The Francis Xavier's self-perception in a Japanese mirror

La autopercepción de Francisco Xavier en un espejo japonés

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Abstract: This paper considers Xavier's famous statements in his first letter from Japan, and other missives, wherein he states his high views and expectations of the Japanese people. Xavier located the archipelago on a par with Europe with regards to the people and culture, to the extent that back in Europe, Japan could have been considered to be a very similar civilisation. His remark of Japan that it is an island where there were "nor moors neither jews" before his arrival, hints a subtle search for the ideal mission field. Especially as he saw in the Japanese people *hidalguía* and reason, and considered this new mission an ideal field, almost as utopic to receive the Gospel. His observations of Japan reveal his own self-perceptions and his modelling on the Apostle to the Gentiles.

Keywords: Francis Xavier, Japan, self-perception, utopia, *hidalguía*.

Resumen: Este documento considera las famosas declaraciones de Xavier en su primera carta desde Japón y otras misivas, en las que expresa sus altas opiniones y expectativas del pueblo japonés. Xavier situó el archipiélago a la par de Europa en cuanto a gente y cultura, hasta el punto de que en Europa se podría haber considerado a Japón como una civilización muy similar. Su comentario sobre Japón de que es una isla donde no había "ni moros ni judíos" antes de su llegada, insinúa una sutil búsqueda del campo misionero ideal. Sobre todo, porque vio en el pueblo japonés hidalguía y razón, y consideró esta nueva misión un campo ideal, casi como utópico

para recibir el Evangelio. Sus observaciones de Japón revelan sus propias percepciones de sí mismo y su modelado sobre el Apóstol de los gentiles.

Palabras clave: Francisco Xavier, Japón, autopercepción, utopía, hidalguía.

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Francis Xavier's self-perception in a Japanese mirror[1]

Introduction

Among the thousands of men who left Lisbon in the sixteenth century en route to the Indies, on 7th April 1541, departed the Navarrese Francisco Xavier (1506-1552).[2] Xavier sailed in the ship *Santiago*, on his thirty-fifth birthday, representing the newly founded Society of Jesus, of which he was one of its founders, and as Apostolic Nuncio in the East.[3] Thus began his mission to the East Indies, and the famous letters that over the years would "electrified his brethren and everyone else who read them."4 Among these letters, one has been of particular importance, the often quoted and on occasion titled his *Magna carta* (MC).[5] This is the

1 This article is the result of a synthesis of a chapter that I presented to the medieval and Modern Language Faculty of the University of Oxford 2012, for a progression milestone in a viva voce.

2 See Ulrike Strasser, *Missionary Men in the Early Modern World: German Jesuits and Pacific Journeys* (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), p. 79.

3 By the bull of Pope Paul III *Regimi militantis* (1540). As a papal nuncio Xavier represented the Holy See as an ecclesiastical diplomat in the *Estado da Índia*: "Apostolic Nuncio to the islands of the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean, as well as to the provinces and places of India this side of the Ganges and the promontory called the Cape of Good Hope, and beyond", see James Brodrick, *Francis Xavier,1506-1552* (London: Burns & Oates, 1952), 113.

4 John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). 30. The first edition of a Jesuit letter, written by Xavier from India, was published in Paris in 1545, *Copie dunne lettre missive envoiee des Indes, par monsieur maistre François Xauier frere treschier en Ihesuchrist, de la societe du nom de Ihesus*, París, 1545, see Federico Palomo, *Corregir letras para unir espíritus. Los Jesuitas y las cartas edificantes en el Portugal del siglo XVI* (Lisboa: Centro de Estudos de História Religiosa, 2005), *Cuadernos de História Moderna. Anejos* ISBN: 84-95215-57-8, 2005, IV, 57-81, 73.

5 There are 137 extant documents of Francis Xavier, see James Brodrick, *The Origin of the Jesuits* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1986), 114. According to Verdoy, of these only eight were written by Xavier's own hand, the rest were dictated, see Alfredo Verdoy, *San Francisco Javier: El Molinero de Dios* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2006), 25. The present work would

first letter written by Xavier from Japan to his fellow Jesuits in Goa on the 5th November, 1549.[6]

This paper aims to analyse Xavier's utopian views of Japan and how by his observation of different cultures we learn about his own self-perception and the mindset of a sixteenth century missionary and his modelling on St Paul.

The Japanese mission began with the pioneer spirit of Xavier and his view of the commensurable cultures between Europe and Japan as expressed in his missives. The description of the archipelago would gradually change from almost *terra incognita*, to the very significant superlative and superficial impressions of Xavier with the inception of the mission. This would have a lasting impact, especially because of his descriptions of the Japanese people as white, reasonable, *hidalgos* and honourable, almost replicating European culture.

Xavier, unlike Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), did not dictate his autobiography, however early biographies were published since the end

mainly use the Spanish version letter of Xavier to the Jesuits in Goa (Kagoshima, 5 November 1549), in *Cartas y Escritos de San Francisco Javier*, ed. Felix Zubillaga, S.J., 3rd ed. (Madrid: La Editorial Catholica S.A., 1979), 347-72, henceforth referred to as MC and *X. Cartas* to Xavier other letters in this letter compilation.

6 This is one of five letters written by Xavier present in one of the most important epistolary compilations of the Jesuit presence in Japan in the XVI c., the *Cartas que os Padres e Irmãos da Companhia de Iesus escreverão dos Reynos de Iapão & China aos da mesma Companhia da India, & Europa, desde anno de 1549 até o de 1580*, (ed. fac-simil de la edición de Évora, 1598), Maia, 1997, 7v-15v, henceforth cited as Évora Cartas,1598. The MC was already present in two previous and well known compilations (among other publications) of Jesuit letters from Japan, in the *Cartas que os Padres e Irmãos da Companhia de Iesus, que andão nos Reynos de Iapão escreverão aos da mesma Companhia de India, e Europa, desdo anno de 1549 ate o de 66* (Coimbra: Antonio de Maris, 1570), 18-40, henceforth cited as *Coimbra Cartas; and the Cartas que los Padres y Hermanos de la Compañía de Iesus, que andan en los Reynos de Iapon escribieron a los de la misma Compañía, desde el ano de mil y quinientos y quarenta y nueve, hasta el de mil quinientos y setenta y uno* (Alcalá de Henares: Juan Iñiguez de lequeria, 1575), 38r-46v, henceforth cited as *Alcalá Cartas*.

of the sixteenth century.[7] Francisco de Jasso y Azpilcueta was born on 7th April 1506, to a noble family in the castle of Xavier, near Pamplona in Navarra, Spain. He was the youngest son of Juan de Jaso, privy counselor to King John III of Navarre and Doña Maria de Azpilcueta y Aznárez. Little is known of his childhood, except that Xavier showed a special inclination towards studies.[8] In 1529, in Paris, at the college of Sainte-Barbe, he met and shared quarters with Loyola, who won Xavier "for the service of God by means of the [Spiritual] Exercises."[9] Following his conversion, Xavier together with Loyola and other companions pronounced their vows on the day of the Assumption of the Virgin, on

