Recent Research on the Azuchi Screens

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Recent Research on the Azuchi Screens

MARK K. ERDMANN AND ÉLIANE ROUX

On 4 April 1585 a remarkable exchange took place in Rome.[1] Having arrived in the city roughly two weeks earlier after a three-year journey from Japan, a group of four Japanese teenage boys, sent as emissaries by the Jesuit mission and retroactively named the Tenshō Embassy, met with Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585; r. 1572–1585) in his private quarters. This rare privilege of a private audience followed the boys' official public reception at a crowded papal consistory and was one of several meetings between the parties before the pope's death on 10 April. During this occasion, the boys presented several gifts brought from Japan, including a pair of large six-panel folding screen paintings (*byōbu* 屏風) known today as the Azuchi Screens.[2] The screens had been commissioned and given to the Jesuits by the warlord Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 (1534–1582), the first of the so-called three great unifiers of Japan. They depicted a panoramic, bird's-eye view of Azuchi Castle—Nobunaga's newly-constructed, palatial, mountain fortress home—as well as its surrounding town and adjacent ports. According to a compiled account of the day's events, Gregory XIII seems to have immediately recognized the importance of the gift. After receiving them, he "ordered that the paintings on which Azuchi was depicted were to be displayed in that well-adorned

1 The present article is based on three research reports authored by Éliane Roux in the context of the Azuchi Screens Research Network team project: *The Humanist-Antiquarian Philips van Winghe (1560–1592) and Network*, 2019; *The Rome-Padua Network of Humanist-Antiquaries 'Ethnographers' and Far East (16–17th cent.)*, 2020; and *The Donation of the Azuchi Folding Screens to Gregory XIII (1585) and Their Original Location in a 'Gallery,'* 2023. It is also based on an article authored by Mark K. Erdmann titled "Nebuchadnezzar's Draw: Revisiting Philips van Winghe's Sketches of the Azuchi Screens in Lorenzo Pignoria's *Images of the Gods and Ancients*" (forthcoming), and an article authored by Roux titled "'Antiquities' from the 'Indies': Circulation of Knowledge on East Asian Art and Material Culture in Early Modern Italian Antiquary Networks, 16–17th Centuries" (forthcoming). Part of these results were presented by Erdmann and Roux in the panel "From Azuchi to Rome: The Tenshō Embassy and the Azuchi Screens" at the international online symposium "Beyond the Southern Barbarians: Repositioning Japan in the First Global Age" (held by Kyushu University and Yale University, 16 February 2021), entitled: "Nebuchadnezzar's Draw: Revisiting Philips van Winghe's Sketches of Azuchi Castle" (Erdmann) and "An 'Antiquity' from Japan: The Azuchi Castle Screens and Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century European Antiquary Networks" (Roux). The authors want to express their gratitude to the reviewers for their comments. Special thanks to Sugimoto Studios and a JSPS 2017–2018 postdoctoral grant to Erdmann for funding this research.

2 On the Tenshō Embassy in Rome and the donation of the Azuchi Screens to Gregory XIII, see, for example, de Sande, *Japanese Travellers*; Brown, "Courtiers and Christians"; Cooper, *The Japanese Mission*; Valignano, *Dialogo sulla missione*.

loggia, to show that [the boys'] gift was to be counted among those to be held in high esteem…"[3] Gregory XIII's command, however, was not maintained. The Azuchi Screens would disappear from the historical records less than a decade after their reception.

Since the rediscovery of the history of these paintings in the twentieth century, hope that they or some traces of them remain has inspired many scholars to search for them.[4] The enthusiasm to find the screens is entrenched in their profound cultural significance in Japan and beyond. In addition to their international pedigree as the first major diplomatic gift sent from Japanese to Western leaders, their value as historical documents cannot be overstated. The screens represent one of only a handful of paintings attributable to Kanō Eitoku 狩野永徳 (1543–1590), not only the most influential painter in Japan of the late sixteenth century, but an artist famed for his detailed renderings of cityscapes filled with genre scenes. Analogous paintings by Eitoku (figure 1) suggest that the Azuchi Screens contained numerous meticulously painted, colorful vignettes depicting the architecture and daily life in Azuchi and, as such, they would offer a wealth of insights into a range of historical topics. Although it existed only for three years, Azuchi Castle was a landmark monument in the development of the opulent Azuchi-Momoyama-安土桃山 period (1573–1615) aesthetic, the Japanese castle architectural typology, and the urban plan of the castle town. Furthermore, as the screens are known to have included a depiction of the Jesuit seminary in Azuchi, they would offer a rare, illustrated record of Jesuit activities in Japan at their peak as well as an architectural example of hybrid forms of expression arising from the local policy of cultural accommodation.[5] Yet, their value extends beyond the historical. For the people of Shiga Prefecture, home of Azuchi Castle's ruins, the screens are a symbol of a past heyday and hold the promise of a future renaissance. Should they be discovered, the screens would become the cornerstone for long-standing ambitions to reconstruct Azuchi Castle.

This paper represents a continuation of these efforts to determine the fate of the Azuchi Screens, and, at the same time, it seeks to reconsider, deepen, and reframe our understanding of the screens' significance within the context of social, cultural, and material interactions between Japan and Europe. This rethinking has evolved from research done by the Azuchi Screens Research Network (ASRN), the first collaborative, systematic attempt to search for new information related to the Azuchi Screens. ASRN was born of a 2005–2007 Japanese initiative led by Paola Cavaliere, Wakakuwa Midori (1935–2007), and Shimbo Kiyono, sponsored by the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations and Azuchi Town 安土町.[6] The project was revived in 2016 thanks in large part to the generous support of the artist Sugimoto Hiroshi 杉本博司 (b. 1948). Since this rebirth, ASRN has evolved into an international and interdisciplinary collective of academics, artists, and other professionals dedicated to researching early modern cultural and material exchange between Europe and East Asia, with a particular focus on Italy and Japan, and engages with a global network of specialists from different fields, as well as several academic, cultural, and governmental institutions.[7]

While the chance that the screens still exist in any form is low, the group's research efforts have found that there exists an abundance of research avenues related to the screens' reception, their original display context, and their legacy as research objects on Japan. These aspects of the screens' history, essential to uncovering more information about them and their possible fate, concurrently reveal it to be a sort of transcendent object. While its material character may only be minimally grasped or analyzed, its vestiges in the form of firsthand and secondhand accounts form a considerable nexus and foundation for interrogating the context in which they were received. The screens were not merely

3 Valignano, *De missione legatorum Iaponensium*, p. 257; adapted from de Sande, *Japanese Travellers*, p. 301. All the translations in this article are by Éliane Roux unless otherwise stated.

4 Hamada, "Azuchiyama byōbu ni tsuite."

5 In the Jesuit account of the reception of the screens, Nobunaga is said to have inquired whether Valignano "wished to carry [back] his very own college in painting ['painted']" before gifting them ("[…] se o padre [Valignano] desejasse de levar pintado o seu mesmo Collegio, de maneira que lhe mandou os seus beóbus para que os visse, e que se lhe contentassem os deixasse ficar, & não lhe contentando lhos tornasse a mandar"). Coelho, "Carta annua de Iapaõ." In *Cartas,* II, fol. 39v.

6 Wakakuwa, Shimbo, and Cavaliere, *Azuchi-chō*; Cavaliere, "Azuchijō no zu byōbu."

7 ASRN is composed of Gen Aihara, Paola Cavaliere, Mark Erdmann, Éliane Roux, Kiyono Shimbo, and Anton Schweizer, with affiliations to Kyushu University; the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Contemporary Culture Research Unit (ERCC) at the University of Melbourne's School of Culture and Communications; and the Odawara Art Foundation, Japan.

Figure 1. Kanō Eitoku. *Rakuchū rakugai*. Uesugi screens. Muromachi period, ca. 1565. Pair of six-panel folding screens. Ink, colors, and gold on paper. Each 160 x 364 cm. Yonezawa City Uesugi Museum. Detail of right screen, panels 1 and 2.

diplomatic gifts; they were lavish, large-scale, and rare "curious" objects that demanded notice and, as such, were immediately appreciated as symbols of the Church's evangelization successes in Asia and the promise of the greater potential of its missionary effort spearheaded by the Jesuits. As Japan was increasingly closed off in the early seventeenth century and universalist scientific endeavors flourished together with curiosity culture and collecting—that is, the popular practice of accumulating exotic objects and *naturalia* for study and display in cabinets of curiosity, or other conservation or exhibit spaces—their meaning partially shifted to that of ethnographic research materials and a rare window onto a culture and society that defied easy categorization. In this respect, the screens' reception history reveals a consistent and informed understanding of Japan prior to the crystallization of orientalist attitudes in subsequent centuries. In their varied reception, the screens represent an ideal centerpiece for interrogating the evolving and imprecise state of knowledge about Japan—and East Asia or "Indies" as a methodologically indivisible category—vis-à-vis its material culture as it was understood in Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Space and Meaning, Local and Universal

