

# Magdalen College MS. 228 and the Kirishitan Bunko Library Guia do Pecador

## —Further traces of Kirishitan Neo-Latin—

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### Abstract

The so-called Kirishitan in early modern Japan lived in a multilingual environment. As part of an ongoing project documenting their use of the Latin language, the author recently inspected two manuscripts, one at Magdalen College, Oxford, and another at the Kirishitan Bunko Library of Sophia University, Tokyo. In the former, the author discovered more traces of the use of Western languages (Latin and Portuguese) than had been reported in published sources, and uncovered signs of erasures by scraping which likewise had not been previously noted. As for the latter, the author, having inspected the original manuscript, proposes some minor improvements over a preexisting transcript prepared by Harada, and otherwise vindicates Harada's assertion that the text strongly suggests that the book to which the manuscript is attached was carried by the Japanese Kirishitan Thomas Araki himself from Japan to Italy. Together, these manuscript sources testify to the multilingual and transnational nature of the world in which the Kirishitan lived and through which the sparse and precious remains of their endeavor were to be scattered.

### 1. Introduction

Latin, the language of the ancient Romans, experienced a sort of revival (or return to “classical” standards) in Europe following the Renaissance. In the early modern period, the Jesuit Order, with its emphasis on education, became one of the foremost promoters of “good” (i.e. classical, but at the same time practical) Latin in the Catholic world.

The Jesuits were also the most heavily represented Catholic missionary group in early modern Japan, and their educational endeavor turned out a number of Japanese who produced Latin documents that survive to this day. The author is engaged in an ongoing project to document Japanese-authored Latin from the so-called Kirishitan period (roughly the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century). In the present contribution, the author wishes to share some discoveries made during his inspection of two documents from this period; a trilingual handwritten

textbook of Japanese origin which is kept at Magdalen College in Oxford, England, and a handwritten book dedication by the Japanese missionary Thomas Araki that is currently housed at the Kirishitan Bunko Library at Sophia University, Tokyo. These documents, which must have themselves traveled over many oceans and continents during the past several centuries, testify to the culturally and linguistically diverse world that the Japanese Kirishitan inhabited.

### 2. Latin Content in Magdalen College MS. 228

#### 2.1. The Manuscript

Magdalen College in Oxford has a Japanese manuscript codex which is thought to be of late 16<sup>th</sup>–early 17<sup>th</sup> century origin. It contains a partial translation of Gomez' *Compendium Catholicae Veritatis*, a comprehensive scientific, philosophical and theological textbook that was originally written in Latin for Japanese Jesuit college students in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>[1]</sup>

In the summer of 2014 and again of 2015, the author was permitted to inspect this remarkable manuscript at Magdalen College. It is interesting to note that Magdalen had kept this document for a long time, perhaps from as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, without anyone apparently realizing what it was. The manner in which Magdalen acquired it remains a mystery, and its earliest known record is from an 1852 catalog entry which identifies it as a Chinese manuscript. It was only around 1995 that Dr. Christine Y. Ferdinand, who had just become the Magdalen Librarian, began to contact specialists at Oxford and elsewhere in an effort to identify its content. Her initiatives first led to the discovery that the manuscript was not Chinese but Japanese, then eventually to the realization that it was one of the very few primary documents surviving from the context of *Kirishitan* Jesuit college education.<sup>[2]</sup>

## 2.2. The Languages in MS. 228

The manuscript is mostly in Japanese, but it also contains marginal notes as well as inserted and interlinear texts in Latin and Portuguese. Of these, the former predominates, but the latter is definitely present. The following list of human organs from f. 6r. is a clear example of the use of Portuguese.

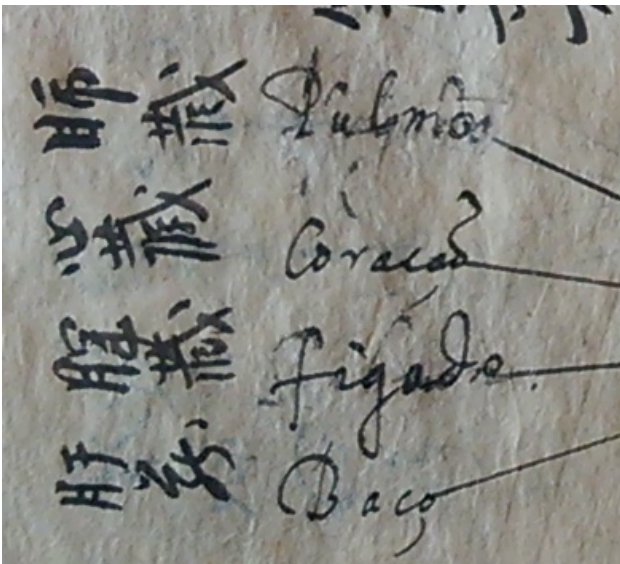


Fig. 1 Magdalen College MS.228 f.6r.

