

Production and Circulation of Vernacular Italian Books Related to the Jesuit Mission in Japan in the Sixteenth Century

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Abstract The reports and histories compiled by the members of the Society of Jesus in the second half of the sixteenth century were among the earliest European sources to treat 'Japan' as a geographical and political reality. The peculiarity of the Jesuit approach, focused on research and adaptation, is reflected in the variety of their contents, encompassing descriptions of geography, politics, society, language, religion and art. The reports were also the earliest sources on Japan to reach a wider public in Europe. They were not only delivered to Coimbra, Rome and to the different Jesuit houses, but also distributed commercially, in the form of letter-books, throughout Europe. It can be presumed that the impact of the letter-books on European readership was enhanced by the growing popularity of periodical publications and by the expansion of the publishing market. This paper will use the reports published in vernacular Italian as a case study, and investigate the nature of such readership and how the reports fit into the Italian book market of the sixteenth century. It will analyse them in light of the cultural and economical processes that led to their production and circulation, focusing on publishing houses, editions and formats, in order to evaluate the editorial policies that led to their circulation.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Sixteenth-Century Vernacular Italian Letter-Books About Japan: Production, Commercial Diffusion and Impact. – Appendix. Sixteenth-Century Vernacular Italian Letter-Books About Japan: a Bibliography.



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1 Introduction

Throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese, Spanish and Italian members of the Society of Jesus attempted to evangelise East Asia. To communicate with each other and with their Superiors in Coimbra and Rome, they adopted an institutionalised system for correspondence, adapted from one the order was already using in Europe. The system was devised by the founder of the Society, Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), and remodelled, according to changing needs, as the result of a discursive process between the administrative centre and the peripheries of the order (Delfosse 2009, 71-2).

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Missionaries from different religious orders had reached Asia long before the Jesuits did. The Portuguese were motivated to pursue their maritime expansion by both religious ardour and the economic benefits derived from the African (and Asian) trade.¹ Under the protection of the Portuguese Crown, the Franciscan order and the Dominican order had carried out their missions to India in 1500 and 1503, respectively. By 1538, the Episcopal see of Goa was established, so that when Francis Xavier (1506-52), who was pivotal to the Jesuit mission in East Asia, first set foot in India in 1542, the seeds of the diffusion of the Christian faith had already been firmly planted (Üçerler 2008, 155).

Still, neither the Franciscans nor the Dominicans developed an intelligence system that could compare to the one the Jesuits had set in place. This was mainly because of the importance Loyola placed on the practice of letter-writing. One peculiar element of the Jesuit missionary approach was the way in which it combined Christian belief with humanist moral values. Jesuit thinkers highly valued the mastery of *eloquentia* (that is, proficiency in the language arts and, more specifically, in the rhetorical practice, including the composition of letters); it was considered a means, in itself, to moral perfection and a strategic tool to propagate the Christian message, edify the audiences, and, more prosaically, win the patronage of the ruling classes (Boswell 2003, 248).

The Jesuit system for correspondence consisted of the regular dispatch of official reports (quarterly at first, and later annually) from the different centres of the missions to the Father General of the Company in Rome and to the Jesuit College of Coimbra in Portugal.² The letters responded to the need to convey information and to help the bureaucratic machine of

1 Missionary effort had come hand-in-hand with Portuguese sea explorations since 1418, when Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460) had assumed the position of *regedor e governador* (ruler and governor) of the Order of Christ. Ever since, this crusading militia had been ideologically and materially involved in the Portuguese explorations, providing the Crown with the greatest source of funding for its maritime enterprise (Hamilton 1948, 37). The link between Portuguese imperial ambitions and Christian missionary efforts had been formally asserted by the Roman Church in the second half of the fifteenth century through a series of Papal Bulls: the *Dum Diversas* (1452), the *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) and the *Inter Caetera* (1456), which granted the right to the Portuguese Crown to administer the newly 'discovered' territories in the East Indies, in both a civil and an ecclesiastical capacity. This established the system that came to be known as *patroado real* (royal patronage) (Boxer 1969, 20-4). The system was then formalised in 1494 with the ratification of the Treaty of Tordesillas, which established a circular line of division, running from pole to pole 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands and splitting the known world into two spheres of influence. All territories east of the line were to pertain to Portugal. The full text and translation of the Treaty, as well as a related bibliography, are available in Davenport (2012, 84-100).

2 The letters from the East Indies were usually sorted in Goa, the administrative and religious centre of the mission in Asia. Together with official reports, other private forms of correspondence travelled between singular members of the Society, usually in separate sheets known as *hijuela*. The structure of the system is described in detail in Lach 1965, 314-31.

the Society, but their purpose went far beyond that. They were meant to connect Jesuit communities, spread apostolic models and edifying news, and, in the final instance, build a common religious identity for the Society (Palomo 2005, 59-60). In this spirit, copies of the reports were forwarded from Rome and Coimbra to the various Jesuit colleges of Europe, as a guide and inspiration for future missionaries and other members of the Society. Given the amount of work required to sustain this system, to speed up the process of reproduction and circulation, manuscript copies soon gave way to printed ones (Palomo 2005, 74).

Printing the letters was, however, also a way of exposing them to a wider public. That this was a conscious intent is reflected in the fact that the letters were not merely printed, but published and placed in a circuit of commercial distribution. In this sense, printed Jesuit reports became vehicles through which the European public gained information about the missions, as well as, collaterally, about the geography, climate, culture and contemporary political events of the countries in which the missionaries were stationed. The published letter-books, with their wide accessibility, made knowledge about Eastern Asia available to the European readership in a way previously unthinkable.