7 The first biography was written by Orazio Tursellini S.J. *Vida del P. Francisco Xavier de la Compañia de Jesus*, trans. into Spanish Pedro de Guzmán 1560-1620 (1620?), in 1594; followed by João de Lucena S.J., *História da Vida do Padre Francisco de Xavier*, facsimile ed. preface by Alvaro J. Da Costa Pimpão, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1952), in 1600; other biographies used here include *The Life of St Francis Xavier Apostle of the Indies and Japan*, from the Italian of Daniello Bartoli and J. P. Maffei, ed. Rev. F. W. Faber (London: Thomas Jones, 1858); Brodrick, *Saint Francis Xavier*; Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier, His Life, His Times*, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J., 4 vols. (Rome: The Jesuit Historical Institute, 1973); Miguel Corrêa Monteiro, *Saint Francis Xavier, A Man for all others* (CCCt Correios de Portugal, 2006); Alfredo Verdoy, *San Francisco Javier, El Molinero de Dios* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2006). This is by no means a complete list of primary and secondary sources about Francis Xavier. There are many works that touch upon Xavier's apostolic work in Asia, such as Carmelo Lisón Tolosana, *La Fascinación de la diferencia: La Adaptación de los Jesuitas al Japón de los Samuráis, 1549-1592* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2005), 9-34; Fernando Garcia Gutiérrez, "Europa descubre el extremo Oriente: Los Viajes de Francisco Xavier (1506-1552)", in *Jesuitas Exploradores, Pioneros y Geografos*, ed. Juan Plazaola (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 2006), 19-35.

8 "Depois de aprender em Navarra, quanto bastava da lingua Latina, passou em França, á universidade de Paris", see Lucena, *História da Vida*, I, 8.

9 His *Spiritual Exercises, see Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Personal Writings*, trans. with intro. Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 53. According to Tursellini, Loyola wins Xavier over after many attempts, with the famous passage in Matthew 16: 26, "que le aprovechara (dezia) a uno ganar todo el mundo con detrimento de su alma y de su salvación", see Tursellini, *Vida del P. Francisco Xavier*, 8r.

15th August, 1534.10 Their intention was to go to Jerusalem, but after this failed, they returned to Rome.[11] In 1539, the King of Portugal, João III, asked his Portuguese ambassador, D. Pedro Mascarenhas to request the Pope to send some clerics to India.[12] Xavier was chosen to travel to India, and swapped the opportunity to access an important clerical position in Pamplona, for a life as a missionary.[13]

In Italy and about to depart for Lisbon, Xavier was given an audience with Pope Paul III who conceded him "liberalmente as graças, & indulgencies"[14] and according to Lucena, compared him with St Thomas the apostle: "Ide pois avante, seguindo a Deos: Levay, & estendey, imitando ao Apostolo S. Thome, o nome, & religiam Christã até os ultimos fins do Oriente".[15]

On the 15th August 1539, Xavier departed for Lisbon. Three years later, on 6 May 1542, he arrived in Goa.16 In Asia, Xavier would tirelessly evangelize, spending two years with the poor pearl fishers on the eastern coast of Cape Comorin, along with apostolic work in other areas. Goa was then the centre of the Portuguese empire in the East and became also the centre for the Society of Jesus east of the Cape of Good Hope. It is worth to highlight that the Jesuits used 'Company of Jesus' which emphasised, 'the centralization of the order, bureaucratic character, clear stratification, and direct lines of communication.'[17]

10 In a Church outside Paris on the slopes of Montmartre. They were seven in total, Ignatius Loyola, Peter Favre, Francis Xavier, Diego Laynez, Alfonso Salmerón, Simon Rodriguez, and Nicholas Bobadilla.

11 In Rome they deliberated whether to start a religious order, see Brodrick, *Saint Francis Xavier*, 69-71.

12 Diogo de Gouvea mentioned to João III, King of Portugal of "certain learned clerics of exemplary life", see King João III letter to Mascarenhas (Lisbon: 4 August 1539), cited in Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, I, 543.

13 "[Xavier] received information that his family had just secured a rich and noble benefice for him", see *The Life of St Francis Xavier*, Bartoli and Maffei, 12. Xavier was chosen together with Simon Rodriguez (1510-79) to go to India.

14 Lucena, *História da Vida,* I, 30.

15 Lucena, *História da Vida*, I, 31.

16 After spending seven months in Mozambique.

17 See Hugh Cagle, *Assembling the Tropics: Science and Medicine in Portugal's*

Although Japan had been reached by the Portuguese merchants since 1543,[18] it seems that Xavier discovered of their arrival, when he was in Malacca in 1547:

> While in this city of Malacca, I was given great news by some Portuguese merchants, men of great credit, of some very large islands, recently discovered, which are called the islands of Japan.[19]

Xavier requested to Portuguese merchant Jorge Alvares, who had been to Japan, to write an account of the islands and its people.[20] Immediately, he was impressed and excited,[21] first by the accounts given by the Portuguese of the Japanese:

> [According to Portuguese merchants] much fruit would be done in increasing our holy faith, more than in any other part of India, because they [the Japanese] are people very eager to learn, what these Gentiles of India do not have. [22]

Empire, 1450-1700 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 23.

18 It was generally acknowledged by 1633, that the three first Portuguese to reach Japan were Antonio de Motta, Francisco Zeimoto, and Antonio Peixoto, see *João Rodrigues's Account of Sixteenth Century Japan*, ed. Michael Cooper (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2001), 63. On the argument of the different dates of the arrival of the Portuguese and who they were, see Olof G. Lidin, *Tanegashima: The Arrival of Europe in Japan* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2002). 16-35.

19 My own translation, see Xavier to the Jesuits in Rome (Cochin: 20 January 1548), *X. Cartas*, 233. Xavier noted: "Hace poco tuve información de la tierra de Japón", see Xavier to Simon Rodríguez (2 February 1549), *X. Cartas*, 295. Unless otherwise indicated translations are my own.

20 This report remains the first written record by a European who had been to Japan. Xavier sent this report to Europe, where soon became very popular, see Xavier to the Jesuits in Rome (Cochin: 20 January 1548), 224. There are many copies of this report, the present work has used the one in *Os Portugueses e o Japão no Seculo XVI*, ed. Rui Loureiro (Lisboa: Ministerio da Educação, 1990), 15-25.

21 The interest that Japan had created among the missionaries becomes clear in a letter: "estad prestos todos, porque, si hallare disposición en Japón, donde podáis hacer más fruto que en la India [...] a muchos de vosotros escribiré primero que vengan donde yo estoy", see Xavier to Fathers Camerte, Gomes and Gago (Malacca: 20-22 June 1549), *X. Cartas*, 328.

22 See Xavier to the Jesuits in Rome (Cochin: 20 January 1548), *X. Cartas*, 233.

Here, for the first time, Xavier compares the Japanese with the people of India in religious terms, concluding that the former would be more apt to receive Christianity because of their tendency to learn.[23] This shows Xavier's quest for commensurability, looking for cultures sharing common ground with his own culture.

Secondly, by Xavier coming into contact with three Japanese, and in particularly with Anjirō (Paulo de Santa Fe), of whom he held a high opinion and to whom he constantly enquired about his homeland.[24] After over a year and a half of much preparation, he arrived in Japan with fellow Spaniards Cosme de Torres (c.1510-70) and Juan Fernandes (c.1526-67) on 15th August 1549, "dia de nossa Senhora de Agosto, de 1549".[25] The Japan these Spanish missionaries encountered was in political upheaval and undergoing radical changes. This period is characterised by constant wars between competing *daimyo* (feudal lords), called the *Sengoku jidai* (戦国時代, 'Warring States era', 1467-1600). The Emperor of Japan was nominally the official ruler but exercised little power; he delegated power to the Shogun whose political influence was weakened by the increasing power of semi-independent warlords. This power vacuum was seen as an opportunity by the *daimyo* to increase their political and financial power by annexing neighbouring fiefdoms.[26] This situation was aggravated by the involvement of militant Buddhist sects.[27]

23 On Xavier's influence in India see Jose Kalapura, SJ, "The Legacy of Francis Xavier: Jesuit Education in India, 16th -18th Centuries" (Pamplona: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, 2012).