The first line, for example, has the Japanese for

“lung” followed by its Portuguese equivalent. Judging from the position of the lines, the Portuguese text is not a later addition but must be part of the original composition. It is not clear however what the editorial policy was behind the insertion of Portuguese or Latin here or elsewhere. The next page (f.6v.) has a similar diagram but the inserted text is in Latin.

Üçerler, in his published description of MS. 228, selectively and by way of example as he himself says, identifies Latin marginalia on the following folia: 18v., 25v., 27r., 31r., 39r.<sup>[3]</sup> In addition to these, the current author identified the following folia which preserve Latin marginalia: 14r., 25r., 28v., 38v., 43r., 54r., 158v., 160v., 212v. Furthermore, Latin (and sometimes Portuguese) inserted in the main Japanese text can be found on the following folia: 1r., 1v., 2r., 4v., 5r., 5v., 6r. (Portuguese), 6v., 10r., 10v., 11r., 14v., 22v., 28r., 49r., 69r., 81v. (crossed out), 82r., 82v., 83r., 83v., 84r., 95v., 112r., 127r., 143r., 148r.-148v. (the Nicene and Apostolic Creeds), 149r., 156r., 169r., 176r. (perhaps Portuguese), 186r. (partly Portuguese), 210r. (Portuguese), 211r., 331r., 332r. (partly Portuguese), 332v. Lastly, interlinear texts in Latin are found on the following folia: 333r., 353r. Of interesting note is one marginal note written in Japanese, but using the Roman alphabet, on f. 354v.

## 2.3. Erasure by Scraping

Most of these Latin and Portuguese texts, to be sure, can be seen clearly in the 1997 *Ōzorasha* facsimile, and one does not necessarily need to consult to original manuscript to read them. However, while inspecting the manuscript at Magdalen, the current author also discovered signs of erasure by scraping in a number of places, which would be impossible to detect in the facsimile. In the original manuscript on the other hand, the scraping is not hard to see, as the affected spaces have a dent with slightly roughened surface on the abraded side, as well as a slight bulge on the opposite side.

The scraping away seem mostly, if not exclusively, to have been applied to marginal notes rather than the main text. The following folia have such erasures: 1r., 11v., 13v., 24v., 43v., 268r. From conversations with Sino-Japanese manuscript specialists, the author has

learned that erasure by scraping is not a commonly seen practice in East Asia. The issue probably deserves further investigation.

In certain places, due to weak scraping as well as from context, the erased text may still be decipherable. I give one example below:

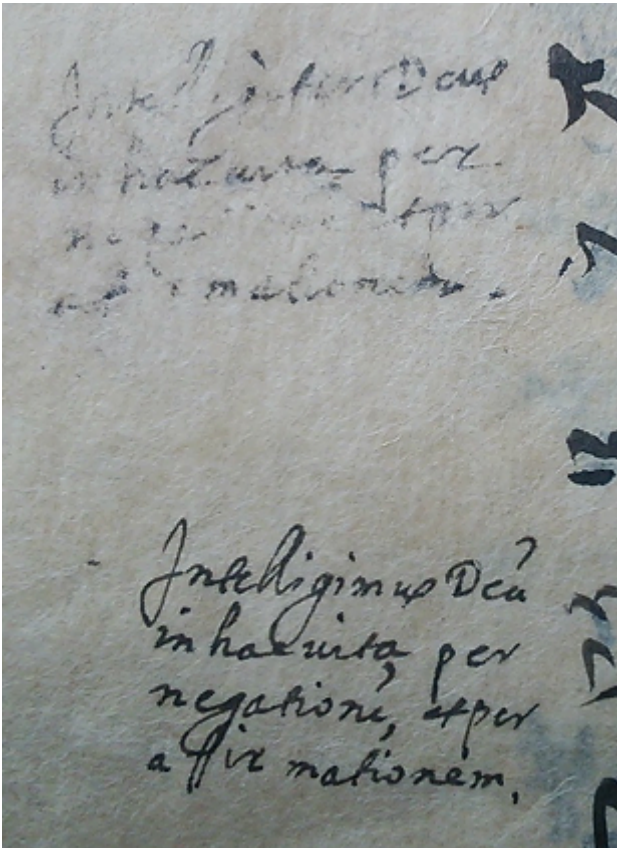


Fig. 2 Magdalen College MS. 228 f.43r.