The events of 4 April 1585 outlined above are a critical moment in the history of the Azuchi Screens as well as a nexus point in a larger web of meaning and interactions within which this diplomatic gift was activated. In regards to the character of the screens, details surrounding their presentation are of great interest as much of the limited information that is already known about their character derives from newsletters, known as *avvisi*, containing firsthand and secondhand accounts of the day's papal audience.[8] Research into clarifying the exact date and location of the audience—that is, a point contradicted by various accounts[9] —and the identities of those present as well as those interested in the events of that day has already helped ASRN to uncover new *avvisi* that bring to light new details on the presentation of the screens and some of their peculiarities, and continues to hold potential for discovering additional records. Among these recent discoveries is an unedited passage describing the screens as "two paintings on panels depicting the portraits of two important cities of the Kingdom of Japan, which have all the streets, and the buildings, [made] of cedar wood […]."[10] This description is especially noteworthy as it echoes other accounts in regard to the physical character of the screens as "wood" and thereby raises questions about their perceived and actual materiality as imported, hybrid objects.[11] Another account that has been

8 The three previously known *avvisi* are:
(1) Letter from Annibale Ariosto to Cardinal Luigi d'Este, 25 March 1585 (Modena, Archivio di Stato di Modena [hereafter ASMo], Avvisi e notizie dall'estero, Roma, busta 3), extracts published in Schütte, "Die Wirksamkeit der Päpste für Japan," p. 218; Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, *Dai Nihon shiryō*, pp. 266–67.
(2) *Avviso* from Rome, 30 March 1585 (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana [hereafter BAV], Urb. lat., 1053, fols. 145rv). Transcribed and discussed in Boncompagni Ludovisi, *Le prime due ambasciate dei giapponesi a Roma*, no XV; Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, *Dai Nihon shiryō*, pp. 236–37; Wakakuwa, Shimbo, and Cavaliere, *Azuchi-chō*, pp. 8–9; Erdmann, "Azuchi Castle," pp. 482–84.
(3) Letter from Teodoro Panizza to Cardinal Luigi d'Este, 5 April 1585 (ASMo, Carteggio degli Ambasciatori Estensi in Roma); see Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, *Dai Nihon shiryō*, p. 246; Boscaro, "New Documents on the First Japanese Mission to Europe"; Erdmann, "Azuchi Castle," p. 485.

9 Primary records conflate the date of the public consistory on 23 March 1585, the date of the presentation of gifts, and dates of other meetings between Gregory XIII and the Japanese delegates. A detailed and unedited description by an unidentified Jesuit father who attended the consistory (Milan, Venerabile Biblioteca Ambrosiana [hereafter VBA], manuscript D 490 inf., fols. 95rv–96r, entitled in the margin: "Delli Giaponesi"), together with the various manuscript diaries of the Vatican Palaces' Master of Ceremonies for the year 1585 kept at the Vatican Library and the Office for the Liturgical Celebrations of the Holy Pope's *Archivio Storico dei Cerimonieri Pontifici*, confirm that the screens were not presented at the consistory. *De missione* dates the presentation of gifts to "Thursday […] Nones of April," suggesting, per the ancient Roman calendar, on 5 April. However, the universal calendar for 1585 places 5 April on a Friday. Confirmation of Thursday being the day of the event can be found in Panizza's letter (see n. 8) and in one of the newly discovered *avvisi* (see n. 10).

10 Discovered by Roux. Abovementioned letter from an unidentified Jesuit father, Rome, 23 March 1585 (VBA, D 490 inf., fols. 95rv–96r); *Avviso* from Rome, 30 March 1585 (ibid., fol. 90r).

11 *Avviso* from Rome, 30 March 1585 (VBA, D 490 inf., fol. 90r): "Li Prencipi Indiani hanno portato […] due quadri di tavole depinti con li ritratti di due gran città del Regno del Giappone che hanno tutte le strade, e li ediffici, di legno di cedro […]." The possibility exists that the screens' paintings, rendered on paper, were remounted on a wooden board. Another description, similar to *avviso* 2 (see n. 8), is contained in VBA, ms. P 251 sup., fol. 87r: "To donate to His Holiness and others, they [the Japanese delegates] brought various things from that country […]. Among other things that they donated to His Holiness there was a painting, where is depicted the principal city of Japan, called Nabunanga [*sic*], which is two *braccia* [arm's lengths] in height, [and] four or

overlooked in modern scholarship is a mention in a 1585 booklet that highlights the pageantry and significance of the day's events, and records the transportation of the screens to the Vatican Palace. The ambassadors "brought their gift in a carriage, accompanied by the carriage of [Cardinal] San Sisto and other servants, and the pope had them sit and 'cover' [remain with their hats] next to him, a thing that made the persons who were there astonished, as he treated them as his sons."[12]

Likewise, the location of the "well-adorned loggia" where the screens—according to contemporary accounts—were initially placed is a critical point that has demanded investigation. This location is the starting point from which the screens' subsequent and unknown transmission might be traced and may allow for the identification of those who had access to these objects and whose writings or production require surveying. Yet, the question of the "well-adorned loggia" as a receptacle for such a multilayered object also reveals the utility of the screens to interrogate the context into which they were received.

The description of Gregory XIII's designs for the screens quoted above comes from one of three accounts that describe their presentation to the pope. This account, *De Missione legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam curiam* (On the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Court) is a Latin translation by Duarte de Sande (1547–1599) of a lost text written in Castilian around 1587–1589 by the Jesuit Visitor of Missions in the East Indies and mastermind behind the Tenshō Embassy, Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606).[13] Valignano was not a firsthand witness to the embassy's activities in Rome, but was well informed about its progression through the boys' personal notes, the diary of their guide and caretaker Father Diego de Mesquita (1551–1614), and, presumably, additional input from Jesuit fathers.[14] *De Missione* contains the most detailed description of the activities of that day, but the two other sources offer additional critical details. The second account, *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giaponesi* (Reports of the Visit of the Japanese Ambassadors), was written contemporaneously to the ambassadors' visit by Guido Gualtieri (ca. 1540–post 1592), professor of humanities and secretary of Latin letters of the Holy See during the pontificate of Sixtus V (1585–1590), and printed in 1586.[15] It is a compilation of chronicles, *avvisi*, and printed booklets with reports or literary texts (such as poems, epigrams, and orations) on the topic of the boys' visit. The third source is *Tratado dos Embaixadores Japões* (Treatise on the Japanese Ambassadors) from circa 1592; it was not printed, but it is widely known through various manuscript copies.[16] This report on the Japanese ambassadors' journeys by the Jesuit missionary Luís Fróis (1532–1597) is an organized compilation of sources that was done in preparation for Fróis's magnum opus *Historia do Japão* (History of Japan), and includes "memorials" and other notes by the Japanese boys, unedited or printed contemporary chronicles on their mission, information from the Jesuit network in their annual letters, as well as directly copied passages from Gualtieri's book.[17]

Together, these accounts offer a composite summary of the events of 4 April 1585 and, critically, provide the only known clues regarding the original placement of

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five *braccia* in length" (*Per donare a Sua Santità et altri hanno portato varie cose di suo paese* […] *fra l'altre cose che donorno a Sua Santità fu un quadro dove è depinta la città principale del Giapone detta Nobunanga quale è alto due bracia, e longo quatro*). In another *avviso* dated 30 March (BAV, Urb. lat., 1053) that describes the presentation and character of the screens, it is mentioned that "[The Japanese Embassy] presented to the pope a painting on a very wide and thin piece of *tree-trunk* (*scorza d'arbore*) depicting their capital city, with many magnificent buildings" (*Hanno donato al Papa sopra una grand[issi]ma, et sottiliss[im]a scorza d'arbore il ritratto della loro Città prin[cipa]le ornata de molti edificij magnifici*). The meaning and translation of the expression "scorza d'arbore," tree-trunk, needs to be further scrutinized. The same term "scorza d'arbore" is used to describe the paper of the diplomatic letter sent by the daimyo of Bungo to the pope: "In the public consistory they presented also letters from the king of Bungii [*sic*], in the kingdom of Japan, written on a very subtle [or fine] tree rind [*scorza d'arbore*]" (*avviso* of Rome, 30 March 1585, VBA, D 490 inf., fol. 90r). This usage suggests that the expression may not literally describe tree bark.

12 Pinto, Okamoto, and Bernard, the editors of Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*, p. 184, quote this passage from the 1585 booklet *Breve Raguaglio Dell'Isola del Giappone. Et di questi Signori, che di la son venuti a dar obedientia alla Santità di N.S. Papa Gregorio XIII* related to the private audience with the pope on 3 [*sic*] April: "[…] portarno il lor presente in carrozza, et cocchi da [Cardinale di] San Sisto accompagnati, et da altri servitori, et gli fece il Papa seder, et coprire appresso se, cosa che fece stupire, trattando con loro come Figliuoli."

13 Valignano, *De missione legatorum Iaponensium*. The Latin translation was first printed in Macau in 1590. English translation in de Sande, *Japanese Travellers*.

14 Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*, pp. xxiii–xxx.

15 Gualtieri, *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giaponesi*.

16 Fróis, *Tratado dos Embaixadores Japões*, ca. 1592. The most well-known manuscript copy is in Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, COD. 11098. Published and commented in Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*.

17 Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*, pp. xxiii–xxx.

the screens.[18] According to them, the screens were to be placed in a location that is referred to as a "loggia named Gallery" (Valignano-de Sande) or "gallery" (Gualtieri, Fróis). This gallery is characterized as having "walls […] hanging many ornaments and […] covered with gold and a plethora of colors" (Valignano-de Sande) and that Gregory XIII "had himself built and decorated with well executed paintings of various cities and 'countries'"[19] (Gualtieri, Fróis) that were "of the world" (Fróis). Valignano further adds that the gallery in question was "a pathway for the private use of the pope which leads to [or toward] a truly elegant garden called Belvedere." Gualtieri and Fróis also make it clear that one end of this pathway connected to the private residences of Gregory XIII, including a study and bedroom.

