from the contacts that the Jesuits had established with the mercantile community of Nagasaki.

Mesquita mentions the names of António Garcês and Vasco Dias as being merchants who were involved in this transportation of Western plants to Nagasaki.⁹ António Garcês was not merely any trader but, rather, was one of the most important elements of the mercantile community in Nagasaki and was profoundly involved in this network of contacts established by the Jesuits. Thus, Valignano, in the same month of October 1599, wrote to Juan de Ribera, informing him that he was sending a Japanese seminarian, the *dōjuku* Agostinho,¹⁰ so that the Jesuit clerics based in Manila could address their need to acquaint themselves with the Japanese language. According to Valignano, Agostinho would be taken to Manila on board one of António Garcês' ships captained by Francisco Martins, which would arrive in Manila sometime between the end of 1599 and the beginning of 1600.¹¹

considerable presence in trade between Japan and the Philippines. For further information about commercial relations between Japan and Manila at the end of the 16th century and early 17th century see Arcadio Schwade, "The First Trade Routes and Relations between Japan and Mexico" in *Studies on Asian Topics*, n° 13: *Asian Trade Routes*, Karl Reinhold Haellquist (editor), Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, Curzon Press, 1991, pp. 209-216 and pp. 275-276 and Juan Gil, *Hidalgos y Samurais. España y Japon en los Siglos XVI y XVII*, Madrid, Alianza, 1991.

9 About the mercantile community of Nagasaki, see João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, *O Cristianismo no Japão e o Episcopado de D. Luís Cerqueira*, Volume II, Lisbon, 1998 (Ph.D. dissertation in the History of the Discoveries and Portuguese Expansion, presented at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the New University of Lisbon), especially Chapter 13, "Nagasaki, uma cidade especial", pp. 503-532.

10 Ōta Agostinho 太田アゴスチノ (c. 1574-1631) was born in Urakami, Nagasaki, and entered the seminary in 1595. In 1597 he accompanied the Bishop Pedro Martins to Macao and returned to Japan later the same year. He arrived in Manila somewhere between the end of 1599 and the beginning of 1600, where he placed himself at the service of the Rector Juan de Ribera. He returned to Japan in 1602 but, in 1614, was once again to be found in the Philippines, from where he left for Macao in 1620. He travelled to the Philippines for a third time at the end of the 1620s and died in 1631, shortly after having been ordained as a priest. According to Valignano, Agostinho's journey to the Philippines would strategically benefit the Jesuits in Manila. In addition to teaching the Japanese language and preaching in Japanese, he could translate letters sent by Tokugawa Ieyasu to the Governor of Manila. See the letter by the Visitor Alessandro Valignano to the Rector Juan de Ribera, Shiki, 20 October 1599, ARSI, *Jap.-Sin.*, 13 II, fls. 331-331v, and also J. F. Moran, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

11 About the merchant António Garcês and the ship bound for Manila at the end of 1599 that would have been captained by Francisco Martins see João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, *op. cit.*, pp. 524-525. Juan Gil, likewise, confirms the arrival of this ship in Manila during the same period, Juan Gil, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

This ship, which transported Agostinho and very probably also took the *Apologia* that Valignano sent to Ribera, was one of the ships that transported some plants to Nagasaki on its return voyage, as one can deduce from the following words by Diogo de Mesquita: “The owners of these ships that go from here, and particularly Francisco Martins, Captain of António Garces’ ship, have been told how they must bring these plants [...]”¹²

Vasco Dias was another merchant involved in the commercial traffic of these plants, as is clearly stated by Mesquita in his letter: “Pero de Faria, Captain of Vasco Dias’ ship, that is going there, is a reliable and honourable person, a Portuguese [...]; he could also bring some plant in his ship as I have already requested him to here.”¹³ Vasco Dias was also totally integrated in the Nagasaki-Manila mercantile circuit and, in much the same way as António Garcês, was one of the channels of communication in this network of Jesuit contacts, transporting correspondence between the Jesuit missionaries based in Japan and in the Philippines.¹⁴

In this manner, one can perceive that the introduction of something as exotic as Western plants in Japan is perfectly integrated within the backdrop of established commercial activities between Manila and Nagasaki. This presence of Western botanical specimens in Japan can only be understood when viewed within the context of the active network of communications that the Jesuits had established amongst themselves and the relationship that they maintained with the mercantile community of Nagasaki.

