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‘In their own way’: contrafactual practices in Japanese Christian communities during the 16th century

THE first European description of Japan, known then as *Cipangu*, is found in Marco Polo’s travelogue, *Livre des merveilles du monde* (Book of the marvels of the world), penned at the turn of the 14th century.¹ This literary encounter, albeit inaccurate and evidently fabricated, forged a powerful illusory image in the Renaissance mind of an exotic island to the Far East, ruled by a king of measureless wealth; a land whose streets were awash with gold. In the century that followed, this fabled land lay at the heart of European imperial ambitions in which *Cipangu* and its treasures were hailed as the long-lost biblical region of Ophir.² Motivated by these gilded visions, Christopher Columbus set sail for the East Indies in 1492, only to arrive, inadvertently, at the shores of the Bahamian island of Guanahani, claiming it for the Spanish Empire. It was not until 1543, when Portuguese sailors drifted off the south coast of Kyushu amidst a typhoon, that Europeans first made contact with the Japanese.³ It was also during this year that the earliest Catholic missionaries of the Society of Jesus (known as Jesuits) arrived in Goa, by order of Pope Paul III and King John III of Portugal, to carry the word of God to the Portuguese colonies of India. It was here that the Jesuits’ first seeds of a Christian Japan were sown, bearing fruit throughout a turbulent century of interreligious exchange, guided by the push and pull of Japan’s march towards unification.

Within the context of early modern colonialism, David R. M. Irving employs the musical metaphor of an ‘enharmonic exchange’ occurring between Europeans and non-Europeans during sustained periods of contact, whereby different communities ‘gradually tempered their cultural systems to

incorporate an understanding [of] the Other’.⁴ No more clearly is this use of an *accommodatio* over a *tabula rasa* approach demonstrated, than in the Jesuit mission to Japan during its so-called Christian Century (1549–1639). Through negotiation of social, cultural and religious identities, the consequent exchanges between the proverbial East and West gave birth to a truly syncretic genre of liturgical performance in which music was applied, localized and newly created by Japanese communities. It is in just such a light that Irving identifies the subversive capacity of musical syncretism against an uncomplicated narrative of Western cultural imperialism.⁵

This article confronts the reader with an image not of European imposition and passive ‘oriental’ reception, but rather of a unique *Kirishitan* (Japanese Christian) culture of music-making that warrants closer inspection.⁶ For the Jesuits, a missionary ethos of *accommodatio*—and its facilitation of cross-cultural habituation through the performing arts—implied a degree of cultural openness on both sides. In addressing this dynamic, this article analyses the musical traditions of *Kirishitan* communities in the first decades of the Jesuit mission (1549–70), looking to how the use of contrafaction bridged a cultural divide. To this end, it presents contrafaction as an active mode of socio-religious localization by which Japanese Christians asserted their own sense of *Kirishitan* identity through music, setting vernacular texts to existing forms of Japanese vocalization in the 16th century. Indeed, these performance practices were not only instances of vernacularization, but also a development of traditions that are best understood as truly Japanese. Drawing on missionary letters

concerning these communities in southern Japan, various examples of *Kirishitan* musical traditions will be examined. Balanced by an understanding of the Japanese social, cultural and religious landscape during this period, these Jesuit accounts will be critically assessed, stressing how existing indigenous musico-dramatic forms provide an innovative framework for understanding this past musical culture through the lens of Japanese performance history. These colourful episodes provide us with snapshots of localization in action—that is, the simultaneity of universalizing and particularizing tendencies⁷—that invite further study of Japanese contributions to the cultural mission of the Society of Jesus.

Listening to the local

In re-envisioning the contrafactual traditions of *Kirishitan* communities,⁸ the historian's necessary reliance on European primary sources—the reasons for which will be clarified below—highlights an underlying, yet unavoidable, irony. The compounded filtering of these materials through a Western genre of history may also be accused, as per Victor Anando Coelho's contention, of being but 'a variation on a master European narrative.'⁹ However, this historiographical tension between European and non-European perspectives, so symptomatic of the post-colonial discourse, is an inevitability encountered in 'doing history' by way of engaging with Western structures of historical thought.¹⁰ To this extent, a critical approach to these materials must be pursued, listening closely for the vestiges of local, non-European voices and practices.

Due to the systematic persecution of Christian missionaries and congregations by Japanese authorities throughout the 17th century, very little in the way of material culture (scores, instruments, treatises and so on) has survived. As a result, the 'aural residues' of *Kirishitan* contrafacts and related musical forms are not to be found in such obvious objects, but rather in seemingly silent sources which, as Jan Biddle and Kirsten Gibson have shown, 'bear witness to there having been sound, and encourage us to listen out for the now faint echoes of fleeting, intangible, aural worlds of the past'.¹¹ Yet we seemingly reach a dead end when looking for accounts of music-making written from the perspective of

Kirishitan adherents themselves. Perhaps because of this, such contrafactual practices can be too easily glossed over as exceptions to the norm, rather than as central elements of *Kirishitan* faith and ritual practice in the 16th century. Such 'exceptions' have received scant scholarly interest as components of a unique, localized and truly Japanese culture.

That considered analysis of these kinds of *Kirishitan* traditions is still lacking is due primarily to the scarcity of sources, and the general way in which such musical practices have fallen into a 'grey area' between different disciplines.¹² In this vein, Daniele V. Filippi has stressed how Jesuit catechetical methods that 'involved dialogues, recitation, and singing' were developed within a 'fruitful interaction between experiences on European soil and experiences in the extra-European missions'.¹³ He further contends that in looking to this 'non-conventional repertory' we are able to identify practices that were 'one of the most characteristic sonic experiences available in the everyday life of Catholics, and ... [as such] helped shape personal as well as collective beliefs and identities'.¹⁴ In exploring the development of *Kirishitan* contrafaction and its broader performative application, we thus gain a greater sense of the Jesuits' grassroots approach to their apostolic work in the Japanese mission.¹⁵ This article demurs from Filippi only in his conceptualization of 'extra-European' regions, for this is to relegate the development of *Kirishitan* traditions to a status of peripheral significance. Rather, these performance practices demand consideration of their validity in their own right, as new cultural forms in the 16th century.

In investigating the dynamics of intercultural encounters in early modern colonial contexts, musicologists and historical ethnomusicologists alike have, on the one hand, pursued research about the ways in which non-Europeans have been represented in European musical composition as a means of reinforcing 'various ideological constructs, from universalism to romanticism and evolutionism';¹⁶ while on the other hand, scholars have devoted themselves to discussing the role of music in cultures of colonial subjugation.¹⁷ Yet in the case of Japan, the island nation never succumbed to the imposition of European rule. Certainly, the course of Japanese history was profoundly influenced by the effects of

Western imperialism, not least by the introduction of ammunition technologies which fundamentally changed the face of Japanese warfare and, in turn, the trajectory of national unification. As a region largely unaffected by Iberian imperialism in its most direct sense, however, the example of Japan, and the role of music in its encounter with the West, calls upon us to ask different kinds of questions from those associated with contemporary instances of colonialism. Indeed, prior to the Japanese persecution of Christians from the turn of the 17th century, individuals could freely move through social, cultural and religious spaces in which the choice to participate in *Kirishitan* traditions—however idiosyncratic their interpretation and practice may have been—was theirs to make.¹⁸ An analysis of *Kirishitan* contrafaction and its related musical forms in the 16th century thus presents an ideal course by which we can reconsider not only our understanding of the geography of Catholicism, but also how to overcome the enduring Eurocentric dualities that detract from a more nuanced understanding of the history of music in an interconnecting and interacting world.¹⁹