The naming of the space as a "gallery" and the various details about it (i.e., a loggia, adjacent to Gregory XIII's private quarters, leading to the Belvedere garden, containing maps of countries and cities of the world as well as gold and color, and constructed during Gregory XIII's papacy) leave two candidates for the original display location of the screens (figure 2): The Gallery of Maps (*Galleria delle carte geografiche*) and the Gallery of Cosmography (*Galleria della cosmografia*), also called the "Terza Loggia" (Third Loggia).

The first of these spaces, the Gallery of Maps (figure 3), has long been assumed to have been the initial home of the screens for several reasons. Built between 1578 and 1580, with its pictorial program completed toward the end of 1581, this loggia is not only Gregory XIII's most famous architectural contribution to the Vatican, but it was also a project that he was highly invested in

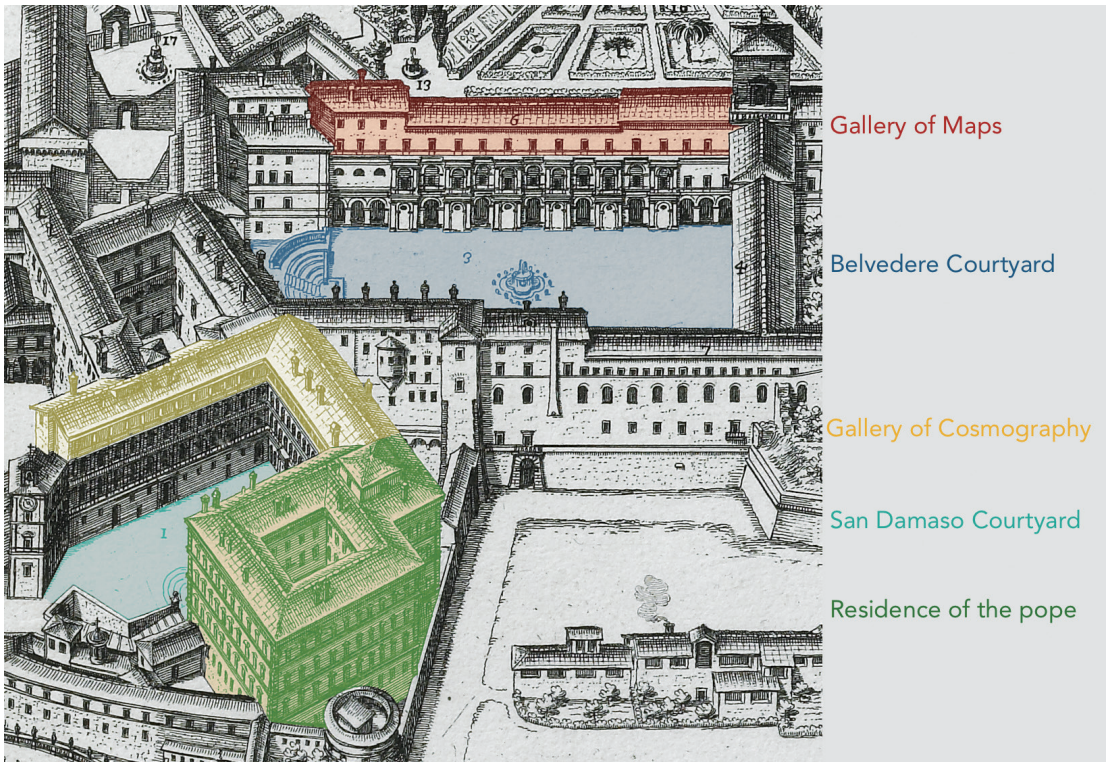


Figure 2. Giovanni Battista Falda. Detail from *Plan and Elevation of the Belvedere Garden of the Vatican Palace*. First published 1677; MCCM edition published ca. 1688. Etching. Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University. © Bruce M. White, 2008. Prepared by Erdmann.

18 Valignano, *De missione legatorum Iaponensium*, pp. 256–57; Gualtieri, *Relationi della venuta degli ambasciatori giaponesi*, p. 90; Fróis, *Tratado dos Embaixadores Japões*, pp. 184–85, in Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*.

19 See the discussion below in n. 25 concerning the translation of the term "paesi."

Figure 3. Ottaviano Mascherino; overall design and cartoons for maps by Egnazio Danti. Gallery of Maps, 1578–1581. Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Palace. 2024 © Photo Scala, Florence.

and associated with.[20] One hundred twenty meters long and six meters wide, the space is located on the west side of the Belvedere Courtyard and features forty maps depicting the Italian territories. These subjects, decorated with gold and rendered in vibrant colors, perfectly match both the Valignano-de Sande and Gualtieri descriptions. Beyond the association with Gregory XIII and its correspondence to the 4 April 1585 accounts, another reason that the Gallery of Maps has been identified as the space where the screens were exhibited is due to a copied map and letter, discussed in greater detail below, that place a key witness, the Flemish antiquarian Philips van Winghe (1560–1592), there in 1592.[21] Although no evidence exists to confirm it, for lack of any other record of van Winghe visiting the Vatican Apostolic Palace, it is widely assumed that this visit was the occasion when he saw the screens and sketched them.

The Gallery of Maps, however, fails to meet one characteristic: that the maps on display were "of the world." This description of the maps comes from Fróis, who it bears reiterating worked with a range of sources including Gualtieri, but was not aware of Valignano-Duarte's *De Missione*, and had never seen the Gallery of Maps.[22] In this respect, Gualtieri's text, based on his own experience inside the Vatican in the years immediately after the Tenshō Embassy's visit, appears to be more authoritative. His language, scrutinized in light of contemporary sources, suggests that a key term that he deploys, "paesi," while generally translated to "countries," in fact refers to another common early modern meaning for this term: "landscapes" (or "villages"). It seems that in encountering this term, Fróis assumed the former meaning, and consistent with his writing that relies on

20 Gambi and Pinelli, *La Galleria delle Carte Geografiche*; Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*.

21 Letter from Philips van Winghe to Abraham Ortelius, Rome, 13 July 1592 (Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, PBL 2766), in Ortelius, *Abrahami Ortelii*, pp. 520–23. Reproduction and English translation in van der Sman, "Dutch and Flemish Printmakers in Rome," p. 264.

22 Fróis, *La première ambassade du Japon en Europe*, pp. xxvi–xxx.

others' work, proposed a broader reading of the term "paesi" that aligns with descriptions of the Gallery of Maps that circulated at the Roman court at that time.[23] Notably, although it included only maps of Italy, the program of the Gallery of Maps was often referred to as a cosmography ("cosmografia") in contemporary descriptions.[24] Fróis's choice to describe the maps as "of the world" thus appears to have been a derivation from texts of the sources he consulted and therefore attributable to shifting significations for the term "paesi" and "cosmografia."[25] In sum, comparative philological analysis between the sources shows that Fróis's statement cannot be seen as conclusive evidence to disqualify the Gallery of Maps as the initial display location for the screens.

The other candidate, the Gallery of Cosmography (figure 4), is the upper loggia of the three Loggias of San Damaso ("Logge di San Damaso") in the San Damaso Courtyard, which expands over two wings from different periods.[26] The western wing, built in the early 1560s (1560–1562 or 1565, depending on sources) by Pope Pius IV (1499–1565; r. 1559–1565) over Raphael's loggia, was decorated with fresco paintings of thirteen maps of countries and several city views from these countries, nominally located east of the Prime Meridian, but in fact located in Europe and Central Asia. Pius IV's "Third Loggia" was then expanded by Gregory XIII using the same architectural designs as part of the new northern wing of the San Damaso Palace. Conceived like the Gallery of Maps by the papal cosmographer Egnazio Danti (1536–1586), and executed between 1580 and 1585, the decoration program of the northern wing of the Gallery of Cosmography originally featured twelve maps of the territories of America, Asia, and Africa, as well as at least twenty-seven views of cities in these territories. Further, the two wings of the gallery intersected with two monumental maps of the Western and Eastern Hemispheres, added in 1583-1585. These monumental maps remain, along with those of the western wing, but the original paintings of the northern wing are no longer extant. Annexed to the apartment of Gregory XIII and its "Sala Bologna," the Gallery of Cosmography meets several characteristics described in the 4 April 1585 accounts and, moreover, would have offered a thematically coherent space of display for the screens. There is also a tantalizing possibility that the map of Japan (included among the maps of Asia) was, like the other country maps, accompanied by a painting of an important local, thus Japanese, city. Unfortunately, records of the descriptive inscriptions accompanying the cities adjacent to the Japan map were deteriorated or otherwise made illegible already by the eighteenth century, when the decorative cycle was described by Taja and Chattard.[27] For lack of further historical records, it is not possible to confirm the identity of the cities adjacent to the Japan map.

While the question of which gallery served as the initial home of the screens remains, for the moment, unanswerable, this line of inquiry is nonetheless instructive in that it reveals a critical fact: the boys' gifts were not received in a vacuum. Quite to the contrary, assuming that the description of Gregory XIII's reaction to them is at all accurate, it seems that the location where the screens would be placed was, if not immediately obvious, laden with profound meaning. A pope of

23 Another example of Fróis's reworking of others' writings is his adaptation of Gaspar Coelho's 1582 Annual Letter ("Carta annua de Iapaõ […] quinze de Feuereiro do anno de 82" mentioned in n. 5), discussed in Erdmann, "Azuchi Castle," pp. 131–33.