2. Diogo de Mesquita: a missionary dedicated to evangelical activities in Japan

When we describe Diogo de Mesquita’s activities, we can easily come to the conclusion that we are dealing with the actions of a missionary who was perfectly integrated into and identified with the Jesuit presence in Japan. It was Diogo de Mesquita who accompanied the 1582 Embassy that the *daimyō* of Kyūshū sent to Europe. This Embassy, which consisted of four young Japanese (Mâncio Itō 伊東マンシヨ (1569-1612), Miguel Chijiwa 千々石ミゲル (c.1569-?), Martinho Hara 原マルチノ (1569-1629) and Julião Nakaura 中浦ジュリアン (1569-1633)), was conceived of by the Visitor Alessandro Valignano with a view to exemplify the allegiance of three Christian *daimyō* of Kyūshū

12 Letter from Father Diogo de Mesquita to the Rector of the Manila College, Nagasaki, 28 October 1599, ARSI, *Japonica-Sinica*, 13 II, fl. 348v (see appendix).

13 *Ibidem*, fl. 349v.

14 See João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, *op. cit.*, pp. 525-526.

to the Pope and demonstrate the efficacy of Jesuit missionary activities.¹⁵ Diogo de Mesquita was the individual chosen by Valignano to accompany and supervise the children and, at the same time, prepare a diary of the journey. Valignano had so much confidence in Mesquita that the Visitor even affirmed that he should be the one to succeed Pasio as the Vice Provincial of Japan, even though he was not a professed priest with four vows. Mesquita did not succeed Pasio, but did go on to hold many important positions with key responsibilities. Thus, in 1595, he was the Rector of the Amakusa College and, in 1598, Rector of the Nagasaki College, a position that he would hold until 1611.

Mesquita, who took such care to bring Western plants to Japan, was also responsible for the introduction of the movable type-face printing press in the Japanese archipelago in 1590, when he returned from his journey with the aforementioned Japanese Embassy. This printing press enabled the Jesuits to print religious books to be read by Christians and by students of the Jesuit colleges and, from 1600 onwards, they even managed to print with Japanese characters.¹⁶

Mesquita was perfectly integrated into the missionary strategy of the Society of Jesus, even assisting in the preparation of a native Japanese clergy.

15 In 1581, three Christian lords of the island of Kyūshū, in collaboration with Valignano, decided to send an Embassy with two elements to Europe. The *daimyō* of Bungo, Ōtomo Yoshishige 大友義鎮 (1530-1587), also known as Ōtomo Sōrin 大友宗麟 and D. Francisco (after his baptism in 1578), sent his nephew Mancio Ito. Arima Harunobu 有馬晴信 (1561-1612), the lord of Arima, known as D. Protásio (after his baptism in 1579) and his uncle Ōmura Sumitada 大村純忠 (1532-1587), lord of Ōmura, also known as D. Bartolomeu, due to his baptism in 1563, decided to send Miguel Chijiwa, Arima Harunobu's cousin and Ōmura Sumitada's nephew. Two noblemen from the house of Ōmura accompanied these two envoys, namely, Martinho Hara, whose sister was married to a brother of the *daimyō* of Ōmura, and Julião Nakaura, the son of a lord of one of the fortresses between Ōmura and Hirado. The group left Nagasaki in February 1582 and, after various stopovers in Malacca, Macao and Goa, arrived in Lisbon in August 1584. In Europe, they visited the main cities of Portugal, Spain and Italy. They left Lisbon in April 1586, arriving in Goa in 1587. After a stay in Macao, they returned to Japan in July 1590, aboard the Great Ship, accompanied by the Visitor Valignano and Father Diogo de Mesquita. For more information about this Embassy, see Duarte de Sande, S.J., *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium. Diálogo sobre a Missão dos Embaixadores japoneses à Curia Romana*, (Américo Costa Ramalho, translation and introduction), Macao, Comissão Territorial de Macau para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses/Fundação Oriente, 1997; Luís Fróis, *Tratado dos Embaixadores Japões* [I Parte], (Rui Loureiro, edition and introduction), Lisbon, Editorial do Ministério da Educação, 1993 and Juan Gil, "Europa se presente a si mesma: el tratado *De missione legatorum Iaponensium* de Duarte de Sande" in *O Século Cristão do Japão. Actas do Colóquio Comemorativo dos 450 anos de amizade Portugal-Japão (1453-1993)*, (Roberto Carneiro and A. Teodoro de Matos, org.), Lisbon, 1994, pp. 411-439.

16 For biographical information about Diogo de Mesquita and, especially, the important role he played in the introduction and activities of the movable type-face printing press in Japan, see Diego Pacheco, S.J., "Diogo Mesquita, S. J. and the Jesuit Mission Press" in *Monumenta Nipponica*, XXVI, 3-4, pp. 431-443.

Likewise, Diogo de Mesquita was also responsible for the construction of the Hospital of Santiago in Nagasaki. After the Hospital was built, he held the post of Superior at this institution. Subsequently, he oversaw the enlargement of the church of the Hospital (1606) and the construction of a new infirmary (1612). He was also responsible for the construction of a new Residence for the Jesuits (1612) and a primary school (1612), as well as the enlargement of the Jesuit College, where he built halls in the Japanese style (1603).