24 Luís Fróis, who meet Anjirō in Goa in 1548, described him as "hum japão nobre gentio' and, 'andava este Paulo de Santa Fé vestido como Irmão, que seria pouco mais ou menos homen de 36 ou 37 annos", see Luís Fróis, *Historia de Japam*, ed. José Wicki (Lisboa: Bibioteca Nacional de Lisboa, 1976), I, 17 and 20.

25 See Xavier to the Jesuits in Europe (22 June, 1549), *X. Cartas*, 351.

26 Alan Strathern, "Immanent Power and Empirical Religiosity: Conversion of the Daimyo of Kyushu, 1560–1580." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 47, no. 2 (2020): 247–78.

27 Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742* (New York: Orbis Books, 1994), pp. 3-6. In the fifteenth and sixteen-

It is against this background, that Xavier wrote his letter to his brethren in Goa and through this, revealed a self-assessment of himself, together with the high expectations he had of Japan that would, for many decades to come, excite generations of Jesuits.[28] If Columbus set the tone for what was to follow in the nature of the accounts that were written about the conquest of America, then Xavier's impressions in his letters about the Japanese mission did the same for the latter.[29] The letter to Goa is a long letter, and in it Xavier raised a number of issues, from spiritual matters to more practical and worldly ones, such as the extreme difficulties and dangers which involved the trip to Japan; the qualities of the Japanese as well as their short fallings, especially of the bonzes; the necessity of the Jesuits to continue improving their spirituality; and the belief in increasing Christianity in these islands. But

th-centuries the Ikkō-ikki were groups of rebellious farmers, monks, and lesser nobility backed up by the power of the Jōdo Shinshū sect of Buddhism, see Neil McMullin, *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

28 After 1560s the enthusiasm for overseas service is clear in the 15,000 petitions to the Generals, some which repeatedly apply to work in the missions beyond Europe, see Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540-1750* (California: Stanford University Press, 1996). 256.

29 See *Joan-Pau* Rubiés, "Futility in the New World: Narrative of Travel in Sixteenth-Century America", in *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, eds. Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 74. The figure of Francis Xavier "towers over the whole enterprise", see Linda Zampol D'Ortia, "The Cape of the Devil: Salvation in the Japanese Jesuit Mission Under Francisco Cabral (1570-1579)" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Otago, 2016), 23. The influence of a group of letters or a book is illustrated by the impact of Sir John de Mandeville, a fourteenth-century writer, whose book was very influential in the age of discoveries, especially on Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama, see Hughes Didier, "Bento de Góis: Un Jesuita entre los Musulmanes del Asia Central", in Plazaola, *Jesuitas Exploradores*, 40; see also Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing 400-1600* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988). 122-61. According to *Álvarez-Taladriz*, Xavier's letters inspired Valignano to travel to Asia, see Alessandro Valignano, *Sumario de las Cosas de Japón (1583) y Adiciones del Sumario de Japón (1592)*, ed. José Luis *Álvarez-Taladriz* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1954), I, 63*.

throughout the letter there is also an underlying theme that shows Xavier's own mission, a self-perception of his heroic virtue appreciated by God.

Self-presentation – *ethos*

The literary concept that serves as an aid to the analysis of this text is *transtextuality* with special focus on the subtype hypertextuality.[30] Transtextuality is "all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" and that "covers all aspects of a particular text".[31] For Gérard Genette hypertextuality involves "any relationship uniting a text B (hypertext) to an earlier text A (hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of a commentary".[32] In this way the MC is the hypertext, as designated by Genette: "literary texts which allude, derive or relate to an earlier work or hypotext".[33] As such, Xavier's MC and his other letters can be considered as hypertexts.[34] The importance of St Paul epistles or hypotexts to the MC is paramount, first because Xavier copied, paraphrased or allude to them. Secondly, he used St Paul epistles as examples and as a guide. He clearly not only alludes to the epistles, but he carefully incorporates passages to be more persuasive. As such any analysis of Xavier's letters must go hand in hand not only with the context of the Japanese mission but also with St Paul epistles.

In his self-presentation, as he articulated his own *ethos*, Xavier managed to convey his modelling on St Paul. Among the early apostles, St Peter was considered as the apostle of the Jews, and St Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles, the non-Jews, those who had not heard the Gospel. The Sixteenth Century was an age of discovery, when new lands and people

30 See Gérard Gennette, *Paralimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). 1.

31 Gérard Gennette, *The Architext: An Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). 83-4.

32 Genette, *Paralimpsests*, 5.

33 Bronwen Martin and Felizitas Ringham, *Key terms in Semiotics* (New York: Continuum, 2006). 99.

34 On hypertextuality see Graham Allen, I*ntertextuality: The New Critical Idiom*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). 104-10.

were constantly revealed. For the missionary, spreading Christianity to endless numbers of people who had never heard of Christ and were "under the claws of the Devil", it must have been both exciting and challenging. The letter to Goa resembles in many ways St Paul's epistles, Xavier also appears to use their style, which demonstrates Xavier was well versed on these letters as he cites them regularly. In his MC, Xavier emerges modelling himself on the Apostle of the Gentiles. This should not be taken as presumptuous on his behalf but rather as following established cultural models, as Peter Burke noted, it is an example of the "presentation of the self".[35] After all it was St Paul who wrote: "Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

In the 1960s, the Jesuit Jesús Lópes Gay argued that sixteenth century missionaries were consciously inspired by and more importantly followed the example of the Apostles, and above all that of St Paul. Missionaries not only compared their pastoral work with that of the primitive church but used it as a justification to their methodology.[36] In the early 70s, George Elison called Xavier "The Apostle of Japan and Saint Paul of the Indies".[37] Ellison proved that from early times Xavier was compared with the Apostle of the gentiles. In that way, João Rodriguez Tçuzu's (c.1562–1634) compared Xavier's behaviour in Yamaguchi with St Paul's in Athens in the Areopagus.[38] Elison argued that the almost identical scene of Xavier leaving Japan, with St Paul's departure in Ephesus in Acts, 20: 32,[39] described by Rodrigues, lacks any historical objectivity, and it probably created by Rodriguez. John W. O'Malley in *The First Jesuits*, not only effectively argued that the Jesuit's fourth vow was an affirmation to the early Jesuits'

35 See Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on perception and communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). 57.

36 Jesús Lópes Gay, *El Catecumado en la Mision del Japón del s. XVI* (Roma: Libreria dell'Universita' Gregoriana, 1966). 5.

37 George Elison, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973). 31-2.

38 Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, 6.

39 "A Dios y a la divina palabra de su evangelio, que es poderosa para edificar y dar la herencia eterna y bienaventuranza", cited in Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, 13.

commitment to missionary work, but their missionary impulse was inspired by the Apostles, among whom St Paul's epistles took special place among their early preaching.[40] So far, the historiography of Xavier has compared him with the Apostle of the gentiles but has not demonstrated how he saw himself.