24 Examples are in the manuscript account "Memories on the Paintings and Buildings Done at the Vatican by Gregory XIII" (*Memorie sulle pitture e fabriche [di Gregorio XIII] colli suoi disegni particolarmente fatte nel Vaticano*), last quarter of the sixteenth century, BAV, Boncompagni-Ludovisi, D.5, fols. 240r–241v, published by Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, pp. 615–16; Ciappi, *Compendio delle heroiche et gloriose attioni*, p. 7.

25 Gualtieri describes the "gallery" as featuring "*varie città e paesi*," normally translated as "various cities and countries." As mentioned, "paesi," translated as "countries," can also mean "villages," and in the early modern period, was also used for "landscapes." In this respect, the term may extend to include "cities and countries of the world." Notably, this broader reading of "paesi" more closely conforms with descriptions of the Gallery of Maps that circulated at the papal court at that time.

26 On the Gallery of Cosmography, see Taja, *Descrizione del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano*; Chattard, *Nuova descrizione del Vaticano*, pp. 349–57; Banfi, "La loggia della Cosmografia nel Palazzo Vaticano," passim; Hess, "Le Logge di Gregorio XIII in Vaticano" and "Le logge di Gregorio XIII nel Palazzo Vaticano," both published in Hess, *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien*, pp. 117–22, 123–28; Redig de Campos, *I Palazzi Vaticani*, p. 172; Cornini, De Strobel, and Serlupi Crescenzi, "Il Palazzo di Gregorio XIII," pp. 153–54; Meadows-Rogers, "The Vatican Logge and their Culminating Decoration"; Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*.

27 Evidence for the inclusion of a Japanese city comes from two texts: Taja, *Descrizione del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano*; Chattard, *Nuova descrizione del Vaticano*. When Taja and Chattard published their detailed descriptions of the Vatican Palaces, in 1750 and in 1766 respectively, the map of Japan as well as the city views still existed. See also the details of the iconographic program in Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps* ("Appendix C: The Terza Loggia).

Figure 4. *Northern wing of the Gallery of Cosmography*, ca. 1582–1585. Vatican City, Vatican Apostolic Palace. 2024 © Italia, Ministero della Cultura, Gabinetto fotografico.

the Counter-Reformation, Pope Gregory XIII worked significantly during his papacy (1572–1585) not only to strengthen Catholicism against the Protestant Reformation, but also to globally propagate the Christian faith by actively supporting missionary endeavors, and thereby offset the loss of believers due to the Reformation. A strong supporter of the Jesuits, he fostered their missionary activities in the farthest territories, and particularly in Asia, securing proselytizing monopolies as well as providing funding.[28] In the context of Japan, he supported the creation of seminaries in Nagasaki, Arima, and Azuchi. His engagement may even be seen as a critical impetus for Valignano's creating and finding Kirishitan daimyo sponsors for the Tenshō Embassy. Gregory XIII's interest in promulgating the Faith made him especially receptive to appeals for official recognition of Christianity in Japan as well as for spiritual guidance and material assistance for the Japanese mission and its new converts.

Reaffirming papal temporal and spiritual authority and legitimizing the Church through various instruments—including the creation of narrative-laden monumental spaces that interacted with selected objects in his private residences and the apostolic palaces at the Vatican—was essential for the pope to enact a unifying force for Catholics around the world and instrumental in directing missionary activities. The several mural cartography programs that Gregory XIII commissioned for his residential and representation spaces in the Vatican Palaces, and especially the two galleries discussed above, were designed to convey Gregory XIII's territorial ascendency, the global vision of the papal mission, and aspirations for the Universal Church. These spaces, elaborated through an iconographic program representing the Christian community as

28 On the Jesuit mission in Japan at the time of Gregory XIII, see Ucerler, "The Jesuit Enterprise"; Ucerler, "The Christian Missions"; Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits*; Elison, *Deus Destroyed*; Ucerler, *The Samurai and the Cross*. For a historiography, see Fujikawa, "Studies on the Jesuit Japan Mission."

having no limits of geography, space, and time, envisioned the potential expansion of the Faith not only in the Papal States and Italy, but into the territories of all the continents.[29] The message of a Universal Church and Christian mission in the world that Gregory XIII sought to express, particularly in the Gallery of Cosmography, is significantly compatible with the underlying religious meaning embedded into the Japanese embassy. Gregory XIII's completion to Pius IV's project presented as immediately accessible to the imagination of its audience—and therefore as concrete and achievable—not only the spiritual reconquest of Protestant Europe, but, beyond this, the conversion of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The strong meaning of the Gallery of Cosmography, which featured a rare cycle of maps of the world for this period, was correlated to both its symbol of Universal Faith and as a modern scientific project showcasing updated knowledge in a moment of "discovery" of the New World and "unknown" territories.[30]

Received and placed within this context, the gifts brought from Japan by the delegates—and especially the remarkable screens representing Azuchi that were offered by the powerful Nobunaga, a figure seen as a burgeoning ally to the Christian mission, and that depicted in detail the town and its Jesuit Seminary, and thus the reach of the Faith to the farthest corners of the globe—were highly coherent, speaking symbols of the pope's ambitions. From this perspective, the screens participated in the construction of a complex symbolic and physical matrix by offering a concrete touchstone that would animate the cartographic representation of Japan (and, possibly, a Japanese city) on the Gallery of Cosmography's walls. As such, and because their exceptionality commanded contemporary reaction, the screens offer critical insight into the history of the material presence of Japan and East Asia in Rome and Italy, as well as the practices of collecting and exhibiting exotic items and diplomatic gifts. Ultimately, the screens' distinct and unique set of meanings within the European context reveals much about how the West initially perceived Japan in the context of early encounters, and, reciprocally, how the West saw and constructed an image of itself. Beyond their reception as exceptional ethnographic and hybrid artifacts, they represented one of many objects, books, accounts, and sketchings that contributed to shape European self-identity vis-à-vis East Asia during the First Global Age.

Scholarly Networks and Second Lives

As mentioned above, Philips van Winghe's now-lost sketches of the Azuchi Screens represent another key research thread and, as with the question of the screens' reception and placement, reveal the unique value of the screens as a vehicle for opening a wider discussion on the reception of Japanese objects in Europe during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The origins of these two images, as they are known to us today in print form (figures 5 and 6), can be dated between 1589 and 1592, when their Louvain-native author stayed in Rome and distinguished himself as a pioneer of Christian archaeology with a special focus on ancient pagan and early Christian remains.[31] Van Winghe's contacts in Rome were numerous and powerful enough to have secured him access to the Vatican, but as noted above, the only recorded instance of his visiting its halls dates to 15 July 1592. This occasion is known via the aforementioned letter that van Winghe wrote to his close friend, the Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598), wherein he details that he had visited the Gallery of Maps "that morning" to copy, per Ortelius's request, its map of Lazio.[32] Shortly after this letter was written, in early September 1592, van Winghe died from malaria. His belongings in Italy, including the notebook or loose sheets containing the sketches, were received in the later 1590s by Jérôme van Winghe (1557–1637), Philips's brother and canon of Tournai cathedral.[33] Roughly a decade later, Jérôme

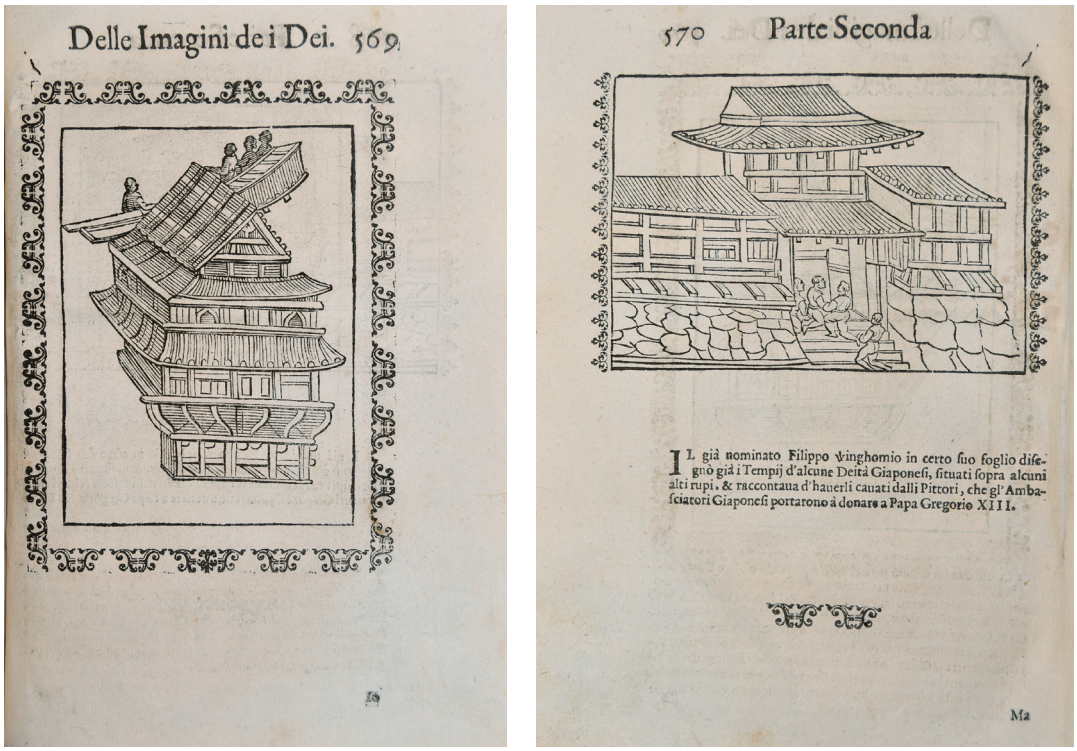
29 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, pp. 448–80; Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, pp. 237–44.