Mesquita was, likewise, a diplomat, and frequently represented the Jesuits in their contacts with the Japanese authorities, especially in meetings with the *bugyō* of Nagasaki, Hasegawa Sahyōe 長谷川左兵衛 (?-1617, Governor of Nagasaki between 1606 and 1615). Similarly, Mesquita's skilfulness in his contacts with an anti-Christian Governor no doubt contributed towards the fact that he was chosen to represent the Jesuits in a meeting, which finally never took place, with Tokugawa Ieyasu, at the time of the edict expelling the ecclesiastics in 1614.

This missionary's involvement in the Jesuits' strategy for their missionary activities is also evident in the same letter that Mesquita wrote to Juan de Ribera in Manila where he refers to the introduction of Western plants in Japan. In the same document in which he wrote about the cultivation of Western plants, Mesquita mentions various situations relating to Jesuit missionary activities. In this way, in this very letter, as Valignano had done, he did not fail to share his fears about Franciscan missionary activities in Japan with the Rector of the Manila College: "We would not like the friars to think that we would be troubled if they were to convert to the Lord many thousands of souls in Japan, but we would like that things be done in a proper way, and that there should be nothing that creates strife amongst brothers and missionaries, as we are all servants, and disciples, of Christ Our Lord." ¹⁷

Mesquita also gives an account of the progress of the movable type-face printing press, stating that he would send some books to Manila that would be of help to the missionaries who intended to learn Japanese:

"If there are any fathers there, that wish to learn the language of Japan, [...] the Father Visitor recently wrote to me to request that I send Your Reverence some books [...] *Silicet* a vocabulary, and a manual about the art of handwriting, because although one has not yet been printed, it is under preparation. In addition, I am

¹⁷ Letter from Father Diogo de Mesquita to the Rector of the Manila College, Nagasaki, 28 October 1599, ARSI, *Japonica-Sinica*, 13 II, fl. 348.

sending a book about the life of the saints, and another book with Japanese stories, all in their language, and our alphabet, and a book of *fides*. [...] and, thus, so that the College library as also some Japanese Christians, who know how to read, can utilise similar books, I am also sending Your Reverence a book to guide sinners, that we translated into the Japanese language here, and printed in their letters, that came out so well, that it could not have been better written by hand. The characters of which were made in our College by our brothers, and *dōjuku*. In addition, I will also send some little Confession books and prayer books, all in the Japanese alphabet.”¹⁸

3. The plants that were introduced in Japan

By means of a biographical analysis, one can conclude that Father Diogo de Mesquita was a missionary who was entirely integrated within normal affairs of Jesuit missionary activity. The cultivation of Western plants in Japan should also be interpreted within the ambit of habitual and natural behaviour. An awareness of the type of botanical specimens that were cultivated by Mesquita allows us to understand some of the most characteristic aspects of the mentality and lifestyle of these Jesuits.

According to the information provided by Mesquita, these plants arrived in Nagasaki via the Portuguese route (Lisbon-Goa-Macao-Nagasaki) and via the Spanish route (America-Manila-Nagasaki). It was via the Cape route that Mesquita transported a fig tree from Portugal to Japan “[...] because from Lisbon to this Japan was brought a plant of good *brigesote* figs, of which this Japan is now replete, it is true, that many plants did not survive but it was due to misfortunes, which one could do nothing about.”¹⁹

These Western plants were fruit trees that would arrive in Japan in the form of saplings and would later be planted in the garden of the Jesuit residence in Nagasaki. As we have already mentioned, the fig trees that were cultivated by Mesquita entered Japan via the Portuguese route. However, the majority of the plants imported by Mesquita arrived in Japan via the Spanish route. In comparison with the route via the Cape of Good Hope, the distance traversed and the latitudes to which these plants that were transported via the Spanish route were subjected, guaranteed them a greater chance of survival until their arrival in Nagasaki.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, fl. 349.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, fl. 348v.

Throughout the letter, Mesquita sometimes limits himself to writing that the plants come from Manila, but on other occasions mentions that they came from Spanish America and, principally, from Peru.

From Manila, various different fruits and fruit trees such as apples, pears and quince trees arrived in Nagasaki. Mesquita had a notorious predilection for quince trees, as we can conclude from the following words: "[...] I would request Your Reverence to spare no efforts with your diligence and charity to send us this year the quince trees, and any other good plant, that we do not have here [...]." ²⁰ Despite the rather limited chance that these plants had of surviving the journey and reaching Nagasaki alive, Mesquita insisted that the quince trees be despatched, stating that it was a plant that was highly appreciated by the Jesuits in Nagasaki: "[...] and we would very much like the quinces particularly, because this land is so suitable for them, that if even one plant were to arrive alive, in a short while this kingdom would be full of them." ²¹

