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bpjs.cham@fcsb.unl.pt

Universidade Nova de Lisboa

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Roque de Oliveira, Francisco

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BY JOÃO RODRIGUES TÇUZU SJ

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A TREATISE INSIDE A TREATISE: CHINESE MATTERS IN THE *HISTORIA DA IGREJA DO JAPÃO* BY JOÃO RODRIGUES TÇUZU SJ*

Francisco Roque de Oliveira

University of Lisbon

Abstract

In the first chapters of the unfinished manuscript of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão* (c.1627) the Portuguese Jesuit João Rodrigues Tçuzu articulates the general description of Japan and of its religions with a vast series of geographical and anthropological data on China. Within the context of the Jesuit prose of that time it is a unique methodological option, resulting from the author's correct perception as pertains to the decisive influence that Chinese culture had in East Asia. Despite the numerous problems related with the textual systemization of those Chinese matters, it results in a brief descriptive treaty about China. It is also the first relevant synthesis on the subject written in China itself after the work left by Matteo Ricci in 1610. Starting from Rodrigues' biography and from the context that allowed the writing of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, in this informal treaty about China we will try to distinguish the segments that resulted from Rodrigues' personal experience throughout his years of exile in Macao and his journeys through the Middle Empire (1610-1633), from those in which he used complementary sources: eastern or European, classical or modern. Since the author worked on this text until the end of his life, we will follow the same traces of construction and textual transmission of the sections about China of the *Historia do Japão* through the complementary reading of Rodrigues's *Breve aparato pera a Historia de Japam melhor se entender*, an autograph and unpublished manuscript kept at the Academia de la Historia, in Madrid.

Resumo

Nos capítulos introdutórios do manuscrito inacabado da Historia da Igreja do Japão (c. 1627), o jesuíta português João Rodrigues Tçuzu articula a descrição geral do Japão e das suas religiões com uma vasta série de dados geográficos e antropológicos sobre a China. No quadro da prosa jesuítica da época, trata-se de uma opção metodo-

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lógica original, resultante da correcta percepção que o autor teve da influência decisiva que a cultura chinesa exerceu sobre toda a Ásia Oriental. Apesar de a sistematização dessas matérias chinesas apresentar inúmeros problemas de forma e de conteúdo, o facto é que acaba por resultar num breve tratado descritivo sobre a China e na primeira síntese relevante sobre o tema que foi escrita na própria China depois da obra legada por Matteo Ricci em 1610. Partindo da biografia de Rodrigues e do contexto que propiciou a escrita da Historia da Igreja do Japão, trataremos de distinguir neste tratado informal sobre a China os segmentos que resultaram da experiência pessoal que Rodrigues acumulou durante os anos do seu exílio em Macau e nas suas viagens através do Império do Meio (1610-1633), daqueles para os quais o autor utilizou fontes escritas complementares, orientais ou europeias, clássicas ou modernas. Uma vez que o autor trabalharia neste texto até ao final da sua vida, seguiremos a mesma pista da construção e transmissão textual das secções alusivas à China da Historia do Japão através da leitura complementar do Breve aparato pera a Historia de Japam melhor se entender, manuscrito autógrafo e inédito de Rodrigues guardado na Academia de la Historia, em Madrid.

要約

ポルトガル人イエズス会士ジョアン・ロドリゲス・ツズによる手書き未完成原稿『日本教会史』(C. 162) は日本とその宗教についての広域にわたる概要が中国との地理的及び人類学的な関連から導入されている。当時のイエズス会と異なる見解は、中国文化が東アジアに与えてきた影響を正確に認識していた著者ならではである。書き込みの構成に問題が残るが、中国について端的に論じている。また、同様のテーマで1610年マテオ・リッチによって中国で記されているが、その後初の小論文である。ロドリゲスの経歴から始め『日本教会史』を記した当時の状況へと進めたが、この非公式記述にみられる中国に関しては、マカオへ追放されていた時期のロドリゲスの個人的経験を情報源とするもの及び中国本土への旅(1610-1633)からくる経験と、東洋と西欧、旧と新といった補足的情報源によるものとに区分を試みた。著者は終生この記述に取り組んだこともあり、中国に関する事項では未発表のロドリゲス自筆原稿 *Breve aparato pera a Historia de Japam melhor se entender* (Academia de la Historia)、マドリッド) の記述を補足とした。

Keywords:

João Rodrigues Tçuzu SJ, History of the Church of Japan, China, Geographic and Anthropological reports, Jesuit historiography, Intertextual studies, 17th century

João Rodrigues Tçuzu SJ, História da Igreja do Japão, China, Descrições geográficas e antropológicas, Historiografia jesuítica, Estudos intertextuais, Século XVII

ジョアン・ロドリゲス・ツジ・SJ、日本教会史、中国、地理的、人類学的な記述、イエズス会の史書、テキスト相互性研究、17世紀

1. Rodrigues in China: exile and writing

At a certain stage of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, Father João Rodrigues Tçuzu (1561-1633) explains the reason why he decided to develop some contents about China in a title devoted to the Jesuit mission in the Nippon archipelago:

“During the course of this history, we must often refer to this kingdom [of China], its provinces, cities, customs, writing, and religion, because the Japanese took the most important of what they possess from this kingdom, and so it as necessary to give more information about this kingdom than about others. But as this may well be done elsewhere, we will mention only briefly here what is sufficient for our purpose”.¹

Although Rodrigues, as quoted, postponed the development of these general matters concerning the geography, anthropology and history of China for a later stage, we will see that they would ultimately occupy an important place in the structure of the *Historia do Japão*. By doing this Rodrigues reveals that he is in tune with the main Portuguese chroniclers, historians and geographers of the 16th and 17th centuries who were, at the same time, the pioneers of European Orientalism: João de Barros, Diogo do Couto or António Bocarro, for instance, just to mention the “trinity” elected by Charles Boxer.² Just as any of these secular authors did when writing the chronicle of Portuguese military and political achievements in Asia, the exercise proposed by Rodrigues focuses on describing the fundamental characteristics of the societies in which the Jesuit missionaries worked. In addition: Rodrigues’ perception of the profound historical and cultural consanguinity that exists between the Japanese and the Chinese worlds leads him to study both societies at the same time. In summary, here we have a European author who carries out an exercise of “compared cultural anthropology” in which the object of the study is provided by two Asian civilizations. Even if there were no other motive, the mere fact that a decentralized availability of a Eurocentric perspective exists would be enough for the geographical and

1 Michael Cooper (ed.), *João Rodrigues’ Account of Sixteenth-Century Japan*, bk 1, ch. 1, p. 24 (João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, p. 36; Lisbon, Biblioteca da Ajuda, 49-IV-53, f. 9r).

2 Cf. Charles Ralph Boxer, ‘Three historians of Portuguese Asia’, pp. 3-32.

anthropological reports that this book contains to take on the relevance we believe they have.³

We know that shortly after the Portuguese arrived in Tanegashima (1542-1543), several reports about Japan gathered in India by the Jesuit missionaries started to include comparisons between aspects of the Japanese reality and aspects of the Chinese culture from which it was believed the former originated. In the account entitled *Emformação da ilha de Japão*, whose authorship is assigned to the Japanese Anbsei Yajirô (Paulo de Santa Fé) and was included by Francisco Xavier in the *Livro que trata das cousas da Índia e do Japão* (c. 1548), a brief note referring to Buddha and to the diffusion of Buddhism in Asia articulates this key question of the religious identity of both nations.⁴ Jorge Álvares, a Portuguese adventurer who was at that very same time one of the most experienced men in navigating the China Sea, also contributed to that *Livro* compiled by Governor Garcia de Sá with one *Emformação* about Japan. In that text, the topic about Japanese religion was again perceived after a series of similarities with what Álvares himself saw in China.⁵ About thirty-five years later, Father Alessandro Valignano would also rely on his personal experience in East Asia to add an important note to the question of the origin of Buddhism in Japan that marks the Chinese roots of the Japanese writing system.⁶

As the knowledge of these two cultures became deeper, the written speech of the Jesuits – in ethnographic, historiographical, epistolary, apologetic and even catechetical form – will be revealed to be more abundant in this type of correspondence. As an example we have the passage of colloquy XXXIII of the dialogue *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam curiam* (Macao, 1590) where the two authors, Alessandro Valignano and Duarte de Sande, not only retrieved the majority of the topics concerning the “sect of them which follow the instructions of Xaquam, or as the Chinese call him Xequiam” (i.e. Buddha), but also compare the social pre-eminence of the “Priests” of most Japanese religions with the subordinate character of Chinese Buddhism and Taoism.⁷ The same happens in the texts that João

3 Cf. Diogo Ramada Curto, *Cultura escrita (séculos XV a XVIII)*, pp. 119-130; José Manuel Garcia, ‘Préface’ [to Luís Fróis, *Traité sur les contradictions de mœurs entre Européens & Japonais*], pp. 31-38.

4 Adelino de Almeida Calado (ed.), *Livro das cousas da Índia e do Japão*, ch. XVII, pp. 63-64.

5 Idem, *ibidem*, ch. XVIII, pp. 105, 109.

6 Alessandro Valignano, *Historia de principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesus en las Indias Orientales*, Part I, ch. XXVIII, pp. 252, 254. Cf. Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, pp. 964-965.

7 [Alessandro Valignano &] Duarte de Sande, *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam curiam*, col. XXXIII, pp. 395, 396 (*An excellent treatise of the kingdom of China*, p. 106; *Diálogo sobre a Missão dos Embaixadores Japoneses à Cúria Romana*, p. 341). Cf. Sebastião Rodolfo

de Lucena, SJ included in *Historia da vida do padre Francisco Xavier* (Lisbon, 1600) relating to the same matters of transmission from the Chinese to the Japanese of the “books, falsities and idolatries of Xaquam’s *Fotoquês*”⁸ and the manifestations of authority that the bonzes exhibited in Japan and that the power of the mandarins apparently prevented from being repeated in China.⁹ However, until the *Historia da Igreja do Japão* was written, no European author – religious or secular, writing in Europe or in the East – would be as thorough in establishing parallels between the material reality and the customs of the Chinese and Japanese people as was João Rodrigues in his manuscript.