In considering contrafaction as a part of the Jesuits' cultural mission, it is clear that it was not only adopted by European missionaries in foreign fields. Indeed, as with the case of Japan, local communities also engaged in their own forms of contrafaction as religious practice. In this we are faced with a need to rethink our definition of contrafaction beyond what many consider a 'pan-European tradition'.²⁰ Throughout the limited literature written about the music of Japan's Christian Century, focus has been primarily devoted to what Irving has described as 'the long-distance reproduction of [European] sacred musical performances'.²¹ In this vein, some scholars have speculated about the kinds of musical exchanges that occurred during the first Japanese embassy to Europe between 1582 and 1590, in which four Japanese youths both performed, and were audience to, the height of Renaissance music in Italy, Spain and Portugal.²² However, the majority of research to date has been dedicated to the empirical collation of episodes depicting Western music-making and music education during Japan's Christian Century. Beyond the classic chapters in Eta Harich-Schneider's monumental *A history of Japanese music*, and the work of David Waterhouse

in the 1990s, the lion's share of this research has been undertaken by Japanese scholars—namely Ebisawa Arimichi and Minagawa Tatsuo—predominantly publishing in the Japanese language.²³

In taking music seriously as a constitutive element of the Jesuits' enterprise, fully embedded within the mission context (music as 'cultural mission'),²⁴ this article moves beyond the tendency of these musicological studies to date which have treated *Kirishitan* music-making as isolated or dis-embedded cultural practices. By acknowledging that these disparate episodes are in fact connected by people and places that warrant closer inspection, we are able to see a broader narrative of the developing cultural practices and identities of *Kirishitan* communities in 16th-century Japan.

Music as mission and the dawn of Japan's Christian Century

Francis Xavier (see [illus.1](#)), revered as the 'Apostle of the Indies and Japan', was a founding member of the Society of Jesus and a central figure in its formulation of early missionary practice, forged through experiences with diverse and divergent cultures. He was introduced to Anjirō, a Japanese man brought to Malacca by Jorge Álvares, in December of 1547. For Xavier, this meeting planted a seed of divine inspiration to sail to the recently 'discovered' Kingdom of Japan. The century of Christian influence that would follow this encounter has been well defined in scholarly circles as a period of intercultural exchange between the so-called 'East and West', built on a substratum of commerce and religious dissemination. Notwithstanding the fact that the Jesuits' initial success was integrally tied to matters of trade, scholars have begun to reappraise the importance of the arts more broadly in defining the social, cultural and political landscapes of early modern Asia.

The first stirrings of a Jesuit musical tradition originated from the order's members in Spain. Having adopted the practice, as advocated by Saint John of Ávila, of setting the catechism to popular music, the convention known as *contrafactum* came to be used within Europe and throughout the foreign missions during the middle decades of the 16th century.²⁵ This power of music—as an instrument of evangelization—was soon acknowledged



1 Portrait of St Francis Xavier; unknown Japanese artist, c.1619–30. Cursive text in *man'yōgana* (an early Japanese phonetic syllabary using Chinese characters) reads 'San furanshisuko saberyusu sakramento' (Sacrament of St Francis Xavier) (image courtesy of Kobe City Museum, Japan)

for its ability to forestall heretical interpretation by virtue of its supposed unambiguous representation of Christian ideas.²⁶ These developments coincided with the Council of Trent, and were among the leading factors which came to emphasize the importance of music in pastoral and proselytic practice. Within a short ten-year period the successful use of song, often in the local vernacular, throughout the Jesuit missions of South America, India and Africa, spoke to the effectiveness with which music could be used as a tool of religious conversion. Thus in 1558 the Jesuit secretary, Juan Alfonso de Polanco, advocated the missionary use of music to the extent that it could further the spiritual development of ‘heathens’ in ‘remote places’, while nevertheless acknowledging this as being at odds with accepted practice in Europe at the time.²⁷

Arriving in Japan with minimal knowledge of the native language, Xavier was inevitably beset by early hardships. It was soon clear to him and his fellow missionaries that in order to make their message of salvation intelligible to the Japanese, the linguistic divide had to be bridged. The Jesuits’ efforts in this transmission process have elsewhere been defined by scholars as a kind of missionary ethos instigated by the early work of Xavier in South and South-East Asia.²⁸ Yet it was in his encounter with the Japanese that the seeds of *accommodatio* were truly sown. Indeed, Henri Bernard-Maitre refers to Xavier’s ‘deux manières de mission’, with the former *tabula rasa* method ending as the Japanese mission began.²⁹ At the same time, it was this initial lack of linguistic fluency that encouraged missionaries to experiment with non-linguistic practices, not only focusing on visual methods (such as the use of religious artwork, relics and rituals), but also grounding their efforts in musical forms.

Local versification and the liturgy

Having developed from the practice of *missa lecta* (read Mass), we can assume that singing in Japanese churches was initially performed in Latin, as it was in Goa. The very first documented example of liturgical singing in Japan occurred in 1552 at the Daidōji Church of Yamaguchi. Here, Christmas Day was celebrated by the *Kirishitan* community with a *missa cantada* (sung Mass) under the direction of their Jesuit fathers. By 1555, daily Mass—and the regular

use of liturgical singing—became a common practice across Hirado and Funai, in addition to the singing of monophonic *cantigas* from 1556.³⁰ These latter Portuguese secular melodies were sources of standard contrafaction, in which missionaries set simple catechetical and biblical texts in Japanese. It is also important to note that the development of these sung practices preceded the arrival of the first European books to reach Japan in 1556. These included ‘a book of plainchant’ and ‘another book of polyphony’ which are no longer extant and whose contents are now unknown.³¹

Throughout the corpus of Jesuit letters, references to the practice of singing ‘in their own way’ (*à sua maneira*) or in accordance ‘with their traditions’ (*à sua costume*) are recurrent. As distinct from the ways in which missionaries describe the vernacular approach to contrafaction—that is, the setting of indigenous translations to existing European melodies—we are confronted with performance practices that appear to move beyond vernacularization towards a set of socio-religious traditions that are best understood as truly Japanese. The practice of what will be described as ‘local versification’ was a turning point in the Jesuits’ cultural mission. This term is employed not only to signify the practice of rendering biblical narratives into vernacular verse, but also the setting of these verses to indigenous vocal styles. This *Kirishitan* approach to liturgical singing can therefore be understood as a kind of contrafaction whereby Japanese translations were set to Japanese melodies. By transforming the singing of *Kirishitan* communities from pieces rendered in Latin (and seemingly unintelligible to many), to ones in vernacular verse, *Kirishitan* practitioners were able to take creative control of how they expressed their own understanding of the Christian faith. Indeed, the Japanese predisposition for incorporating foreign elements into their core beliefs and practices laid the foundations for the development of distinctly *Kirishitan* musical forms. As we will see, these contrafactual practices emerged as part of a long history of cultural integration, drawing on ten centuries of indigenized Buddhism and its use of local versification.