A wide range of literature exists discussing different aspects of the Jesuit system for correspondence, its evolution and its long-term impact. Lamalle 1981-82 explores the innovative cultural potential of Jesuit letter writing and the way in which Jesuit correspondence was organised and archived. Lach 1965 underlines the role of the reports in conveying, after the prolonged lack of direct contact during the Middle Ages, the very first significant bits of factual knowledge about Eastern Asia to Europe.³ In a similar vein, Harris 1999 builds on previous works by Wessels 1924, Bolton 1936 and Dainville 1964 to discuss the contribution of Jesuit travel and writings to geography, natural history, botany and ethnography. Caputo 2016 specifically discusses the reports from Japan published in Italy between 1552 and 1585 as part of a broader analysis of the impact of the imaginary related to Japan on Italian literature, from the writings of Marco Polo (1254-1324) to Francesco Carletti (1573-1636). Palomo 2005 focuses on the edifying nature of the reports and their role in building a common

3 A notable exception was the writings of the isolated land voyagers of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries - Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, William of Rubruck, Odoric of Pordenone and Marco Polo. All were based on first-hand testimony and all, as Olschki 1957 underlines, were in many ways challenging the Medieval legendary traditions towards Asia. However, in their time the narratives were not as widely read and renowned as they would become in the sixteenth century thanks to the diffusion of print. Similarly unknown to the wider public were the writings of Portuguese traders who, after 1499, had reached Asia by the sea route around Africa. This was probably because, as Lach (1965, 153) again suggests, the Portuguese Crown was enforcing a deliberate policy of reserve so as to prevent useful information from leaking into the hands of their European commercial competitors.

religious identity among the Jesuits. Friedrich 2008, on the other hand, focuses on the letters' administrative value: he discusses the factors that prompted Loyola and Polanco to conceptualise a central government for the Society, and the ways in which (not without controversy) this sedentary centre obtained and archived information from the local level, using the Jesuit correspondence system as a case study of the connections between the emergence of rational bureaucracy and the birth of a modern system of information management in Europe. Delfosse 2009 more thoroughly analyzes the dialectic relationship between the central level and the local level by describing the system of correspondence in a diachronic perspective. While crediting Loyola for his role in building a pyramid structure of information within the Society and in defining the letters' basic aims and characteristics, she argues that Jesuit letter-writing was an evolving reality, constantly redefined in accord with the order's expanding needs. Similarly, Asami 2002 discusses local contributions to the readjustments of the system, focusing on the reports from Japan, the way Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606) envisioned their structure, and the selection of information intended for inclusion in published letter-books.

However, while much has been written about the logic behind the Jesuit system for correspondence and about the mechanics of the circulation of the reports inside and outside the Society, the manner in which the letter-books fit into the European book market of the sixteenth century is still unclear. Were they pushed into the catalogues of printers from the Society of Jesus, or did they fit into a more independent editorial policy on the part of publishers? What was the response to their publication? Did they pass by unnoticed, or can one presume that they truly helped put the 'Indies' on the map, not only for students in Jesuit schools but for a wider European public? If so, for which public, and to what extent?

Given the lack of data about the number of sales, obtaining these answers is not easy. Clossey (2008, 197-215) approaches the questions by focusing on the writings of Nicholas Trigault (one of the best-selling authors within the order). The present article explores them by using Italian editions of sixteenth-century Jesuit letters from Japan as a case study. It discusses them in light of the cultural and economic processes that led to their production and circulation, and analyzes their place in the Italian book market of the sixteenth century. The final appendix provides a bibliography of the editions.

2 Sixteenth-Century Vernacular Italian Letter-Books about Japan: Production, Commercial Diffusion and Impact

Before the establishment of the Jesuit mission, only vague references to Japan had appeared in European (and Italian) literature. Marco Polo was the first European writer to make a recognizable mention of the archipelago, under the name 'Cipangu'. The information he included in his account was, notably, second-hand and inaccurate. He greatly overestimated Japan's distance from China, misjudged the position of the archipelago, and unrealistically stressed its commercial isolation at a time when Japan had developed a rich history of maritime relationships with Eastern Asia (Oliveira e Costa 2007, 43). However, many European descriptions of the archipelago produced up to the 1540s stemmed from his work; more often than not, they exaggerated its inaccuracies in a way that shaped the myth of 'Cipangu' as something profoundly different from the image of 'Japan' that would emerge from later eye-witness accounts.⁴

In this sense, the Jesuit reports about Japan that appeared in the European book market in the second half of the sixteenth century were a novelty – and a well-received one. Reports from Japan retained a prominence among published Jesuit missionary reports throughout the second half of the sixteenth century – so much so that, as Lach points out (1965, 321), many later writers gave the Jesuit letters from this period the generic title of 'Japan letters'. Moreover, as exemplified by the vernacular Italian editions listed in the appendix of this article, publishers were increasingly singling out 'Japan letters'. Reports from Japan published up to the 1570s were primarily inserts in works more generally devoted to 'India' (in the general meaning of both Brasil and the territories in Asia that the Treaty of Tordesillas had assigned to the Portuguese); however, after the publication of the first letter-book centered wholly on Japan (Zanetti, Rome, 1578),⁵ works focusing on Japan – or more rarely on Japan and China – became the rule.

Vernacular Italian editions are of particular interest from the perspective of distribution and reception. In fact, several factors suggest that in the second half of the sixteenth century they were the most popular among European editions of 'Japan letters'. Many studies include listings of and information about the materials related to the Jesuit missions in Asia: Sommervogel 1885, Streit 1916-55, Ternaux-Compans 1968 and

4 For an analysis of the impact Marco Polo's writings had on Italian literature, see Caputo 2016. For an analysis of Marco Polo's work in relation to the wider context of Europe's discovery of East Asia, see Olschki 1957. For a more general overview of the historical, geographical and travel narratives on Japan antedating the Jesuit production, see Lach 1965, 652-63. For a specific focus on cartographical sources, see Boscaro 1990.

5 From now on, works listed in the appendix will be referred to using the name of the publisher, the place of publication and the year of publication.

Correia-Afonso 1955. Several bibliographies are also devoted to publications and documents related to Japan: Cordier 1912; Japan Institut 1940; Laures 1940; Matsuda 1965; Wenckstern, Pages 1895.⁶ From the bibliographies emerges a pattern in the publication of the letter-books that favours the Italian editions, up to at least the 1580s. Many *editio princeps* are Italian, and Italian collections, as underlined by Lach (1965, 674-75), constitute about 50% of the publications. This provides the basis for many subsequent translations in Northern European languages (published in Paris, Louvain and Dillingen).

The fact that reports about Japan dominated Jesuit publishing in the second half of the sixteenth century should not be surprising. The prominence of 'Japan letters' was connected to the centrality of the Japanese mission during this phase of the Jesuit enterprise in Asia. Unlike in India, the Jesuits were the first Christian order to reach Japan, and they retained exclusive influence over the archipelago, as per open Papal instructions (included in the brief *Ex pastoralis officio*, dated 1585) until the 1590s, when the first Spanish Franciscans made their way to the archipelago from the Philippines (Massarella 1990, 15-24). Moreover, the mission achieved promising results, at least up to the death of Oda Nobunaga (1534-82) and the rise of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-98), when the first persecutions against Christians began in Japan.⁷ It makes sense, therefore, that the Jesuits deemed the reports about the mission as appropriate edifying material.