30 Fiorani, *The Marvel of Maps*, passim.

31 Schuddeboom, *Philips van Winghe*, p. 272; Schuddeboom, "Research in the Roman Catacombs."

32 Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, PBL 2766. Transcribed in Ortelius, *Abrahami Ortelii*, pp. 520–23. Reproduction of map and partial English translation in van der Sman, "Dutch and Flemish Printmakers in Rome," p. 264.

33 Van Winghe's possessions came via at least two shipments that arrived separately in 1594–1595 and 1597–1598. The first shipment, and possibly the second, was received by Ortelius in Antwerp, then forwarded to Jérôme in Tournai. Therefore, it is possible that Ortelius kept some material that was pertinent to his work. See four letters from Jean L'Heureux and Nicolas De Vries to Ortelius dated between 1594 and 1597, published in Ortelius, *Abrahami Ortelii*, p. 586 n. 247; p. 606 n. 257; p. 631 n. 269; p. 730 n. 310.



Figures 5 and 6. *Page 569* (left) and *page 570* (right). Philip Esengren, copied from sketches by Philips van Winghe, in Pignoria "Second Part of the Images of Indian Gods" ("Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani"), *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* (*The Images of the Gods and Ancients*). Reproductions from the 1626 edition. Woodblock prints, 15.5 x 21.2 cm. 2024 © Private collection.

would introduce the sketches to his friend and correspondent Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637). This French polymath and central figure in early modern European intellectual history, in turn, forwarded them or copies of them to his friend Lorenzo Pignoria (1571–1631), based in Padua, identifying their subjects as a "temple of Japanese [people] at the peak of a mount extracted from the paintings that the Japanese ambassadors gave to Gregory XIII of blessed memory."[34]

Through this circuitous route and three decades after the presumed date of their creation, Pignoria, a prolific scholar and antiquarian with a varied career as a priest, librarian, curate, and canon, commissioned the painter, engraver, and antiquarian Philip Esengren (known as Filippo Ferroverde in the Italian milieu, active early seventeenth century) to transform the sketches into print form for inclusion within the 1624 edition and second printing of Pignoria's revised and expanded adaptation of the Greco-Roman mythology reference text originally produced by Vincenzo Cartari (ca. 1531–after 1569), known by its shortened title *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* (The Images of the Gods of the Ancients).[35] More specifically, these details of the Azuchi Screens were incorporated within an addendum to this text titled "Second Part of the Images of Indian Gods" (*Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani*), a philological catalogue-essay on several deities of the early modern "Indies"—that is, America and East Asia. The prints were accompanied by fifteen drawings of Japanese

34 Peiresc visited Tournai around 1606 when he saw at least one of van Winghe's notebooks. He subsequently wrote to Jérôme to ask to borrow some of van Winghe's drawings, and Jérôme obliged prior to August 1612. Schuddeboom, "Research in the Roman Catacombs," p. 31 n. 16. Peiresc introduced the sketches to Pignoria in a letter dated 4 January 1616 (Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertine, ms. 1875, 308r–309r), transcribed in Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*, pp. 338–41.

35 Pignoria, *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi*. On Pignoria and his work, see Seznec,"Un essai de mythologie"; Volpi, "Lorenzo Pignoria e i suoi corrispondenti"; Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*.

deities provided and extensively described by Girolamo Aleandro (1574–1629). Pignoria would add to Esengren's prints a short caption outlining the origins and subject matter of van Winghe's sketches: "The already mentioned Philips van Winghe in one of his [manuscript] folios, yet drew the temples of some Japanese deities, placed above some high cliffs. And he recounted that he copied them from the painters [*sic*] that the Japanese ambassadors brought to donate to Pope Gregory XIII."[36]

Pignoria's addendum exemplifies the manner by which ideas about the East Indies, and Japan, developed out of the collaborative production of a wide-reaching circle of active scholars. A core circle of these scholars congregated, until 1601, around the great humanist Gian Vincenzo Pinelli (1535–1601) and his famed library in the vibrant university city of Padua, a hub for the exchange of ideas and knowledge. Members of the circle included Paolo Gualdo (1553–1621) and Aleandro, both of whom were, like Pignoria, men of the cloth, humanists, collectors, and antiquarians. The trio intensively collaborated with each other and with Peiresc, with whom they had a long-lasting friendship after his several-month stay in Padua. Additionally, Pignoria, Gualdo, and Aleandro all spent significant periods in Rome, where they forged relationships with scholar-antiquarians, missionary communities, and owners of collections of ancient objects and curiosities. In Rome, they joined the dynamic humanist circle around Francesco Barberini (1597–1679), the influential cardinal nephew of Pope Urban VIII (1568–1644; r. 1623–1644), to whom Aleandro was secretary of Latin letters from 1623. Strategically positioned, from Rome and Padua, they acted as disseminators of scholarly information and news on antiquities, intercessors, and dispatchers for their network.[37] The correspondence of the members of this network bears witness to their discussions on objects seen, acquired, or desired such as "antiquities"—that is, a category that included exotica, cult objects, art objects such as sculptures, as well as Roman archeological artefacts—along with costumes, ancient customs, drawings of objects, as well as shipments of books, other objects and rarities.

Correspondence and other primary sources illustrate that Pignoria, Gualdo, Aleandro, and Peiresc collected and exchanged information and drawings on curiosities from the "Oriental Indies," as well as about the Tenshō (1585) and Keichō (1615) Japanese embassies to Europe, and Japanese culture more broadly. In 1614, Pignoria declared to Gualdo that he "may [himself] deserve the title of antiquary, mostly of the countries very far from our world."[38] At that time, he was actively searching for material on East Asia to substantiate his thesis that Egypt was the genetic origin of foreign, idolatrous religions, as well as to demonstrate remote connections between these and Christian traditions in the most distant regions of the world. For instance, Pignoria asked the astronomer Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) in 1612 to send him drawings and information on things that were "[not] Egyptian, but [rather] Indian, as well as of China, Japan, Burma, and similar regions of the East Indies, as of the West, like Peru, Mexico, and New Spain," and noted that he had seen paintings from the Indies in the Villa Medici in Rome.[39] He would issue similar requests to Gualdo, based in Rome and in close contact with the Jesuits. In addition to the sketches of the Azuchi Screens, Peiresc provided Pignoria with four drawings of an Indonesian kris handle from his collection and offered to furnish him with an image of a Chinese procession. Aleandro stands out within this group as he seems to have possessed some specialized expertise on Japan.[40] As mentioned, together with the aforementioned fifteen drawings of Japanese idols, he provided Pignoria with detailed descriptions of these images. These descriptions were presumably based on information derived from an, as yet, unlocated or lost correspondence with Aleandro.[41]

Since their rediscovery as primary documents related

36 "Il già nominato Filippo Winghomio in certo suo foglio disegnò già i Tempij d'alcune Deità Giaponesi, situati sopra alcuni alti rupi, & raccontava d'haverli cavati dalli Pittori [sic], che gl'Ambasciatori Giaponesi portarono a donare a Papa Gregorio XIII." Pignoria, *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi*, p. 570. Translation in English from Erdmann, "Azuchi Castle," p. 52.

37 On this network, see for instance Rizza, *Peiresc e l'Italia*; Volpi, "Lorenzo Pignoria e i suoi corrispondenti;" Weststeijn, "Art and Knowledge in Rome and the Early Modern Republic of Letters"; Miller, "The Antiquary's Art of Comparison."

38 Letter from Pignoria to Gualdo, 31 October 1614, *Lettere d'uomini illustri* 1744, pp. 164–67: "[…] portare forse il nome di antiquaro primo, ed in capite di que' paesi tanto remote dal nostro Orbe […], quoted in Volpi, "Lorenzo Pignoria e i suoi corrispondenti," p. 103.

39 Letter from Pignoria to Galileo, 12 October 1612, published by Favaro in Galilei, *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, XI, p. 389, quoted by Volpi, "Lorenzo Pignoria e i suoi corrispondenti," p. 103; Miller, "Taking Paganism Seriously," p. 94.

40 See Peiresc, *Correspondance de Peiresc et Aleandro*, vol. 1, p. 37; Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*, passim.