As the Jesuits grew in fluency with the Japanese language, so too did the quality of their doctrinal translations. The first documented instance of Japanese

verse within a performative context occurs in 1554. In celebration of Christmas in Yamaguchi, missionaries Duarte da Silva and Belchior de Figueiredo are recorded as having recited passages from a Japanese book that described the Augustinian ‘six ages from Adam to the end of the world’ (‘das seis idades, de Adam, até o fim do mundo’). These passages are described as being contextualized by a ‘sung preface’ (*prefacio cantado*) which was very consoling to the *Kirishitan* congregation.³² Da Silva was most likely responsible for these translations, as the Jesuit surgeon Luís de Almeida had noted his active engagement in the compilation of language vocabularies.³³ However, da Silva would have undoubtedly been assisted by a Japanese *dōjuku* (lay auxiliary), the most likely candidate being the famed *biwa-hōshi* or itinerant ‘lute priest’ known by the name of Lourenço Ryōsai. Baptised by Xavier in 1551, he was received into the Society as a lay brother by Cosme de Torrès, the mission superior, in 1563.³⁴ As the missionaries’ own language instructor, Lourenço was intimately engaged in the Jesuits’ literary endeavours, and was noted for his assistance in the translation of various catechetical texts. Identifiable as the first Japanese catechist, we begin to see Lourenço’s role in the training of *Kirishitan* children. Thus in reading between the lines, we are able to see more clearly the active role that *Kirishitan dōjuku*, such as Lourenço, played within the Japanese mission. Ultimately, it was these *biwa-hōshi* who fostered a new kind of *Kirishitan* devotion, grounded in existing Japanese styles of vocalization. (An image of a blind *biwa-hōshi* can be seen in the 1501 *Shichi-jū-ichi-ban shokunin uta-awase* (Poetry Competition of Seventy-One Artisans in Seventy-one Rounds) at the Tokyo National Museum, and also on the museum’s website.³⁵)

By 1561, Juan Fernández had reported that the now well-seasoned Guilherme Pereira, apart from offering lessons in the Japanese language, was responsible for teaching Christian doctrine to the children of the Jesuit elementary school in Funai. Fernández paints a picture of these young boys, ‘even those who barely know how to speak’, as learning ‘the whole doctrine in their language’, as well as in Latin, within eight months.³⁶ By the beginning of the 1560s, Fernández, under the tutelage of Lourenço, had become one of the most linguistically proficient missionaries,

even writing a book of Portuguese–Japanese grammar. As Joseph F. Moran has noted, this book was used by missionaries for instruction in the Japanese language until the arrival of a printing press at Nagasaki in 1591.³⁷ Given that Balthasar Gago had also returned to Funai by 1559, we might also consider the possibility that his Japanese catechism, the *Nijū-go-ka-jō* (Twenty-five articles), completed between 1557 and 1558, was a source for vernacular instruction.³⁸ With its inbuilt dialogic format, Gago’s text would also appear a likely source for sung recitations, especially in the case of antiphonal singing.³⁹ Gago himself notes that in 1559 the Christian doctrine was recited in Japanese (‘sua lingua’) during evening prayer before his preparation of the morning sermon.⁴⁰ Inasmuch as Latin liturgical singing offered missionaries one of the most far-reaching and emotive methods of doctrinal instruction, the vernacular turn in this practice offered *Kirishitan* practitioners unprecedented access to Christian teachings outside the formal schooling system of the Jesuits. In his same letter of 1561 Fernández demonstrates the extent of translation, and the efficiency with which the Japanese memorized the resulting vernacular texts:

They know the principal tenets of the Christian Doctrine: *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, *Credo* [and] *Salve Regina* in Latin, and the Commandments of the Law of God and of the Church, the mortal sins and virtues against them, and the works of mercy, in their language.⁴¹

In order to understand how this kind of vernacular instruction led to the proliferation of localized vocal styles, we must look to the contexts in which this syncretic practice flourished. It was in dramatic representations, based in the tradition of medieval mystery plays, that Japanese townspeople used their own local genres of music as new ways to express their identity as *Kirishitan*.

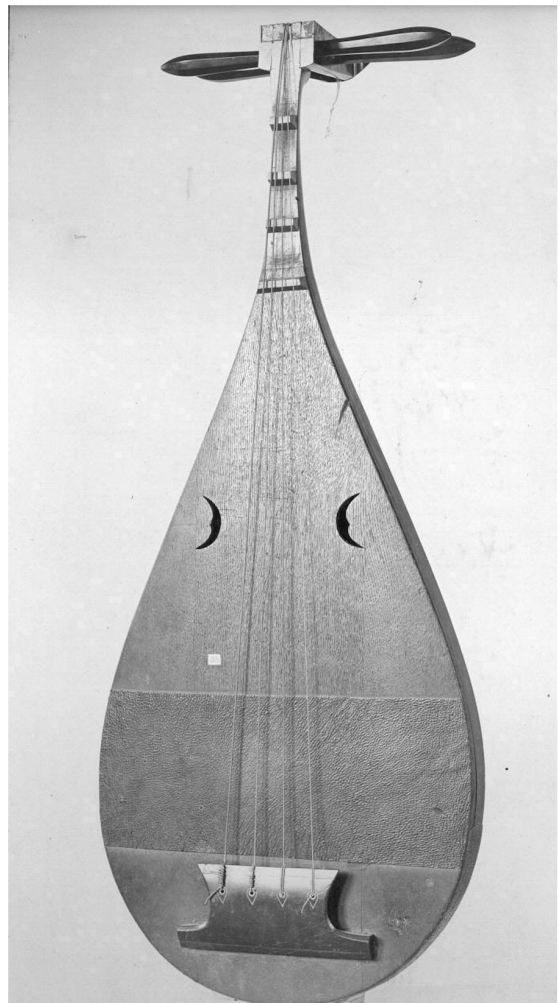
Defining *Kirishitan* drama

The development of a unique dramaturgy that synthesized both European and Japanese musico-dramatic aesthetics is a largely neglected topic in the history of Japanese theatre.⁴² To the extent that Buddhism ‘became Japanese’ following its arrival from Korea in the 6th century, so too can we observe a ‘Japanization’ of Christianity. This is most clearly

exemplified in the genre of what will be called *misuteriyo-geki*,⁴³ a form of *Kirishitan* drama that developed in line with the vernacularization of liturgical singing in the 1560s. It is within this experimental environment that we see both Japanese and Jesuits attuned to each other's ritual traditions and performance aesthetics. One of the first, and most communicative encounters with Japanese performance styles, followed the arrival of the blind troubadour, Lourenço.

From their appearance at the steps of the Daidōji Church of Yamaguchi in the spring of 1551, Lourenço and his *biwa* (a Japanese short-necked fretted lute; see [illus.2](#)) offered the Jesuit mission a new way of preaching that exploited the familiarity of Japanese musical narrative traditions. *Biwa-hōshi*, such as Lourenço, were blind itinerants who recited war stories for the deceased and the bereaved during funerary rites for fallen soldiers, while others engaged in popular Buddhist evangelism at temples and in the streets.⁴⁴ Indeed, the *biwa* was restricted to this social category of the blind, and thus, as Michele Marra has discussed, those who played it occupied a liminal (*sanjo*) space as 'outcast' musicians in Japanese society.⁴⁵ The apogee of their storytelling tradition was the *Heike monogatari* (The tale of the Heike), an epic ballad that describes the political struggle between the Taira and Minamoto clans for control of Japan at the end of the 12th century. As Alison Tokita has noted, the sung recitation of this epic to the accompaniment of the *biwa* served 'to pacify the dead or to lead [one] to salvation', in addition to functioning as a form of entertainment.⁴⁶

With its central Buddhist themes of impermanence (*mujō*) and karmic order, we can begin to see a number of useful parallels between the *Heike monogatari* and the Jesuits' cause. Indeed, this epic was eventually adapted for a Christian readership by the *dōjuku*, and later impassioned apostate, Fabian Fucan, who published the book between 1592 and 1593 in Romanized Japanese (see [illus.3](#)).⁴⁷ It is also interesting to note that this repurposing of the *Heike monogatari* by a religious institution was not without precedent. Just as the *biwa-hōshi* were developing their narrative performance styles in the 12th and 13th centuries, so too were temple priests in Kyoto beginning to incorporate episodes from the *Heike monogatari*, known as *ku*,⁴⁸ into their sung hymns,



2 Nineteenth-century example of a *Heike biwa*, dated 1835 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

through which the powers of Buddhism were presented as an antidote to history's misfortunes.⁴⁹ The mobile model of vernacular, grassroots engagement by the *biwa-hōshi* thus offered a framework through which the word of God could be disseminated in a localized way. In their use of these musically skilled itinerants as mouthpieces for the Christian faith, the Jesuits appropriated Buddhist soundscapes for *Kirishitan* purposes. In conflating the sonic worlds of Buddhism and Christianity, Lourenço and his pupils were able to present their newly adopted foreign faith to the Japanese in a familiar and accessible



3 Frontispiece to the Jesuit edition of the *Heike monogatari* in colloquial Japanese (Amakusa, c.1592); © British Library Board (Asia, Pacific & Africa Or.59.aa.1, f1pr)

way. These blind troubadours thus offer an important link to the development of distinctly Japanese styles of *Kirishitan* devotion and their expression in music and drama.