João Rodrigues’ biography is a decisive element to understand the reason why the introductory chapters of the *Historia do Japão* integrate such a valuable approach to Chinese culture and Chinese daily life. In addition to the months that he spent in Macao during 1596, when he went there to be ordained as a priest, Rodrigues remained in China for the last 23 years of his life. As widely reported, following the incident with the ship *Madre de Deus* and after having lived in Japan for more than three decades, in 1610 Rodrigues was cast out of the Japanese mission and took asylum in Macao. Once there, his superiors appointed him consultant of the Province of China. In 1612, Rodrigues accompanied a delegation of Portuguese merchants to the winter fair in Canton (Guangzhou), where he tried to negotiate a loan for the Japanese mission. Between June 1613 and June 1615, he travelled to the interior of China by indication of Father Francesco Pasio, who had been visitor in China and Japan (1611-1612). Amongst others cities he visited Nanjing and Beijing. Once back in Macao he became consultant of Jerónimo Rodrigues, Dean of Madre de Deus College, and there are some documents confirming his works as a preacher. Still in 1615 he returned to the Canton fair to discuss with the local mandarins a definite status for Ilha Verde (Green Island), a section of Macao’s territory that would remain under Jesuit possession until 1762.

In the years that followed the frustrated Dutch attempt to conquer Macao (1622), Rodrigues joined several Macao delegations that negotiated in Canton the reinforcement of the city defence. In 1628, he accompanied visitor André Palmeiro on a journey to Jesuit Residences in China, which ended with

Dalgado, *Glossário Luso-Asiático*, vol. 2, p. 421; Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, pp. 1017-18.

8 João de Lucena, *Historia da vida do Pe. Franc^o. Xavier*, bk. X, ch. XXIV, p. 881. ‘Fotoqué’, name given to those deities adored by Japanese Buddhists. Cf. Sebastião Rodolfo Dalgado, *Glossário Luso-Asiático*, vol. 1, p. 405.

9 João de Lucena, *Historia da vida do Pe. Franc^o. Xavier*, bk. X, ch. XXIV, pp. 882-883.

the presentation at Beijing Court of a memorial favourable to the interests of the Society of Jesus. He left Macao in the last weeks of 1628, profiting from the opportunity given by the military expedition that the Macao Senate sent to Beijing to help the agonizing Ming power against Manchu advances. In August 1630, Father Rodrigues returned to Macao with a request from the imperial Chinese Court to send a larger contingent of Portuguese soldiers. In October he accompanied that new force towards the north of China. Near Beijing, Rodrigues had a stately interview with the ambassadors of the King of Korea and showered them with gifts, including books, watches, arms, and a telescope. He returned to Macao in the beginning of 1633 and died there in the summer of the following year.¹⁰

Apart from what is contained in the unfinished project of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, we also know about the existence of a sample of writings belonging to the “Chinese period” of João Rodrigues’ life where a complementary inquest on the topics related with the Chinese mission and China itself can be traced. There is some information that says that Rodrigues worked in Macao on compiling a catechism for common use in China and Japan, a text that is thought to be lost. The same might have happened with the majority of the texts that we know he wrote about the controversial adaptation of Christian terminology and liturgy to Chinese customs, a report that Rodrigues might have published in Chinese about the military expedition that Macao sent to help the Ming in 1628, his contribution to an Atlas of Asia in several volumes that would follow the *Theatrum orbis terrarum* model by Abraham Ortelius (Antwerp, 1570), and also what is thought to be a descriptive treaty of China.¹¹

On the other hand, we know the content of nine letters written by Rodrigues between 1611 and 1633 in Macao, Canton and Beijing. Amongst these we highlight the one he wrote in Macao on 21 November 1626, addressed to the Jesuit Father General in Rome. In it Rodrigues made the first European description of the Nestorian Stone of the 8th century found in 1623 near Xianfu (province of Shannxi), which had inscriptions in Syriac and Chinese and represented a fundamental testimony for the disclosure of the introduction of Christianity in China during the Tang dynasty.¹² Amongst these

10 Cf. Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus*, vol. 6, col. 1970-1974; Louis Pfister, *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine*, vol. 1, pp. 214-215; Michael Cooper, *Rodrigues, o intérprete*, pp. 277-301, 321-361; idem, *João Rodrigues' Account*, pp. XIX-XX; Jacques Bésineau, *Au Japon avec João Rodrigues*, pp. 193-199, 215-217; Francisco Roque de Oliveira, ‘João Rodrigues Tçuzu’.

11 Cf. Michael Cooper, *Rodrigues, o intérprete*, pp. 338-340; idem, *João Rodrigues' Account*, pp. XXII; Jacques Bésineau, *Au Japon avec João Rodrigues*, pp. 195-196.

12 João Rodrigues, letter to the Jesuit General, Macao, 21.XI.1626, Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), *Jap-Sin.*, 18, ff. 66r-70r.

letters we also highlight the one in which Rodrigues mentions the journeys he made throughout China and what he learnt about the geography between the Caucasus and Japan thanks to the Chinese maps and descriptions of Asia that he was able to see (letter written in Macao on 22 January 1616 to the Father General in Rome).¹³

One last reference to the unique context that induced the writing of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão*. We know for a fact that the request made in 1620 by the Jesuit Superior in Japan assigning Rodrigues to compile this book was already the fourth attempt made by those responsible for the Society in order to finish that project. In 1579, the historian Giovanni Pietro Maffei asked Father General Everard Mercurian to order Father Luís Fróis to make a *commentario* about the land, the politics and the wars related with the progress of the Jesuit mission in Japan.¹⁴ In mid-1584, Fróis might have received in Nagasaki the order from Rome entrusting him to carry out that project. He worked on it during the last 10 years of his life. Nevertheless, Alessandro Valignano never allowed Fróis' *Historia de Japam* manuscript to be sent to Europe because he considered it too long and imprecise for the targeted public.¹⁵ Valignano himself tried to fill the gap by starting a treaty entitled *Del Principio y Progreso de la Religion Christiana en Japon*, a task interrupted in 1601. Twelve years later he would order the same task from the Portuguese missionary Mateus de Couros. During the first half of the 1620s, Father Couros wrote a few times on how he was occupied with the preparation of that text, but the difficult Japanese situation would prevent him from concluding the work. The conditions for the project to pass to the experienced hands of Rodrigues were thus created.

Rodrigues' exile in Macao and his deep knowledge about Japan made him the most logical choice to carry out this review about the history of the Catholic Church in the Japanese archipelago.¹⁶ However, it would be the difficult events faced by the Japanese mission that would ultimately pressure the Jesuits to divulge a book like this one, which above all should be seen as propaganda for their works in Japan.

In fact, just like in 1601, when Valignano started and finished the first volume of the mentioned *Del Principio y Progreso de la Religion Christiana en Japon*, Rodrigues's *Historia* should begin by being understood as an

13 João Rodrigues, letter to the Jesuit General, Macao, 22.I.1616, ARSI, *Jap-Sin.*, 16, ff. 284r-288v.

14 Giovanni Pietro Maffei, letter to the Jesuit General Everard Mercurian, Coimbra, 6.XI.1579, ARSI, *Ep. Nostr.*, 95, f. 172v., in Luís Fróis, *Historia de Japam*, vol. 1, p. 397.

15 Cf. Luís Filipe Barreto, *Macao: Poder e Saber*, pp. 377-380.

16 Cf. Charles Ralph Boxer, 'Some Aspects of Western Historical Writing on the Far East', pp. 275-277.

answer to the pressure that the Mendicant Orders based in the Philippines were exerting on the Japanese territory. This aspect underlying the whole project is as important as the financial problems of the Mission and the consequent need to raise funds, a situation closely related to the increasing printing of this type of works. The Jesuits had just promptly reacted to the publication of *Historia de las Islas del Archipiélago, y Reynos de la Gran China* by Marcelo de Ribadeneyra OFM (Barcelona, 1601) with the edition of *Relación de las Islas Filipinas* by Pedro Chirino (Roma, 1604). Meanwhile, Pedro de Morejón, SJ, former Dean of the Kyoto seminar, had written over 400 *Apostillas* where he responded to the challenge presented in the second of the three known versions of *Relacion del Reino de Nippon* by Bernardino de Ávila Girón OFM (ms. 1615).¹⁷

In order to understand the complex political situation that frames the historiographical project given to Rodrigues, we should regard two additional aspects. A first realm to consider is that of the administrative separation of the Missions of Japan and China in relation to the Province of India (a trend that Rodrigues subscribes). A second realm to consider is that of the increasing pressure originating from the European interests that tried to remove the Chinese Mission from the Portuguese *Padroado* (a tendency that Rodrigues does not approve, as we can confirm by reading the attacks he launched against the tradition that Valignano and Ricci established about the nuclear question of Chinese liturgical terms).¹⁸ Up to a certain point, the emphasis given to China in the structure of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão* can be seen as a sign of this double ideological commitment.¹⁹

2. Form and content

It is the content and not the literary outline or internal structure that distinguishes the chapters of *Historia da Igreja do Japão* where Father João Rodrigues summarizes and articulates the physical and cultural scenarios that framed the Jesuit work in the Chinese and Japanese Missions. As mentioned, both the secular reference chronicles and the model of missionary history on which this book is based offered the reader a general idea about

17 Cf. Léon Bourdon, *La Compagnie de Jésus et le Japon*, p. 31.

18 Cf. Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, p. 162; João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, 'A rivalidade luso-espanhola no Extremo Oriente e a querela missionológica no Japão', pp. 489-496; idem, *O Cristianismo no Japão e o episcopado de D. Luís Cerqueira*, vol. 1, pp. 212-213, 417; idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, pp. 686-672.

