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WHERE THE IMPOSITION HAD NO WAY: REFLECTIONS ON THE JAPANESE REACTION TO THE JESUIT ACTIVITY IN JAPAN DURING THE XVI AND XVII CENTURIES

During the XVI century, the expansionist process of the Portuguese Crown reached its greater geographical amplitude. The most distant territory from Portugal within the area under the Portuguese Patronage intervention was Japan, an archipelago in Far East Asia in which was founded a Jesuit mission in 1549. Being in a region of great difficulty to be accessed, where the priests were almost completely isolated, the Jesuit mission in Japan gradually assumed a genuine Japanese form. The establishment of a mission in the territory was inevitably conditioned by the interests and determinations of the local government. As such, in front of a growing resistance by the Japanese leaders, the missionaries came to suffocate from the ending of the XVI century, until their final expulsion from Japan in the first half of the XVII century. Considering this scenario, I seek to reflect on some aspects of the reception the Japanese population manifested to the evangelization during the XVI and XVII centuries. At the same time that the Japanese were identified by the missionaries as a higher and civilized people, what would make them ideal to create a Christendom, they showed to be very resistant to any imposition of the European referential. Thus, to understand better some aspects of the cross-cultural encounters this experience promoted, from the rejection to the conversion, I will analyse fragments of Jesuit letters and Japanese documents focusing on the Japanese point of view in what concerns the evangelization in the archipelago.

Keywords: Society of Jesus, Jesuits, Evangelization, Japan.

NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

Mariana Boscariol is graduated in History from the Sao Paulo State University (UNESP, 2009) and has a master's degree from the Department of Oriental Languages of the University of Sao Paulo (USP, 2013). She concluded the Ph.D. program in "History of the

Portuguese Expansion" of the NOVA University of Lisbon (UNL) in March 2018, with a thesis intituled "Two sides of the same coin: the Jesuit mission in Brazil and in Japan (1549-1597)". From 2013 to 2018 she was Research Assistant of the Centre for the Humanities (CHAM, FCSH/UNL), currently being full Researcher of the same Centre. Since April to September 2018 she was Visitant Researcher of the Faculty of Japanese Studies of the Aichi Prefectural University (APU). Her investigation had focused on the Jesuit activity under the Portuguese Patronage authority during the sixteenth century from its geographical limits of action: Brazil, and Japan. Mariana Boscariol has experience in Modern History, with emphasis on the sixteenth century, acting on the following themes: Society of Jesus, Jesuit Missionaries, History of Japan, History of Brazil, Evangelization, Cross-Cultural encounters, and Cultural Accommodation.