Throughout the letter, Diogo de Mesquita mentions the names of other plants that were indispensable in the garden of the Jesuit residence in Nagasaki such as morello trees, peach trees, cherry trees and a good grape variety: "In recent years Your Reverence and other people have been requested to send us from New Spain, or from Peru, other plants for cherries, morellos, peaches and some good variety of grapes [...]." It was particularly important to cultivate grapes of a good quality, especially to make wine for Mass, because as Mesquita mentions, "[...] those that we have here in Japan are not good, and nor is it possible to make wine that will last from them [...]." ²²

These plants and fruit trees were so important that Mesquita did not hesitate to request the Rector to order them, in case they did not exist in Manila: "[...] do not fail to order them, even if it costs some money, for which purpose we could utilise the money that will be made on some books, that the Brother Procurator has there which are to be sent to be sold in New Spain [...]." ²³

Similarly, the cultivation of olive trees was very important for the Jesuits in Nagasaki and Mesquita could hardly contain his elation about their success in cultivating this tree: "The olive trees, which were sent to us

²⁰ *Ibidem*, fl. 348v.

²¹ *Ibidem*, fl. 348v.

²² *Ibidem*, fl. 348v. The problem of procuring wine that was suitable for Mass in Japan appears to have been a constant source of concern. As early as 1559, when Father Luís de Almeida used to order drugs for the Hospital in Oita, he also requested that suitable wine for Mass be despatched as well. V. Dorotheus Schilling, O.F.M. *Os Portugueses e a Introdução da Medicina no Japão*, Instituto Alemão da Universidade de Coimbra, Coimbra, 1937.

²³ *Ibidem*, fl. 348v.

here in past years are doing very well, and one of them has borne fruit this year already [...]". However, at the same time, he continued to request Juan de Ribera to go on sending him the best olive trees that he could manage to find: "[...] if by chance you come across any plant with larger olives than the ones we have here, we would be delighted to receive it." ²⁴

From Mesquita's letter, it is possible to conclude that the Western botanical specimens cultivated in the garden of the Jesuit residence consisted primarily of fruit trees. However, they also grew flowers, as one can deduce when the Jesuit missionary affirmed that he was going to send the Rector in Manila "[...] two little plants with good roses [...]." ²⁵

These botanical specimens needed to be transported in a specific manner and this was one of the main concerns mentioned by Mesquita in his letter to Juan de Ribera. Thus, references to the kind of plants and fruits that were to arrive in Japan were also accompanied by detailed instructions about the manner in which these plants should be transported.

Despite being instructed by Mesquita, the Portuguese merchants did not always transport the plants with due care: "[...] because they forget everything as they are so caught up in their merchandise [...]". Many plants arrived in Nagasaki already dried up, as was the case with the quince trees: "[...] owing to the lack of care on the part of those who brought them, not even one arrived that was not dead and could not be planted, the reason was that the pots in which they came were too large, and could not be kept in a place where they were safe from the sun and the waves of the sea, and salt water from the sails, and people, who would walk over them [...]". Mesquita concluded that all the plants: "[...] would be very easily brought alive, if they came with due care. I would request that the pot be neither too big nor too wide, but rather be of the same kind in which the pears come here, making two or three holes at the bottom, from where the water can run out if it receives too much or the rain gets in. Likewise, the said pots must be brought in a dry place, which people do not use as a passage, nor the deck, nor any place where the sails are kept [...]." ²⁶

However, more than just recording the introduction of Western plants in Nagasaki, this letter reveals the existence of a sharing of tastes and products. Thus, Mesquita did not fail to express his gratitude for everything that the Rector in Manila constantly sent to the Jesuits in Nagasaki: "Your Reverence sends us so many things that we do not have words that are

²⁴ *Ibidem*, fl. 348v.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, fl. 349.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, fl. 348v.

sufficient to express our thanks. May Our Lord repay your efforts”²⁷. According to Mesquita, the gratitude of the Jesuits in Nagasaki went well beyond thanks for despatching customary products, such as bottles of wine. Thus, through the words of this Portuguese Jesuit, we also come to know that the circulation of pet animals, such as birds and dogs, was a frequent occurrence in the relationship between the Jesuits of Manila and Nagasaki. Mesquita affirmed that “[...] We received the flasks of wine, the little dogs, and all the rest, that [for those of us] in this land everything was highly appreciated, and particularly the Father Vice Provincial greatly appreciated the little dogs, he sent one of them to Miyako as a present, and kept the other one here [...].”²⁸ On the other hand, Diogo de Mesquita informed Ribera that the Jesuits in Manila were going to receive: “[...] some good songbirds, such as two skylarks and another bird that they call *uguisu*, whose singing is much appreciated by the Japanese, and is even mentioned in their books, and as they are difficult to raise, and keep, there are very few in Japan; however there was one here in our house and I consider it to be well employed in being sent to your college.” Apart from this, Mesquita further mentions that, “Another bird is being sent, that they call *yamagara* here, who even though his song is not very strong, nevertheless the antics and movements that he gets up to, and when he retires during the night to sleep in his nest, are more enchanting than his song. I am sending one more skylark for our Brother procurator Lorenzo Rodríguez [...].”²⁹