19 Cf. Francisco Roque de Oliveira, 'Michael Cooper (ed.): *João Rodrigues's Account of Sixteenth-Century Japan*', pp. 118-119.

the geography, ethnography and customs of the contacted people. João de Lucena echoes this basic idea when he writes in his *Historia de Francisco Xavier* that all the readers expect to find a preamble with “a description about the emplacement, the qualities of the land, habits and civility of the people” whenever a region is described.²⁰ Rodrigues is no exception here. As he himself explains at a certain point of his manuscript, before analyzing the elements of ecclesiastical history it was necessary to offer a full description of the country, describing “its size, position, and names”, such as “its division into provinces, and many other things concerning the quality of the soil and its produce, and more relevantly, its customs, government, cult, and religion”.²¹

With this principle in mind, we have carried out three types of exercise that seemed more important to us for an analysis of the Chinese matter included in João Rodrigues’ *Historia do Japão*. First, we have identified the main information about China and the customs of its inhabitants integrated in Books 1 and 2 of the first volume. In order to do that we used the manuscript kept in Biblioteca da Ajuda in Lisbon. As is well known, it is a copy of the 18th century, from Macao’s Jesuit archives. This is the most complete manuscript left from this book.

Second, we have proceeded with an internal examination of the selected parts of the Ajuda manuscript. Our goal was to isolate the elements originating from the experience and observations of the author in China from those that came from printed or manuscript texts. In the subject related to textual transmission, Father Rodrigues actually worked as did most of his colleagues: on the one hand, he extensively used written western and Chinese sources; on the other, he did not identify a large part of the information that he reported in second or third hand. To understand the sense and the real dimension of this process is an essential precondition to comprehensively evaluate the originality, value and real authorship of the descriptions of China signed by Rodrigues.

Last, we have confronted the data analyzed in the Ajuda manuscript with the text from *Breve aparato pera a Historia de Japam melhor se entender*, an autograph manuscript by the author kept in the Academia de la Historia in Madrid. Although it is incomplete, the *Breve aparato* corresponds, *grosso modo*, to the general description of Asia that initiates the *Historia do Japão*. Nevertheless, Rodrigues introduced here several corrections and additional information about Chinese matters. The fact that Rodrigues worked on this

20 João de Lucena, *Historia da vida do Pe. Francº. Xavier*, bk. X, cap. XVII, p. 852.

21 Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues’ Account*, bk. 1, ch. t, p. 41 (adapted) (João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, p. 64; Ajuda text, ff. 16v-17r).

parallel text until the end of his life reinforces its importance as a testimony of the author's constant effort to update his knowledge about China, its geography and civilization. The main differences between the Chinese contents of both the *Breve aparato* and the manuscript from Biblioteca da Ajuda are briefly reviewed at the end of this essay.

The relative disorganization that characterizes Rodrigues' writing is an issue that does not allow an immediate understanding of the complete distribution of the notes about China in the main manuscript that remained from the *Historia do Japão*. In fact, the titles of each chapter and its subdivisions are not always explicit in separating Japanese issues from Chinese issues. On the other hand, a certain topic that has already been seen is often repeated several paragraphs or chapters further ahead without previous mention and sometimes even with a different content, almost as if it were an alternative version of the same subject. After reading the existing copy in Biblioteca da Ajuda, the immediate impression we get is that of an author who constantly rewrites his text, updating it whenever he has time for doing so. The textual character and quality of *Breve aparato* basically confirms this trend.

The modern reader has to restore a dispersed and somewhat repetitive text with limited vocabulary, which is the opposite of the literary sophistication exhibited by other Jesuit authors, such as Lucena or Maffei, for instance. Anyway, all of this is compensated not only by Rodrigues' unexcelled skills as grammarian, but also – and particularly relevant in this case – by his unusual capacity to observe people and the circumstances of daily life. Even the quick and unpolished prose, characteristic of his signature, makes this document a more faithful portrait of the precarious situation in which it was written than the most exquisite humanist text, produced from a distance at some scriptorium in Europe.

The essential aspects of the anthropological and geographical portrait of the Middle Kingdom appear in the first chapter of Book 1 of the *Historia do Japão*, throughout the five points that compose the section entitled "China, the seventh part of Asia, in which are recounted and described its antiquity, names, ancient China, ancient and present boundaries, its divisions, and ancient and modern government".²² In what should be Chapter 9 of Book 1 (the copyist, or the author himself, forgot the numbering) the theme of Chinese itinerary measures is developed.²³ In the first point of Chapter 21 Rodrigues writes about the offer of gifts.²⁴ In Chapter 22 he writes about

22 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 35-62 (Ajuda text, ff. 9r-16r).

23 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 9, pp. 162-166 (Ajuda text, ff. 46r-47r).

24 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 21, pp. 306-311 (Ajuda text, ff. 84v-86r).

courtesies and bows in use amongst the Chinese.²⁵ In Chapter 29 he writes about their banquets and manner of inviting guests.²⁶ In Chapter 32 – the second last of Book 1 – Rodrigues writes about the origin of tea and the tea ceremony.²⁷

The treatment of the Chinese object – both done in an autonomous way and in constant articulation with the Japanese case or other Asian cases – continues in Chapters 4 and 5 of Book 2 of the *Historia do Japão*, which deal with the ideograms and the importance given to the study of letters.²⁸ Chapter 6 of the same Book concerns paper, ink and writing instruments.²⁹ Chapter 7 covers the topic of printing, but also includes some notes about teaching which according to the title should not be included here.³⁰ Chapter 8 is dedicated to “mathematical arts”, but there is also mention of more general topics of the history of science.³¹ Chapters 9 and 10 contain an approach to some cosmological theories made by the Chinese.³² The short Chapter 12 talks about the eclipses.³³ Astronomy and judiciary astrology are mentioned in the following chapter.³⁴ In Chapter 14, Rodrigues returns to Chinese cosmology and adds some information about its geography.³⁵ In Chapter 15 the Chinese calendar is analyzed.³⁶ In the following – which is also the last of Book 2 – he again writes several notes about judiciary astrology.³⁷

3. “New and true description of China”

Before undertaking a detailed analysis of the several points from Chapter 1 of Book 1 of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão* reserved for the summary on China’s geography and customs, it is necessary to note some of the references to the same subject that can be found dispersed in the extensive general

25 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 22, pp. 326-337 (Ajuda text, ff. 90v-93v).

26 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 25, pp. 404-416 (Ajuda text, ff. 112v-115v).

27 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 32, pp. 437-456 (Ajuda text, ff. 121v-127r).

28 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 4, pp. 27-40 (Ajuda text, ff. 147v-151v); vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 5, pp. 40-42 (Ajuda text, ff. 151v-152r).

29 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 6, pp. 46-47 (Ajuda text, ff. 153v-154r).

30 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 7, pp. 52-55 (Ajuda text, ff. 155r-156r).

31 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 8, pp. 57-68 (Ajuda text, ff. 156v-160r).

32 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 9, pp. 69-75 (Ajuda text, ff. 160r-162r); vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 10, pp. 76-85 (Ajuda text, ff. 162r-164v).

33 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 12, pp. 92-95 (Ajuda text, ff. 167r-167v).

34 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 13, pp. 95-104 (Ajuda text, ff. 168r-170v).

35 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 14, pp. 105-111 (Ajuda text, ff. 170v-172v).

36 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 15, pp. 112-132 (Ajuda text, ff. 172v-197r).

37 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 16, pp. 134-140 (Ajuda text, ff. 179r-181r).

description of Asia that introduces this Book. Several topics broached here will be analyzed again in the following chapters: for instance, the antiquity of astronomy and Chinese writing³⁸, knowledge about the mariner's needle³⁹, the provincial division⁴⁰, the Great Wall⁴¹, the astronomic position of some of the most distant Chinese borders, and the identification of China with Cathay, a major geographical acquisition that was divulged in texts such as those by Martín de Rada, Diego de Pantoja and Matteo Ricci.⁴²

About this last subject, Rodrigues recovers the old thesis that sustains the inexistence of the strait of Anian, thus defending the idea of geographical continuity between the Asian and American continents.⁴³ Although some well informed circles of the Society, based on English sources, mention the existence of the Northeastern Passage since 1601, texts known by Rodrigues – like the report that Jerónimo de Angelis, SJ signed after his first visit to Ezo Island in 1618 – say the contrary.⁴⁴ In any case, not only Vitus Bering's historical journey would occur between 1725 and 1730, but it was also necessary to wait for Gerhard Friedrich Müller's map, entitled *Nouvelle Carte des Descouvertes Faites par les Vaisseaux Russiens aux côtes inconnues de l'Amerique Septentrionale* (Amsterdam, 1766), in order for results of the 1648 pioneer expedition led by Fedor Alexeev and Semen Dezhnev to be divulged – the latter were the first Europeans to find and cross what would later be called the Bering Strait.⁴⁵

Equally interesting are the leads that the author gives us about some of the – real or merely probable – sources on which he based himself to write some of this information. To begin with, Rodrigues mentions both old “Chinese writings”⁴⁶ (a possible reference to *Shujing*, the Book of History, the first of China's Five Classics⁴⁷), and maps of unknown origin or consulted in Ortelius's *Theatrum*.⁴⁸ On the other hand, whilst part of his description

38 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 16-17 (Ajuda text, f. 4r).

39 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 16-17 (Ajuda text, f. 4r).

40 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 29 (Ajuda text, f. 7v).

41 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 30 (Ajuda text, f. 7v).

42 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 29-35 (Ajuda text, ff. 7v-9r). Cf. Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, pp. 1069-1073, 1091-1096, 1100-1103, 1151.

43 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 17 (Ajuda text, f. 4r); vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 30 (Ajuda text, f. 7v); vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 34 (Ajuda text, f. 8v).

44 Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 12, n. 5; p. 29, n. 8.

45 Cf. Kenneth Nebenzahl, *Mapping the Silk Road and Beyond*, pp. 154-159.

46 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 17 (Ajuda text, f. 4r).

47 Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 11, n. 10.