However, the popularity of Italian editions is more of a puzzle. As early as 1563, Valignano advised against the use of Italian in published letter-books, suggesting a preference for Spanish and, later, for Latin (Asami 2002, 5). Valignano did not clarify the reasons for this request. Possibly, he prioritised the needs of the missionaries stationed in Asia (most of whom would find Latin easily accessible) over the Society's need for publicity. However, in spite of his request, the production and circulation of Italian editions was not discontinued; on the contrary, it flourished throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. One may presume that Jesuit authorities in Europe decided in favour of vernacular editions as a conscious effort to expose the public to the letter-books. Sixteenth-century Europe was a context in which Latin, while still a common denominator for the Roman Church (Eisenstein 2005, 185), was losing its international

6 In addition to these bibliographies, several works include anthological excerpts from the letters. See, for example, the translations by Murakami 1926 and 1927-28.

7 Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, as the two powerful *daimyō* (warlords) who ended Japan's political division in the second half of the sixteenth century, represented a major reference point for the mission. Nobunaga, strongly opposed to Buddhist sects, was generally supportive of the mission. On the other hand, Hideyoshi, after initially showing a good disposition, turned on the mission in 1587 by emitting two edicts of expulsion. Presumably, the Jesuits' pretensions to authority had alarmed him during his campaign in Kyūshū (Hall 1988, 359-64).

character (Kristeller 1990, 119-38), and where the 'revolution' brought about by the printing press was promoting a standardisation of vernacular languages (Eisenstein 2005, 91-2). As Hirsch (1977, 41) underlines, a 'new reader', one belonging to social groups once excluded from access to books and unable to understand Latin, was essential to the printing industry's expansion. In other words, by the end of the sixteenth century, a growing European readership was relying less on Latin.

Using Venice as a case study, Grendler (1992, 213-14) estimates the percentage of Italian readers at around 33% of the adult male population and 13% of the adult female population, and underlines how, despite the fact that many readers came from the upper strata of society (including rich merchants and professionals), only about half the men (the learned population of university professors and students, aristocracy, clergy, doctors or jurists) and a small percentage of the women had access to Latin. In this context, the use of the vernacular in publishing was rapidly spreading. In the case of Italy, in the second half of the sixteenth century, about 46,8% of an estimated quantity of 12.724 published books was written in the vernacular (Santoro 1994, 107). If the Society of Jesus meant to promote the letter-books related to Japan, use of the vernacular would certainly enable wider distribution.

Why the Society would allow - or wish to divulge - the books outside the circles of the clergy can be understood not only in light of the Society's need for publicity, but also in light of the Counter Reformation's policies. As Barbier (2004, 227-72) underlines, after the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559 and the end of the Council of Trent in 1563, the Counter Reformation influenced the book market in Catholic Europe both by means of coercion - through censorship and the *Index librorum prohibitorum* (Index of banned books, 1564) - and by means of a concurrent Catholic Revival that stimulated interest in new kinds of publications. News about the conversions of far-away populations could inspire public interest and, in the face of the defeats that Catholicism suffered in Europe after the Protestant Reformation, foster the notion of Catholic Church's greatness and world-wide predominance.

Still, as tools for the propagation of the faith, Spanish and Portuguese editions worked just as well as Italian editions did. In this sense, the popularity of Italian editions cannot, in my opinion, be ascribed only to the efficacy of Catholic propaganda; it is better understood in light of the entrepreneurship of Italian publishers and, more generally, of the dominating trends in the contemporary Italian book market. As Caputo (2016, 140) underlines, the fact that Italy, as opposed to Spain and Portugal, was excluded from the commercial and territorial competition in the East Indies gave Italian publishers more liberty, within the limits imposed by Jesuit censorship, to divulge the contents of the reports related to the missions in Asia. This, I argue, allowed the reports to become part of their response

to the general crisis that hit the Italian book market in the second half of the sixteenth century.⁸

To illustrate my point, I have chosen to focus on the Venetian book market, which works as a mirror for the Italian market as a whole, as throughout the sixteenth century Venice accounted for 48,6% of the total production of Italian *cinquecentine* (Santoro 1994, 108). The policies of the Counter Reformation, as I've mentioned above, deeply affected the publishing landscape of Catholic countries. Publishers negotiated their way through the change by seeking new commercial opportunities through literary genres that the Church approved and promoted. This trend emerged clearly in Venice in the second half of the sixteenth century; works related to religious themes amounted to 25-33% of the totality of the production of Venetian printers, when in the first half of the century religious production had amounted to only 13-15%. This change in editorial policies was at the root of a new expansion in book production after an initial crisis brought about by the announcement of the Index of banned books in 1564. The plague of 1575-77 only temporarily reversed this trend; after 1585, the number of emitted print permits started growing again, though it never reached pre-plague levels (Grendler 1983, 193-5).

By 1564, the earliest editions of letter-books from Japan had appeared in the Venetian book market. They had been published by Michele Tramezzino, who cultivated ties with both the Roman publishing world (through his brother Francesco) and the Society of Jesus (through Cesare Elmi, rector of the Jesuit house of probation in Venice).⁹ Caputo (2016, 243) suggests that the publication of the letters might have initially been delegated by the Society of Jesus to commercial publishers such as the Tramezzino as a means of avoiding direct involvement in commercial transactions. In this light, one may presume that, during an initial phase, editions of 'Japan letters' were not meant to be issued in a predetermined number of copies and that, instead, they were meant to be included in a more 'private' circuit of distribution.

Still, giving up the letters to commercial publishing meant, at least in part, compliance with the laws of commercial distribution. The demand for books steadily increased in Italy since the fifteenth century, in connection with an expansion of the reading population. As Santoro (1994, 96-7) underlines, at the root of the publishing industry's expansion was the ability of publishing houses to replace the logic of demand with the logic of supply, at least in quantitative terms. Editions needed high circulation

⁸ A crisis that, in the long run, would move the axis of the publishing world towards the Protestant countries. See Maclean 2012, 211-34.