41 Peiresc, *Correspondance de Peiresc et Aleandro*, vol. 1, p. 37.

to the Azuchi Screens, the two prints based on van Winghe's sketches and incorporated in Pignoria's *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* have undergone only minimal scrutiny.[42] To be sure, the haphazard character of these images, named here as *Page 569* and *Page 570* after the pages on which they respectively appear, and apparent incongruities in the accompanying text offer reason to doubt their worth as reliable primary documents. *Page 569* depicts an amalgamation of architectural forms that, at first glance, reads as unbalanced or truncated in a manner that suggests that the author(s) struggled to make sense of Japanese architecture and modes of representation.[43] *Page 570*, containing a two-level gate with four figures kneeling on steps ascending to its threshold, appears as comparatively more cohesive, but its authenticity likewise appears as suspect owing to the figures' European clothing and hair—that is, distinctly not Japanese and, as such, a clear reworking of the original subjects. The caption on *Page 570* seems to reaffirm these hints of a culturally uninformed or ambivalent European audience as the structures are identified as "temples of some Japanese deities" and not a castle, the widely understood primary subject of the images, and one ostensibly unrelated to Nobunaga.[44] Further, the prints are almost certainly mirror images of the original sketches. Surviving originals and copies of originals of other images provided by Peiresc and included in the 1624 edition of *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* confirm that Esengren directly copied the original images (see figure 7 for corrected orientation) when carving his woodblocks and, consequently, when printed, the images were reversed.[45] As with the other shortcomings, this reversal suggests a lack of attention to detail and, in turn, that the images' value lies solely in their remarkable pedigree.[46]

Yet, despite being a copy of a copy of the Azuchi

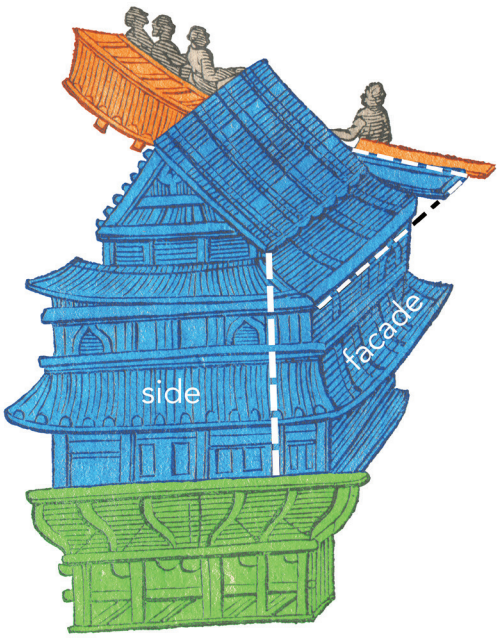


Figure 7. *Page 569* building reversed to original orientation, with added color and guidelines. Prepared by Erdmann, based on figure 5.

42 McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, p. 167; Miura, *Yomigaeru shinsetsu Azuchi-jō*, p. 93; Weststeijn, "Art and Knowledge in Rome."
43 McKelway, *Capitalscapes*, p. 167.
44 Pignoria, *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi*, p. 570. Nobunaga is popularly known as having been antagonistic to religious groups and, consequently, associations between him and organized religion are often dismissed. Regarding this understanding and its reassessment, see Lamers, *Japonius Tyrannus*, pp. 163–64.
45 Based on comparisons between the depiction of Quetzalcoatl in fol. 36v of *Codex Ríos* (BAV, Vat. lat., 3738) and fol. 58r of ms. 1564 (Rome, Biblioteca Angelica), attributed to Alfonso Chacòn, copied from now-lost original sketches by Philips van Winghe. Also compare Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc's drawings of *Raksasa on Indonesian kris* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des estampes Aa-54) with Pignoria, *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi*, pp. 86–88.
46 Weststeijn, "Art and Knowledge in Rome and the Early Modern Republic of Letters," pp. 1–2.

Screens, comparison of the prints' buildings with analogous subjects and forms in Eitoku's oeuvre, namely the so-called Uesugi Screens (*Uesugi-bon rakuchū rakugai-zu byōbu* 上杉本洛中洛外図屏風, details in figures 1, 8, and 9) and *Scenes of Amusements around the Capital* (*Rakugai meisho yūraku-zu* 洛外名所遊楽図), reveal a remarkable degree of fidelity that allows for a provisional identification of their subjects and, in turn, a reassessment of their authors that is consistent with their well-documented scholarly approach to historical objects.[47] These two pairs of screens are, like the Azuchi Screens, examples of a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century genre of painting known as cityscape screens (*toshi-zu byōbu* 都市図屏風) that contain aerial views of urban spaces and well-known locales that are interspersed with gold-leaf or gold-paint-rendered ground and clouds. Eitoku's works represent some of the earliest surviving examples of the genre and possess unique stylistic treatment of various subjects that may be used to interpret the assortment of motifs in the two prints. Broken down (figure 7), *Page 569* may be read as three parts: a central two-level building with a tiled, hip-and-gable roof along with one background and one foreground structure that are both likely parts of a surrounding gate, wall, or corridor.

The precise character of the central building and that it is consistent with examples of Japanese Buddhist architecture is discernable through comparison and knowledge of Japanese architectural norms. If one draws an imaginary line straight down from the gable's right corner, the side of the building on both levels is clarified as being three bays. This line corresponds to a key pillar within the structure that supports the gable end and marks the corner of the building's core (*moya* 母屋) and its second level. Running to the immediate right of this line on both the first and second levels is an apparent misreading in the form of an extending "half-bay." The origins of this mistake are easily appreciable if one compares the *Page 569* building to the depiction of the Golden Pavilion (Kinkaku 金閣) of Rokuonji 鹿園寺 (also known as Kinkakuji 金閣寺; see figure 8) in the Uesugi Screens. The angle at which the right side of the Golden Pavilion recedes—particularly on its second story—is so wide that, if not copied precisely, the foreshortening can easily be misread as a shortened bay. This reading is corroborated by the cusped windows (*kadōmado* 花頭窓). Only through a reimagining of the second-level extending bay—that is, the projection to the right of the imaginary line (figure 7)—as part of the façade is the adjacent window able to conform to the premodern norm of positioning these decorative elements in the outermost bays of a structure. Rectangles in the two rightmost bays of the first level suggest paneled doors and, above these doors, either

Figure 8. Same as figure 1. Detail of Golden Pavilion, Rokuonji (left screen, panel 2).

Figure 9. Same as figure 1. Detail of Imperial Palace (right screen, panel 6).

47 Regarding their scholarly methodology, see Miller, "Taking Paganism Seriously;" Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*. See also n. 65.

Figure 10. Same as figure 1. Detail of Hosokawa Palace gates (left screen, panel 3).

non-penetrating tie beams (*nageshi* 長押), overhead walls (*kokabe* 小壁), a transom (*ranma* 欄間), or a combination of these fixtures. The back-most (i.e., left-most) bay lacks these elements, but, as such, offers a noteworthy detail: the bays on the sides of temple buildings, in contrast to castle towers, are often characterized by architectural elements such as doors, windows, or plain walls that by themselves form an asymmetrical facade.

The *Page 569* building sits between foregrounded and backgrounded structures that possess details that suggest truncated surrounding walls or gates. These details include the obscuring of the bottom half of the figures in the background—that is, a mode of rendering figures exclusive to those situated within walled courtyards in Eitoku's other works (figure 9)—and two sets of three elongated "S" and mirrored "Ƨ" shapes in the foreground—that is, a form repeated only in Eitoku's rendering of *eburi-ita* 柄振板 (figure 10), cusped wooden decorative boards that are attached to the ends of wall roofs where a wall connects to a gate. These attributes and the positioning of the *Page 569* building between surrounding walls, along with the notable absence of decorative elements typical of castle architecture such as finial *shachihoko* 鯱鉾—that is, a type of dragon possessing an arched carp body and tiger-like face—together clarify the structure as *not* martial in nature, but as consistent with examples of Japanese Buddhist architecture.

Additional details offered in the caption on *Page 570* and in Peiresc's 1616 letter to Pignoria allow for an even more precise identification.[48] Both descriptions characterize the buildings as located atop precipitous ledges. This added detail is critical as it narrows down the list of possible sites to one: Sōkenji 摠見寺. Sōkenji stands out amongst the many religious institutions that might be reasonably imagined to have been depicted in the screens on account of its location on the southwest ridge of the mountain that Azuchi Castle crowned. In other words, Sōkenji is the only site in the immediate vicinity of Azuchi Castle where religious structures were seated atop steep rock foundations. Owing to both the *Page 569* building's character as well as a lack of

48 See n. 34 and n. 35.

correspondence with any other structure known to have been situated within Sōkenji's precinct, the identity of the *Page 569* may be further specified as the Bishamon Hall (Bishamondō 毘沙門堂), a structure that was renamed as the Main Hall (*hondō* 本堂) of Sōkenji in the centuries after Nobunaga's death.[49] Following from this identification, the identity of the gate in *Page 570* may also be tentatively posited. Considering the lower angle of its ground plane—that is, a detail that, based on comparison with buildings in the lower register of the oldest surviving cityscape screen to feature a castle and a work that is regularly theorized as a derivative of the Azuchi Screens, the Mitsui Memorial Museum's Jurakutei Screen (*Jurakutei-zu byōbu* 聚楽第図屏風, figure 11), suggests a lower position within the overall composition of the screens—the gate in *Page 570* may be provisionally named as the Dodo Bridge Gate (Dodobashimon 百々橋門), a structure that originally checked the entrance path to Sōkenji.[50]