Derived from Latin liturgical drama as early as the 10th century, mystery plays were developed most significantly in the 14th and 15th centuries throughout England, France and Italy. These plays performed representations of biblical narratives as *tableaux vivants*, accompanied by antiphonal recitation or singing in the vernacular.⁵⁰ This dramatic structure in many ways mirrored existing Japanese performance traditions, opening a door to the reimagination of Christianity in innovative ways. As we

will see, most religious drama in Japan throughout the 1560s dealt primarily with the suffering of Christ. Such representations of the Paschal mystery appear as part of a broader biblical repertory performed by the *Kirishitan*, including representations of Adam and Eve and the origin of sin, the Judgement of Solomon and the End of Days, among others. What Jesuit correspondences tend to leave us with are descriptions of notable *Kirishitan* drama and their use by the Japanese for key occasions in the liturgical calendar—namely Holy Week and Christmastide.

By the 1560s the Jesuits had established the practice of translating extracts from the Gospel and from the Bible in general. Japanese *dōjuku*, such as Lourenço, continued this practice through the development of local versification, in which these translated extracts were set as verses to be sung in local performance styles. In reflecting on Christmas in the city of Sakai during 1566, Luís Frois, missionary and early ethnographer of Japanese culture, described the active participation of the *Kirishitan* in the creative direction of devotional acts:

The *consoado*⁵¹ was not like those normally had in other lands, but the night [was] accompanied by many stories of the scriptures that the noblemen, in their taste and devotion, rendered into verses to be sung.⁵²

To speak of ‘their taste’ and ‘their devotion’ is thus clearly to differentiate between a standard of (European) Jesuit devotional acts and a set of distinctly *Kirishitan* traditions formed by the Japanese for the Japanese. The recurrence of these accounts of performances rendered ‘in their own way’ or in accordance ‘with their traditions’ therefore begs the question of how they were enacted.

The Bible and the *biwa*

The first descriptive account of the *misuteriyo-geki* form appears in a letter written by Juan Fernández in 1561. He recounts how, in the days leading up to Christmas in 1560, Cosme de Torrès had given charge of the direction of a religious drama to two or three *Kirishitan* of the Funai congregation:

First, they enacted the fall of Adam, and the hope of redemption, and for this purpose they placed a tree [adorned] with golden apples in the middle of the Church, beneath which Lucifer had deceived Eve, and all this [was

presented] with *their motets [sung] in Japanese* ... And after the fall they were cast out from Paradise by the Angel, which was the cause of much lamentation and weeping, because the material was so moving, and the figures so devout and graceful that there was no one in the audience who was not moved ... After this they enacted the two women who went to seek justice from Solomon. This enactment was good and caused much confusion amongst the gentile women who kill their children, [for it 'shows them the strength of natural love a mother has for her child'] ... And they said all this *in song*, and the Christians would reply to them from the other side [of the church], helping them to sing these songs.⁵³

In this account we can observe a form of *Kirishitan* drama with performance conventions, rooted in the practice of local versification, already well known to the congregation. The use of Japanese motets (*motetes*) and songs (*cantigas*) in this instance should not be interpreted as a reference to the conventional musical forms of Western sacred music, but rather to styles of vocalization derived from Japanese traditions.⁵⁴

Though intended for the celebration of the birth of Christ, this *misuteriyo-geki* was nevertheless grounded in the moral teaching of sin, to which the Japanese were reported to have been very receptive. Fernández's mention of the play's antiphonal form is of particular importance. In emphasizing antiphony between the actors and the congregation, he records how the use of 'call and response' engaged individuals to participate in the sonic structuring of collective *Kirishitan* identity. Moreover, given that the musical structures he speaks of are Japanese in compositional form and language, this example of antiphony could not be derived from the Christian tradition of singing psalms in plainchant. Therefore, we must look elsewhere to understand this distinctively *Kirishitan* use of 'call and response'. We find a likely candidate in the musical style of Lourenço and his fellow *Kirishitan* *biwa-hōshi*, with their public and private proselytizing performances. Their translations of biblical stories into vernacular minstrel ballads were particularly noted for engaging with audience participation.⁵⁵ The dialogue between the preacher and his people, and the setting of texts to recognizable melodies, thus offers us a possible explanation for the 1561 description of antiphonal participation and the congregation's familiarity with these 'songs'.⁵⁶ An attempt to reimagine the

soundscapes of *Kirishitan* devotion is certainly a difficult task, for the Jesuits lacked a specialized vocabulary with which to provide accurate details of the Japanese musical elements in the *misuteriyo-geki* of the 1560s. Thus in discussing likely vocal styles, we must observe the techniques employed by Lourenço and his contemporaries.

An abundance of different, yet related, song styles were practised during Japan's Christian Century. *Yōkyoku* (Noh theatrical recitation), *heikyoku* (epic ballads), *saimon* (hymns used in Buddhist, Shinto and Confucian rites) and songs from the ballad-drama genre of *kōwakamai*, were all based in the tradition of Buddhist sutra chanting called *shōmyō*.⁵⁷ Derived from the Sanskrit *sabdavidya* ('study of language'), *shōmyō* is a kind of scriptural intoning vocalized syllabically or melismatically, and set to standard melodic phrases. These consist of a set of formulaic patterns which are derived from two different scale systems, the *ryo* and the *ritsu*, each of which employs five basic notes (pentatonic scale structure) and two auxiliary notes.⁵⁸ James Araki conjectures that, due to the pervasive reach of Buddhism throughout the Asuka period (538–710 CE), *shōmyō* likely formed the roots of much of Japan's popular music at that time.⁵⁹ The vernacularization of *shōmyō* as early as the 9th century also demonstrates a Japanese propensity for cultural assimilation⁶⁰ and provides a parallel for *Kirishitan* contrafacts in the 16th century.

The art of the *heikyoku* ('Heike melody'), of which Lourenço was a master, enjoyed popularity between the 14th and 16th centuries before being subsumed by the advent of the *Satsuma-biwa* at the turn of the 17th century.⁶¹ The name *heikyoku* is derived from the music to which the previously discussed *Heike monogatari* was sung. It is believed that Nakayama Yukinaga, to whom the text of the ballad is attributed, had based his melody on a *shōmyō* composed by the 10th-century Buddhist priest Genshin.⁶² Thus the blind *biwa-hōshi* encountered by the Jesuits were performing music influenced not only by the mysticism of their pre-*Heike* predecessors,⁶³ but also by the traditions of Buddhist *shōmyō* and the music of the imperial court (*gagaku*). Their use of this synthesized musical tradition for *Kirishitan* teaching was simply another strand in an already complex fabric.