⁹ This was not uncommon in a context in which, as Romani (1992, 524-5) illustrates, Venetian publishers handled the typographical and commercial aspects of their production, though in many instances Rome exerted a strong direct influence on the editorial process.

figures to amortise the fixed costs associated with the printing process. For example, we know from a letter by Michele Tramezzino himself¹⁰ that an average edition in Venice had to consist of at least 1000 copies, as the printing privilege was not conceded for fewer than 400 copies, and with fewer than 1000 copies, production costs would not be covered. Michele Tramezzino may have decided to publish the reports from Japan more as a consequence of his personal connections with the Society of Jesus than as the result of a qualitative evaluation of the materials in light of his editorial policy. However, one can presume that he meant to profit from the books. In this sense, his involvement in the distribution of the materials probably became, in sheer quantitative terms, a turning point.

However, as Caputo (2016, 237) illustrates, the impact of the works on the Italian intellectual landscape was still relatively small, at least up to 1585. This makes sense in light of the distribution of the editions. As the appendix of this article indicates, the overwhelming majority of Italian letter-books on Japan saw the light in the last two decades of the sixteenth century. Moreover, books published from the 1580s onward tended to appear in multiple editions.

One factor that was probably crucial in stimulating demand for the reports – and interest in Japan in general – was the fact that the Japanese embassy reached Lisbon in August 1584. Sent to Europe on Alessandro Valignano's initiative, in the name of three *daimyō* from Kyūshū,¹¹ it was received by the Holy Father and the King of Spain in 1585 and seems to have had a considerable impact on the contemporary public, as records of the time report the enthusiastic reception the envoys received in the various cities they visited.¹² Some researchers, such as Brown 1994, have actually questioned the real significance of such a reception for the general European population. What is certain, however, is that the embassy in itself spurred the publication of a number of titles – at least 80 works produced in the brief span of two years.¹³ They included primarily booklets – pamphlets and gazettes reporting on the voyage of the ambassadors, their meetings with various members of the European aristocracy and the public hearing that the Pope granted to them. Sometimes they provided short descriptions of Japan (based mostly on the Jesuits' published first-hand accounts). In addition, the works related to the embassy included at least one more organic work, the *Relationi della venuta degli Ambasciatori*

10 Quoted in Grendler 1983, 11.

11 Ōtomo Yoshishige (1530-87), Arima Harunobu (1567-1612) and Ōmura Sumitada (1533-87).

12 The reception of the embassy is discussed in Moran 1993, 9-16.

13 The works related to the embassy have been catalogued by Boscaro 1973.

Giaponesi a Roma by Guido Gualtieri,¹⁴ which collected and reorganised all the somewhat repetitive information that had been scattered throughout previous publications. A growing interest in Jesuit writings on Japan is more easily understood in light of this editorial boom.

In my opinion, this editorial boom also prompted a number of resourceful publishers to integrate the books on Japan into their editorial policies in a more structured way. Such was the case with the Giolito publishing house. The Giolito family, active between 1536 and 1606, was one of the giants of the Venetian publishing industry. Since 1585, it had been responsible for publishing most of the Japanese reports issued in Venice. Quondam (1977, 76), through his work based on the annals of the Giolito house compiled at the end of the nineteenth century by Salvatore Bongi (1825-99), underlines how the Giolito family embraced, from the start, a very definite identity as vernacular publishers, with only 49 titles in Latin – a meager 4,8% of their total production. Unlike smaller publishing houses (where, in the absence of modern strategies of publicity, demand was the primary factor determining editorial policies), the Giolito family was able to drive production to a measure, through rational editorial planning, and publish an average of more than 30 titles per year (Quondam, 1977, 67). They were also among those publishers able to ride the wave of the Catholic revival in qualitative terms. Their production before 1560 was almost exclusively devoted to contemporary Italian literature. When the general Italian book market was hit by the crisis associated with the Counter Reformation, the Giolito were among those publishers who found new commercial opportunities in it, and did so in an innovative way. As Quondam (1977, 74-88) underlines, while other publishers resorted to devotional literature as a response to the crisis, the Giolito devised a new editorial policy, giving birth to the form of the *collana editoriale* (editorial series). A religious editorial series was developed in accord with the trends of the post-Council Venice book market. However, hand in hand with the religious series, the publisher inaugurated a new series of *historie*. The term *historia*, sometimes replaced with *cronica* or *relatione*, stands for a

14 The full title of the work is *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giapponesi a Roma sino alla partita di Lisbona. Con le accoglienze fatte loro da tutti i principi christiani, per doue sono passati. Raccolte da Guido Gualtieri*. Several editions of the work were published in Italy: one in Rome, in 1586, by the Francesco Zannetti publishing house; two in Venice, both in 1586, by the Giolito publishing house; and one in Milan, in 1587, by the Pacifico Ponte publishing house. Another lengthy and organic account of the embassy was included in the *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam curiam*, published in 1590 in Macao. However, the work, as explained in its preface, was not intended for a European readership, but rather was to be used in Jesuit seminaries as a text for Latin studies and as a sort of guide to Europe for Japanese readers. (This was one of the reasons why the book was not sent to Rome for an *imprimatur*, as was customary.) An annotated English translation of the work is found in Valignano 2012. A more recent Italian translation is included in Valignano 2016.

“form of writing codified by tradition and supposedly grounded in truth, reality, objectivity. [...] But ‘historia’, much like today’s ‘storia’, was used at the time to mean both history and narrative fiction» (Pallotta 1992, 349). The purpose of this series was very different from that of the religious series, though also somewhat complementary. While the religious series was meant to be edifying, the historical series openly appealed to curiosity, the pleasure of reading and what Eisenstein (2005, 108) identifies as a reader’s growing desire to vicariously take part in faraway events.

The choice of *historie* as a countermeasure for the crisis proved to be a sound publishing decision in a context like the late sixteenth-century Venetian book market. The sixteenth century could rightly be called the first age of information. *Avvisi, relationi, fogli di notizia* and other newspaper-like publications circulated in all the major printing centers of the time, relating both national and international events with a regularity that has induced researchers such as Monaco 1992 to trace back to them the birth of modern periodical publications. A similar role in the book market was played by travel literature, in particular the *historie* about the new worlds that the Great Discoveries had brought to the public’s attention. The *historie* enjoyed great fortune throughout the century, and found in Venice one of its main points of diffusion (Pallotta 1992, 347).