48 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 17 (Ajuda text, f. 4r).

of the Asian boundaries seems to be very similar to the equivalent excerpt from the first of the *Décadas da Ásia* by João de Barros (Lisbon, 1552)⁴⁹, the reference made to “our authors” who wrote about the use of cars with sails in the land of the Tartars suggests a previous reading of the correspondent description that appears for the first time in Barros’ third *Decade* (Lisbon, 1563).⁵⁰ Furthermore, while the *Book* of Marco Polo is used to identify Tibet’s toponymy and some passages of China’s northeast limits⁵¹, several parts regarding the position of China’s borders were – explicitly or implicitly – based on the commented edition of Ptolemy’s *Geography* edited by Giovanni Antonio Magini (Cologne, 1596).⁵²

Magini, Ricci and Barros will form an essential base for the composition of the portrait of China that begins in the section that Rodrigues reserves for this purpose in Chapter 1 of Book 1 of the *Historia do Japão*. The opening sequence, regarding the origins of the toponyms China and Cathay and the geographical position of the country, is arranged in a very similar way to what we can read in the manuscript *Storia dell’Introduzione del Cristianesimo in Cina* by Matteo Ricci (1608-1610) or in the Latin version of this first chronicle of the Jesuit mission in China published by Nicolas Trigault: *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas* (Augsburg, 1615).⁵³ The same happens with the geographic coordinates and the “squared form” of the Chinese territory⁵⁴, elements that already appear in some of the first texts written by Ricci in China (such as the letter sent from Zhaoqing, on 13 September 1584, to the Spanish factor Juan Bautista Román⁵⁵) long after its systematization in Father Ricci’s *Storia*.⁵⁶

49 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 17 (Ajuda text, f. 4r); vol. 1, p. 20 (Ajuda text, f. 5r). Cf. João de Barros, *Ásia*, Década I, bk. IX, ch. 1, f. 105v.

50 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 18 (Ajuda text, f. 4v). Cf. João de Barros, *Ásia*, Década III, bk. II, ch. VII, f. 47v.

51 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 29 (Ajuda text, f. 7r); vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 32 (Ajuda text, f. 8r); vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 33 (Ajuda text, f. 8v). Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues’ Account*, p. 20, n. 5.

52 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 17-18 (Ajuda text, f. 4r); vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 20 (Ajuda text, f. 5r); vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 29 (Ajuda text, f. 7v); vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 32 (Ajuda text, f. 8r). Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues’ Account*, pp. XXXIII-XXXIV; p. 12, n. 7; p. 20, n. 8; p. 22, n. 1.

53 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 35-37 (Ajuda text, ff. 9r-9v). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 7-12 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 3-4); Nicolas Trigault, *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas*, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 3-5 (*Entrata nella China*, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 3-4).

54 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 38-39 (Ajuda text, f. 10r).

55 Matteo Ricci, letter to Juan Bautista Román, Zhaoqing, 13.IX.1584, in *Opere storiche*, vol. 2, p. 38.

56 Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, p. 13 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, p. 5).

For part of the description of the Chinese boundaries and the main rivers in China, João Rodrigues evokes the authority of Ptolemy, but the passages mentioned once again match Magini's version of Ptolemy's *Geography*.⁵⁷ The passage where Rodrigues describes the eastern point of China and corrects the association between the words "Nimpó" (Ningbo) and "Liampó" is not that different from the corresponding passage of the first *Decade of Asia* by Barros⁵⁸ (besides being the same passage that we find, although in a shorter version, in Lucena's *Historia*⁵⁹). In other important excerpts of this introduction, like the one where Rodrigues compares the role of the Chinese written language with Latin's vehicular function⁶⁰, we realize that this image had already been used several times in the Society's sources: for instance, in the letter that Father Manuel Teixeira addressed to the Jesuits in Europe on 1 December 1565⁶¹, in the *Sumario de las cosas de Japon* by Valignano (ms. 1583)⁶², in the *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesus en las Indias Orientales* also by Valignano (ms. 1583)⁶³ and in the equivalent part of Maffei's *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI* (Florence, 1588).⁶⁴

The list and the indications about the inland or coastal situation of the fifteen provinces of the Chinese Empire that come after this in a specific section are similar to the sequence chosen by João de Barros to describe the same topic in the third *Década da Ásia*.⁶⁵ In Ajuda's manuscript of the *Historia do Japão* there are some differences pertaining to details regarding that previous text, for instance, when Rodrigues replaces the reference to "Quincij" that appears in Barros' text by "Pekim" (Beijing). Anyhow, this

Cf. idem, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, p. 13, n. 2; Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, pp. 1004 and 1102; idem, 'Viagem ao trono do mundo', p. 255.

57 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 38 (Ajuda text, f. 10r); vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 41 (Ajuda text, f. 10v). Cf. Giovanni Magini, *Geographia universae veteris et novae absolutissimum opus* (Cologne, 1597), pp. 169 and 170, ref. in Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 26, n. 5; p. 29, n. 2.

58 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 40-41 (Ajuda text, f. 10v). Cf. João de Barros, *Asia*, Década I, bk. IX, ch. I, fl. 106r.

59 Cf. João de Lucena, *Historia da vida do Pe. Franc^o. Xavier*, bk. X, ch. XVII, p. 852.

60 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 38 (Ajuda text, f. 9v).

61 Manuel Teixeira, letter to the Jesuits in Europe, Macao, 1.XII.1565, Lisbon, Academia das Ciências, *Cartas do Japão*, III, ff. 112r-112v, in Benjamin Videira Pires, 'Cartas dos Fundadores', pp. 788-789.

62 Alessandro Valignano, *Sumario de las cosas de Japon*, ch. 14, p. 39*.

63 Alessandro Valignano, *Historia de principio y progreso*, Part I, ch. XXVIII, p. 254.

64 Giovanni Pietro Maffei, *Le Istorie dell'Indie Orientali*, vol. 1, bk. 6, pp. 176-177. Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 26, n. 3; Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, pp. 965, 980-981.

65 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 43-44 (Ajuda text, ff. 11r-11v). Cf. João de Barros, *Asia*, Década III, bk. II, ch. VII, f. 45r.

specific way of presenting the theme was already used in several texts like the *Discurso de la navegacion* by Bernardino de Escalante (Seville, 1577)⁶⁶, Maffei's *History of India*⁶⁷ or Magini's *Geography*.⁶⁸ Besides, corrections like the one referring to Beijing could already be found in other Jesuit texts at least since the *De Missione Legatorum* by Duarte de Sande and Alessandro Valignano.⁶⁹ This remote affiliation in João de Barros, but in the meanwhile refined in the writings of the Society, is also perceived in the brief note about the royal cities of Beijing and Nanjing that Rodrigues includes in the same section⁷⁰: these are aspects that we cannot trace in Barros' text but, on the other hand we can find them in several Jesuit written sources such as *Historia del principio y progreso* by Valignano⁷¹, *De Missione Legatorum* by Sande and Valignano⁷², or in Ricci's *Storia*.⁷³

By the time João Rodrigues compiled the *Historia do Japão*, a series of modern European reports about China helped to reveal the urban hierarchy of the country. Amongst the older ones, the most relevant must be included in a short list that comprehends: the *Enformação da China* by Amaro Pereira made known by Father Baltazar Gago, SJ (1562)⁷⁴; the above said letter from Macao by Manuel Teixeira (1565)⁷⁵ – in fact, a thorough account of the three years that this missionary stayed in Macao and its surroundings; the report from the *Consejo de Indias* that rejected the proposals of conquest of the Ming Empire that had been assigned by Diego Garcia de Palacios in 1570⁷⁶; what Martín de Rada wrote in the *Relacion verdadera de las cosas del reyno*

66 Bernardino de Escalante, *Discurso de la navegacion que los Portugueses hazen à los Reinos y Prouincias del Oriente*, ch. 6, ff. 30r-30v

67 Giovanni Pietro Maffei, *Le Istorie dell'Indie Orientali*, vol. 1, bk. 6, p. 170.

68 Giovanni Magini, *Geographia*, p. 263, ref. in Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 30, n. 8.

69 [Alessandro Valignano &] Duarte de Sande, *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium*, col. XXXIII, p. 380 (*Diálogo sobre a Missão dos Embaixadores Japoneses*, pp. 329-330). Cf. Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, p. 1005.

70 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 43-44 (Ajuda text, ff. 11r-11v).

71 Alessandro Valignano, *Historia de principio y progreso*, Part I, ch. XXVI, pp. 216-217.

72 [Alessandro Valignano &] Duarte de Sande, *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium*, col. XXXIII, p. 380 (*Diálogo sobre a Missão dos Embaixadores Japoneses*, pp. 329-330).

73 Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 14-15 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 5-6).

74 Amaro Pereira & Baltazar Gago, 'Enformação da China que ouve de hũ portugues por nome Amaro Pereira', in Raffaella D'Intino, *Enformação das Cousas da China*, p. 89.

75 Manuel Teixeira, letter to the Jesuits in Europe, Macao, 1.XII.1565, Lisbon, Academia das Ciências, *Cartas do Japão*, III, ff. 211v-212r, in Benjamin Videira Pires, 'Cartas dos Fundadores', p. 787.

76 Cf. León Bourdon, 'Un Project d'invasion de la Chine', pp. 100-101.

de Taibin (1575-1576)⁷⁷; and, finally, what Miguel de Loarca put in Chapter 2 of the second part of his *Verdadera relacion de las cosas del Reyno de China* (ms. 1575).⁷⁸

Reading what Rodrigues wrote about this topic⁷⁹, we can see that he based himself on two types of fundamental references. On one hand, he used a Jesuit systemization matrix similar to the one Ricci gives in his *Storia*, but which is neither equivalent to that text⁸⁰, nor to more developed texts, like the one we find in *Historia del principio* by Valignano⁸¹ or in the *Ragionamenti* by Francesco Carletti (ms. 1606-1616).⁸² On the other hand, we also realize that Rodrigues uses (apparently in a direct way) maps or Chinese books that contained updated data on the administrative circumscriptions, cities and places of the Empire – exactly the same type of sources that authors like Rada, Loarca, Valignano, Ricci or Carletti used.