Testifying to the variety of products that circulated between the Jesuits in Manila and the Jesuits in Nagasaki, one also finds a brief reference to the fact that Mesquita was sending Juan de Ribera “[...] a little box with some bits of bacon, that I had sent you for your stomach, for which reason I am again sending another similar one, that the seminarian Agustín is taking with him.”³⁰ It is also important to note the reference to the fact that it was the seminarian Agostinho, the same one mentioned by Valignano, who took this product to Father Juan de Ribera. Thus, the seminarian Agostinho travelled on the ship that would transport birds and other products to Manila and that, on its return voyage, would bring Western plants to Nagasaki.

In this manner, the total integration of the circulation of these products, such as plants and birds, is once again clearly evident within a network of Jesuit contacts, which had been established on a priority basis to enable the circulation of information and communication for Jesuit strategies for their evangelical activities.

27 *Ibidem*, fl. 348v.

28 *Ibidem*, fl. 348v.

29 *Ibidem*, fl. 349.

30 *Ibidem*, fl. 349.

Conclusion: recreating landscapes and flavours

The main conclusion we can reach, that has been mentioned throughout this article, is based upon the idea that the introduction of Western plants in Japan was the result of a network of communications established by the Jesuits. In addition, an analysis of the specific kinds of plants that were circulated enables us to consolidate the idea that this situation was not an eccentric activity but, rather, was wholly integrated in these Jesuits' lifestyle and manner of thinking.

The Jesuit missionaries who were in East Asia and in Japan mainly hailed from Latin backgrounds and almost all of them were Portuguese, Spanish or Italians. They were individuals who came from Southern Europe and who, owing to their missionary activities, found themselves in remote lands amongst civilisations that were very different from their own homelands.

Diogo de Mesquita was a missionary who, like many others, was far from his original home environment. Thus, this importing of Western plants should be interpreted as an attempt to recreate a world that was familiar to him. In Nagasaki, Mesquita sought to reconstitute a certain space and flavours of a Mediterranean world that was very dear to him. It is in this context that Mesquita cultivated fig trees, quince trees, peach trees, pear trees and, of course, the indispensable grapevines and olive trees. More than a generic cultivation of Western plants, this represents a reproduction of a landscape and flavours that were so typical of Southern Europe.

In this sense, as we can conclude when reading Mesquita's letter, this necessity to recreate a familiar world was something he had in common with other Jesuits who, by means of the circulation of these products, sought to minimise the enormous distances that separated them from their original homelands.

For all these reasons, an analysis of this circulation of Western botanical specimens, apart from revealing the existence of a consolidated network of communications, allows us to connect with a human and emotional dimension associated with the cultivation of these plants.

APPENDIX

ARSI, *Japonica-Sinica*, 13 II, fls. 348 – 349v.

Letter from Father Diogo de Mesquita to Father Juan de Ribera, Rector of the Manila College, Nagasaki, 28 October 1599

(fl. 348) Muy Reverendissimo en Christo Padre

Pax Christi

Por los navios, que este año han venido dessa Manila, he recebido dos cartas de V. R. Con las quales me he mucho consolado así por las nuevas tan minudas, que V. R. de los negocios y de todos los sucesos desse reino nos ha embiado como mucho mas que el amor, y gran cuidado, con que trata, y negocia todas las cosas, y negocios que de aca le encomendamos; Dios N. Sor. Pague a V. R. tanta charidad, y amor como en todo nos muestra, y iuntamiento lo mucho que haze para ayudar a los christianos japones, que allavan en sus trabajos, y litigios, lo que es cierto obra de gran charidad, y que nos la estimamos en tanto, como se fuessemos los mismos, que la reciben, los quales no se muestran ingratos al beneficio recebido apregoando en toda parte quan ayudados, y favorecidos son en sus trabajos, y negocios, particularmente de V. R. y de los mas padres de la Compañía en essa Manila.