The decision to include the Japanese letter-books in their catalogue appears to align with both dominating trends in the editorial policy of the Giolito. The reports matched the edifying purpose of the religious series while simultaneously appealing to the thirst for ‘curious’ news from faraway lands, which was at the root of the historical series’ popularity.

The ‘curious’ nature of the narration was particularly pronounced in ‘Japan letters’ published in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The earliest Jesuit reports on Japan included in the Italian editions were those written by the founder of the Japanese mission, Francis Xavier. Of the ten letters written before, during and immediately after his trip to Japan from 1549 to 1551, the Italian editions included four letters, a 1549 report from Cochin, written before his departure from Japan, two reports from Kagoshima, dated 5th of November 1549, and one report written, again from Cochin, upon his return from the archipelago.¹⁵ They illustrate the events that prompted Xavier to travel to the archipelago, describe the mission’s establishment and first phases, and include Xavier’s first-hand assessments of Japan. As Caputo (2016, 165-201) underlines, they are – particularly the letter included in the 1552 edition – of pivotal importance in the founding of a new discourse on ‘Giapam’ in Italian intellectual history. On the other hand, they did not dwell on the complexity of Japanese

¹⁵ The first letter was included in Tramezzino (Venice, 1562). The second was included in Dorico and Bressani (Rome, 1552). The third and fourth were included in Tramezzino (Venice, 1558).

culture and society. Letters from the 1550s, 1560s and 1570s, written by the Fathers who took charge of the mission in Japan immediately after Xavier's departure in 1551,¹⁶ appear to be of a more informative nature. They include, along with the narration of matters more strictly related to the mission, in-depth observations of Japan's geography, politics, society, language, religion and art, as well as descriptions of customs, ceremonies, cities and fortresses.¹⁷

The evolution in the contents of the books can easily be linked to the missionary strategies of the Jesuit order in Japan, which were reflected in the manner in which the missionaries approached their reports. Xavier describes the Japanese as "the best population that has yet been discovered, and probably the best to be found amongst the infidels"¹⁸ and as "more obedient to reason, than any other Infidels I have met, and so curious and ready to ask, so eager to know, that they never cease to question".¹⁹ His insistence on the concept of 'reason' derived in any probability from the influence of the thought of Thomas Aquinas. If the idea of paganism was, in the Renaissance period, an 'inclusive' category of otherness (Ryan 1981, 525), the concept of 'reason' functioned, in Thomist thought, as an element of distinction between populations that had to be converted. All people possessing the 'right reason' - namely, those who had developed written languages and a structured society - shared a common intellectual and moral framework, identified as 'natural law', from which the Christian religious system was assumed to directly derive.²⁰ The logical consequence of this assumption was that all beings deemed rational were considered naturally prone to convert if shown the way by means of rational instruction. The fact that Japanese society responded to natural law meant that the Jesuits had to accommodate and compromise with local customs to acquire knowledge and understanding of the Japanese language and man-

16 The published letter-books from this period include reports by Cosme de Torres (1510-70), Balthasar Gago (1520-83), Gaspar Vilela (1525-1572), Luis De Almeida (1525-83), Francisco Cabral (1528-1609), Organtino Gnechi Soldo (1530-1609) and Giovanni Francesco Stefanoni (1540-1603), as well as one report by Brother Lourenço (1521?-92), the first Japanese layman to have been received inside the Society of Jesus.

17 See, for example, the annual letter by Father Gaspar Vilela of 1561, published in Tramezzino 1565, which includes an extensive description of the city of Kyōto, and of the celebrations for the Gion *matsuri* and the Obon *matsuri*. For an overview of the typical contents of annual letters, see Cooper 1965.

18 "[La gente, che abbiamo conversata, è] la migliore, che sin'adesso si sia scoperta, et fra gli infedeli mi pare non si ritroveria altra migliore" (Tramezzino 1558, folio 104).

19 "Più obbedienti alla ragione, che gente infidele, che già abbia mai visto, e tanto curiosi e importuni in dimandare, tanto desiderosi del sapere, che mai finiscono di interrogare" (Tramezzino 1558, folio 126).

20 The influence of Thomist thought on the missionary approach that the Jesuits adopted in Japan has been illustrated in depth by Massarella 2008.

ners. In this manner, they could grasp the best ways to rationally demonstrate the Christian doctrine to the Japanese people. While, in concrete, not all Jesuit missionaries stationed in Japan smoothly adhered to this line of thought, this stance became the basic premise for the management of the Japanese mission in the sixteenth century, in a manner reflected in the contents of the reports sent to Europe. Alessandro Valignano, who took charge of the mission in Japan during his first trip as Father Visitor in 1579, further stressed the strive towards research and adaptation, adopting these principles as the heart of his missionary strategy.²¹

This translates into a further expansion of the range of the matters treated in the letters produced after 1580, particularly those by Father Luis Frois (1532-97). The reports include extensive narrations, sometimes in the order of a hundred or more pages, of contemporary political events, at both the local and central levels, and detailed accounts of the wars and shifts of power that involved the Christian *daimyō*. The annual letters from the years 1579, 1580 and 1581 extensively narrate the rise of Oda Nobunaga (Zanetti 1584). The reports of the years 1583 and 1584 relate Nobunaga's death and the subsequent political turmoil (Gioliti 1586). The annual letter of 1586 includes a lengthy account of the rise of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (Zanetti 1588). There are even letters devoid of information related directly to the mission, like the one written by Father Luis Frois in 1595, which relates the death of the newly nominated *kanpaku* (imperial regent) at the hands of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (Zanetti 1598). All these 'curious' materials were fit to respond to a precise demand from readers after the 1585 embassy, and to be integrated into ampler editorial policies such as those of the Giolito.

Even in light of such considerations, defining the readership of the letter-books from Japan is not easy. Big publishing houses can indicate the type of public for which the publications were meant, as they tended to follow a definite editorial line and address a specific public. In the case of the Giolito house, publications were intended mostly for an upper, educated middle class (Quondam 1977, 88). However, one must consider that, as Eisenstein (2005, 37) underlines, the actual readership and hypothetical targets that publishers devised did not always coincide. Moreover, smaller houses often worked on commission and published materials of a more disparate nature. Outside the big publishing centres, such as Venice and Rome, defining the type of public that had access to the books has proven to be an arduous task.