Lourenço's development of what will be called 'Kirishitan-kyoku' (Kirishitan melodies) is likely to have employed stylistic techniques that we see in *heikyoku*: striking of the *biwa* with the plectrum to set a vocal pitch, followed by the singing of a phrase; and then the setting of a new pitch or the playing of a *biwa* interlude that reflects the mood of the text.⁶⁴ Within the various melodic formulas (*kyokusetsu*) of the *heikyoku* repertory, we can identify four distinct structures of vocalization: 'declamation (*ginshō*), recitation (*rōshō*), arioso and *eishō* aria.'⁶⁵ The aria form employs melismatic vocal lines within a free rhythmic structure, while recitation passages are generally syllabic with use of a regular pulse.⁶⁶ The syllabic form of composition, in which each syllable is set to a single note, demonstrates an emphasis on textual clarity. The use of syllabic recitation would probably have functioned in *Kirishitan-kyoku* as a memorable and entertaining way of interpreting plot lines and advancing the dramatic action of biblical narratives, much like the use of recitative in European sacred oratorios or secular opera. The *eishō*, meanwhile, with their melismatic flourishes and wide vocal range, can be seen as a potential means of presenting impassioned accounts from the Gospel, or an opportunity to place emphasis on Christian moral lessons. Indeed, the two-and-a-half octave vocal range of the *heikyoku* repertory was in stark contrast to the melodic conservatism of the Jesuits' plainchant.⁶⁷ It is perhaps for this reason that Luís Frois believed that while '[European] boys sing an octave higher than men[,] in Japan they all screech out the same note, the one on which the treble clef rests.'⁶⁸ In this treatise on cultural comparisons between Europe and Japan, written in 1585, what Frois appears to be emphasizing is the absence of a distinction between treble, tenor, alto and bass voice types (the natural high voices of boys and the matured voices of men); that Japanese men sang at the same register as boys. Exactly what kind of singing Frois is referring to in this statement, however, is uncertain.

How can the musical textures and styles of the *biwa-hōshi*, as described thus far, facilitate an understanding of the sonic fabric of *Kirishitan* communities? To the extent that Fernández's reference to Japanese 'motets' at Christmas indicates a kind of purely Japanese vocal style, Belchior de Figueiredo's

description of the Feast of the Resurrection during 1566 also seems to support this claim:

Our companion Paulo [Yōhō], had rendered into the Japanese language, in a certain kind of verse that the Japanese habitually sing, the entire story of the burial of Christ, and that of the Angel's answer to the Marias who went to visit him.⁶⁹

Figueiredo's indication of a standard verse form would seem to confirm a vocal style that was part of the everyday lives of the *Kirishitan*. Lourenço used songs (*Kirishitan-kyoku*) to instruct and edify his pupils, both in Yamaguchi and Funai, who memorized these narratives of the Gospel and the Bible in general.⁷⁰ Moreover, we are also aware of a young blind boy, known by the baptismal name of Tobias, who learnt how to play the *biwa* from Lourenço and continued his practice of preaching through the genre of *Kirishitan-kyoku*.⁷¹ The scholarly work of the late Juan Ruiz-de-Medina is indispensable in this regard. His scouring of Jesuit correspondence for mention of these *biwa-hōshi* unearthed a number of detached episodes which can nevertheless collectively assist us even further in understanding the nature of *Kirishitan-kyoku* in the 1560s. Furthermore, later accounts of these itinerant figures reveal how they fitted into the Jesuit mission, and their perceived utility as local agents of conversion. In 1586, Frois recounts:

In some of our churches we also make use of them [*biwa-hōshi*] after they become Christians, but for a different purpose, namely, to teach the Christian doctrine from village to village, to preach to some heathens and recount the lives of saints and matters of God to the Christians.⁷²

Similarly, in 1594, Francesco Pasio comments on how the skills of the *biwa-hōshi* were transformed into both literal and figurative instruments of the word of God:

Instead of teaching the other frivolities and stories that such blind [troubadours] habitually teach and sing, now, after being converted, they become masters of the Christian doctrine and go about teaching it from village to village.⁷³

These accounts paint a picture of Lourenço and his contemporaries as mobile mouthpieces for the Jesuit mission, bringing Christian vocabularies and ideas

to the 'gentiles' via music, and corroborating the faith of the *Kirishitan* 'from village to village'. Figueiredo's description of a standard verse form is thus a likely reference to the *Kirishitan-kyoku* performed by the itinerant *biwa-hōshi* as early as Lourenço's arrival at the Daidōji Church in 1551. By the early 1560s we can already observe an established contrafactual repertory of locally versified 'songs'. In a letter written in 1564, Giovanni Battista de Monte offers pivotal information as to how the Jesuits directed the use of *Kirishitan-kyoku* for the presentation of religious drama. Here he describes the celebration of Christmas by the Funai congregation in 1563:

The feast of the birth of our Lord is celebrated with great solemnity, by which they [the Japanese] enact many mysteries of the Old and New Testament, such as the Story of Adam to Noah, which are translated into verses in the Japanese language, that almost all the [Japanese] Christians know by heart, and sing them while walking, and at their own celebrations.⁷⁴

This description of the performance of localized verse by the *Kirishitan* illustrates a dual function, both public and private: on the one hand there is an emphasis on community, as individuals confirm their *Kirishitan* identity within the group by singing at festivals; on the other hand, Monte's account suggests that these verses were also sung as a kind of 'inner dialogue' that accompanied individuals in their daily activities and structured domestic space. Indeed, the use of contrafaction in singing *Kirishitan-kyoku* was the key to instructing both children and adults alike. In the very process of learning and 'singing to the Lord', Monte identifies a process of cognitive substitution whereby the Japanese would 'leave' (that is, forget) 'their gentile songs'.⁷⁵

This programme of 'overwriting' came to exemplify the Jesuit approach to instructing children in the art of liturgical singing in the latter half of the 16th century. Diego de Ledesma's *Modo per insegnar* (Method for teaching Christian doctrine) of 1573, for instance, exhorted children to be an example of virtue: when singing in the streets or at home, they were to sing songs of the catechism and not immoral tunes.⁷⁶ In his account, Monte explains the Jesuits' understanding of this vernacular turn as the prime 'way [in which] they come to learn much of the

Scriptures by heart, which [in turn] greatly helps them to have more faith'.⁷⁷ The contrafactual repertory of *Kirishitan-kyoku* allowed Japanese practitioners to engage in 'sonic sign[s] of belonging'⁷⁸ through the localization of text and performance styles. The ability of the Japanese to pick and choose aspects of Christianity as they understood it, and to interpret and express devotion in 'their own way' is the very reason why Ikuo Higashibaba identifies the scholarly use of the terms 'converts' or 'conversion' as problematic in relation to the Japanese. He argues that this implies an ideal type of theologically defined Christian fidelity which was for the most part never achieved.⁷⁹ For many Japanese, baptism rather offered them an alternative or supplementary form of salvific insurance.

The popular practice of the *Kirishitan* faith, most evidently in the 1560s, was a syncretistic union of local (Japanese) and foreign (European) ideas and rituals. As we have seen, the manifestation of this union in musico-dramatic acts of devotion demonstrates a clear 'Japanization' of Christianity, so that to speak of these practices simply as 'Christian' runs the risk of masking their syncretic character. Indeed, the porous structure of *Kirishitan* identity routinely allowed for such syncretism, as is charmingly demonstrated in an account from 1564. Frois describes the events of Easter Sunday in Hirado during the previous year, in which Juan Fernández had sung the words 'Dic nobis Maria, quid vidisti in via?' (Tell us, Mary, what didst thou see upon the way?). This question, posed to Mary Magdalene as she returns from the sepulchre, is a reference to the medieval Easter sequence *Victimae paschali laudes* ('Praise to the Paschal Victim'), the second half of which recounts the story of her witnessing Christ's resurrection. In his account, Frois depicts a kind of intercultural antiphony, whereby this question is answered by an elderly *Kirishitan* man, singing and playing a bowl with a stick.⁸⁰ While no reference is made to the language or manner in which the elderly man sang, this playing of a bowl is a telling sign. 'Bowl beating', or *hachi-tataki*, was used by itinerants to accompany the recitation of Buddhist sutras in exchange for alms.⁸¹ Often aligned with the Tendai sect of Buddhism, this use of *hachi-tataki* might imply a recitation style akin to sutra-chanting, or perhaps more broadly a connection with

the *Kirishitan-kyoku* repertory circulated by the *biwa-hōshi*.