The fact that the prints are identified as "temples of some Japanese deities" testifies to a critical point: they were almost certainly understood as such. All three key actors, van Winghe, Peiresc, and Pignoria, in the creation and collecting of these images were each focused in their research on religious artifacts and cross-cultural interaction. While van Winghe was almost exclusively focused on Western subjects, he had many contacts within the Jesuit community and friends with universal humanist interests, and was well positioned to know the most cutting-edge information on Japan. Noteworthy also is that he corresponded regularly with Ortelius, a figure deeply invested in researching global culture in the making of his magnum opus, the world atlas *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570), and the author of the 1595 edited map of Japan after Luís Teixeira (fl. last quarter of the sixteenth century), and for whom he collected maps and other material on every part of the world.[51] Further, in van Winghe's only surviving notebook appears a list of the seminaries and colleges that Pope Gregory XIII erected in Japan, including Azuchi.[52] Closer examination of van Winghe's work also suggests that his interest in the Azuchi Screens stemmed from their potential as touchstones for comparison between Christianity and other religions.[53] In particular, van Winghe's sketch of the Mesoamerican god Quetzalcoatl in the Vatican Library's *Codex Ríos* (ca. 1566), drafted during the same period as he sketched the Azuchi Screens, allows for a better understanding of the presence of the "Indies" in his studies. A copy of this now-lost original sketch of Quetzalcoatl survives in a manuscript volume ascribed to the historian Alonso Chacòn (1530–1599) kept at the Biblioteca Angelica (*Manoscritto* 1564), and includes peripheral notes by van Winghe wherein he explains that in their ceremonies, Mesoamerican people used bread and water, as well as incense, and draws a parallel with the Christian cult. Copies of other sketches by van Winghe in Biblioteca Angelica's *Manoscritto* 1564 and in the Vatican Library's *Ménestrier Codex* (Vaticani Latini 10545), a bound copy of one of van Winghe's notebooks and other folios ascribed to Peiresc, show that the Quetzalcoatl image was associated with a "cult and food" category, with images of Roman pagan and Christian objects featuring commensals.[54] The interest of antiquarians in the newly explored territories is known to be also connected to efforts to demonstrate connections between foreign religions and Christianism. Likely the "temples of some Japanese deities" from the Azuchi Screens, as described by Pignoria and Peiresc, were drawn by van Winghe with a similar intent, that is, as a documentation of Japanese religious rites for comparison with Christian rites.

In the case of Peiresc and Pignoria, both were actively interested in foreign religions and well read on the subject as a consequence of their grappling with the implications for a Christian universe of the tsunami of cultural artifacts brought in by traders and missionaries.[55] In particular for Pignoria, depictions of Japanese temples would have been of special interest as they could serve as a touchstone to test a popular thesis and one at the heart of his project revising *Le imagini de gli*

49 The name of the hall is in Ōta, *Shinchō-kō ki*, p. 373. Regarding the nature of the hall, see Okagaki and Asakawa, "Hotoke o koeru Nobunaga."

50 Yamamoto, "Kanō Eitoku no shōgai," pp. 270–71.

51 Meganck, *Erudite Eyes*.

52 Philips van Winghe, *Notebook* (Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium [hereafter KBR], ms. 17872–3), fol. 64v; Takemoto, "'Azuchi byōbu' o egakinokoshita Furandoru-jin," pp. 81–82.

53 Roux, "An 'Antiquity' from Japan."

54 Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, ms. 1564, ascribed to Chacòn, who like van Winghe, was involved in the first Christian archeology initiatives in Rome at the end of the sixteenth century; *Ménestrier Codex*, BAV, Vat. lat., 10545 (reproduction available on DigiVatLib).

55 Miller, "Taking Paganism Seriously"; Mulsow, "Antiquarianism and Idolatry"; Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*; Wyss-Giacosa, "Through the Eyes of Idolatry."

dei de gli antichi, that foreign religions and religious practices, including of "those people […] comprised under the general name of the East Indies," were derivatives of ancient Egypt[56] and that the "Demon" also imitated the work and language of God to seduce idolatrous societies, as far as in Japan.[57] In contrast, Europe was unique owing to its embrace of Christianity, but sometimes "Our Lord God, with His mercy, made great inroads for the preparation of the Gospel [Evangelization] in some of these countries [of the New World]."[58] Pignoria summarizes: "Indeed, in all these, it seems to me that I see great diversity: in some, the spirit of the Egyptians, and of the 'Orientals,' in some [others], things of our [Western World's] making," and agrees with an author who "believes that at other times the Japanese had knowledge of the Christian law […] but then Idolatry obscured this light, of which in these statues [of Japanese deities] some vestige remains."[59]

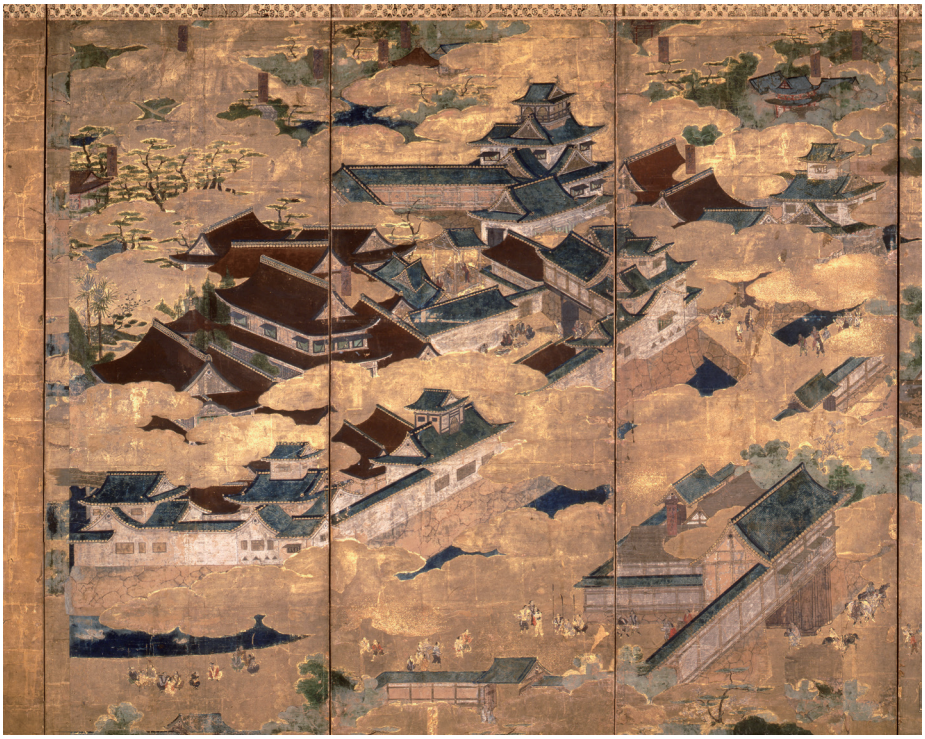


Figure 11. Anonymous. *Jurakutei*. Azuchi-Momoyama period, late 16th c. Folding screen. Ink, colors, and gold on paper. 156 x 355 cm. Mitsui Memorial Museum, Tokyo. Detail of panel 5.

56 Pignoria, "Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani" (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 546: "Ne lasciarono quieti gl'Egitti que' popoli, che scoperti & domati alla memoria de' nostri Padri dalla valorissima natione Portoghese, sono compresi sotto 'l nome generale d'Indie Orientali […]." Another clear statement in this sense can be found on p. 564: "Et in somma per tutto questo, che chiamavano nuovo mondo, tanto nell'Occidente quanto nell'Oriente, io ho avertito tanto la conformità fra le superstitioni Egittiane, & quelle del Paese, che ho avuto a maravigliarmi alcune volte."

57 Pignoria, "Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani " (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 553, states: "[…] non sarà fuor di luogo il mostrare, come il Demonio, Simia [sic] di Dio s'andò avantaggiando per imitare la più segnalata attione, che uscisse mai dalle mani divine […]." Therein, page 572 is a Japanese example coming from Aleandro's description of a Japanese idol: "Di questo Idolo io non saprei che mi dire, se non che pare, che'l Demonio si sia servito della maniera delle imagini nostre, per imprimere ne gl'animi della Gentilià di quei paesi, li suoi inganni." Pignoria brings other examples from the "New World." For instance, on p. 555 he illustrates how the myth of the conception of Quetzacoatl as found in the *Ríos Codex* revisits the Biblical narrative of the Annunciation to the Virgin by Archangel Gabriel.

58 Pignoria attributes for instance the presence of the cross in an image of Quetzacoatl to God's "preparation of the Gospel." Pignoria, "Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani" (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 558: "[…] nostro Signore Iddio, per sua misericordia, fece strada grande alla preparation dell'Evangelio in alcuno di questi paesi."

59 Pignoria, "Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani" (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 585: "In questi tutti

Almost certainly of interest for Pignoria, and very possibly for Peiresc as well, was the location of the Japanese temples depicted in the Azuchi Screens, precisely characterized by both the scholars—who seem to have been building on accompanying notes to van Winghe's sketches—as being "at the peak of a mount" or "placed above some high cliffs."[60] Indeed, Pignoria explains in his treatise on the "Indian" gods that the location of "the temples of the 'Ethnics'" was "obstinately in the woods or on the peaks of mounts, where the horror and the site would invite the superstitious people to the cult of their false deities."[61] One contemporary source may further account for these scholars' fascination with these particular details of the Azuchi Screens as well as may confirm the identity of the buildings posited above: Fróis's story of Nobunaga's alleged apotheosis. This famous and still prevalent myth derives from a 1582 report written by Fróis in the wake of Nobunaga's assassination and published in Europe almost immediately after its arrival in 1585.[62] To make sense of the chaos brought on by Nobunaga's end and loss of an ally whom the Jesuits had previously lauded, Fróis blamed Nobunaga's hubris for his demise and cited as evidence for this charge the refurbishment of a two-level structure within Sōkenji where visitors could come to pray to a stone that held Nobunaga's "divine body" (*shintai* 神体).[63] As a consequence of this report, Sōkenji—which survived the destruction of Azuchi Castle after the assassination of Nobunaga—was elevated to being arguably the most famous Japanese temple in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe. Republished in multiple books, Fróis's dramatic account offers a possible basis for van Winghe to have been drawn to this structure that illustrated pagan ritual activity in such a striking manner over all others within the Azuchi Screens. Assuming that he was able to link the images to Fróis's account, Pignoria would have seen in these images not only exemplary visual records of the architectural and site attributes of the pagan temples, but also invaluable windows onto Japanese religious rituals that would enrich his compendium on religious iconography, some of which he could have linked to the living gods that were the pharaohs.[64] To be sure, further evidence is required to demonstrate that either was able to make the link between Nobunaga, Sōkenji, and the screens. What is worth noting at this point however is that the dynamic collaborative environment in which these figures operated allows for careful consideration of this possibility.