In the above, the extant marginal note reads: “Intelligimus Deum in hac vita per negationem, et per affirmationem” (We understand God in this life through negation and through affirmation). The erased text above it seems to have been: “Intelligitur Deus in hac vita per negationem et per affirmationem” (God is understood in this life through negation and through affirmation). They are nearly identical, with only a slight grammatical difference. Whether the correction was motivated by a desire to change the grammar or just to change the position of the note remains to be seen. But in any case, this and other instances of correction do suggest that this multi-lingual manuscript

was produced with considerable care and underwent revisions.

### 3. Thomas Araki’s Handwritten Dedication in the Kirishitan Bunko Library Guia do Pecador

#### 3.1. Thomas Araki

Thomas Araki (?-1646 or 1649), also known as Pedro Antonio Araki, was a Japanese missionary with a colorful international career. A native of Japan, he travelled to Rome in the early 1600’s, became a protégé of the famous cardinal and later saint Robert Bellarmine, and was ordained priest there around 1611. He then returned to Japan circa 1615 and apostatized in 1619. After apostasy he is recorded to have cooperated with anti-Christian persecutors and seems to have been active also as a merchant in Nagasaki.<sup>[4]</sup>

#### 3.2. The Manuscript

It has been known for some time that a Japanese translation of the Catholic doctrinal guide Guia de Pecadores (known by its Portuguese title, Guia do Pecador) printed in 1599 and discovered in 1996 in the Gesù Church in Rome has a Latin handwritten note by Thomas Araki on its flyleaf.<sup>[6]</sup> The volume has since been transferred to the Kirishitan Bunko Library at Sophia University, Tokyo, where the author had the opportunity to inspect it in 2015. Araki’s note has been transcribed and translated by Harada already, but he relied on a facsimile and his translation is in Japanese.<sup>[5]</sup> The new transcription below, which differs from Harada’s in a couple of places, is (to the author’s knowledge) the first full published version that is made from the original, and the translation is also the first one to be made available in English.

#### 3.3. Thomas Araki’s Dedication: Transcripts, Translation and Discussion

The hand is practiced, clear cursive in black ink. In some places however the lines are blurry with the ink bleeding into the paper.

The flyleaf itself consists of two layers. There is a thin, translucent top layer which appears to have been pasted onto a thicker piece of paper, and at present the two layers are beginning to separate near the edges, putting bits of the top layer in danger of being lost.

This thin top layer, which has the handwriting, is in a fragile condition and is disintegrating, especially on the right side. The ink seems to be at least partly responsible for the disintegration, as some of the letters are now visible only as holes on the top layer where the ink seems to have eaten through the paper, so to speak.

In what follows, the author first gives the “diplomatic transcript” which keeps all the abbreviations, followed by a discussion of those places where my reading differs from Harada’s. This is followed by a “reading transcript” which expands the abbreviations and uses standard spelling and punctuation, and then an English translation of the entire text.

Diplomatic transcript:

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Ego Petrus Ant<sup>o</sup> Arachius Japponen  
sis presbiter, ut nonnullam erga Roma  
nū collegium Societatis Iesu, in quo  
Rhetoricæ, philosophiæ, & Theologiæ 5  
studiis per aliquot anno[rū spatiū] operam  
dedi, grati animi signi[fi]cationem  
exhibeam, quādo ali[as] præ mea  
tenuitate non possum, librum  
hunc, quo recta ad salutem uia 10  
peccatori mōstratur, ex hispani  
ca lingua in Iapponicam trāsla  
tum, & in Japp<sup>a</sup> excusū, eidem  
Rom<sup>o</sup> colleg<sup>o</sup> dono do. optans  
magnopere, ut ab iis, qui i[psum] 15  
viderint, nō rei ipsius, quæ [(ets)i  
aliqua peregrinitatis rō ha[bend]a  
sit) nulla plane est, sed animi  
precium æstimetur.

Petr<sup>9</sup> Ant<sup>o</sup> Arachius 20

6. anno[rū spatiū] conieci; Harada et Obara aliquot  
annos 8. ali[as] conieci; Harada et Obara alius.