Certainly, the letter-books were devised for easy and wide circulation. In fact, all editions were in the small 'octavo' format²² first adopted by

21 Valignano's approach towards the East Asian missions is analyzed in depth by Ross 1999.

22 In the octavo format, the full sheet of printing paper (about 19 x 25 inches) was folded to form eight leaves (sixteen pages) (Reitz 2004, 96).

publisher Aldo Manuzio at the beginning of the sixteenth century as a manageable format that would prove convenient to scholar-diplomats and patrician councillors of state (Eisenstein 2005, 295). As Petrucci (1977b, 140) illustrates, given its manageability, the format was also meant to attract a new public. This public, as Montecchi (1992, 355) reports, would come to include less-traditional groups of readers, primarily non-professionals, in the range of the upper middle class.²³ In time, popular books would also adopt octavo, along with other small formats. However, as Grendler (1992, 211-37) underlines, books designed for lower, uneducated classes also shared a recurring set of physical characteristics – such as the use of Gothic characters – that are not common to letter-books devoted to ‘Japan letters’. In this sense, reports about Japan do not appear to fall under the flag of ‘popular’ literature.

As already illustrated, use of the vernacular in the letter-books can itself be deemed an indicator that the books were not exclusively addressed to a learned, professional readership. On the other hand, one must keep in mind that while not all readers knew Latin, all readers, including learned readers, knew the vernacular, and that, as Eisenstein (2005, 48) states, ‘traditional’ readers were still a main target for publishers and a strong driving force in the production of books.

It was through the learned readership that the letter-books came to influence a wide range of contemporary literary genres. The Jesuit reports were widely exploited not only as sources of religious histories (the most notable of which were those authored by Giovanni Pietro Maffei),²⁴ but also for a number of lay histories, cosmographies and collections of travel literature. For example, the Italian popular historians Mambrino Roseo (1500-80?) and Cesare Campana (1540-1606) included extensive accounts of the progress of the Christian mission in Japan in their world histories (both titled *Delle Historie del Mondo* and dated 1573 and 1598, respectively). The geographer Giovanni Lorenzo d’Anania (1545-1609) in-

23 Nor were popular books as often conserved in libraries, nor did they usually circulate in places far from the one in which they were produced, as only educated readers with sufficient financial resources could afford the shipping expenses. The fact that letter-books published in Rome, Naples or Brescia are available today in libraries throughout Europe can, in itself, indicate the type of public that used to read them – although library consistencies, as Caputo (2016, 257) underlines, are not always a reliable indicator of diffusion.

24 The *Rerum a Societate Iesu in Oriente gestarum volumen, continens historiam iucundam lectu omnibus Christianis, praesertim ijs, quibus vera Religio est cordi. In qua videre possunt, quomodo nunquam Deus Ecclesiam suam deserat, & in locum deficientium a vera fide, innumeros alios in abditissimis etiam regionibus substituat*, dated 1571, and the *Historiarum Indicarum Libri XVI. Selectarum item ex India Epistolarum eodem interprete Libri IV*, dated 1588. The first was the first attempt at an official history of the mission in Asia (particularly in Japan), while the second, which devoted four of its sixteen volumes to Japan, is probably the most complete and reliable sixteenth-century historical account of the Japanese Jesuit mission. Maffei is discussed in Asami 2002, 14-9.

cluded, in his cosmographical work, *L'Universale fabrica del mondo* (1573), lengthy chapters about Japan and China that relied heavily upon the Jesuit sources. Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485-1557) added to the 1554 edition of his *Navigazioni et viaggi* the Italian translation of some of the earliest Jesuit letters on Japan. Richard Willes (1558-73), editor of the *History of Travayle* (1577), included in his work a discussion "Of the Island Giapan" based on Jesuit sources, while Richard Hakluyt (1553-1616), author of one of the greatest collections of travel literature in the English language (*The principal navigations, voyages and discoveries of the English nation, made by sea or over land*, first published in 1590) incorporated in his work most of the letters of Father Luis Frois on Japan.

On a more indirect level, the reports, in a way that anticipated later writings on China and the current of seventeenth-century sinophilism, fed universalistic theories that were already surfacing in European political thought. Lach (1977, 235-52) has underlined, for example, how the Jesuit writing on both Japan and China added to an interest in cultural alternatives that found its expression in the writings of such thinkers as Giovanni Botero (1544-1617).

This influence was particularly significant after 1585. Of course, Jesuit writers did not doubt the privileged status of Christendom, and the perspective of their representations of Japan remained extremely partial. Letters did not respond to objectivity in the modern sense of the term, but were conceived as rhetorical devices. As such, they interpreted and assimilated Japan through Eurocentric categories. However, by presenting Christianity as an integration rather than an alternative to Japanese culture, they set a comparison between cultures that helped open the space to a sense of cultural relativism previously unknown to Europe - one that calls for further study.

Appendix**Sixteenth-Century Vernacular Italian Letter-Books About Japan:
a Bibliography**

In Italy, the following books including letters by Jesuit missionaries stationed in Japan were published between 1552 and 1601. These include both first editions, and reprinted editions of earlier works. Some books consist in but one letter, but most of them are collections. As a whole, the letter-books include a total of about a hundred letters.

All texts listed below are, as already mentioned, in the octavo book-format. In brackets are reported the consistencies found in Italian libraries.

Avisi particolari delle Indie di Portogallo. Ricevuti in questi doi anni del 1551. & 1552. da li reverendi padri de la Compagnia de Iesu, dove fra molte cose mirabili, si vede delli paesi delle genti, & costumi loro & la grande conversioe di molti populi, che cominciano a ricevere il lume della santa fede & relligione christiana.

Rome: Valerio Dorico, et Luigi fratelli Bressani, 1552. (11)

Nuoui auisi delle Indie di Portogallo riceuti questo anno del 1553. doue si tratta della conuersione di molte persone principali & tra li altri d'un re signore de 11000. isole, con vna descrizione delli costumi de i giaponesi nostri antipodi & come loro riceuono la nostra santa fede.

Rome: Valerio Dorico, et Luigi fratelli Bressani, 1553. (2)

Avisi particolari delle Indie di Portogallo. Nouamente hauuti questo anno del 1555 da li R. padri della Compagnia di Iesu doue si ha informatione delle gran cose che si fanno per aumento de la santa fede. Con la descriptione e costumi del Regno de la China, & altri paesi incogniti nouamente trouati.