In most of these cases, the clues or evidences take us to the content of some of the editions of *Guangyu tu* (*Enlarged terrestrial atlas*) by Luo Hongxian (original version c. 1541; 1st printing in 1555) or to other geographical works or Chinese maps where equivalent information could be found. The fact that the figures that Rodrigues gives us for the “fu” (*fu*, superior prefecture), “cheu” (*zhou*, sub-prefecture) and “hien” (*xian*, county) do not match any other known statistical description does not compromise the accuracy of this report and shows a real effort in updating the information. The same thing happens when we read the supplementary indications that Rodrigues gives about the number of “guey” (*wei*, garrisons), “so” (*suo*, guard posts), the number of soldiers placed near the Great Wall and the total of troops spread throughout the country.⁸³ One also notes that he is constantly concerned about correcting the inaccurate terminology used amongst European authors who proposed analyzing the various categories of Chinese villages and towns.⁸⁴

77 Martín de Rada, *Relacion verdadera de las cosas del reyno de Taibin*, ff. 22r-23r

78 Miguel de Loarca, *Verdadera relacion de las cosas del Reyno de China*, ff. 139r-139v.

79 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 44-48 (Ajuda text, ff. 11v-12v.).

80 Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 14-15 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 5-6).

81 Alessandro Valignano, *Historia de principio y progresso*, Part I, ch. XXVI, pp. 218-220. Cf. Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, p. 956; idem, ‘Terra, costumes e ritos chineses’, pp. 160-161.

82 Francesco Carletti, *Razonamientos*, Segundo razonamiento de las Indias Orientales, pp. 150-154 (*Voyage autour du monde*, pp. 200-205; *Mi viaje alrededor del mundo*, pp. 161-167).

83 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 48-50 (Ajuda text, ff. 12v-13r). Cf. Marcel Destombes, ‘Une carte chinoise du XVI^e siècle’, pp. 463-472; Luciano Petech, ‘La fonte cinese delle carte del Ruggieri’, pp. 42-44; Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues’ Account*, p. 33, n. 3.

84 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 46 (Ajuda text, f. 11v).

This latter implies a simultaneous familiarity with texts that, in this case, could be Lucena's *Historia*⁸⁵, *De Missione* by Sande and Valignano⁸⁶ or even *Historia del gran Reyno de la China* by Juan González de Mendoza (Rome and Madrid, 1585-1586).⁸⁷ The albeit influence of texts like Galiote Pereira's *Alguas cousas sabidas da China/Tratado da China* (1553-1565) or the *Tractado das cousas da China* by Gaspar da Cruz OP (Évora, 1569-1570) is felt in the lines that close this point, dedicated to the bridges founded over barges that assured the functioning of the customs office in some rivers of inner China.⁸⁸

To give an account of the "government of the kingdom of China", Rodrigues again adopts some of the topics frequently used in European sources of that time, most of which derived from the proto-Sinology exercises of the 16th century written by Portuguese authors like Galiote Pereira and Gaspar da Cruz.⁸⁹ It is the case of references made to the absence of nobility of blood in the country, the idea of the supreme value of merit as the basis for social ascent, the superiority of literate mandarins over soldier mandarins, the indications on how the exam system functions and the three literary degrees granted by the Chinese teaching regime – "Bacharel"/Graduate (*xiuzai* or "flourishing talent"), "Licenciado"/Degree-holder (*juren* or "recommended scholar") and "Doutor"/Doctor (*jinshi* or "presented scholar").⁹⁰ Despite the fact that Rodrigues did not use these equivalent Chinese designations (which were already mentioned in texts of the Society at least since *De Missione* by Sande and Valignano⁹¹), we can observe that his description of the matter is very close to the most thorough synthesis available, like the one we find in Ricci's *Storia*.⁹²

The same happens in the paragraphs where Rodrigues describes the structure of the central government.⁹³ This theme suffered gradual progress

85 João de Lucena, *Historia da vida do Pe. Francº. Xavier*, bk. X, ch. XX, p. 867.

86 [Alessandro Valignano &] Duarte de Sande, *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium*, col. XXXIII, p. 381 (*Diálogo sobre a Missão dos Embaixadores Japoneses*, p. 330).

87 Cf. Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia del gran reyno de la China*, Part I, bk. I, ch. VIII, ff. 12r-13r.

88 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 50-51 (Ajuda text, f. 12v). Cf. Galiote Pereira, *Alguas cousas sabidas da China*, pp. 122-123; Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado das cousas da China*, ch. VII, p. 812.

89 Cf. Galiote Pereira, *Alguas cousas sabidas da China*, pp. 102-103 e 106-108; Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado das cousas da China*, chs. VII, XVII, XIX.

90 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 51-52 (Ajuda text, f. 13v).

91 Cf. [Alessandro Valignano &] Duarte de Sande, *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium*, col. XXXIII, pp. 387-388 (*Diálogo sobre a Missão dos Embaixadores Japoneses*, p. 335); Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, p. 1011.

92 Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 6, pp. 55-56, 67 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 6, pp. 35, 45).

93 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 53-56 (Ajuda text, ff. 13v-14v).

since it was disclosed in the anonymous *Enformação da China* which was sent from Malacca to Rome at the end of 1554 by the Jesuit superior Melchior Nunes Barreto.⁹⁴ After that, this very same matter would greatly benefit from what was written in summaries about China signed by authors like Mendoza,⁹⁵ Maffei,⁹⁶ Sande/Valignano,⁹⁷ Pantoja⁹⁸ or Carletti.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, not even the existing differences between Rodrigues' and Ricci's versions of the general description of the Six Ministries allow to greatly distinguish their texts in this matter.¹⁰⁰ At most, we find small blunders, for example, like the order in which the "Himpù" (*xinbu*, "the council for crime and punishment throughout the realm") and the "Cùmpù" (*gonbu*, "the council for royal and public works") are presented.¹⁰¹

In the following point, which focuses on the "particular government of each province", the textual affiliations seem to be slightly different. We know that the complicated civil and military hierarchy holding together the functioning of the Chinese State at provincial level was gradually revealed throughout the 16th century in Portuguese fundamental sources like, for instance, the letter written by Cristóvão Vieira in Canton (Guangzhou), in 1534, the *Historia* by Castanheda, the *Tratado* by Galiote Pereira and the *Tractado* by Gaspar de Cruz.¹⁰² If we compare the information and the sequence of issues presented by Rodrigues with these Portuguese texts, we observe a greater proximity than that obtained through the same exercise with Ricci's *Storia*.¹⁰³

94 Cf. *Enformação de algumas cousas acerca dos costumes e leys do reino da China*, p. 744.

95 Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia del gran reyno de la China*, Part I, bk. III, ch. VIII, ff. 64r-67r; Part I, bk. III, ch. IX, ff. 67r-70v; Part I, bk. III, ch. X, ff. 70v-75v. Cf. Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. 1, bk. 2, p. 756, n. 116.

96 Giovanni Pietro Maffei, *Le Istorie dell'Indie Orientali*, vol. 1, bk. 6, p. 184.

97 [Alessandro Valignano &] Duarte de Sande, *De Missione Legatorum Iaponensium*, col. XXXIII, p. 389 (*Diálogo sobre a Missão dos Embaixadores Japoneses*, p. 337).

98 Cf. Diego de Pantoja, *Relación de la China*, ff. 103r-103v.

99 Cf. Francesco Carletti, *Razonamientos*, Segundo razonamiento de las Indias Orientales, pp. 163-165 (*Voyage autour du monde*, pp. 211-213; *Mi viaje alrededor del mundo*, pp. 171-173).

100 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 54 (Ajuda text, ff. 13v-14v). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 6, pp. 57-62 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 6, pp. 37-40).

101 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 54 (Ajuda text, f. 13v). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 6, p. 58 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 6, p. 38).

102 Cf. Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, pp. 530-531, 683, 807-808.

103 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 56-60 (Ajuda text, ff. 14v-15v). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 6, pp. 64-65 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 6, pp. 42-43).

For this purpose, we can compare the long list of provincial officials presented in the *Historia do Japão* with the content of Chapter 16 of Cruz's text. Similarly, there is a seemingly flagrant proximity between Rodrigues' remarks about the emperor's secluded way of living, the palaces of the royal princes or the regular visits that the imperial commissioners paid to the provinces, with that on the same issues offered in Galiote and Cruz's texts.¹⁰⁴ It is only at the end of this section that Rodrigues adds what appears to be original information about the number of eunuchs – 12000 – living inside Beijing Court in 1615. This data was probably collected when he visited Beijing at that time.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, both Ricci and Cruz could have provided most of what we find in the following point of Rodrigues's *Historia*, regarding the various noble classes and – again – the different Chinese academic degrees.¹⁰⁶

4. The everyday life of the Chinese

As we have just seen, the extensive introduction to China that Father João Rodrigues integrates at the end of Chapter 1 of the Book 1 of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão* concentrates on specific matters related to the political administration of the country. Nevertheless, the author is silent as to a specific number of topics which constitute recurring matters in geographical introductions similar to this one: mineral resources, land productions, legal system, urban morphology and city building, just to name the most common topics in this kind of writing.

This somewhat atypical reading pattern shall be maintained throughout the following chapters, which concentrates on the actual aspects of the anthropological and cultural reality of China. Here, we will also notice the lack of in-depth approach to religions and forms of Chinese spirituality, topics which are generally expected to be found in texts of this sort. In the chapter which deals with the matter of Chinese and Japanese astrology, Rodrigues refers the reader to a "treatise on the sects of these kingdoms" which should appear ahead but, if it was ever written, it does not seem to have survived.¹⁰⁷

104 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 57, 58, 60 (Ajuda text, ff. 15r-15v). Cf. Galiote Pereira, *Algumas cousas sabidas da China*, p. 103; Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado das cousas da China*, chs. VIII, XXII.

105 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 60-61 (Ajuda text, f. 16r). Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, pp. 39-40, n. 5.

106 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 61-62 (Ajuda text, f. 16r). Cf. Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado das cousas da China*, chs. VIII, XVII; Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 5, pp. 44-50 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 5, pp. 25-31).

107 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 9, p. 69 (Ajuda text, f. 160r).

Nonetheless, flaws such as these are not enough to cast a shadow on the fact that we have before us a remarkable *fresco* on the daily life of the Chinese people which definitely constitutes the most interesting part of the set of notes that Rodrigues dedicated to China.