For a better understanding of the letter to the Jesuits in Goa, it is necessary to see the context in which it was written. It is worth pointing out that the letter to Goa was written less than three months after Xavier's arrival to Japan.[41] This explains his cursory descriptions, generalizations, and conclusions of Japan, with high expectations for the future of this new mission.[42]

The Jesuits were an activist rather than a contemplative order, and since the early times in Italy had preached mainly upon Paul's epistles. The description of Japan by Xavier would encourage future Jesuits to choose this mission as their first choice. The revival of the wish for martyrdom in the sixteenth century is depicted in contemporary descriptions. And as the archipelago was full of, "idolatrías y enemigos de Christo", and the land was going through political upheaval, martyrdom was always a possibility. A seven year old, Teresa de Avila, after reading the life of the saints wished to die in the same way, and wanted to go with her brother, "a tierra de moros, pidiendo por amor de Dios, para que allá nos descabezasen."[43] Tursellini noted: "Pero el [Xavier] que andava

40 See O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*,107-10. Among Paul's epistles the Jesuits, like Luther, preferred to preach upon the Epistle to the Romans.

41 Xavier arrived to Japan accompanied by two Jesuits, Father Cosme de Torres, Brother Juan Fernandes, three Japanese, Anjirō, Antonio, and João, and two servants Manoel (who almost died on route) from China, and Amador, a Malabar.

42 Torres acknowledge this, two years later in 1551, of Xavier impressions he wrote: "O padre M. Francisco escreveo mui largo o anno que chegou aqui [...] muitas cosas q passamos na terra, ainda que entaõ tinhamos disso pouca experiencia", see Cosme de Torres to the Jesuits in India (Yamaguchi: 29 September, 1551), Évora Cartas,1598, 16v.

43 Santa Teresa de Jesus, *Obras Completas*, trans. intro. and notes of Efren de la Madre, O.C.D. y Otger Steggink, O. Carm. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1976), 5th ed. 29.

desseoso del martyrio, espero hallar en la India, lo que no pudo alcançar en Hierusalem".[44] Tursellini depicts the early Jesuits, and here specifically Xavier, as looking for martyrdom, just as St Paul had desire (Phil. 1: 21-3). In this way Japan was to become the favourite destination for future Jesuits who constantly applied to be sent there.

In his letter to the Jesuits in Goa, Xavier almost paraphrased Romans 8: 39:

Xavier's letter (1549)	**Romans 8: 39**
These seeing themselves in greater tribulations that were never seen, entering them, nor the devil with his ministers, nor the many storms of the sea [...] knowing the truth, by the great confidence that they have in God, that without his permission and license they cannot do anything.[45]	I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor spiritual powers, neither the present nor the future, nor cosmic powers, were they from heaven or from the deep world, nor any creature whatsoever will separate us from the love of God.

Above all, Xavier goes on to use a combination of moral and dogmatic teaching. St Paul had used the same style many centuries before and one can notice the relation between St Paul epistle (hypotext) and Xavier's MC (hypertext).[46] Loyola had modelled himself on St Francis and St Dominic,[47] and in this letter, it becomes clear who Xavier was trying to imitate.[48] Xavier's view of himself is illuminating as it helps us also to see

44 Tursellini, *Vida del P. Francisco Xavier*, 23r-v.

45 See MC, 358.

46 In a similar vein, Homer's *Odyssey* (c. 8th century BC) could be regarded as the hypotext for James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).

47 Burke argued that Loyola saw himself "as a second St Dominic", but Loyola also seems to want to imitate St Francis of Assisi, "St Francis did this, so I must do it; St Dominic did this, so I must do it", see *Saint Ignatius*, Munitiz and Endean, 15.

48 Xavier had a vision of "St Ieronymo, de quem o Padre Francisco foy sempre especial devoto", see Lucena, *História da Vida*, I, 21.

this man in full dimension and why he held such utopian views of Japan.

That Xavier quotes and cites from St Paul's Epistles is of no surprise, as explained earlier, he is a Jesuit missionary whose order had been founded for the caring of souls and since the early times in Italy had preached mainly upon Paul's epistles. But there is more here, he writes as a leader with a moral authority that resembles the early teachings of the Apostles.

In this letter, even his style of writing occasionally coincides with St Paul's, and uses almost the same wording: "No os digo estas cosas [...]"[49] similar to 1 Corinthians 4: 14 "I do not write this [...]" Xavier's self-comparison with St Paul becomes all but evident when he uses almost the same words to describe the benefit, he himself had received from God, paraphrasing apostle of the gentiles in:

Xavier's letter (1549)
2 Cor. 12: 2

I know a person, to whom God gave a lot of mercy.[50]	I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven.

Here the similarities are too close; Xavier is obviously describing himself using Paul's epistles. Xavier like St Paul must have felt called to the service of Christ, as a reward for his spirituality, writing to other Jesuits in Goa he himself proclaimed this. His road to Damascus had been Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, and according to Tursellini, Loyola had won him over with the passage in Matthew 16: 26: "what will one gain by winning the whole world if he destroys himself". Xavier felt that his faith in God and Christian dedication had been rewarded having reached Japan. The perils of sailing in Asia in the sixteenth century were innumerable, hundreds died en route to the *Estado da India* alone.[51]

49 MC, 359.
50 See MC, 374.
51 A doctor in the same vessel that Xavier travelled in, wrote that it was a miracle

Away from the Portuguese fortress and *feitorias*, Portuguese carracks faced pirates and thieves, storms, diseases, and lack of food and water. To make matters worse, Xavier travelled from Malacca to Japan in the ship of the Chinese gentile Aván "the thief", and complained of the idolatries and sacrifices on board. *52* This made him feel that he was at the mercy of the devil: "See", he says, "the travails that we could had in this navigation, it being the opinion of the devil and his servants whether we were to come to Japan or not."[53] Afflicted by "the Devil" as Paul had been: "Three times I prayed to the Lord that it leave me but he answered, 'My grace is enough for you; my great strength is revealed in weakness'' (2 Co. 12: 7-9). Xavier tells his brethren in Goa that the best remedy under these circumstances, is "totally distrusting the man of himself, and greatly trusting in God, putting all the forces and hopes in him".[54] Again Xavier takes after St Paul who wrote, "of myself I will not boast except of my weaknesses" (2 Co. 12: 1-5) by boasting of his weakness and relying entirely on God.

In the famous letter to the Jesuits in Goa, written from Japan, Xavier explained to his brethren that in Japan, "Y porque los mayores trabajos en que hasta agora os habéis visto, son pequeños en comparación de los que os habéis de ver los que a Japan viniéredes."[55] Japan is therefore so attractive to the missionaries precisely because it demanded a great deal of suffering and sacrifice, and it would test their endurance. Xavier warned the Jesuits, "Y creedme que los que a estas partes viniéredes, series bien probados para cuánto sois".[56] The circumstances in Japan, which excited Xavier so much, were not just finding a religious paradise for the increase of Christendom in part due to the quality of the people, but also it was the right environment for the missionaries, where their

that "only" forty-one died on the voyage, see Brodrick, *The Origin of the Jesuits*, 115.

52 During the trip Xavier writes that a companion almost died (Manuel China), and a daughter of the captain drowned, see MC, 349.

