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The First European Description of Japan, 1585: A Critical English-Language Edition of Striking Contrasts in the Customs of Europe and Japan by Luis Frois, S.J. Japan Anthology Workshop Series. New York: Routledge. Pp. 312. Hb, \$160.

Josef Franz Schütte, SJ, was the first modern scholar to discover Luis Frois SJ's sixteenth-century "tratado em que se contem muito susinta e abreviadamente algumas contradisões e diferenças de costumes antre a gente de Europa e esta provincia de Japaô" [treatise containing in very succinct and abbreviated form some contrasts and differences in the customs of the people of Europe and this province of Japan] in the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid sometime after World War II. All evidence suggests that Frois wrote the treatise under guidance of Alessandro Valignano for the purpose of serving as a manual on Japanese customs for Jesuit missionaries in the country. Its literary form is unique, in that it itemizes the distinguishing cultural practices of the Japanese in the form of six hundred distichs, that is, in short couplets. Schütte edited and translated Frois's manuscript into German and published it at Sophia University (Japan) in 1955 with the title *Kulturgegensätze Europa-Japan (1585)*. Schütte's book, which also contains a transcription of the manuscript in its original Portuguese, has been used for the production of translations into Japanese, Chinese, French, Spanish, and modern Portuguese. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Richard K. Danford, Robin D. Gill, and Daniel T. Reff, we finally have the first critical edition of Frois's work in English. The editors relied on Schütte's Portuguese transcription of Frois's manuscript as well as a copy of the original found in the Real Academia. Any scholar who is fortunate enough to read this book might agree with me that this long-overdue publication does not disappoint.

This volume, appropriately titled by the editors *The First European Description of Japan, 1585*, is a must read for any student or scholar of European-Asian encounters. The introduction, authored by Reff, provides us with an accessible account of the context in which the treatise was composed. It summarizes the life of Luis Frois (1532–1597) and the circumstances under which he produced his work. Frois, whose birth name was Polycarp, joined the Society of Jesus at the age of sixteen and embarked with the order on a mission to Africa, India, and Japan, never to return to his home and his merchant roots. Seven years after his arrival, Frois had acquired fluency in Japanese and was able to take up residence in Kyoto, the imperial site, and acquired permission from *daimyo* Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) to proselytize in the area he controlled. He had to flee Kyoto for the province of Bungo in

1577 as the result of civil wars. In Bungo, he met Father Valignano and began traveling with him to other areas of Japan to inspect the missions in the role of assistant and translator. Frois's treatise manifests Valignano's belief that the Japan mission could only be successful if the missionaries proselytized in Japanese, and adopted and showed respect for Japanese customs. Also reflecting Valignano's thought, Frois conveyed in his treatise the notion that Japan was as civilized as the most advanced Western European countries (i.e., Portugal, Spain, Southern France, and Italy) and that it was a mistake to underestimate the Japanese because they did not behave in ways familiar to Europeans.

Frois's work is, in effect, focused on Japanese practices that, according to Reff, were critical in determining the success of the Jesuit missions. More precisely, the text identifies thirteen main cultural differences between the Japanese and Western Europeans, which are the following: "Concerning men, their persons, and their clothing," "Women, their persons and customs," "Concerning children and their customs," "Concerning [Buddhist] temples, images and things pertaining to the practice of their religion," "The Japanese way of eating and drinking," "Japanese offensive and defensive weapons and warfare," "Concerning horses," "Diseases, doctors, and medicines," "Japanese writing and their books, paper, ink, and letters," "Houses, construction, gardens and fruits," "Ships, seafaring and *dogus*," and "Japanese plays, farces, dances, singing and musical instruments." A final chapter includes descriptions of sixty-five miscellaneous cultural practices with topics that range from different attitudes towards sneezing and the purpose of a fake smile, to the differing beliefs about servant-master relationships and the killing of animals.

The critical apparatus provided by Danford, Gill, and Reff more than satisfies all expectations for editions and translations of this sort. It has been clearly conceived for novices as well as experts. Each one of Frois's distichs is followed by historically contextualized observations relevant to the topic at hand. These explanatory notes are intended mainly for the reader with little knowledge of the European and the Japanese early modern period. The abundant footnotes to the editors' commentaries are, on the other hand, targeted at the advanced scholar. They generally contain relevant bibliographical references, and philological or linguistic concerns that often involve Frois's use of the Portuguese and Japanese. In a few cases, the editors elaborate on their motivation for choosing specific English translations. The bibliography is, moreover, a valuable repository of about five hundred primary and secondary works on the subject of the Japan missions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

All of the aforementioned attributes make Danford, Gill, and Reff's tome a worthwhile text to be used by seasoned scholars as well as in courses on the encounter between Europe and Japan, both at introductory and more advanced levels.

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DOI 10.1163/22141332-00204008-13