The subject of linear measurements is introduced and shall be resumed in Chapter 8 of this same Book 1. As frequently occurs in his prose, Rodrigues rapidly approaches a series of more or less connected matters. In this case, the opportunity serves for him to evoke the millennial history of the Chinese nation based on testimony from their “records” and “scriptures”.¹⁰⁸ This opportunity is also suitable to test the compatibility between Chinese and Biblical chronology, an exercise that greatly reminds us of what González de Mendoza had done in his *Historia de China*.¹⁰⁹

Here João Rodrigues also takes the chance to test a parallel between the Chinese writing system and hieroglyphic characters.¹¹⁰ Authors such as Maffei and Ricci had already tested correspondences similar to these.¹¹¹ As is known, this type of comparison would be specially expanded from the moment in which Athanasius Kircher – first in the *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (Rome, 1652), a little later in the influential *China illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1667) – used this to support the theory of an Egyptian origin for Chinese civilization.¹¹² In Chapter 4 of Book 2 of the *Historia do Japão*, Rodrigues speculates in more detail on the supposed correspondences between the Chinese ideograms and the forms of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.¹¹³ Even though the thesis does not seem to be clearly formulated at this point, in this perceived search for the nature of the original language of primitive humanity we can foresee the interpretation of Chinese Hebraism, i.e. the idea that the Chinese ideograms derived from Hebrew.

The content of the Chinese books is once again evoked in the paragraphs of the unnumbered Chapter 9 of Book 1, which deals extensively with the matter of Chinese linear measurements. Even though we are aware of what authors like João de Barros had said on this matter after having read the

108 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 8, pp. 159-162 (Ajuda text, ff. 45v-46r).

109 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 8, pp. 159-160 (Ajuda text, f. 45v). Cf. Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia del gran reyno de la China*, Part I, bk. I, ch. V; Part I, bk. III, ch. I; Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, pp. 876-877; idem, ‘Geografia e propaganda segundo a *Historia del gran Reyno de la China* de frei Juan González de Mendoza’.

110 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 8, p. 160 (Ajuda text, f. 45v).

111 Cf. Giovanni Pietro Maffei, *Le Istorie dell’Indie Orientali*, vol. 1, bk. 6, pp. 176-177; Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 5, pp. 36-37 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 5, pp. 20-21).

112 Cf. Francisco Roque de Oliveira, *A construção do conhecimento europeu sobre a China*, p. 979; Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues’ Account*, pp. 330-331, ns. 2, 3.

113 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 4, pp. 27-31 (Ajuda text, ff. 148r-149r).

same type of sources¹¹⁴ – and which other writers like Mendoza or Carletti had learnt from Barros's third *Decade* or from an intermediate text based on Barros¹¹⁵ –, we immediately notice the superiority of the information provided by Rodrigues: more than a dozen designations of metric units, old and modern.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the description of how the Chinese offered gifts, a subject covered in the first paragraphs of Chapter 21, does not differ greatly from the equivalent description stated in the chapter of Ricci's *Storia* which is dedicated to courtesies, ceremonies and festivities.¹¹⁷ Yet, Rodrigues manages to be more thorough than Ricci in details such as those regarding visiting cards, and anticipates the more extensive content of Chapter 12 of Part 1 of the *Relatione della Grande Monarchia della Cina* by Álvaro Semedo, SJ (Rome, 1643).¹¹⁸

The material in the following chapter, dedicated to Chinese courtesies, bows and obeisances, had already been worthy of an in-depth reading in the first modern treaties on China. For instance, see the chapters that Gaspar da Cruz and Juan González de Mendoza have dedicated to this subject in their monographs.¹¹⁹ In his *Historia de China*, Mendoza claims to have sought support in the reading of "ancient records" to approach the topic¹²⁰, exactly the same type of sources which Rodrigues is said to have resorted to in order to research some of the ways of sitting and some types of bows which had been passed on from ancient China to Japan. Nonetheless, it is understood that the elements which Rodrigues gives the reader on ways to behave at table, to kneel and dress, to greet someone on the street or to mourn the dead incorporates written memory with vast direct experience in the matter. In general, the quality of his report is more detailed than any of the preceding sources, including that which was written by Matteo Ricci.¹²¹

114 Cf. João de Barros, *Asia*, Década III, bk. II, ch. VII, ff. 44v-45r.

115 Cf. Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia del gran reyno de la China*, Part I, bk. I, ch. VI, ff. 9v-11r; Francesco Carletti, *Razonamientos*, Segundo razonamiento de las Indias Orientales, pp. 149-150 (*Voyage autour du monde*, pp. 199-200; *Mi viaje alrededor del mundo*, p. 161).

116 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 9, pp. 162-166 (Ajuda text, ff. 46r-47r).

117 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 21, pp. 305-311 (Ajuda text, ff. 84v-86r). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 7, pp. 73-74 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 7, pp. 51-52).

118 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 21, pp. 307-308 (Ajuda text, ff. 85r-85v). Cf. Álvaro Semedo, *Relação da Grande Monarquia da China*, Part 1, ch. 12, pp. 122-123.

119 Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado das cousas da China*, chs. XIII, XIV; Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia del gran reyno de la China*, Part I, bk. III, ch. XIX.

120 Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia del gran reyno de la China*, Part I, bk. III, ch. XIX, f. 96r.

121 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 22, pp. 326-337 (Ajuda text, ff. 90v-93v). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 7, pp. 72-79 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 7, pp. 49-57).

After Rodrigues's *Historia* it is, once again, necessary to wait for Semedo's *Relatione* in order to discover a more complete record on "courtesies in use among the Chinese" than that composed by Rodrigues.¹²²

In the letter written by Father Rodrigues in Canton at the end of 1615, addressed to the Provincial Father Valentim Carvalho, we find a record of one of the many banquets which Rodrigues attended during his journeys across China.¹²³ This experience was once again a determining factor for the quality of what he wrote in the *Historia do Japão* pertaining to the same topic of banquets and festivities which the Chinese offered their guests.¹²⁴ Authors like Cruz, Rada and Ricci had also drawn on their personal experience to write as they did about the Chinese taste in food and drink by registering an infinity of details which include matters such as the favourite dishes, the arrangement of plates on the table, the music and other forms of entertainment which accompanied their festivities.¹²⁵ Even though these paragraphs of the Rodrigues manuscript are closer to the content of Ricci's *Storia* than to any other preceding text, they still offer a considerable amount of original information. Besides, by carefully reading Rodrigues' text we can still see that both the vocabulary used and the sequence of some passages (for example the one which described the musical representations) are presented in a manner which is much closer, or even identical, to what we have in the *Tractado das cousas de China* by Gaspar da Cruz.¹²⁶

Rodrigues uses this chapter on banquets to introduce two marginal dissertations, one related to the variety of animal and vegetable productions, and another about the principles of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. For this second topic, we conclude that the contemporary dissertation found in Matteo Ricci's *Storia* is not only – and once again – relatively comparable to the one written by Rodrigues, but in fact is even more solid than the exposition signed by Rodrigues.¹²⁷ Now, when the subject is tea

122 Cf. Álvaro Semedo, *Relação da Grande Monarquia da China*, Part 1, ch. 12.

123 João Rodrigues, letter to Valentim Carvalho, Canton (Hangzhou), December (?) 1615, ARSI, *Jap-Sin*, 114, f. 6v, in João Paulo Oliveira e Costa (ed.), *Cartas Anuas do Colégio de Macau*, pp. 154-155.

124 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 29, pp. 403-406, 409-416 (Ajuda text, ff. 112r-113r, 114r-115v).

125 Cf. Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado das cousas da China*, chs. XII, XIII; Martín de Rada, *Relacion verdadera de las cosas del reyno de Taibin*, ff. 26r-27r; Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 7, pp. 76-79 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 7, pp. 54-57).

126 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 29, pp. 415-416 (Ajuda text, f. 115v). Cf. Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado das cousas da China*, ch. XIII, pp. 833-834; ch. XIV, pp. 835-836.

127 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 29, pp. 406-409 (Ajuda text, ff. 113r-114r). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 10, pp. 115-132 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 10, pp. 88-99).

and its ceremony – in other words, the most practical aspects of everyday life yet again – the terms invert themselves once more. It is clear that Ricci composes a sound note on the variety, preparation and use of tea in China (and in Japan). However, throughout Chapter 29 of Book 1 of the *Historia do Japão*, Rodrigues gives all these topics an incomparably more thorough report which includes the indication of the best places to grow the plant, the peculiarities of its preparation in China and Japan and a long list of its alleged therapeutic properties. Once again, it is clear that his experience of a full life in East Asia was fundamental for the superlative result of his account.¹²⁸

The remarkable skills that Rodrigues featured in the areas of lexicography and comparative grammar are revealed throughout most of Chapter 4 of Book 2, devoted to “the liberal arts, and the art of letters” of the Chinese and Japanese people. Apart from the above said controversial speculations which the author also introduced here in relation to the origin of Chinese ideograms, most of the remaining text focuses on a grounded introduction to the subject identified in the title of the chapter, and examples which refer directly to the content of his *Arte da lingoa de Iapam* or *Arte Grande* (Nagasaki, 1604-1608)¹²⁹ do not go amiss. This subject is continued in the beginning of the following chapter, where a tour of the alphabetic writing system used in Japan is preceded by new approaches, once again founded on what could be seen “in their annals”, on the antiquity and relevance of the study of letters in China, and also on the Chinese examination system and the meritocratic matrix upon which the regime was founded.¹³⁰ A little later, when approaching the issue of paper, ink and other tools used in writing, Rodrigues attributes the invention of paper to Han China.¹³¹ In his *Storia*, Ricci describes in a very similar manner to that used by Rodrigues both subjects related to writing and the way in which the Chinese printed, an issue covered in Chapter 7 of Book 2 of the *Historia do Japão*.¹³²

128 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 32, pp. 437-442, 451-454 (Ajuda text, ff. 121v-123r, 125v-126v). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 3, p. 26 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 3, p. 12).

129 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 4, pp. 27-40 (Ajuda text, ff. 147v-151v). Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues's Account*, p. 333, n. 1; p. 334, n. 2.

130 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 5, pp. 40-42 (Ajuda text, ff. 151v-152r). Cf. idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 7, p. 55 (Ajuda text, f. 156r).

131 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 6, p. 47 (Ajuda text, f. 154r).