53 See MC, 349.

54 See MC, 351.

55 MC, 359.

56 MC, 359.

faith would be tested. In this way, Japan offered a religious utopian which appealed to the missionaries, in a land that had not only, "la mejor que hasta agora está descubierta, y me parece que entre gente infiel no se hallará otra que gane a los japanes".[57] But where the difficulties, the obstacles put by "muchas importunaciones de los bonzos,"[58] those "ministers of the devil", the idolatries of the laity, in a country with a scarcity of food: "hízonos Dios tanta merced en traernos a estas partes, las cuales carecen de estas abundancias, que, aunque quisiésemos dar estas superfluidades a el cuerpo, no lo sufre la tierra."[59] To this it should be added that his previous opinions of other races in Asia had been unfavourable, of the people from India, for example, he described them as "hablando en general, muy bárbara [...] No tienen inclinación a oír cosas de Dios y de su salvación".[60] Of the people of Morotai island, Maluku Islands, Xavier wrote, "Es gente *bárbara*, carecen de escrituras, no saben leer ni escribir".[61]

So far, we have seen how Xavier was presenting himself, now we turn to how others saw and describe him, the people who saw him as virtuous. According to João de Lucena, while Xavier and Simon Rodriguez were in Lisbon:

> Os começáram per todo o Reyno vulgarmente a chamar Apostolos [...] nam podemos porem deixar de estranhar muyto, vẽdo nos tam longe dos merecimentos d'aquelle nome, de que o mesmo S. Paulo se avia por indino. Posto que em parte os Padres Mestre Francisco, & M Simam tambem podéram responder a Portugal o que o propio S. Paulo escrevia aos Corinthios.[62]

This shows an early indication of how by 1600, Xavier was portrayed as an apostle, due to his mission to the Indies. The Jesuit Henrique

57 MC, 354.
58 MC, 367.
59 MC, 366.
60 (Cochin: 14 January, 1549), *X. Cartas*, 274.
61 My own emphasis (Cochin: 20 January, 1548), *X. Cartas*, 217.
62 See Lucena, *História da Vida*, I, 35. Already in the Alcalá compilation in 1575, the same is said of Xavier and Simon Rodrigues, who were "tan aceptos al pueblo, que les pusieron por nombre los Apostoles", see *Alcalá Cartas*, 1r.

Henriques (c.1520-1600) saw Xavier as fulfilling St Paul's message. In a letter to Loyola on 31st October 1548, he wrote:

> I shall first attempt to give you an account of Father Mestre Francisco [...] since he seeks as far as he can, and more than can be described, to fulfil that saying of St Paul: "Omnibus omnia factus sum ut omnes lucrifacerem (which is very applicable to our society)."[63]

Fernão Mendes Pinto (c.1510-83), who met Xavier and was a Jesuit for two years, in his *Peregrinação*, he mentioned that Xavier by the year 1547 had, "grande nome de santo na voz de todo o povo por milagres que lhe lâ viraõ fazer, ou, para mais acertado, que Deos nosso Senhor por elle fizera."[64] Early biographies, such as Tursellini's (1545-1599) and Lucena's (1550-1600) referred to him as beati and saint, although he was not beatified until 1619 and canonized until 1622. But a word of caution should be given here, since these biographies were written by Jesuits, who over-enthusiastically depicted miracles and deeds. However, on the other hand, they also represent the values and processes of their society, when a young religious order, the Society of Jesus, needed a saint to intercede on their behalf to the court of heaven.[65] The Italian Jesuit Marcello Mastrilli (1603-37), apparently dreamed about Xavier, who foretold him about his martyrdom in Japan.[66]

63 "I have become all things to all men so that I might gain all" (1 Cor. 9: 22), see Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, III, 523.

64 *Peregrinação de Fernão Mendes Pinto*, facsimile ed. of the 1614 ed., presentation José Manuel Garcia (Castoliva editora, MAIA, 1995), 263r.

65 Patronage and clientele were very important in this period and this extended to the "heavenly court", by asking a saint to intercede on one's behalf. In 1614, in a heated debate, the Dominican de Valderrama told the Jesuit Carvalho, that the Society of Jesus had "been born yesterday" and had not a single saint to pray in heaven, and that the Dominican Order "had populated heaven with infinite numbers of saints and martyrs and their members were all lawyers" see Alejandro Valignano, S.J. *Apología de la Compañía de Jesús de Japón y China (1598)*, ed. José Luis Alvarez-Taladriz (Osaka: Eikodo, 1998). iii.

66 See Ines G. Županov, 'Passage to India: Jesuit Spiritual Economy between Martyrdom and Profit in the Seventeenth Century', in *Journal of Early Modern History*, 16 (2012), 1-39.

The knowledge which Xavier had of St Paul's epistle is vast and is very clear when he cites him throughout his letter. This understanding is corroborated by O'Malley who argued that Paul and the apostles were the models in which the Jesuits saw themselves, as shown in the Society's Constitutions.[67] And that the special "fourth' vow has "often been misunderstood as a kind of loyalty oath to the Pope, whereas it is really a vow to be a missionary".[68] This clear missionary impulse is further emphasized by Nadal's statement that "Paul signifies for us our ministry".[69] But, if Xavier is modelling himself on St Paul, is he an isolated case? The answer appears to be no. There was the precedent of the Franciscans, who wanted to implement a new Christian paradise in the new world, and with that in mind they sent Fray Martin the Valencia with twelve other friars in 1523. [70] The minister general of the whole Order of the Friars Minor (Franciscans) Fray Francisco de los Angeles, sent them to Mexico to liberate souls from the oppression of the devil by "contemplating and considering the life and merits of the most blessed Saint Paul".[71] The metaphorical language used by de los Angeles is significant of a period of revival in the Church of the sixteenth century, of a need to change, a kind of renaissance of the ideal of the primitive

67 "To travel through the world and to live in any part of it whatsoever where there is hope of greater service to God and of help of souls", see O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 73.

68 John W. O'Malley, "How the First Jesuits Became Involved in Education", in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum, 400th Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. Vincent J. Duminuco (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 60.

69 O'Malley, "How the First Jesuits Became Involved in Education", 73.

70 The famous twelve, with whom the organized effort to evangelize Mexico began. That same year, Loyola made his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, with the intention of remaining there for the rest of his life, "helping souls"; this did not turn out that way as the Franciscans almost threaten him with excommunication unless he left. By this year it is probable that Xavier had already received the tonsure (perhaps in 1522), and therefore he was already destined to become a cleric at the Diocese of Pamplona, but according to his biographers remained fixated on the benefits of this world.

71 See "Orders given to 'the twelve", in *Colonial Latin America, A Document History*, ed. Kenneth Mills, William B. Taylor and Sandra Lauderdale Graham (Oxford: SR Books, 2002), 59-64.

church. It is not by chance that de los Angeles mentioned Saint Paul,[72] as clear that these Franciscans were inspired by the work of the Apostle of the Gentiles, by spreading Christianity. The early enthusiasm for the Americas did not last, and by the middle of the sixteenth century the golden age of the colonization of the New World was fading fast.[73] Many became disillusioned with the Americans, considered inept for evangelising.[74] With Sahagun lamenting at the end of his life: "It is clear that everything is false in the very foundation of this new Church".[75]

Early accounts of Francis Xavier emphasized his saintliness, mentioning his austere life and miracles.[76] This type of description had propelled him, though deservedly, to become the prototype of the ideal missionary, and had elevated him to become the Apostle of the Indies. But this aura also serves as armour, difficult to penetrate into the real man, and had clouded the impressive and determined figure of this man and of his biographers. On the other hand, studying Xavier without the desire to save souls, deeply influenced by Loyola and his Spiritual Exercises, and searching for salvation; resulted in, as pointed out by Luke Clossey, in a missionary described as an atheist Jesuit risking his life to travel to the end of the world to embrace multiculturalism.[77]

72 For Motolinía (one of the members of 'the twelve') "Apostle" meant Saint Paul, see José Antonio Maravall, *Utopía y Reformismo en la España de los Austrias* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1982). 80.

