

Tenshō, *Diario di un pellegrinaggio giapponese alla curia romana (1585)*, *Fonti manoscritte e a stampa*, ed. by Paolo Giulietti, Olimpia Niglio, Carlo Pelliccia. Todi: Tau Editrice, 2025, 530pp. ISBN 9791259754974. €57.

The body of scholarly work regarding the 1584 to 1586 voyage of four adolescent Japanese converts to Catholicism from Japan to Europe and back, organized by Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606), the Jesuit general visitor of the missions to Asia, continues to grow. Having generated an important number of accounts at the time of the voyage that were published and circulated widely, the event, often signaled as a watershed meeting of Japan and Europe in the early modern age, has continued to inspire research. Scholars have scoured the paper trail, looking for hitherto unknown details of the interactions of these Japanese youths with Europe and Europeans. Until now, scholars could rely mainly on published and unpublished accounts of the journey and foray into Italy such as *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium*, published in Macao in 1590. This was attributed to Duarte de Sande but, as recent scholarship has almost decisively proved, was in fact authored by Valignano himself. Luís Fróis' *Tratado dos embaixadores japoneses que forão de Japão a Roma no anno de 1582*, only published in 1942, is another key text, as is Guido Gualtieri's *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giapponesi a Roma, fino alla partita di Lisbona*, published in Rome in 1586. The current book will certainly help to enrich and enhance research into the passage of the four Japanese adolescents through Italian lands and ultimately their meeting with the pope.

The title, *Diario di un pellegrinaggio giapponese alla Curia romana (1585)*, may seem a little misleading in that the book is not the publication of one source, one account, or a single diary of the voyage. Rather, it brings together multiple sources regarding the voyage throughout the Italian Peninsula, which are culled from different archival holdings. There are no documents tracing the journey from Nagasaki through Goa, then Portugal and Spain, in 1583–1584. Such documents have been published elsewhere and have been the attention of scholars for decades. The sources published in the *Diario* begin with the arrival in Livorno in March 1585 and end with the departure from Genoa in August of that same year. This large volume, made up of 530 pages, thus chronicles a mere six months of the journey. That said, the readers who this new book will reach can only be grateful that such a volume has been published, as it provides them with important and original sources, many of which had remained dormant in Italian archives for centuries. The attention given to the presentation of the sources, often relying on skilled archivists or scholars familiar with these documents culled from places like Perugia, Narni,

Camerino, Loreto, Ancona, Fano, Rimini, Imola, Bologna, Modena, and Venice, is reason enough to justify the publication of this book.

The choice of title is most fitting in that it departs from the widespread notion that the voyage amounted to an “embassy,” something Antonella Romano has already stressed was not the case, for we are contemplating an audacious two-way exercise in cross-cultural communication (“1585. L’Europe découvre le Japon” in *L’exploration du monde. Une autre histoire des Grandes Découvertes*, ed. Romain Bertrand (Le Seuil, 2019), 226–230). The three authors and editors of *Diario di un pellegrinaggio giapponese*, Paolo Giulietti, Olimpia Niglio, and Carlo Pelliccia, are seasoned scholars who have already dedicated years to the study of the Tenshō expedition. They emphasize in their *premissa* that, for the four young Japanese travelers, the voyage to the court of the pope was, in a very real sense, a pilgrimage that culminated in the meeting with the ailing Gregory XIII on March 22, 1585, and with the newly elected Sixtus V on several occasions, before their departure from the city in June 1585. The book takes special care, and rightly so, to reconstruct the long sojourn in the Eternal City, with many hitherto unknown documents held in several archives. The archives provide a wealth of new details and information that give us a completely new understanding of the travelers’ time in the city and their interactions with the Roman Curia and Roman society. The carefully choreographed voyage was of course much more than a religious pilgrimage: it provided for an exceptional series of intercultural encounters that left lasting impressions on both sides in early modern Italy. The sources so meticulously presented in this book rightly stress this aspect of encounter, with wonder and surprise throughout.

Diario di un pellegrinaggio giapponese is a very helpful register or source-book of the copious documents which serve to flesh out the story of the passage of the youths through Italy in 1585. At times entire archival documents are transcribed and published, while other times a photograph is provided along with a brief summary. On other occasions, the editors describe the contents in detail without actually publishing them. This irregular form of presentation remains understandable and indeed, it is surprising that the book manages to occupy only a little over 500 pages. For scholars, the mere fact that we are provided with the archival references of the documents is a priceless aid that is much appreciated. Without a doubt, the book will be valued for the intimate and new light it sheds on the 1585 pilgrimage and voyage. As such, it is clearly the most comprehensive, archivally grounded guide yet regarding the Italian reception of the Tenshō mission. It does not claim to, and indeed cannot, take the place of *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium*, which will continue to be the principal source for our knowledge of the Tenshō mission, but it permits

scholars to read that classic with a new take. This book could be of interest for university teaching in courses on early modern missions, global Catholicism, or relations between Europe and Asia. For scholars of early modern Italy and especially of Rome, it is of obvious interest.

The book itself was conceived within the Archdiocese of Lucca's *Thesaurum Fidei* initiative, which commemorates Catholic missionary outreach to Japan and the survival of that faith there, albeit in its hidden and often syncretic format, for centuries. It brings together no fewer than three dozen contributors from multiple institutions. That interdisciplinarity is not formal: archivists, historians, art historians, and librarians all leave their fingerprints on the chapters, which are arranged as city-by-city dossiers tracking the Tenshō voyage's Italian itinerary. The editorial introduction correctly frames the enterprise explicitly for what it is, namely a curated corpus of manuscript and printed sources – some which are newly surfaced, many newly contextualized. The readers of this register thus receive a meticulously chronicled “document road map” to 1585 Italy in addition to an account of the voyage of the four Japanese visitors to Europe.

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