132 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 7, pp. 52-57 (Ajuda text, ff. 155r-156v). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 4, pp. 30-31 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 4, pp. 15-16).

5. *Machina Mundi*

The fact that Rodrigues was asked to write the *Historia da Igreja do Japão* one decade after Ricci's death, in 1610, and that he worked on the manuscript until the end of his life, in 1633, afforded him the opportunity of integrating extensive data on Chinese mathematical and astronomical sciences as well as general scientific knowledge where we can clearly perceive the use of the invaluable experience of "scientific apostolate" consolidated within this final period of the Ming dynasty by Jesuits like Giulio Aleni (1582-1649), Johann Terrenz Schreck (1576-1630), Wenzel Pantaleon Kirwitzer (c. 1589-1626), Giacomo Rho (1592-1638), Sabbatino de Ursis (1575-1620), Diego de Pantoja (1571-1618), Manuel Dias Jr. (1574-1659), Nicolo Longobardo (1559-1654), Francesco Sambiasi (1582-1649) or Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1591-1666).¹³³ The actual selection of topics that Rodrigues makes so as to portray the state of the mathematical sciences in China implicitly features the specialization chosen by the Society of Jesus in aiming at a stable presence close to the Court of Beijing: privileged attention to topics associated with the correction of the calendar, astronomical forecasts (which constituted the basis for astrological forecasts) and cartography.¹³⁴ This is merely a quick inventory of what is offered in the final part of the Ajuda manuscript on this subject.

In Chapter 8 of Book 2, João Rodrigues presents an extensive introduction to the history of the science of China, supported – once again, as he says – on what "is recorded in the Chinese annals".¹³⁵ In his opinion, the great tradition and excellence of Chinese mathematics, astronomy or geometry were only exceeded by the superiority of the Europeans in the same sciences as proven by some of the astronomical observations that "our modern mathematicians" made in China itself.¹³⁶ In the following chapter – on astrology –, Rodrigues rehearses an approach to some of the cosmological theories produced by the Chinese and establishes occasional comparisons with classical cosmology from what he had learnt in the *Cursus Conimbricensis* or by quoting concepts from scholastic philosophy mastered during his religious training.¹³⁷

133 Cf., *inter alia*, Huang Qichen, 'Macau, ponte do intercâmbio cultural', pp. 162-170; Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, pp. 162-168; Paola Demattè, 'From Astronomy to Heaven', pp. 55-57.

134 Cf. Ugo Baldini, 'The Jesuit College in Macao', pp. 58-59.

135 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 8, p. 63 (Ajuda text, f. 158v).

136 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 8, p. 65 (Ajuda text, f. 159r). Cf. idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 8, pp. 57-68 (Ajuda text, ff. 156v-160r).

137 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 9, pp. 69-75 (Ajuda text, ff. 160r). Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues's Account*, p. 359, n. 3; p. 361, n. 2; Sandra de Amaral Monteiro, 'O calendário japonês', pp. 158-159.

In the beginning of Chapter 10, where the astronomical theory common to both Chinese and Japanese is explained, Rodrigues once again evokes the authority of Asian written sources, and combines its sayings with the specific vocabulary of scholastic philosophy.¹³⁸ He also makes a brief reference to Ptolemaic astrology taught by Arab astronomers living in the Court of China and introduces a rather interesting paragraph that echoes the cosmological debate underway in Europe about the central issue of the composition or nature of the heavens.¹³⁹

For this second point, Rodrigues establishes a direct correspondence between the very ancient perception that the Chinese had of Heaven as “one unit and fluid, or the very air” and the defence of the very same idea by “some modern astrologers in the northern regions” (of China, so it appears).¹⁴⁰ Even though this identification might not be quite precise, it is deemed sufficient for us to notice that it refers to a very similar cosmological system to the one that Christoph Rothemann conceived based on the observations of the comet of 1585 – the decisive experience that led the Kassel mathematician to replace the concept of heavens or celestial orbs made of the solid heavenly spheres with the concept of a fluid heaven consisting of pure air.

Even though assessment of the debt that the astronomical and cosmographical thought of Tycho Brahe owes to Rothemann is deemed a complex matter and one that is rich in contradictions¹⁴¹, we know that the legacy of Stoic physics in the latter’s celestial theories features multiple affinities with Brahe’s idea that the heavens would be a fluid or a liquid. We also know that Brahe’s cosmological system was at the time defended by Jesuits such as Cristoforo Borri (1583-1632) based on the argument that it constituted the only hypothesis able to “save all the astronomical phenomena”¹⁴² – precisely the same idea and the same words used by Rodrigues to summarize the

138 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 10, pp. 76-85 (Ajuda text, ff. 162r-164v).

139 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 10, pp. 83-84 (Ajuda text, ff. 164r-164v).

140 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 10, pp. 84-85 (Ajuda text, f. 164r).

141 Cf. Owen Gingerich & Robert S. Westman, *The Wittich Connection*, pp. 69-76; Adam Mosley, *Bearing the Heavens*, pp. 71-73, 95-96.

142 Cristoforo Borri, *De astrologica universa tractatus. Dividitur in duas partes quarum prima de contemplatrici astronomica, secunda, de practica breviter, sed dilucide ita pertractat ut deese plane aut desiderari posse nihil videatur* [1612-1615], Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Rome, Ms. Fondo Gesuitico 587, quoted in Luís Miguel Carolino, ‘The Making of a Tychonic Cosmology’, p. 315. Cf. Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus*, vol. 1, col. 1821-1822; José Sebastião da Silva Dias, *Portugal e a Cultura Europeia*, pp. 99-101; Luís de Albuquerque, *Para a História da Ciência em Portugal*, pp. 127-142; Norberto A. F. Cunha, ‘Cristóvão Borri’, pp. 183-185; Victor Navarro Brotóns, ‘Matemáticas, cosmología y humanismo en la España del siglo XVI’, pp. 169-180; Michel-Pierre Lerner, ‘L’entrée de Tycho Brahe chez les jésuites’, pp. 157-163; W. G. L. Randles, *The Unmaking of the Medieval Christian Cosmos*, pp. 174-178; Luís Miguel Carolino, *Ciência, Astrologia e Sociedade*, pp. 260-271.

cosmological ordering that he associates with those unspecified modern astrologers of the northern parts.¹⁴³ Finally, we know that Borri was sent to the Missions in Asia in 1615 and that he arrived in Macao in 1617, where Father Francisco Vieira, Apostolic Visitor of Japan and China, gave him the task of writing an astronomic treaty on the fluidity of the heavens.

In the mind of the Jesuit superior, this treaty aimed to persuade the missionaries in China to replace the Aristotelian ideas on the structure of the universe that they continued to sustain and teach by means of a view that was more adapted to the notion of heavens prevailing amongst the Chinese.¹⁴⁴ There are still many doubts as to whether Cristoforo Borri wrote the requested text before having left for Cochinchina towards the end of 1617. Nonetheless, the fact is that Borri lived again in Macao for approximately one year between 1622 and 1623, when Rodrigues was also in the city. Therefore, it is possible to conceive that the reference to the cosmological framework of those modern astronomers of the north made in this chapter of the *Historia do Japão* could indirectly echo Rothemann or Brahe and that the connection between their astronomical ideas and the synthesis written by Rodrigues was, in one way or another, actually Borri's.¹⁴⁵

In Chapter 12 of his *Historia*, João Rodrigues deals with the importance of the calculus of the eclipses of the sun and of the moon for culture and power in China, noting the current decline of Chinese astronomical knowledge. Once again, Rodrigues approaches one of the most delicate aspects of the cultural accommodation practised by the Jesuits in China – in this case, precisely the point that would help the decisive approach that the Jesuit astronomers later attained with the imperial Astronomical Observatory, when the Qing conquerors chose to trust the credibility of the calculations of the European priests as a form of justifying the foreign government that they had just imposed on the Han.¹⁴⁶

143 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 10, p. 85 (Ajuda text, f. 164r).

144 Cf. Matteo Ricci, letter to P.N.N.S.I., Nancian, October 28.X.1595, in *Opere storiche*, vol. 2, p. 175; Matteo Ricci, letter to the Jesuit General Claudio Acquaviva, Nancian, 4.XI.1595, in *ibidem*, vol 2, p. 207; Joseph Needham, *La tradition scientifique chinoise*, p. 228; W. G. L. Randles, 'Le ciel chez les jésuites espagnols et portugais', pp. 136-139; Ugo Baldini, 'The Portuguese Assistancy', pp. 63-64, n. 41; idem, 'The Jesuit College in Macao', p. 57, n. 81; Domingos Maurício Gomes dos Santos, 'Vicissitudes da obra de Cristóvão Borri', pp. 123-125; Norberto A. F. Cunha, 'Cristóvão Borri', p. 176; Olga Dror & K. W. Taylor (ed.), *Views of Seventeenth-Century Vietnam*, pp. 24-31.

145 We are most grateful to Dr. Luís Miguel Carolino for his advice on these paragraphs of Rodrigues's *Historia* and the scientific legacy of Cristoforo Borri. Naturally, the author of this article is the sole responsible for the abovementioned suggestions concerning the supposed Borri-Rodrigues Macanese link.