73 "The friars saw the opportunity to create a utopia, a chance to return to the purity of the primitive apostolic church", see J.S. Cummins, *Jesuit and Friar in the Spanish Expansion to the East*, (Variorum Reprints, London, 1986), V. 38.

74 " Valignano admitted roundly that the Jesuits would rather work in Japan than elsewhere, since they could see and reap the reward of their proselytizing labours with relative ease and frequency", see Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, 80.

75 Cited in Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: the intellectual dynamics of colonization and globalization*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (New York and London: Routledge, 2002). 192.

76 "O padre lhe disse, que o Governador nam viviria muyto tempo, estava entam Garcia de Sá muyto bem disposto, mas d'aquelle dia a dous meses o enterraram", see Lucena, *História da Vida*, 434-5.

77 Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). 7.

In 1545, Xavier complained to Loyola that since departing Portugal, four years earlier, he had only received "unas cartas vuestras rescebí de Roma, y de Portugal dos de maestro Simón."[78]

Xavier calculated responses to letters from Rome, from those missionaries stationed in the Moluccas and Japan, would take three years and nine months to reach back to Rome. This was not only due to the vast distances but also to the limitation of the times when the ships could travel to and from ports, and that counting on good weather, otherwise it should be added another year.[79] As the leading missionary of the Jesuits stationed in Asia, facing new challenges in very different environments and new cultures, Xavier understood that most of the immediate guidance and leadership that his fellow Jesuits would receive will come from him. He felt this weight heavily on his shoulders, requesting from the General of the Order, Ignatius of Loyola, to send a prominent Jesuit:

> I beg you, most good father, that you also look after these children of yours who are in India, and send a person eminent in virtue and holiness, whose firmness and encouragement should shake my lethargy.[80]

Under such circumstances he sought spiritual guidance, a model to follow in his isolation. He found this in the Epistles of Paul and the example of the apostle to the Gentiles, a leader who during the *ecclesia primitiva* had suffered similar tribulations among those who had never heard of Christ and lay the foundations upon which Christianity would flourish.

As a leading missionary responsible for an increasing number of Jesuits arriving to Goa and making decisions almost independently from Rome,

Xavier is constantly referring to St Paul's epistles, reflecting and constantly modelling on the legacy left by the early Apostle, and through this inspiration creating a utopian ideal of the construction of a new kingdom of God, in Japan with the best gentiles yet discovered.

78 Xavier to Loyola (Cochin: 27 January 1545), *X. Cartas*, 163.
79 Xavier to the Jesuits in Rome (Cochin, 20 January 1548), *X. Cartas*, 227.
80 Xavier to Loyola (Cochin, 20 January 1548), *X. Cartas*, 228.

"Ni moros ni judios" Japan as utopic island

In 1516, Thomas More (1477-1535) published his *Utopia*. This work was conceived against a backdrop of discovery of unchartered lands and people, and renaissance humanism, by combining travel literature with the current ideas and preoccupations of the age. As a neologism, this term was needed in order to name what was new or in vogue in his society at that particular time.[81] Other cultures and new civilizations gave utopian writers of the early modern period the possibility of a present location, neither in the past nor in the future, while using fiction to tell a story.[82]

As one analyses Xavier's missives, one can appreciate something that becomes clearer in his famous MC, which reflects on a close relationship between conversion and specific existing temporal conditions, such as the qualities that the neophytes needed to have for the success of the mission. While the primitive church had insisted that the gospel was for the salvation of everyone who believes, for Xavier the spiritual conversion of the gentiles was associated with and facilitated by a variety of issues. Showcasing his Iberian background, he enthusiastically wrote from Cochin about the high prospects of the conversion of "Japón, que es una isla" where there are no "moros ni judíos".[83] The Iberian Peninsula had experienced a long period of struggle, the so-called *Reconquista*, between Christians and Muslims by the sixteenth century.[84] Japan is considered more apt to receive the Gospel on account

81 Fatima Vieira, "The Concept of Utopia", in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, ed. Gregory Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

82 *Three Early Modern Utopias, Utopia, New Atlantis and the Isle of Pines*, ed. Susan Bruce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). xii-iii.

83 "Neither Moors nor Jews", see Xavier to Loyola (Cochin: 12 January 1549), *X. Cartas*, 281.

84 On the reconquest of Portugal see Stephen Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal: Political and Cultural Reorientation on the Medieval Frontier* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); on Spain see Angus Mackay, *Spain in the Middle Ages: From Frontier to Empire, 1000-1500* (Basingstoke and London: The Macmillan Press, 1977); Richard Fletcher, *Moorish Spain* (Berkeley

of being free of the influence of other known religions. From Lisbon, Xavier had displayed a similar feeling already regarding the conversion of the island of Ceylon (Sri lanka), "[The Viceroy] me dijo este otro día que en la India, en una isla de solos gentiles, *sin mixtura de moros ni judíos*, que habíamos de hacer mucho fruto".[85] Xavier complained of the lax behaviour of some Portuguese living in India. He asked from King John III of Portugal to send the Inquisition to India: "mande vuestra alteza la santa inquisición; porque hay muchos que viven la ley mosaica y secta morisca, sin ningún temor de Dios ni vergüenza del mundo".[86]

Xavier incorporates Japanese society into the European social structure. Here, loosely, a Japanese noble such as a samurai is called a *hidalgo*. This assimilation of Japanese society into a European model would continue, in such a way for example a *Daimyo* (feudal lord) becomes a *Duque* (Duke).[87] In this way, Xavier is interpreting his new environment according to his European background, often comparing one against the other, sometimes the Europeans fared better and at other times the Japanese. Throughout these comparisons a subtle criticism of his Europe appears when he thinks that the Japanese are superior. Besides the apparent absent of Judaism and Islam, Xavier also observed qualities inherent to certain cultures, such as *hidalguía*, honour, and reason, qualities which he considered positive for the expansion of Christianity in Japan.[88] At the same time, Xavier's first impressions, born of false analogies, had filled with optimism the minds of the Jesuits in Goa and Europe.[89] Further, I have found that this nobleman

and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006); Joseph O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* **(**Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). On Judaism in Spain and its expulsion see Joseph Pérez, *The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, trans. Lysa Hochroth (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

85 My own emphasis, see Xavier to Loyola and Juan Coduri (Lisbon: 18 March 1541), *X. Cartas*, 73.

86 Xavier to John III (Ambon: 16 May 1546), *X. Cartas*, 201-2.

87 See (Cochin: 29 January 1552), *X. Cartas*, 385.

88 Xavier promised he will call more Jesuits to the Japanese mission: "no sera mucho que antes de dos años os escriba para que muchos de vosotros vengan a Japón", see MC, 373.