Rome: Antonium Bladum, 1556. (5)

Diversi avisi particolari dall'Indie di Portogallo ricevuti, dall'anno 1551. sino al 1558. dalli Reverendi padri della compagnia di Giesv. Dove s'intende delli paesi, delle genti, et costumi loro, et la grande conversione di molti populi, che hanno ricevuto il lume della santa fede, et religione Christiana. Tradotti nuouamente dalla lingua Spagnuola nella Italiana.

Venice: Michele Tramezzino, [1558].²⁵ (1)

Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1565. (1)

²⁵ The publication date is tentative, derived from the preface.

Nuovi avisi dell'Indie di Portogallo, ricevuti dalli Reverendi Padri della compagnia di Giesu, tradotti dalla lingua Spagnuola nell'Italiana.

Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1559. (22)
Venice: Tramezzino, 1568. (1)

Nuovi avisi dell'Indie di Portogallo, Riceuuti dalli Reuerendi Padri della compagnia di Giesu, tradotti dalla lingua Spagnuola nell'Italiana, Terza parte. Col priuilegio del Sommo Pontefice, et dell'Illustrissimo Senato Veneto per anni XX.

Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1562. (1)

Nuovi avisi dell'Indie di Portogallo, Venuti nuouamente dalli R. Padri della compagnia di GIESV, & tradotti dalla lingua Spagnuola nella Italiana. Quarta parte. Col priuilegio del Sommo Pont. Pio IIII. Et dell'Illustriss. Senato Veneto per anni XX.

Venice: Tramezzino, 1580. (1)

Lettere del Giappone de gli anni 74, 75, & 76. Scritte dalli reuerendi padri della Compagnia di Giesu, & di portughese tradotte nel volgare italiano.

Rome: Zanetti, 1578. (5)
Rome: Zanetti, 1579.
(included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).
Naples: eredi di Matteo Cancer, 1580. (1)

Lettere del Giappone scritte dalli reuerendi Padri della Compagnia di Giesu. Dell'anno 1577.

Brescia: Giacomo e Policreto Turlini, 1580. (8)
Naples: eredi di Matteo Cancer, 1580 (with the alternative title *Lettere del Giappone dell' anno MDLXXVII scritte dalli reuerendi padri della Compagnia di Giesu*). (1)

Lettere dell'India orientale, Scritte da' Reuerendi Padri della Compagnia di Giesv'. Nelle quali si scopre la grande arte vsata de gli istessi, per liberar l'anime degli infideli Indiani dalla potestà del nimico infernale, et ridurle alla nostra santa fede. Nouamente stampate, & ampliate in molti luoghi, & ricorrette con diligenza.

Venice: Antonio Ferrari, 1580. (11)

Alcune lettere delle cose del Giappone. Dell'anno 1579. Insino al 1581.

Rome: Zanetti, 1584. (15)

Rome: Zanetti, 1584 (with the alternative title *Alcune lettere delle cose del Giappone. Scritte da' reuerendi Padri della Compagnia di Iesu. Dell'anno 1579. insino al 1581*).

Rome: Zanetti, 1584. (20)

Naples: Orazio Salviani e Cesare Cesari, 1584 (with the alternative title *Alcune lettere delle cose del Giappone. Scritte da' reuerendi padri della Compagnia di Iesu. Dell'anno 1579 infino al 1581*). (1)Brescia: Vincenzo Sabbio, 1584 (with the alternative title *Alcune lettere delle cose del Giappone, paese del mondo nouo, dell'anno 1579 insino al 1581*). (6)

Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1584. (7)

Venice: Giolito, 1585. (5)

Lettera annale portata di nouo dal Giappone delle cose ivi successe l'anno M D LXXXII.

Venice: Giolito, 1585. (11)

Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1585 (with the alternative title *Lettera annale delle cose del Giappone del 1582*). (11)Rome: Zanetti, 1585 (with the alternative title *Lettera annale delle cose del Giappone del 1582*). (17)*Avisi del Giappone de gli anni MDLXXXII, LXXXIII et LXXXIV. Con alcuni altri della Cina dell'LXXXIII e LXXXIV. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù.*

Rome: Zanetti, 1586. (13)

Rome: Zanetti, 1586. (29)

Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1586. (5)

Venice: Giolito, 1586 (with the alternative title *Nvovi avvisi del Giappone con alcvni altri della Cina, del LXXXIII, et LXXXIV cavati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesv'*). (1)Venice: Giolito, 1586 (with the alternative title *Nvovi avvisi del Giappone con alcvni altri della Cina, del LXXXIII, et LXXXIV cavati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesv'*). (1)*Viaggio nell'India Orientale.*

Venice: Andrea Muschio, 1587 (included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).

Avvisi della Cina et Giappone del fine dell'anno 1586. Con l'arriuo delli signori Giaponesi nell'India. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù. Riceuute il mese d'ottobre 1588.

Rome: Zanetti, 1588. (12)

Rome: Zanetti, 1588 (with the alternative title *Auuisi della Cina et Giappone del fine dell'anno 1587. Con l'arriuo delli signori giaponesi nell'India. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù. Riceuute il mese d'ottobre 1588*). (5)

Rome: Zanetti, 1588.

(included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).

Rome then Verona: Discepolo Girolamo, 1588. (3)

Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1588. (2)

Naples: Horatio Salviani, 1588. (2)

Venice: Giolito, 1588 (with the alternative title *Auuisi della Cina, et Giappone del fine dell'anno 1587. Con l'arriuo de' signori giaponesi nell'India. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù, riceuute il mese d'ottobre 1588*). (7)

Antwerp: Christoforo Plantino, 1588 (included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).

Brescia: Vincenzo Sabbio, 1588 (included in some of the bibliographies, but no actual consistencies found).

Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1589. (3)

Raguaglio d'vn notabilissimo naufragio, cauato d'vna lettera del padre Pietro Martinez, scritta da Goa al molto reuerendo P. generale della Compagnia di Giesu alli 9. di Decembre 1586.

Rome: Zanetti, 1588. (8)

Venice: Giolito, 1588. (7)

Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1588. (3)

Raccolta di molti auuisi del Giappone dell'anno 1582 fin all'87. Doue si tratta del progresso della fede christiana, delle varie riuolutioni, e mutationi de' Stati di quel paese, d'vna gran persecutione contra i fedeli, & altre cose notabili. Con alcun'altri auuisi della China dell'anni 83. & 84. Cauati dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesu.

Rome: Zanetti, 1590. (1)

Lettera annale del Giappone scritta al padre della Compagnia [sic !] di Giesu alli XX. di Febraio M.D.LXXXVIII.