146 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 12, pp. 92-95 (Ajuda text, ff. 167r-168v). Cf., *inter alia*, Noël Golvers, 'Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J.', pp. 195-201; Paola Demattè, 'From

In support of Chapter 13 of this second and last Book of the First Part of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, featuring a summary of Chinese cosmographical, astronomical and astrological knowledge, João Rodrigues once again uses many written sources – Oriental and European, classical and modern. For instance, for a transposition between Chinese and European views on the celestial sphere he quotes Christopher Clavius's commentary on the *Tractatus de sphaera* of Sacrobosco, with greater and lesser precision transcribes passages from the *Chronographie libri quartuor* by Gilbert Générard, uses a passage from the *Bibliotheca sancta* by Sixtus Senensis to reach a certain content of what seems to be the apocryphal *Ethiopic Book of Enoch* concerning the name given by God to all the stars, and also paraphrases a passage from the *Antiquities of the Jews* by Josephus, most probably from a more accessible scholastic text.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, certain “Chinese books of natural magic” supported him when writing about local judiciary astrology.¹⁴⁸

After presenting the Chinese vision of the celestial sphere, Rodrigues announces that he will use the content of the books written by the Chinese and Japanese royal mathematicians to give an account of those that he says are “ridiculous things, and contrary to natural philosophy and experience”, that both nations believed about Earth, water, its shape and its geographical position.¹⁴⁹ For some of the theoretical ideas reproduced here it is possible that Rodrigues considered the cosmological teachings of the Celestial Dome School (*gaitian shuo*) the same that seem to emerge from certain passages of the chapter on astrology that stayed behind and that – with the associated ideas of vaulted heavens arched over a flat, square earth – represented the most influential of the old models that shaped the notion the Chinese had of their place in the cosmos.¹⁵⁰

For the correct outline of certain aspects of Asian geography, Rodrigues recalls some of the teachings (or mistakes) inherited from Ptolemy and Marco Polo.¹⁵¹ As expected, he takes the opportunity to evoke the recent translations

Astronomy to Heaven', p. 57; Benjamin A. Elman, *A cultural history of modern science in China*, pp. 16-19.

147 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 13, pp. 95-96 (Ajuda text, f. 168r). Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 375, n. 2; p. 376, n. 1.

148 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 13, p. 101 (Ajuda text, f. 169v). Cf. idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 13, pp. 95-104 (Ajuda text, ff. 168r-170v).

149 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 14, p. 105 (Ajuda text, f. 170v).

150 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 14, pp. 105-106 (Ajuda text, ff. 170v-171r). Cf. idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 9, pp. 74-75 (Ajuda text, f. 161v); Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 360, n. 2; p. 380, n. 3; Benjamin A. Elman, *A cultural history of modern science in China*, p. 21.

151 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 14, pp. 106-107 (Ajuda text, ff. 171v-171r).

of European mathematical and geographical works provided by the Jesuits in China. He might be referring, for instance, to the *Jihe yuanben* (*Elements of Geometry*, 1607), that is, the version of the first six books of Euclid's *Elements* given by Matteo Ricci and Xu Guangqi, the *Qiankun tity* (*On the Structure of the Heaven and Earth*, c. 1608), corresponding to the translation of Clavius's *Sphere* done by Ricci and Li Zhizao, the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* (*Complete map of all nations of the world*, 1602) by Ricci or the *Wanguo quantu* (*Complete map of all nations*, 1620) by Aleni.¹⁵²

To close this chapter that focused on geographical issues, João Rodrigues reintroduces the coordinates that defined the limits of China and of Japan. In any of these cases, slight discrepancies can be perceived in relation to what he himself noted about this in other parts of the *Historia*: in the same way that the value of the maximum latitude of Japan, in the south, is now corrected by half a degree (from 30°½ lat. S to 30° lat. S), the value of China's maximum Western longitude is also corrected from 125° E to 123° E. Given the well known problems resulting from the difficulty in carrying out a correct measurement of longitudes at that time, the remaining astronomical framework afforded by Rodrigues is generally correct one and in accordance with most contemporary Jesuit writings, namely in relation to the *vexata questio* of the estimate of the maximum latitude of China: 42° N, matching the values corrected by Matteo Ricci's astronomic observations as of 1596.¹⁵³

There is also clear consonance between the description that Rodrigues presents on the way to divide time used by the Chinese and the Japanese and what other contemporary Jesuits – Ricci, Trigault and De Ursis, for instance – had written in relation to the calendar, hours and clocks.¹⁵⁴ Finally, we find practically the same panorama in the last paragraphs of the work related to judiciary astronomy and “various superstitions” that did not fit in the topic of the actual rites.

152 Cf., *inter alia*, Ian Rae, 'A Abordagem Comunicativa Intercultural dos Primeiros Missionários Jesuítas na China', pp. 124-125; Huang Qichen, 'Macau, ponte do intercâmbio cultural', pp. 162-163; Helen Wallis, 'The influence of Father Ricci on Far Eastern cartography', pp. 39-42; John D. Day, 'The Search for the Origins of the Chinese Manuscript of Matteo Ricci's Maps', pp. 96-97; Jean-Claude Martzloff, 'Clavius traduit en chinois', pp. 315-321; Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 383, n. 7; Guang Song & Paola Demattè, 'Mapping an Acentric World', pp. 71-72; Benjamin A. Elman, *A cultural history of modern science in China*, pp. 17-19, 29-32.

153 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 14, pp. 109-110 (Ajuda text, ff. 171v-172r). Cf. idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 37; vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 2, pp. 65-66 (Ajuda text, ff. 9v; 17v). Cf. *inter alia*, Boleslaw Szcześniak, 'Matteo Ricci's maps of China', p. 132.

154 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 15, pp. 112-135, (Ajuda text, ff. 172v-179r). Cf. Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 4, p. 33 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 4, p. 17); Nicolas Trigault, *Litterae Societatis Jesu e Regno Sinarum* [Antwerp, 1615], pp. 129-130, quoted in Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 388, n. 2; Michael Cooper, *ibidem*, pp. 391-392, n. 7; Sandra de Amaral Monteiro, 'O calendário japonês', pp. 159-164.

Pertaining to this issue of the Chinese taste for all types of guessing practices, authors such as Gaspar da Cruz or Juan González de Mendoza had left many explanations in which the writings by Rodrigues are recalled.¹⁵⁵ The resemblance between the content of this last chapter of Book 2 of the *Historia da Igreja do Japão* and many of the annotations left by Ricci in his *Storia* is also rather evident.¹⁵⁶ Anyhow, the vast knowledge that Rodrigues proves to have on these issues will only be exceeded by Semedo's *Relazione della Cina*.¹⁵⁷ As the book by Semedo represented the first update of the chronicle of the Mission of China that was presented to the European public since Ricci's work, once again one notes that the passages that João Rodrigues left about China express a state of intermediate knowledge between the writings of Ricci and Semedo.

Concluding remarks

The fact that the *Historia da Igreja do Japão* remained in manuscript form – and that there is no evidence that there were contemporary copies of said manuscript – determined that the richness of its content had at least apparently, no intellectual consequences: it did not even inform the public, nor did it seem to have been commented, copied or plagiarised in other texts. At least this question shall remain until a critical analysis is made on the various texts and monographs on China that were produced in the following decades, both printed and manuscript.

Nonetheless, João Rodrigues fulfilled his duty. As we started by saying, many points that he approached in these two Books that comprise the First Part of the *Historia do Japão* are taken up again, developed or corrected in the version that he affords us of the same issues in the manuscript of the *Breve aparato*. For instance: there is an alternative version for the history of the ancient borders of China¹⁵⁸ and for various possible pronunciations of the name of the country¹⁵⁹; the list of Chinese and Japanese names that designated it increases¹⁶⁰; there are developments to what was said in the

155 Cf. Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado das cousas da China*, ch. XXVII; Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia del gran reyno de la China*, Part I, bk. II, ch. IV.

156 Matteo Ricci, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 9, pp. 94-97 (*Opere storiche*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 9, pp. 72-75).

157 Álvaro Semedo, *Relação da Grande Monarquia da China*, Part 1, ch. 19.

158 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 38 (Ajuda text, f. 9v). Cf. idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 14.

159 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 38 (Ajuda text, f. 10r). Cf. idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 13v.

160 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 14, p. 111 (Ajuda text, f. 172r). Cf. idem, *Breve aparato*, ff. 12v-13r.

general introduction of Book 1 on the mariner's needle¹⁶¹, the astronomical position of the limits of Asia¹⁶², the Chinese designations for the Caucasus¹⁶³ and the desert of Gobi¹⁶⁴, the extension of the Great Wall¹⁶⁵ and S'ākya, the historical name of Buddha¹⁶⁶; there are developments to what was said in the second point of Chapter 4 of Book 1 pertaining to the major units that structured the administrative organisation of the kingdom¹⁶⁷; the old name of Beijing is corrected¹⁶⁸; data on the mythical history of China that had been introduced half way through the explanation on the Chinese language and script are added¹⁶⁹; some of the astronomical observations of Tycho Brahe are listed in order to confirm the mistakes of Chinese astronomy.¹⁷⁰

All these cases are symptomatic of the quality and circumstances relative to the writing of the *Historia do Japão*. It is a work grounded on the constant care for comparison and update, sometimes with successive drafts on identical topics. Although the hardships of the author in China, his agitated character and his lack of method to express himself in a concise manner prevented him from transforming all this into a closed work¹⁷¹, the result is rather relevant as a testimony to the richness but also the fragilities of Europeans' knowledge of China in the first decades of the 17th century. It was precisely on this impressive legacy that modern Sinology was built.

161 Idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 6v. Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 11, n. 10.

162 João Rodrigues, *Breve aparato*, f. 7r. Cf. Michael Cooper, *ibidem*, p. 12, n. 5.

163 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 18 (Ajuda text, f. 4v); idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 7r. Cf. Michael Cooper, *João Rodrigues' Account*, p. 13, n. 3.

164 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, pp. 18-19 (Ajuda text, f. 4v); idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 7r. Cf. Michael Cooper, *ibidem*, p. 13, n. 5.

165 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 32 (Ajuda text, f. 8r); idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 7r. Cf. Michael Cooper, *ibidem*, p. 22, n. 4.

166 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 27 (Ajuda text, f. 7r); idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 9r. Cf. Michael Cooper, *ibidem*, p. 19, n. 2.

167 João Rodrigues, *Historia da Igreja do Japão*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 43 (Ajuda text, f. 11r). Cf. idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 14v.

168 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 43 (Ajuda text, f. 11r). Cf. idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 14v.

169 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 4, p. 30 (Ajuda text, f. 148v). Cf. idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 12r.

170 Idem, *ibidem*, vol. 2, bk. 2, ch. 8, p. 65 (Ajuda text, f. 159r). Cf. idem, *Breve aparato*, f. 12r.

171 Cf. João Rodrigues, letter to Nuno Mascarenhas, Macao, 30.XI.1627, ARSI, *Jap.-Sin.*, 18 (I), f. 85r., in Michael Cooper, 'Rodrigues in China', p. 269.

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