On line, 6, Harada and Obara<sup>[7]</sup> read “aliquot annos operam.” However, the lacuna between “anno[s]” and “operam” is long enough to contain four or so letters, and the present author proposes “aliquot anno[rū spatiū] operam.” On line 8, the author conjectures “ali[as]” in the manuscript and this fits the context, while Harada and Obara read “alius.”

“Reading” transcript:

“Ego Petrus Antonius Arachius Iaponensis presbyter, ut nonnullam erga Romanum collegium Societatis Iesu, in quo rhetoricae, philosophiae, et theologiae studiis per aliquot annorum spatium operam dedi, grati animi significationem exhibeam, quando alias prae mea tenuitate non possum, librum hunc, quo recta ad salutem via peccatori monstratur, ex Hispanica lingua in Iaponicam translatus et in Iaponia excusus, eidem Romano collegio dono do, optans magnopere, ut ab iis, qui ipsum viderint, non rei ipsius, quae (etsi aliqua peregrinitatis ratio habenda sit) nulla plane est, sed animi pretium aestimetur. Petrus Antonius Arachius.”

English translation:

“I, Pedro Antonio Araki, a Japanese priest, in order to show some sign of my grateful heart toward the Roman College of the Society of Jesus, in which I labored over the study of rhetoric, philosophy, and theology for the space of several years, since, due to my poverty, I am not capable in any other way, give as a gift this book, in which the straight path toward salvation is shown to the sinner, translated from the Spanish language into Japanese, and printed in Japan, to the same Roman College, wishing greatly that by those, who should see it, the price of not the thing itself, which, even though some account should be had of its foreignness, is plainly nothing, but of the heart be appreciated. Pedro Antonio Araki.”

Thomas Araki shows considerable dexterity in Latin in his surviving letter from Macao dated January 3 1615, and in this document too, which was presumably written around 1610 near the end of his stay in Rome, his skill is evident. Evident also is a sense of showmanship and pride, with the ambitious syntax and gigantic period, which however is understandable, not to say excusable, in the context of a dedicatory text.

Other than his style of Latin, one important piece of information which the text conveys is that Thomas Araki personally gave the volume as a gift (lines 13~14) to the Roman College. As Harada<sup>[5]</sup> asserts, and contrary to what other researchers have said (to the effect that Araki simply found or read the volume in Rome),<sup>[6][7]</sup> this most probably means that the volume, or at any rate its sheets which were printed in Nagasaki

in 1599, were carried by Araki as he travelled from Japan to Italy.

#### 4. Conclusion

In popular Japanese thought, internationalization and globalization are frequently associated with the modern period, though scholars have pointed out that there had been many waves of internationalization that affected the archipelago before. The early modern Japanese Kirishitan were one group of people who experienced such a wave of early internationalization, and their case is of particular interest as they were exposed to European culture, and internalized it to such a degree that some of them could produce fluent texts in Latin, the learned language of the West. Even though arguably their cultural endeavor, as remarkable as it was, failed to mature into a significant continuous tradition in Japan, the multilingual remnants of their efforts to learn Western culture and sometimes integrate it with native traditions, which survive in diverse places around the world (often under mysterious circumstances), testify to the sometimes surprising resourcefulness and flexibility of our ancestors.

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the 1599 copy of Japanese *Guia do Pecador*, and to the librarians of the same Library for their manifold assistance while doing so and preparing this contribution.

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**Abstract (Japanese)**

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いわゆる日本人キリシタンは多言語環境の中で生きていた。著者は継続中の日本人キリシタンによるラテン語使用を記録するプロジェクトの一環として、最近2点の写本資料を調査する機会を得た。うち1点はオックスフォード大学モードリンカレッジ所蔵、もう1点は上智大学キリシタン文庫所蔵のものである。前者において、著者は今まで出版物で報告されている以上の西洋言語（ラテン語とポルトガル語）使用の痕跡、また今まで気づかれていなかった、摩擦による訂正跡も発見した。そして後者については、複写版より作成された原田による校訂テキストに、現物を見分した上で些細ではあるが訂正を加え、また原田の主張、つまりこのテキストの内容は、テキストの付随する本を日本人キリシタン荒木トマス自身が日本からイタリアに持参したことを強く示唆しているという意見に全面的に賛成するに至った。いずれにせよ、これらの文書は日本人キリシタンが生きた、そして彼等の文化的学習努力の希少な遺物が散らばっていた世界の多言語性や豊かな国際性を示している。

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Key words : キリシタン, ラテン語, ポルトガル語



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