The brief examples presented in this article speak to a unique musico-dramatic form, the *misuteriyo-geki*, through which we can identify processes of mutual socio-religious acclimatization. In fostering a Japanese performing arts approach to these sacred contexts we can thus see with more clarity a local form of contrafaction—that is, the setting of their own vernacular verses to existing Japanese vocal styles. By reassessing performing practices from the early decades of the Jesuit mission, we gain a glimpse of the extent to which Japanese performers were engaged in the shaping and reshaping of how they saw themselves as *Kirishitan*.

Conclusion

This article has developed an intercultural vocabulary for understanding early modern *Kirishitan* faith and practice through the lens of Japanese performance history. In employing these terms, we are better equipped to address the movement of Catholicism beyond Europe in ways that acknowledge the extent to which non-European practitioners interpreted and

experienced its beliefs via their own local modes of performance. In so doing, early modern *Kirishitan* are transformed from passive recipients into both conscious and unconscious reformers, and thus recognized as adherents to a new kind of Catholicism. For these communities, music was not only a mnemonic instrument of the catechism, but it was also an effective and affective means of collective identity-formation. Far from a mere transplantation of the Jesuits' cultural mission (as it had developed in Europe), what has been uncovered is a period, albeit brief, in which Japanese contrafactual forms came to be intimately connected with a Japanese grassroots approach to *Kirishitan* faith. As noted by Byron Earhart, 'Japanese religion [in a broad sense] is the distinct tradition formed from the interaction of indigenous and foreign organized religious and folk elements in the context of Japanese culture'.⁸² Within the context of Japan's encounter with Christianity, then, to talk about the products of these interactions as merely 'hymns', 'motets' or 'mystery plays' is to mask their syncretic nature. Indeed, it was this very syncretism that offered the Japanese direct modes of accessing and participating in the liturgy 'in their own way'.

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1 The English word 'Japan' is derived from Marco Polo's *Cipangu*, a name by which he referred to a land of great wealth described to him during his travels in Cathay (China) during the late 13th century.

2 As Kendall Brown has shown, Renaissance Europeans believed that somewhere in the Far East lay a bounty of gold. The Bible referred to the wealth of King Solomon obtained from the mines of Ophir; Herodotus had written of sands filled with gold in the desert regions north of India, while other writers, such as Saint Isidore,

had situated Ophir to the East. See K. Brown, *A history of mining in Latin America: from the colonial era to the present* (Albuquerque, 2012), pp.2–3.

3 According to most European accounts, this encounter occurred in 1542. However, Japanese records, which are comparatively more reliable in this instance, identify this occurring on 23 September 1543; see D. Waterhouse, 'Southern barbarian music in Japan', in *Portugal and the world: the encounter of cultures in music*, ed. S. E. Castelo-Branco (Lisbon, 1997), pp.351–77. For the 1607 Japanese account of this arrival, see

Y. Okatomo, *Jūroku seiki Nichiō kōtsūshi no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1936), pp.187–9.

4 D. R. M. Irving, *Colonial counterpoint: music in early modern Manila* (Oxford, 2010), p.73.

5 Irving, *Colonial counterpoint*, p.74. For a critical discussion of the relationship between culture and empire, see J. Tomlinson, *Cultural imperialism: a critical introduction* (Baltimore, 1991); also E. W. Said, *Culture and imperialism* (New York, 1993).

6 The word 'Kirishitan' (a Japanese transliteration of 'Cristão' in Portuguese) is used in this article

both as an adjective and a singular/plural noun, designating the identity and/or practice of Christianity as it was understood and expressed by its Japanese adherents in the early modern period.

7 See R. Robertson, *Globalization: social theory and global culture* (London, 1992), p.100.

8 On the concept of 're-envisioning' past musical cultures, see P. Jeffery, *Re-envisioning past musical cultures: ethnomusicology in the study of Gregorian chant* (Chicago, 1992).

9 V. A. Coelho, 'Music in new worlds', in *The Cambridge history of seventeenth-century music*, ed. T. Carter and J. Butt (New York, 2005), pp.88–110, at pp.90–91.

10 See, for instance, G. C. Spivak, 'Can the subaltern speak?', in *Marxism and the interpretation of culture*, ed. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (Urbana, 1988), pp.271–313; D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference* (Princeton, 2000); K. Chen, *Asia as method: toward deimperialization* (Durham, NC, 2010).

11 I. Biddle and K. Gibson, 'Introduction', in *Cultural histories of noise, sound and listening in Europe, 1300–1918*, ed. I. Biddle and K. Gibson (New York, 2017), pp.1–15, at p.1.

12 D. V. Filippi, 'A sound doctrine: early modern Jesuits and the singing of the catechism', *Early Music History*, xxxiv (2015), pp.1–43, at p.1. Ikuo Higashibaba similarly identifies a need to investigate the popular religious life and culture of lay *Kirishitan* adherents: see I. Higashibaba, 'Historiographical issues in the studies of the "Christian century" in Japan', *Japanese Religions*, xxiv (1999), pp.29–50; I. Higashibaba *et al.*, 'Nihon ni okuru Kirisutokyo no jyuuo to rikai: Kirishitan no baa', *Shūkyō kenkyū*, lxxix (2006), pp.119–26.

13 Filippi, 'A sound doctrine', p.41.

14 Filippi, 'A sound doctrine', p.42.

15 This is to be contrasted with the missionaries' simultaneous 'top-down' method of seeking to convert regional rulers and the nobility; see J. Elisonas,

'Christianity and the daimyo', in *The Cambridge history of Japan*, ed. J. W. Hall and J. L. McClain, iv (New York, 1991), pp.201–72.

16 J. Olley, 'Toward a global history of music? Postcolonial studies and historical musicology', *Ethnomusicology Review*, xx (2016), <<http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/content/towards-global-history-music-postcolonial-studies-and-historical-musicology>> (accessed 7 September 2017). See also, for instance, G. Tomlinson, *Music and historical critique: selected essays* (Aldershot, 2007); B. Zon, 'The music of non-Western nations and the evolution of British ethnomusicology', in *The Cambridge history of world music*, ed. P. V. Bohlman (Cambridge, 2013), pp.298–318; P. V. Bohlman, 'Johann Gottfried Herder and the global movement of world-music history', in *The Cambridge history of world music*, pp.255–76.

17 See, for instance, I. Woodfield, *Music of the Raj: a social and economic history of music in late eighteenth-century Anglo-Indian society* (Oxford, 2000); V. Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus: the power of music in other worlds* (Oxford, 2008); Irving, *Colonial counterpoint*; A. H. Celenza and A. R. DelDonna (eds.), *Music as cultural mission: explorations of Jesuit practices in Italy and North America* (Philadelphia, 2014).

18 There were, however, instances where Japanese regional rulers (or 'daimyo') imposed Christianity upon their subjects, often in efforts to secure trade contracts with the Portuguese; see M. S. Laver, *The sakoku edicts and the politics of Tokugawa hegemony* (New York, 2011), pp.5–8; C. R. Boxer, *The Christian century in Japan, 1549–1650* (Berkeley, 1951), p.138.

19 On rethinking the geography of Catholicism, see S. Ditchfield, 'Decentering the Catholic reformation: papacy and peoples in the early modern world', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, ci (2010), pp.186–208; R. Dunch, 'Beyond cultural imperialism: cultural theory, Christian missions, and global

modernity', *History and Theory*, xli (2001), pp.301–25.

20 U. McIlvenna, 'The power of music: the significance of contrafactum in execution ballads', *Past and Present*, ccxxix (2015), pp.47–89, at p.48.

21 Irving, 'European music books in early modern Asia', *Early Music History*, xxviii (2009), pp.39–59, at p.42.

22 See R. Yūki, *Shinshiryō Tenshō shō nen shisetsu, 1590-nen–1990-nen* (Tokyo, 1990); K. Bosi, 'Tenshō Shōnen shisetsu: the reception of a Japanese delegation at the court of Mantua in 1585', in *Maestranze, artisti e apparatori per la scena dei Gonzaga (1480–1630)*, ed. S. Brunetti (Bari, 2016), pp.230–43.