Del estrago, y daño, que han hecho los cosarios japones, que a essa Manila passaron recebimos todos aca gran pesar así por el mal, que alla hizieron, como tambien por el rigoroso castigo que Daifusama, señor del Japon mando hazer en ellos, crucificandolos, y tomándoles toda su hacienda lo que iustamente merecen, pero de sus mugeres, e hijos tenemos gran lastima, porque lo mismo manda executar en ellos; por lo qual esten alla seguros, porque no passaran a essa Manila semejantes corsarios de aquí adelante, salvo se muriere el señor que agora gobierna, y estos reinos de Japon se perturbaren con guerras. Este señor que agora reyna Daifusama desea mucho tener amistad con essa Manila, y que de ella, ó de la Nueva España le vaya algun navio a los reynos de Quantó, donde el es natural, que estaran del Miaco algunas sesenta leguas, por la qual razon, aun que su antepasado perseguió a los frailes, y los crucificó, el todavia ha estrañado la crueldad de su antepasado, y ha dicho delante a otros señores sus vasallos, que Taicó fuera cruel en esto, porque el negocio de la salvacion deva ser libre, y assi el avia dado licencia al fraile frey Jironimo, que fuesse a sus reinos de Quantó a predicar, y hazer una iglesia, junto a la

mar en algun puerto, que le quadrasse, y adonde pudiesse venir el navio, que desea, y a este respecto particularmente entendemos, que el favorece al dicho fraile, al qual agora embió a llamar el dicho Daifu al Miaco para tratar con el sobre esta embaxada, que alla envia por Sóni (?) don Pedro de Lion Japon, el dicho frei Jironimo venio a Miaco acompañado de algunos cristianos vestido en su habito, y habló con el dicho Daifu, pero lo que que trataron no sabemos de cierto: Dios Nuestro Señor le ayude, y a nos con el, se convertiere los reinos de Quantó a Nuestra Sancta Fee, que agora son todos de gentiles, y los ultimos de Japon, mucho nos holgaremos con ello, si el Señor así lo tuviere por bien. No querriamos, que pensassen los frailes, que nos peza, de que ellos convirtiessen al Señor muchos millares de animas en este Japon, mas holgaríamos, que el modo fuesse bien ordenado, y que entre nos no uviesse cosa que no conveniesse a hermanos, y religiosos, pues todos somos siervos, y discipulos de Christo Nuestro Señor.

Las nuevas destas partes, y varios sucessos, que en ellas hay todo largamente sabra V. R. por la carta annua, y por las particulares del Padre Visitador, por tanto no ay para que relatarlas solamente dire, que despues de la muerte de Taicó estamos con muy maior descanso, y es grande el fructo de las animas, que en todas las partes se comiensa a haser, y esperamos, que cada dia sera mayor, porque Daifusama no es adverso a nuestra ley.

(fl. 348v.) Por el trabajo, que V. R. ha tomado en nos embiar las plantas, y membrillos tan desseados le damos muchas gracias, aunque por el poco cuidado de los que las truxeron ninguna ha llegado sino seca y que no se pudieron plantar, la causa fue que, los vasos, en que vinieron fueron demasiadamente grandes, y no se pudieron poner en lugar donde ni le dicesse el sol ni las olas de la mar, y agua sal[g]ada de las amarras, y gente, que passava por riba dellas; por lo qual otra vez suplicamos a V. R. que con su diligencia e charidad no canse aun este año en nos embiar las plantas de los membrillos, y otra alguna buena planta, que aca no aya, las quales seran muy faciles de trayer vivas, se vinieren con buen modo. Silicet que el vaso no sea muy grande ni ancho, mas sea destas mismas barças, en que de aca van las peras, hasendole en el fundo dos, ó tres agugeros, por dó discorra la agua se fuere mucha la que se hechare, ó entrare de la lluvia. Item han de venir las dichas barças en lugar escusso, que no sea de passage de gente, ni conves, ni lugar, donde andan las amarras, de lo qual todo yo tengo alguna experiencia porque desde Lisbona hasta este Japon he traído una planta de buenos higos brigesotes, de que agora este Japon esta lleno, es verdad, que muchas plantas se me secaron mas fue por infortunios, los quales no se podian impedir.

A los dueños destos navios que de aca van, y particularmente a Francisco Martins capitan del navio de António Garces he dicho el modo, como han de traer estas plantas, mas porque ellos metidos en sus mercancias de todo se olvidan, V. R. quando se las mandare entregar no dexe de les traer a la memoria lo sobredicho, y particularmente los membrillos desseamos mucho, porque es esta tierra tan accomodada para ellos, que si una sola plantilla llegasse aca biva, en breve tempo seria este reino lleno dellos. Los años passados he encomendado a V. R. y a otras personas, nos hisiessen venir de la Nueva España, ó del Peru otras plantas de cerezas,

guindas, malocotones y alguna buena casta de uvas, porque las que ay aca en Japon no son buenas, ni de que se pueda hazer vino de durar; si porventura alguna planta destas ha llegado, V. R. nos hara charidad de embiarla por el mismo modo, que acima digo, y sino, no dexé de tornar a encomendarlas, aunque esso custe algunos dineros, para lo que se podran ayudar de la plata, que se hiziesse en unos libros, que ahy tiene el Hermano procurador para mandar vender a Nueva España, que son de un hombre de la obligación deste Colégio ya defuncto, y lo que en ellos se montara, daremos aca a su muger, que esta biva.