89 See Joan-Pau Rubiés, "Comparing Cultures in the Early Modern World:

of the Renaissance used for the first time the word *hidalgo* when describing non-Europeans.[90] Being a *hidalgo* must also be understood in the context of the preoccupation during this period with hierarchy, decorum, and courtesy.[91] It is worth considering this point, that to my knowledge has never before been mentioned, namely that until Xavier had reached Japan there is no mention of *hidalguía / fidalguía* in his letters when referring to other Asian peoples.[92] When mentioning local societies, he never used *hidalgo* or *fidalgo* in the 76 extant letters written after his arrival in Goa. It is only in Japan that Xavier incorporated the local society into the European framework by naming a Japanese "noble" such as a *bushi* or samurai as a *hidalgo* or *caballero*, although Japanese society had no exact equivalent. As a result of this, he was interpreting this new environment according to his European background. Not only was Xavier the first to place the Japanese on socially equal terms with Europeans, but a close analysis of all his extant letters reveals that Japan is the first culture to which he makes this comparison.

Hierarchies, Genealogies and the Idea of European Modernity", in *Regimes of Comparatism: Frameworks of Comparison in History, Religion and Anthropology*, eds. Renaud Gadné, Simon Goldjill, and Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 116-76.

90 Hidalgo in Spanish, see MC XXIIIv in *Coimbra Cartas*. See also MC 39v in *Alcalá Cartas*. It is worth noting that three of the first Generals of the Society of Jesus were nobles, see John Patrick Donnelly, S.J. "New Religious Orders for Men", in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion 1500-1660*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 163.

91 There was a proliferation of books on manners during the sixteenth century. The large number of such books that were published emphasises the importance of this genre of prescriptive courtesy book, especially regarding social protocols at princely and royal courts, such as *The Book of the Courtier* by the Italian humanist Baldassare Castiglione (1528). See Keith Thomas, *In Pursuit of Civility: Manners and Civilization in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

92 On *hidalguía* see I.A.A. Thompson, "The Nobility in Spain, 1600-1800", in *The European Nobilities*, ed. H.M. Scott (Harlow: Longman, 1995), I, 174-235; on hijodalgo or fijodalgo see Américo Castro, *España en su Historia: Cristianos, Moros y Judíos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1948). 71-8.

Xavier was not only thinking in the next world, he dwelled on worldly matters as well.[93] On this, Xavier also follows the stance of the Apostle of the Gentiles in matters such as the marriage of the Japanese who, "No tienen mas de una mujer"[94] (Cor. 7: 2); the sin of sodomy of the "bonzos, los cuales son inclinados a pecados que natura aborrece, y ellos lo confiesan y no lo niegan".[95] (Rom. 1: 27) But among these worldly matters, Xavier's letter are full of praise for the Japanese; issues which reflect upon the criticism of his European roots and utopian views of this new mission. If the Franciscans had hoped for the revival of the primitive church with "innocent savages" in the Americas, Xavier sees it with the Japanese of "muy buena conversación"[96] most of whom, "sabe leer y escribir, que es un gran medio para con brevedad aprender las oraciones y las cosas de Dios".[97] He writes that he had discovered between the Japanese "huma cousa, que nehuma das partes dos Christãos me parece que tem". This is worth mentioning in its totality, as it is very significant of the values which this noble Basque brought from Europe:

> Os fidalgos, que por mui pobres q sejão, & os que não são fidalgos, por muitas riquezas q tenhão, tanta honra fazem ao fidalgo mui pobre, quanta lhe fariaõ se fosse muito rico: & por nenhum preço casaria hum fidalgo muito pobre com outra casta que naõ seja fidalga, ainda que lhe dessem muitas riquezas: & isto fazem por lhes parecer que perdem de sua honra, casando cõ casta baixa. De maneira que mais estimaõ a honra q as riquezas.[98]

This, perhaps, mirrors upon Xavier's personal experience. Xavier, a younger son of a noble family, had struggled financially during his time as a university student in Paris (1525-1536). Xavier employed a student as his servant, in order to keep up appearances suitable to his background,

93 Xavier wrote a letter of recomendation for the Portuguese returning home, who should be honoured by King João III (Cochin: 31 January 1552), *X. Cartas*, 413-18.
94 MC, 368.
95 MC, 371.
96 MC, 369.
97 MC, 370.
98 Évora Cartas, 1598, 9r-v.

a passage that resembles the part of the *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) and the esquire, who pretends he is wealthy.[99] Xavier found himself in debt because the money from Navarra was not enough.[100] Only the assistance of Loyola was able to get him out of trouble financially.[101] Xavier admired the Japanese, because even when the hidalgos were very poor they still received the honour reserved to their rank, something that obviously did not always occurred back in Europe.

Describing the archipelago, perhaps following on Xavier's description, the editor of the *Alcalá Cartas* wrote than in Japan, "son respetados y acatados los nobles, aunque sean pobres".[102] It is in this way that Xavier sees in the samurai the superlative of the *hidalgo*. In order to maintain his rank, a nobleman needed money, "largesse was a quality to be expected of every nobleman."[103] There are many examples of this period that emphasize on this issue. The ex-governor of India, Francisco Barreto (1520-73), after a shipwreck decided to winter in Goa instead of Mozambique, "because it was very expensive, [...] and did not have the money to maintain his status and the nobility of his character".[104] The Spanish conquistador Bernal Díaz (c. 1492-1584) described Hernan Cortes in similar style:

99 "*¡O, Señor, y cuántos de ellos habrá derramados por todo el mundo que padecen por la negra que llaman honrilla, lo que sufririan por Vos!*", see *Lazarillo de Tormes* (Bogota; Mexico: Norma, 2002), 41. Robert L. Fiore, *Lazarillo de Tormes* (Boston: Twayne, 1984). 62.

100 Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, I, 159.

101 While in Paris, Loyola begged for alms there, Flanders, and England, and was able to cover for his studies and even help financially his friends, one of which was Xavier.

102 See *Alcalá Cartas*, 30r.

103 Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London: Yale University Press, 1984). 155. Jenifer G. Wollock, *Rethinking Chivalry and Courtly Love* (Santa Barbara CA: Praeger, 2011).

104 See *Further Selections from The Tragic History of the Sea 1559-1565*, ed. C.R. Boxer (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959). 45. Duby noted that while it is true that the economies of the time could have an adverse effect upon the pockets of the noblemen, more often it was their own cavalier attitude to expenditure that caused their financial ruin, see Keen, *Chivalry*, 155.

> He wore a plume of feathers, with a medallion and a gold chain, and a velvet cloak trimmed with loops of gold. In fact, he looked like a bold and gallant Captain. But he had nothing with which to meet the expenses I have described, for at that time he was very poor and in debt.[105]

Cervantes hinted that only a mad person would see honour without money in this period, when the innkeeper asked *Don Quixote* "if he had any money", to pay with, to which Don Quixote replied: "that he did not have a copper *blanca*, because he had never read in the histories of knights errant that any of them ever carried money".[106] In a similar vein, Erasmus in his *Praise of Folly* made fun of those, "who make a point of seeming rich to their neighbours but live a meagre, hungry life at home".[107]

The very positive image of Japanese society portrayed by the pioneering spirit of Francis Xavier is revealing, as he dwelled on those aspects of Japan on which he thought a Christian kingdom could be built, the strongly developed sense of honour in particular. This was, of course, a major feature of Iberian society itself at the time, a reflection of the values of chivalry which it carried with it to Asia, as, for example, in the classic poem of Camoens (c. 1524-80), *The Lusiads*. The Iberian society of the sixteenth century placed a very high value on birth and rank.[108] Emphasizing a code of honour that had developed from warrior groups in the middle-ages, and which had been mixed with *Reconquista* and crusading feelings.