23 E. Harich-Schneider, *A history of Japanese music* (London, 1973), pp.445–86; D. Waterhouse, 'The earliest Japanese contacts with Western music', *Review of Culture*, xxvi (1996), pp.35–47; Waterhouse, 'Southern barbarian music in Japan'. See also O. Bloechl, 'Music in the early colonial world', in *The Cambridge history of sixteenth-century music*, ed. I. Fenlon and R. Wistreich (Cambridge, 2019), pp.128–75. Among Japanese musicologists and historians of music, the key literature includes A. Ebisawa, *Yōgaku denraishi: Kirishitan jidai kara Bakamatsu made* (Tokyo, 1983); Y. Kambe, 'Viols in Japan in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries', *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, xxxvii (2000), pp.31–67; M. Takahashi, 'A Portuguese clavichord in sixteenth-century Japan?', *Galpin Society Journal*, liv (2001), pp.116–23; M. Kanaya and K. Ueda, 'Kirishitan jidai no Nihon no ongaku to sei-yō ongaku no deai', *Bulletin of Seinan Jogakuin University*, xx (2016), pp.33–41; T. Minagawa, *Yōgaku toraikō: Kirishitan ongaku no eikō to zasetsu* (Tokyo, 2004); T. Minagawa, 'Madorido han "sakramento teiyō"', *Nihon ongaku-gaku*, lii (2006): pp.109–21; M. Shindo, 'Nihon Kirishitan ongaku kyōiku no genten', *Bulletin of Kurume Shin-ai Jogakuin College*, xxx (2007), pp.23–33.

- 24 On the notion of 'cultural mission' in the early modern Society of Jesus, see J. W. O'Malley, 'Saint Ignatius and the cultural mission of the Society of Jesus,' in *The Jesuits and the arts, 1540–1773*, ed. J. W. O'Malley and G. A. Bailey (Philadelphia, 2005), pp.1–26; also O'Malley, *Five missions of the Jesuit Charism: content and method* (St Louis, 2006); Celenza and DelDonna, *Music as cultural mission*.
- 25 A. H. Celenza, 'Creating models of implementation for the cultural mission: the Jesuits as pedagogues, scholars, and missionaries of music,' in *Music as cultural mission*, pp.141–6.
- 26 T. F. Kennedy, *Music and the Jesuit mission in the New World* (St Louis, 2007), p.3.
- 27 'De cantu—An permitti debeat cantus in India et aliis in locis remotissimis, quanvis in Europa non sit Societatis concessus, si animadvertetur eas nationes ad Deum et spirituale profectum ex eo iuvari, ut Goae observatum est, et in Ethiopia.' Polanco's notes from August of 1558, reproduced in J. Ruiz-de-Medina (ed.), *Documentos del Japón, 1558–1562: monumenta historica Japoniae III* (Rome, 1995), p.126.
- 28 See, for instance, T. G. Grenham, *The unknown God: religious and theological interculturalization* (Bern, 2005), p.143.
- 29 H. Bernard-Maitre, 'Saint François Xavier et la mission du Japon jusqu'en 1614,' in *Histoire universelle des missions catholiques*, ed. S. Delacroix (Paris, 1956), i, pp.296–316.
- 30 Ebisawa, *Yōgaku denraishi*, p.29.
- 31 J. López-Gay, *La Liturgia en la misión del Japón del siglo XVI* (Rome, 1970), p.159. See also Irving, 'The dissemination and use of European music books in early modern Asia,' p.43.
- 32 Duarte da Silva to his brothers of the Society of Jesus in India, from Bungo (20 September 1555), published in *Cartas que os padres e irmãos da Companhia de Jesus que andão nos Reynos de Iapão escreverão aos da mesma Companhia da Índia e Europa des do Anno de 1549 até o de 1580*, ed. M. de Lyra (Evora, 1598), i, fol.43v. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are by the author.
- 33 See Luís Almeida to his brothers of the Society of Jesus in India, from Bungo (14 October 1564); *Cartas*, fol.154v.
- 34 See A. Ebisawa, 'irmão Lourenço: the first Japanese lay-brother of the Society of Jesus and his letter,' *Monumenta Nipponica*, v (1942), pp.225–33.
- 35 See <https://webarchives.tnm.jp/imgsearch/show/C0017472> (accessed 19 February 2019).
- 36 'O irmão Guilherme afora as lições q̄ tem continuas da lingoa de Iapaõ, ensina a doutrina Christã aos mininos: os quaes sam de grandissimas habilidades, porque não ha nenhum entre elles, ainda os que escassamente sabé falar, que em oito meses não soubesse toda a doutrina em sua lingoa, & em latim, & os mais delles o Miserere mei Deus'; Juan Fernández to his brothers of the Society of Jesus, from Bungo (8 October 1561); *Cartas*, fol.77r.
- 37 J. F. Moran, 'A commentary on the *Arte breve da lingoa Iapoa* of João Rodriguez S.J., with particular reference to pronunciation' (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 1972), p.37.
- 38 On Gago's composition of the *Nijū-go-ka-jō*, see Ebisawa, *Yōgaku denraishi*, p.64.
- 39 See, for instance, the 1560 celebration of Christmas in Bungo; *Cartas*, fol.79r.
- 40 Balthasar Gago to his brothers of the Society of Jesus in India, from Bungo (1 November 1559); *Cartas*, fol.65v.
- 41 'e não dizem mais que as cousas principaes da doutrina Christã, s. Pater noster, Ave Maria, Credo, Salve Regina em Latim, & os Mandaméos da ley de Deos, & da Igreja, os peccados mortaes, & virtudes contra elles, & as obras de Misericordia em sua lingoa'; *Cartas*, fol.77r.
- 42 Thomas Leims is the only scholar to have investigated this intersection comprehensively; see T. F. Leims, 'Japan and Christian mystery plays: Christian kōwakamai reconsidered,' in *Contemporary European writings on Japan: scholarly views from Eastern and Western Europe*, ed. I. Nish (Ashford, 1988), pp.206–09; Leims, *Die Entstehung des Kabuki: Transkulturation Europa-Japan im 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert* (Leiden, 1990).
- 43 *Misuteriyo* is the Japanese transliteration of the Portuguese *misterio* (mystery), while *geki* means 'drama'.
- 44 A. Tokita, *Japanese singers of tales: ten centuries of performed narrative* (Farnham, 2015), p.60.
- 45 M. Marra, *Representations of power: the literary politics of medieval Japan* (Honolulu, 1993), pp.70–72. For a theoretical discussion of the concept of liminality as it relates to musicians, see K. B. Brown, 'The social liminality of musicians: case studies from Mughal India and beyond,' *Twentieth-Century Music*, iii (2007), pp.13–49.
- 46 Tokita, *Japanese singers of tales*, p.53.
- 47 Fabian Fucan (c.1565–c.1621) 'converted' from Buddhism to Christianity, entering the Society of Jesus as a novice in 1586. Throughout the 1590s, Fabian was deeply involved in teaching Japanese literature to the Jesuits, only to apostatize, infamously, by 1608. Although a secular work, Fabian's adapted and Romanized edition of the *Heike monogatari* was published with the intention of assisting the European Jesuits in their learning of the Japanese language. See P. Kornicki, *The book in Japan: a cultural history from the beginnings to the nineteenth century* (Leiden, 1998), p.126. For a discussion of the publication's frontispiece, see H. Ito, 'Kirishitan-ban to enburumu (1): Heike monogatari (1593) no daitobira o megutte,' *Bulletin of Saitama University*, xlvii (2011), pp.17–31.
- 48 The *Heike monogatari* is composed of 200 episodes which are themselves divided into phrases, each with its own manner of singing.
- 49 B. Ruch, 'The other side of culture in medieval Japan,' in *The Cambridge history of Japan*, ed. K. Yamamura (New York, 1990), iii, pp.500–554, at p.536.
- 50 See M. McKendrick, *Theatre in Spain, 1490–1700* (Cambridge, 1989),