Las olivas, que aca nos enbiaron los años pasados estan muy buenas, una de las quales ya este año empeço a dar fructo; se por ventura se hallasse alguna planta de maiores azeitonas, que las que tenemos aca, holgaríamos con ella.

V. R. nos envía tantas cosas que no tenemos palabras para le referir las devidas gracias. Nuestro Señor se lo pague todo; recibimos las botijas de vino, los perrillos, y todo lo demas, que para esta tierra todo ha sido de mucha estima, y particularmente los perrillos el padre vice-provincial los estima en mucho, uno dellos embió al Miaco de presente, otro tiene aqui, otro se perdio en el navio de Domingos, que fue el primero que de alla partio, y dio en unos baxos, junto a la Isla hermosa, donde no escapó, mas que la gente, que se salvó, y vino a Japon.

De la ruina que hizo la iglesia desse colégio con el temblor de la tierra nos ha mucho pesado mas confiamos en el Señor, que presto haran otra mejor, y aunque no se acabe tan depriessa, ni por esso quero dexar de embiar a V. R. algunos passarillos de buen canto, como son dos callandras hy otro paxaro que llaman uguisu, cuyo canto a los japones es muy estimado, y nombrado en sus libros, y por ser difficil de criar, y aver lo tienen pocos en Japon; pero uno que aqui avia en casa lo tengo por bien empleado para esse colegio; queira Dios que llegue bivo.

(fl. 349) Va mas otro paxaro, que llaman aca Yamagara, cuyo canto aunque no es muy subido, todavia los tregetos y meneos que haze, y el recogerse de noche a dormir en su calabaza, es mas de estimar que el canto. Vá mas una callandra para el Hermano procurador Lorenzo Rodriguez, porque para que ayude a V. R. en el trabajo de embiarnos las plantas, que pidimos, determino hazerme su conoçido. Embió mas a V. R. dos barças de peras, con alguna dellas podra V. R. combidar a los padres Visitador y Vice provincial a quien no escrivo por non darles ocupacion en medio de las muchas que ternan, solamente por esta me encomiendo mucho a suas Reverencias, a quien estoy prestes para servir en todo lo que me mandaren. Van mas tres saquitos de Foxi del Miaco, que sirvan para en lugar de cuscus, ó para comer al modo de Japon, como enseñara el Dojico Agustín, que alla vá para ayudar a V. R. en el trato de los japones que alla estan; Es buen hombre, y quieto, como mas largamente escrivira el padre Visitador sobre el a V. R.

Se alla hay algunos padres, que tengan desseo de aprender la lengua de Japon, el la podra enseñar para lo qual el Padre Visitador me escribió los dias passados, que embiasse a V. R. algunos libros que para ello le puedan ayudar, los quales embio en un caxonzito. Silicet un Vocabulario, y una doctrina con una arte de mano, porque aun no está empressa una, que se esta preparando para esso; Va mas un libro de la vida de los sanctos, y otro libro de las historias de Japon, todo en su lengua, y

nuestra letra, y un libro de fides; hagase V. R. grande Japon, porque ó aca, ó hay podra hazer a Dios mucho servicio con el, y porque así para la libreria del Collegio como tambien para algunos Christianos japones, que supieren ler, se aprovecharen de semejantes libros, embio mas a V. R. un libro de guía de peccadores, que aquí traduzimos en lengua de Japon, y imprimimos en sus letras, tan primas, que mas no se puede escrevir de mano; Las matrizes de las quales aquí hicimos labrar en nuestro Collegio por nuestros hermanos, y dójicos; Van mas algunos librillos de Confesión, y de oraciones todo en letra de Japon.

Embio mas a V. R. ochenta cruces, y Josos en papel, que pueden servir para los Christianos dessas partes; se uviere algunas imagines de papel tambien se las embiare. Por la de V. R. he entendido aver le sido grata una bocetica con unos pelorillos de tóchinio, que le embié para el estomago, por lo qual le torno a embiar otra semejante, que lleva el dójico Agustín. Una boceta con hostias hechas aca en Japon embié a V. R. el año passado, holgaría de saber, se llegaron incorruptas.

Algunas personas de nuestra obligacion, y otras conocidas me han pedido cartas particulares de recomendacion para V. R., y porque se uviesse de dar a cada uno la suia, seria cosa muy prolixa, a todos les he respondido, que los encomendaria a V. R. en esta; por tanto, acerca desto no digo mas sino, que V. R. como padre de todos trabaje de los ayudar, como sabemos, que lo haze en sus necesidades temporales, y spirituales, los quales, de quien agora me lembro son los nombres siguientes: Cana Miguel, Gervasio, Teuji Andre, Damião medrio casado en esta Nagasaqui; Item Leon Ximizzu, sobre quien ya escrevi a V. R. en particular, por ser hombre a quien tengo a grande obligacion.