Immersed in a culture of honour, sixteenth century *hidalgos* and nobles aimed to enjoy the privileges, freedoms, and exemptions due to their rank. This extended even to those who were not *hidalgos* but had travelled to the Estado da India with the expectation of being rewarded such as Fernão Mendes Pinto and Diogo do Couto (c.1542-

105 See *Bernal Diaz, The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. J.M. Cohen (London: Penguin Books, 1963). 47.

106 Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, (London: Vintage Books, 2005). 31. A copper coin worth roughly half *maravedi*.

107 *Desiderius Erasmus, The Praise of Folly and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Adams (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989). 50.

108 J.H. Elliot, *Imperial Spain 1496-1716* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963). 222.

1616).[109] In this way, when Xavier observed the honourable behaviour of the Japanese, he is observing from his own background, the issues that were discussed and contested in Europe, and he finds in Japan a better way than the one practiced by Europeans. That he thinks the Japanese *hidalgos* would rather turn away from riches than lose their honour is something he admired. St Paul had swapped a "middle-class" background and an official position, changing his career from persecutor to Apostle; in a similar way, Xavier (as well as Loyola and Borja) was a noble who renounced worldly vanities.[110] There seems to be a model that the renunciation of worldly honours produces trustworthy Christians, and more importantly, saints.[111] Xavier had aimed at a successful ecclesiastical carrier when young. Priesthood opened the doors to great and honourable positions, and Xavier had received the tonsure of the diocese of Pamplona already, when he went to commission his title of nobility, knowing that many benefices were reserved to the nobility. This was so common that in 1542, the Venetian ambassador to France noted, "they deal in bishoprics and abbeys at

109 Fernão Mendes Pinto complained of his wasted four and a half years in Lisbon requiring being acknowledge for his service to the Crown, see *Peregrinação*, Garcia, 302v. The Portuguese soldier-chronicler Diogo do Couto, of humble origins, constantly protested of the preference given by the Portuguese Crown in recognition for services to those who applied from high born background over the ones who had achieved merit. And, when his application for admission into the Military Order of Christ was blocked, he threatened posterity in 1607: "if I am neither honoured nor rewarded, I will grind everything to dust, and leave on my sepulchre the inscription of Fabricius, *Ingrata patria ossa mea non pocedebis*", see Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea*, 34.

110 This was greatly represented by Alonso Cano (1601-1667) in the painting of Francis Borgia meditating on a crowned skull now in the Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville.

111 An overwhelming majority of the canonized saints in the West had aristocratic or upper-class backgrounds, something which the hagiographers placed great emphasis upon, see *Saints and their Cults*, ed. Stephen Wilson (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 37. During the Counter-Reformation "at least twenty-six of the fifty-five saints were of noble origin", see Burke, *The Historical Anthropology*, 54.

court as elsewhere in pepper and cinnamon".[112]

For Xavier, a Japanese "hidalgo" would lose his honour by marrying below his class, and would rather remain poor. Marriage was, of course, one way to achieve social mobility in Europe. But at the same time, it was a delicate issue, contemporary accounts observed that marriage, and the family in general, were in crisis.[113] The Council of Trent prohibited the so-called clandestine marriages which caused so much confusion.[114] There was also the issue of the dowry; some families in order to marry one daughter into a suitable marriage provided one large dowry to the detriment of others, usually younger daughters who were left with little or nothing. On the other hand, too much honour could be counterproductive. Francesco Carletti (1573- 1636) noted, "the Japanese nature and customs, that they not only do not bear any sort of insult, but also not even the smallest word that is slightly discourteous".[115] A young Ignatius of Loyola almost killed a Moor, believing that he must defend the honour of his lady, the Virgin Mary.[116] And Mendes Pinto argued that the bonzos in Japan "por hua natural oufania & presumção que tem [...] tomão muyto em caso de honra desdizeremse do que hua vez disseraõ [...] inda que por isso aventurem mil vezes as vidas".[117]

112 Martin D.W. Jones, *The Counter Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). 33.

113 Portuguese male population were encouraged to marriage with the locals, especially with women from the elite, see Francisco Bethencourt, "Political Configuration and Local Powers", *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800*, ed. Francisco Bethencourt & Diogo Ramada Curto (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 214. Francesco Carletti wrote that in 1598 he boarded a boat from Japan "commanded by a captain who was Portuguese by nationality, though born in Nagasaki of a Japanese mother", see *My Voyage around the World by Francesco Carletti: A 16th Century Florentine Merchant*, transl. Herbert Weinstock, (London: Methuen & Co., 1965). 136.

114 See Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700* (London: Macmillan Press, 1999). 55.

115 Carletti, *My Voyage*, 136.

116 See Munitiz and Endean, *Saint Ignatius*, 19.

117 Garcia, *Peregrinação*, 281v.

Equally Xavier tells the Jesuits that those who would come to Japan would not be able to depend on the support of the Portuguese as in Goa. St Paul indicates in I Cor. 1:18-25, that their simplicity had aided them in proclaiming the gospel and not by the use of beautiful words, as the Jews asked for miracles and the Greeks for higher knowledge, in that manner Xavier who did not know the Japanese language asked for the simplicity of a child when he was in Japan, "y agora nos cumple ser como niños en aprender la lengua, y pugliese a Dios que en una simplicidad y pureza de ánimo los imitásenos".[118]

Conclusion

As a leading missionary responsible for an increasing number of Jesuits arriving to Goa and making decisions almost independently from Rome, Xavier sought spiritual guidance, a model to follow in his isolation. Who better to lean on than the apostle St Paul, a leader who during the primitive church proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, and the bulk of his ministry was spent, like Xavier, in pagan lands. Like many sixteenth century missionaries who were consciously inspired by and more importantly followed the example of the Apostles, Xavier managed to convey his modelling on the Apostle to the Gentiles, as such he was following established cultural models. In his self-presentation, as he articulated his own *ethos*, Xavier's moral authority also comes from his comparison with St Paul. In Xavier, we see the early Jesuits' commitment to missionary work, a missionary impulse inspired by the Apostles, among whom St Paul's epistles took special place among their early preaching.

The perspectives of Japan by the pioneer of the mission, reveals a baggage of knowledge and experiences acquired not only in Europe, but also from the places and cultures where he had been, from Mozambique to Kagoshima. This is specially appreciated in Xavier's so-called *Magna Carta* from Japan, where he thought he had found the best gentiles yet discovered. Xavier's writings reveal in a snapshot sixteenth century reality.

118 MC, 380.

His search for commensurability between Europe and Japan, took him to describe Japan and the Japanese people with utopian views. Here one can appreciate a distinction between the *ecclesia primitiva* and sixteenth century missions, namely that while the primitive church had insisted that the gospel was for the salvation of everyone who believes, for Xavier the spiritual conversion of the gentiles was associated with and facilitated by a variety of issues. Showcasing his Iberian background, he concluded that places where there were no "moros ni judíos", or the lack of rival religions well known to him, were more apt to receive the Gospel.

Finally, Xavier incorporates Japanese society into the European social structure. He also observed qualities inherent to the Japanese, such as *hidalguía*, honour, and reason, qualities which he considered positive for the expansion of Christianity in Japan. Further, this nobleman of the Renaissance used for the first time the word *hidalgo* when describing non-Europeans cultures and a Japanese noble such as a samurai is called a *hidalgo*. By doing this he was the first to place the Japanese on socially equal terms with Europeans.

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