- pp.238–60; M. Glaschke, *The role of music in the York cycle of mystery plays* (Munich, 2005), p.4.
- 51 A Portuguese Christmas supper, to be eaten after Midnight Mass on 24 December.
- 52 ‘A consoada não foi como se costuma a fazer em outras terras, mas a noite acompanhada de muitas historias da escritura, q̃ os fidalgos por seu gosto, & devação fazem em versos pera os cantarem.’ Luís Frois to his brothers of the Society of Jesus, from Sakai (30 June 1566); *Cartas*, fol.207r.
- 53 Adapted, with the author’s own alterations and insertions, from Ruiz-de-Medina’s translation in J. Ruiz-de-Medina, ‘The role of the blind *biwa hōshi* troubadours in the history of the Christian mission in Japan’, *Bulletin of Portuguese–Japanese Studies*, vi (2003), pp.107–45, at p.118; Juan Fernández to his brothers of the Society of Jesus, from Bungo (8 October 1561); *Cartas*, fols.78v–79r (emphasis added).
- 54 Ebisawa glosses over these ‘motets’ as popular Japanese songs; see Ebisawa, *Yōgaku denraishi*, p.68.
- 55 H. N. Ward, ‘Images of the incarnation in the Jesuit Japan mission’s Kirishitanban story of virgin martyr St. Catherine of Alexandria’, in *Image and incarnation: the early modern doctrine of the pictorial image*, ed. W. Melion and L. P. Wandel (Leiden, 2015), pp.489–510, at p.492.
- 56 Ebisawa also acknowledges the importance of conversational styles in both Latin and Japanese as a key method of religious instruction among the *Kirishitan*; see Ebisawa, *Yōgaku denraishi*, p.67.
- 57 S. M. Asai, *Nōmai dance drama: a surviving spirit of medieval Japan* (Westport, CT, 1999), p.152.
- 58 I. K. F. Wong, ‘The music of Japan’, in *Excursions in world music*, ed. T. Rommen *et al.* (New York, 6/2016), pp.132–61, at p.149. For the melodic distinctions between *shōmyō* in the Tendai and Shingon sects of Buddhism, see S. G. Nelson, ‘Court and religious music (2): music of gagaku and *shōmyō*’, in *The Ashgate research companion to Japanese music*, ed. A. Tokita and D. W. Hughes (Aldershot, 2008), pp.49–76, at p.66.
- 59 J. T. Araki, *The ballad-drama of medieval Japan* (Berkeley, 1964), p.47.
- 60 S. G. Nelson, ‘Court and religious music (1): history of gagaku and *shōmyō*’, in *The Ashgate research companion to Japanese music*, pp.35–48, at p.40.
- 61 Named after the province in which it was created, *Satsuma-biwa* was developed in the late 16th century as a new model of narrative singing. Initially its repertory was divided into pieces for the edification of young men, women and the elderly. These were soon transformed into military narratives for samurai audiences as well as the general public. See W. P. Malm, ‘Music culture of Momoyama Japan’, in *Warlords, artists and commoners: Japan in the sixteenth century*, ed. G. Alison and B. L. Smith (Honolulu, 1981), pp.163–86, at p.170.
- 62 Araki, *The ballad-drama of medieval Japan*, p.48.
- 63 *Biwa-hōshi* were initially blind mendicants (*mōsō*) who primarily specialized in incantations and exorcisms that are to be distinguished from the practice of *shōmyō*. The early history of these figures is unclear and it is uncertain how these shamanistic figures become artist-performers of vocal narratives. See Ruch, ‘The other side of culture in medieval Japan’, pp.535–6.
- 64 Instrumental *biwa* and vocal elements in *heikyoku* are always separated. Apart from occasional strokes on open strings to punctuate single verses, the *biwa* mainly functions to articulate the divisions of the narrative episode, and through preludes and interludes to reinforce the mood of the text; see H. De Ferranti, ‘Composition and improvisation in Satsuma *biwa*’, in *Musica Asiatica*, ed. A. Maret (Cambridge, 1991), vi, pp.102–27, at p.110.
- 65 H. Komoda, ‘The musical narrative of the Tale of the Heike’, in *The Ashgate research companion to Japanese music*, pp.77–104, at p.84.
- 66 Komoda, ‘The musical narrative of the Tale of the Heike’, p.82.
- 67 For a discussion of *biwa* vocal ranges, see Komoda, ‘The musical narrative of the Tale of the Heike’, p.82.
- 68 L. Frois, *The first European description of Japan, 1585*, trans. R. K. Danford, R. D. Gill and D. T. Reff (New York, 2014), p.238. The editors of this English edition explain this statement on Japanese vocal styles as an indication of monophonic singing—that is, that the Japanese lacked a form of vocal polyphony with independent harmonizing parts. While this observation is certainly true, Frois seems to be remarking on pitch, rather than harmony.
- 69 Belchior de Figueiredo, from Shimabara (13 September 1566), translated in Ruiz-de-Medina, ‘The role of the blind *biwa hōshi* troubadours’, p.121.
- 70 See J. Ruiz-de-Medina, ‘The role of children in the early Japanese church’, in *Portuguese voyages to Asia and Japan in the Renaissance period*, ed. P. Milward (Tokyo, 1994), pp.59–78, at p.62.
- 71 Ruiz-de-Medina, ‘The role of the blind *biwa hōshi* troubadours’, p.121.
- 72 Ruiz-de-Medina, ‘The role of the blind *biwa hōshi* troubadours’, p.124.
- 73 Ruiz-de-Medina, ‘The role of the blind *biwa hōshi* troubadours’, p.125.
- 74 ‘A festa do nascimento do Senhor se celebra ca com grãde solenidade, por q̃ se representaõ muitos misterios do testamento velho, & novo, como he a historia de Adam ate Noe, a qual esta traduzida em versos em lingua de Iapaõ os quaes versos quasi todos os Christaõs sabem de cor, & os cantaõ quando caminham, & estaõ em suas festas’; Giovanni Battista de Monte to Juan Alfonso de Polanco in Rome, from Bungo (9 October 1564); *Cartas*, fol.154r.
- 75 ‘Foi este hum dos melhores modosque se podera achar pera com esta gente, e pera deixarem seus cantares gentlicos, e cantaremos do Senhor’; *Cartas*, fol.154r.
- 76 Filippi, ‘A sound doctrine’, p.10.

77 'E desta maneira ficaõ sabendo grande parte da escritura de cor, o que não pouco os ajuda, pera terem mais fê'; *Cartas*, fol.154r.

78 Filippi, 'A sound doctrine', p.15.

79 I. Higashibaba, *Christianity in early modern Japan: Kirishitan belief and practice* (Leiden, 2001), p.xv.

80 'Dic nobis Maria quid vidisti in via? & da outta parte lhe respondia hũ

velho Christaõ com hũa bacia, & hum pao com ã hia tangendo, por não aver na terra outros instrumentos musicos'; Luis Frois to the brothers of the Society of Jesus in India, from Hirado (3 October 1564); *Cartas*, fol.147v.

81 E. C. Rath, *The ethos of noh: actors and their art* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), p.41. Such 'bowl beaters' were noted by the Jesuits, and later defined in João Rodrigues's *Arte*

da lingoa de Iapam (1604–08) as one of seven kinds of 'beggar' that existed in Japanese society; see G. Groemer, *Street performers and society in urban Japan, 1600–1900: the beggar's gift* (New York, 2016), pp.51–2.

82 H. B. Earhart, *Gedatsu-kai and religion in contemporary Japan: returning to the center* (Bloomington, IN, 1989), p.11.