Van Winghe and Pignoria's scholarly backgrounds and the legibility of the prints reveal that these images have more to offer than being mere symbols of the age. First, and as related to ASRN's inquiry into the nature of the screens, they reveal the potential value of van Winghe's original sketches. Van Winghe was known for being a meticulous and reliable draftsman—indeed, his skill was part of the reason that Ortelius requested his help in obtaining a copy of the Lazio map.[65] However, there is good reason to believe that the print version of his sketches falls short of his reputation. Pignoria himself confessed disappointment in the preface to the 1615 edition of *Le imagini de gli dei de gli antichi* that the volume's prints were not adequately faithful reproductions.[66] Whether he felt this way about the newly

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mi pare di vedere gran diversità, in alcuni lo spirito delli Egitti, & delli Orientali, in alcuni cose di nostro fare. […] L'autore […] vuole che altre volte habbiano havuto i Giapponesi notitia della legge Christiana; & è pensiero molto verosimile; ma che poi l'Idolatria poi oscurasse questo lume, del quale in queste statue ne rimanesse alcun vestigio."

60 See full quotations and references above, n. 34 and n. 35.

61 Pignoria, "Seconda parte delle imagini de gli dei indiani" (in Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, 1624 ed.), p. 555: "gl'Ethnici Tempii […] rittenero ostinatissamente i boschi & le cime de' monti, dove l'horrore & il sito invitavano i superstitiosi al culto delle false loro Deità."

62 Fróis, "Carta do padre Luis Froes." In *Cartas,* 2.1, fol. 62r.

63 Fróis's account is inconsistent with other records, including those written by Fróis himself; see Lamers, *Japonius Tyrannus*, pp. 217–24.

64 Van Winghe had or gained knowledge about the Azuchi Screens when he encountered them. Per Peiresc and Pignoria's descriptions of the sketches (n. 34, n. 35) it is clear that van Winghe knew they were brought by the Japanese delegates. It is also clear he had some knowledge of the Jesuit mission in Japan as he included a list of seminaries established in Japan by Gregory XIII, including the one at Azuchi, in his abovementioned notebook (KBR, ms. 17872–3, fol. 64v). Takemoto, "'Azuchi byōbu'," pp. 81–82. This mention suggests that he had access to additional information on the screens that circulated in contemporary reports. For Pignoria's part, the story of Nobunaga's hubris, which Fróis compares with the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, would have held special interest as one of the main goals in including Japanese iconography was to argue that it was born of the ancient world, particularly Egypt; see Wyss-Giacosa, "Through the Eyes of Idolatry," pp. 125–39.

65 Regarding van Winghe's skill as a draftsman, see Oryshkevich, "Through a Netherlandish Looking-Glass," passim; Schuddeboom, "Research in the Roman Catacombs," pp. 23, 25. Pignoria's intentions are outlined in the title and preface to the 1615 edition: Pignoria, *Le vere e nove imagini*, unpaginated preface.

66 Per Pignoria, blame was not to be laid on him or Ferroverde, but on "the negligence of a few dozen carvers." Pignoria, *Le vere e*

included prints in the 1624 edition or if he actively sought to correct this shortcoming in the same edition is unknown. Nonetheless, in his admission lies a hint that flaws such as the Europeanized figures may not be van Winghe's doing, but victims of the process of transforming the images into prints. Additionally, it is a near certainty that the original sketches were accompanied by notes by van Winghe, as in the case of his studies of the god Quetzalcoatl's image. The existence of these notes is known via Peiresc and Pignoria's parallel descriptions of the buildings as atop steep rocks as well as the copious explanatory notes and sketches that may be found in van Winghe's surviving notebook.[67]

The promise of more detailed sketches and additional notes has prompted, much like the screens themselves, significant research regarding their fate. It has been heretofore presumed that these manuscripts, which included the sketches of the Azuchi Castle screens, were donated by Jérôme van Winghe to the Tournai Cathedral and then subsequently dispersed during the French Revolution or destroyed by bombs during the Second World War. Recent investigation, however, shows that the history of van Winghe's manuscripts is much more complex.[68] The known remaining works authored by van Winghe's own hand—the so-called *Notebook* entitled *Inscriptiones sacrae et profanae collectae Romae et in aliis Italiae urbibus*, a report on the death of Sixtus V, and a treaty on the Holy Cross—bear no *ex libris* (a label of provenance typically found in the first pages of a volume) to indicate that the Tournai Cathedral Library ever owned them. This fact is remarkable as many, if not most, known volumes that came from Jérôme van Winghe's collection and were donated to the cathedral possess this mark. As Jérôme regularly shared van Winghe's work prior to his own death and often spoke in his correspondence with Peiresc about his hopes for his brother's work to be published, it seems entirely likely, also in light of his correspondence, that a percentage of van Winghe's study notes and other manuscripts were dispersed to this end.[69] They were donated to humanist friends who were willing to take over van Winghe's research, or see to the publication of the materials, and thus reborn into a new path. Indeed, most of van Winghe's work reached us through copies, as his notes and drawings were extensively used and shared by antiquarians and humanists of his and the next generation.

This question of the provenance of van Winghe's work relates directly to the second point raised by the fidelity and scholarly foundations of *Page 569* and *Page 570*: the screens were not isolated objects but represent one point in a complex web of gathering and sharing knowledge that was the Republic of Letters, this intellectual community that ushered in the Enlightenment, and, as such, they offer a remarkable test case. The prolonged and character-filled process of van Winghe's sketches becoming prints outlined above is a narrative that suggests that it was a minor miracle that these images exist at all. However, the prints should not be understood as anomalies, but rather as testaments to the vibrancy of this network as it was first evolving. Similarly, the wealth of research avenues related to the fate of van Winghe's sketches is a testament to the network's continued vibrancy into the next century. Further, within this wide-reaching and active matrix of information sharing, the screens and their proxy in van Winghe's sketches stand out as unique. First, their fame as connected to the much-celebrated Tenshō Embassy allows them to be easily identified and assessed. Second, their significance evolved within the network's discourse from diplomatic gift to window into Japan's paganism. In these ways, the screens simultaneously represent a fixed but floating point that allows for tracking the evolution and spread of information related to Japan and East Asia among its members, and through long-reaching connections with the intermediaries as well as owners of objects from the "East Indies," such as missionaries, merchants, travelers, religious houses, and collectors. While ongoing, this line of inquiry reveals great potential not only for discovering the fate of van Winghe's sketches, but also for mapping connections that might serve to bring to light other objects of interest related to Japan and beyond as well as identifying a nexus of knowledge creation.

Conclusion

This article has sought to demonstrate that even in absentia, the Azuchi Screens hold unique scholarly value as a nexus connecting disparate strands of

nove imagini, unpaginated preface; Maffei, *La riscoperta dell'esotismo nel Seicento*, pp. 103–104.

67 KBR, ms. 17872–3.

68 Roux, *The Humanist-Antiquarian Philips van Winghe*.

69 Schuddeboom, "Research in the Roman Catacombs," pp. 23–25; Miller, "The Antiquary's Art of Comparison," pp. 61–62.

collecting practice and intellectual currents in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Europe. The cast of historical figures listed above who crossed paths in one way or another with the screens is outstanding. Their interest and engagement with the screens, even when these objects were inaccessible, is direct testament not merely to Eitoku's skill as a painter, but the fact that these images held a unique multifaceted appeal that was compounded by an evolving, intersectional pedigree. Gifted to Jesuit missionaries, they were initially diplomatic tools used by Valignano to convince the pope of the merits of the Jesuit project in Japan and educate about the nature of a distant land. Gregory XIII reified Valignano's designs by placing them in either the Gallery of Maps or Gallery of Cosmography, but in doing so further built upon this meaning in both calculated and unexpected ways. Included among other representations of topography, the screens were put in dialogue with their palatial surroundings and thus elevated as symbols of Gregory XIII's Universal Church. Concurrently though, the screens in situ were also reborn as "curiosities," a category of foreign or exotic object that attracted the gaze of van Winghe either as part of his interest in finding comparative touchstones for his work on early Christianity or as research materials for his friends. Inadvertently and with the help of the next generation of scholars in Peiresc and Pignoria, his encounter with the screens gave them a second life in print form as an ostensible window onto Japanese religious practice. This compounding and remaking of meaning arguably has recurred in the present day as the screens' quasi-mythical nature has made them an irresistible query for Japanese authorities, as well as professional and amateur scholars alike. This recent reincarnation, however, is a topic for another paper. Yet, herein the old and new intersect. Research into the screens has revealed their value as not in their material character, but an unparalleled pedigree that brings together a wide range of seeming disparate topics under one roof and sheds light on the distinct, but intertwined nature of Jesuits, the Vatican, and scholarly endeavors in the early modern era.

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