Rome: Zanetti, 1590. (20)

Palermo: Giovanni Antonio De Franceschi, 1590. (1)

Brescia: Vincenzo Sabbio, 1590 (with the alternative title *Lettera annale del Giappone scritta, al padre generale della Compagnia di Giesù alli 20 di febraio 1588. Con l'auiso ancora dell'arriuo delli signori giaponesi, all'isola di Macao, del regno della China*). (5)

Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1590 (with the alternative title *Lettera annale del Giappone scritta al padre generale della Compagnia di Giesù Alli 20. di febraro 1588*). (6)

Lettere del Giappone, et della Cina de gl'anni M.D. LXXXIX & M.D. XC. Scritte al r.p. generale della Compagnia di Giesu.

Rome: Zanetti, 1591. (18)
 Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1592. (3)
 Venice: Giovanni Battista Ciotti, 1592. (8)
 Brescia: Vincenzo Sabbio, 1592. (4)

Ragguaglio d'alcune missioni delle Indie Orientali, & Occidentali. Cavato da alcun auisi scritti gli anni 1590. et 1591.

Rome: Zanetti, 1592. (10)
 Rome: Zanetti, 1592. (7)
 Rome, Turin: Zanetti, 1593. (3)
 Naples: Giovanni Giacomo Carlino e Antonio Pace, 1593. (1)
 Bologna: Benacci, 1593 (with the alternative title *Ragguaglio d'alcuni auisi notabili dell'Indie Orientali, & Occidentali. Con l'arriuo delli signori ambasciatori Giaponesi alli loro stati. Cauato da alcune lettere scritte gli anni 1590. & 1591. Da i PP. Pietro Martinez prouinciale dell'India Orientale, Giouanni d'Atienza prouinciale del Peru, Pietro Diaz prouinciale del Messico*). (2)

Copia di due lettere annue scritte dal Giappone del 1589. & 1590. L'vna dal p. viceprouinciale al p. Alessandro Valignano, l'altra dal p. Luigi Frois al p. Generale della Compagnia di Giesu. Et dalla spagnuola nella italiana lingua tradotte dal p. Gasparo Spitilli della Compagnia medesima.

Rome: Zanetti, 1593. (12)
 Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1593. (3)
 Brescia: Policreto Turlino, 1593. (1)
 Brescia: Policreto Turlino, 1598. (1)

Lettera del Giappone degli anni 1591. Et 1592. Scritta al R.P. generale della Compagnia di Giesu.

Rome: Zanetti, 1595. (11)
 Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1595. (2)
 Venice: Giovanni Battista Ciotti, 1595. (4)
 Mantova: Francesco Osanna, 1595. (1)

Lettera annua del Giappone del marzo del 1593, sino al marzo del 94.

Rome: Zanetti, 1597. (10)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1597. (1)

Copia di due lettere scritte dal P. Organtino bresciano della Compagnia di Giesu dal Meaco del Giappone. Al molto r. in Christo p.n. il p. Claudio Acquaiua preposito generale. Tradotte dal p. Gio. Battista Peruschi romano della medesima Compagnia.

Rome: Zanetti, 1597. (12)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1597. (5)
Verona: Girolamo Discepolo, 1597. (1)

Ragguaglio della morte di Quabacondono, scritta dal p. Luigi Frois della Compagnia di Giesu, dal Giappone nel mese d'ottobre del 1595. Et dalla portoghese nella lingua italiana tradotta dal P. Gasparo Spitilli di Campli.

Rome: Zanetti, 1598. (11)

Copia d'vna lettera annua scritta dal Giappone nel 1595. al r. p. Claudio Acquaiua generale della Compagnia di Giesu. Et dalla portoghese nella lingua italiana tradotta dal p. Gasparo Spitilli.

Rome: Zanetti, 1598. (11)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1598. (5)

Relazione mandata da don Francesco Teglio gouernatore, e capitano generale dell'isole Filippine, intorno al martirio de i sei frati spagnuoli, dell'Ordine di San Francesco dell'osseruanza. Crocifissi nel Giappone l'anno 1597, con venti altre persone giapponese che con esso loro morirono, animati e conuertiti da gl'istessi santi frati, nella loro predicazione. In lingua spagnuola castigliana stampata in Siuiglia, e nell'italiana fauella tradotta dal r.p. frat'Angelo Celestino theologo, e predicatore nel Duomo di Firenze.

Rome: Niccolò Muzi, 1598. (1)
Venice: Marcello Iseppo, 1598. (1)
Urbino: Bartolomeo e Simone Ragusi, 1598. (1)
Rome: Francesco Osanna, 1598. (1)
Naples: Giacomo Carlino, 1599. (1)

Relatione della gloriosa morte di ventisei posti in croce per comando del re di Giappone, alli 5. di febbraio 1597. de' quali sei furono religiosi di S. Francesco, tre della Compagnia di Giesu, & dicisette christiani Giapponesi, mandata dal p. Luigi Frois alli 15. di marzo al r. p. Claudio Aquauiuua e fatta in italiano dal p. Gasparo Spitilli di Campli.

- Rome: Zanetti, 1599. (6)
Rome: Zanetti, 1599. (4)
Bologna: eredi di Giovanni Rossi, ad istanza di Gasparo Bindoni, 1599. (4)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1599. (3)

Trattato d'alcuni prodigii occorsi l'anno 1596. nel Giappone. Mandato dal p. Luigi Frois, della Compagnia di Giesu.

- Rome: Zanetti, 1599. (3)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte. (4)

Lettera annua del Giappone dell'anno 1596. Scritta dal p. Luigi Froes, al r.p. Claudio Acquaiuia generale della Compagnia di Giesù. Tradotta in italiano dal p. Francesco Mercati romano della stessa Compagnia.

- Rome: Zanetti, 1599. (11)
Milan: Pacifico Ponte, 1599. (2)
Venice (Padua): Francesco Bolzetta, 1599. (10)

Relatione del martirio, che sei padri scalzi di San Francesco et venti Giapponesi christiani patirono nel Giappone l'anno 1597. Scritta dal R.P. fra Gio. di Santa Maria & tradotta dalla lingua spagnuola nella italiana, per ordine del R.P. fra Giuseppe di Santa Maria.

- Rome: Niccolò Muzi, 1599. (2)
Naples: Antonio Pace, 1600. (1)

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