Uray Sôfu, de quien V. R. en su carta haze mencion de lo aver hecho alla muy bien, aca le avemos referido la recomendación de V. R. y le avemos hecho el favor, y buen tratamiento, el se muestra muy grato a los beneficios de V. R. y de la Compañía.

Ya que V. R. toma tanto trabajo en nos embiar cada año plantas, aun que por nuestra desgracia tirando las olivas, ninguna llegó biva, quiero yo tambien en parte recompensarlo en la misma moneda embiandole una planta de los higos brigesotes, que atrás digo, porque parece que aun podran en algun modo fructificar, pues los ay de casta blanca. Pienso los llevara Francisco Martins gran devoto de V. R. y como tal aun que son muchos los que le ocupan, y embaraçan el navio, todavia para cosas de V. R. no se hazede rogar.

Han mas 2 plantillas de buenas rozas en el mismo vazo.

(fl. 349v.) Acerca de unos papeles que aca me embiaron sobre el negocio de la sortija de diamante de Estevan de Marquena, he hecho aca las diligencias posibles para ver se se podia cobrar, mas el señor Gouvea, que la tenia ha ido a Camboja, y alla le han muerto, y aca por justicia, y mandado de Daifu le han tomado el poco hato, que le quedava, y aun su muger, y hijos corren peligro de seren justiciados, no ay modo de poder cobrar cosa alguna, ni saber, que se ha hecho de la dicha sortija de diamante; por tanto V. R. haga saber esto al dicho Estevan de Marquena.

Ya me parece que he sido muy comprido, y he importunado a V. R. con muchas cosas, lo qual he hecho por le sentir animo para todo; Por tanto quiero acabar pidiendo a V. R., que tambien nos ocupe aca en lo que vos ofreciere, porque lo

haremos de muy buena voluntad. En cuyos sanctos sacrificios, y oraciones mucho me encomiendo. Deste Nagasaqui oy 28 de Octubre de 99

Despues de aver escrito esta me han dicho, que en la tierra de Zebu avia maçanes, y aun guindas, si así es no ay para que tornar a encomendar a V. R. que nos haga charidad tan desseada.

Pero de Faria capitan del navio de Vasco Dias, que alla vá, es persona honrada, y virtuosa, portugues; pareçiome razon avisar desto a V. R. para que le conosca, y favorezca, si en algo fuere menester; el tambien en su navio podra traer alguna planta como aca ya le tengo encomendado.

De V. R.

Siervo en Christo

Diogo de Mesquita

Abstract

A letter written by Father Diogo de Mesquita to Father Juan de Ribera, Rector of the Jesuit College in Manila, in October 1599, provides us with interesting information about the introduction of what we can term Western plants into Japan. These plants, which mainly consisted of fruit trees, arrived in Nagasaki from Europe and Spanish America. The presence of these plants in Japan was only possible due to a consolidated network of contacts that had been established between the Jesuits of the Portuguese *padroado* and the Spanish *patronazgo*, as well as due to the relationship that the Jesuits maintained with the mercantile community of Nagasaki.

Keeping in mind that many of these plants were associated with a Mediterranean and Southern European lifestyle, it was but natural that, by means of the cultivation of these plants, various Jesuits would seek to recreate a landscape that reminded them of their original homelands.

Resumo

Em Outubro de 1599, uma carta do padre Diogo de Mesquita ao padre Juan de Ribera, reitor do Colégio jesuíta de Manila, fornece interessantes informações sobre a entrada do que podemos designar de plantas ocidentais no Japão. Estas plantas, na sua maior parte árvores de fruto, chegam a Nagasaki a partir da Europa e da América espanhola. A presença destas plantas em território nipónico é possível devido a uma consolidada rede de contactos, estabelecida entre os jesuítas do padroado português e do *patronazgo* espanhol, bem como ao relacionamento que os jesuítas mantinham com a comunidade mercantil de Nagasaki.

Tendo em consideração que muitas destas plantas estavam associadas a uma vivência mediterrânica e sul europeia, é natural que vários jesuítas procurassem, com o cultivo destas plantas, recrear uma paisagem que lhes fizesse recordar o seu espaço de origem.

要約

1599年10月付け、イエズス会マニラコレジヨ学長を勤めていたリベラ神父宛の手紙の中でメスキータ神父は日本への「西洋植物」の導入という興味深い情報を書き残した。この植物の大半は果樹であったがヨーロッパあるいはアメリカのスペイン領から長崎に持ち込まれた。日本でこの植物の存在を可能にしたのはポルトガル布教保護権とスペイン布教保護権のイエズス会士の間の情報ネットワークとイエズス会士とマカオ商人社会との付き合いであった。この植物のほとんどが地中海や南欧での生活と関連していたので、その日本への導入を通してイエズス会士が彼らの出身地を思い出すような景色を再現しようということは自然であった。