

CONCLUSIONS

One of the great wonders that I cannot stop admiring is that God our Lord took the ambition and pride of *Taiko-sama*, lord of Japan [Hideyoshi], in the war he made on the kingdom of Korea, as a means to remove from that country very many souls that from eternity had been written in the book of life: some for excellent Christians and others illustrious martyrs.

THUS REFLECTED THE Jesuit Pedro Morejón from his vantage point in Macao in 1627.¹ The introduction of Christianity to Korean women and men emerged as the product of violence. At least initially, it may have offered some a protection from forms of violence. For others, the best demonstration of their faith would be found in suffering more violence. At each moment, these intersections between violence, Christianity, agency, and opportunity were shaped by gendered dynamics that determined expectations and realities for evangelized Korean women and men in the region.

In her work on Japanese women's religious activities at this period, Haruko Nawata Ward argued that "women catechists preached, taught catechism and other Christian literature, translated and wrote Christian literature, persuaded women and men for conversion, baptized, heard confessions, disputed with the Shinto-Buddhist opponents, and cared for their flocks pastorally in various places."² Korean women's activities were not these. Primarily operating as part of a disenfranchised diaspora in the region, they had neither the same opportunities to express their faith nor to be recorded in the performance of their apostolate. Yet their expressions of faith were many and they often struck Catholic observers with the force of their commitment. This study has sought to be attentive to the complex dynamics of such spiritual agency for both women and men, as well as to their points of contact with archives of the region through which we can interpret it. Many recent studies of Catholic practice around the world have rightly suggested how their forms were nuanced by local social and cultural norms including gender ideologies.³ However, in the case of the evangelization of Korean women and men, it was rarely the norms of Joseon that were at stake but those of other societies in the region in which these individuals operated.

1 Macao, March 31, 1627, BRAH, Jesuitas 9/2666, fols. 461v–462r: "Una de las mas insignes marauillas de que no acabo de admirarme es auer tomado Dios nuestro señor la ambicion y soberunia de Taycosama señor de Japon, en la guerra que hizo al Reyno de Cõria por medio para sacar de aquella tierra muchissimas almas que ab eterno tenia escritas en el libro de la uida: a vnos para excelentes Cristianos y a otros para ilustrisimos Martyres."

2 Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*, 221.

3 Amsler, *Jesuits and Matriarchs*, 155; Ward, *Women Religious Leaders*; Jaffary, ed., *Gender, Religion, and Race*.

This study has made gender analysis an explicit and central part of its investigative framework. It has sought to explore the contours of the interactions between Koreans and Catholic missions, placing focus on the distinct spiritual agency and experiences of evangelized Korean women and men in the early modern period. At the same time, it has aimed to analyze how evangelized Koreans, especially women, were presented in mission archives written by Christian men and how that presentation might have shaped the realities of mission experience for both cohorts. Important perceived points of difference were commonly expressed in the mission archives between Korean women and men, between Korean women and Japanese and other women in the region, and between evangelized women and those who were not. Thinking relationally about Korean women also required Catholic missionary men to consider themselves, and their duties and responsibilities to these women, including to record their experiences.

This work has argued that understanding the meanings that gender held for men's expression of their identity and their actions is also critical. European, Korean, and Japanese performances of masculinities and expectations of men were all made and measured in mission activities, including by those seeking their eradication. Jesuit perceptions of Korean Christian men appeared to deny them status as adults who could take on an equal role to their own in the Society, at least before the moment of their deaths. For their own part, a beautiful young boy served as a spirit guide or protector within the visionary experiences of several evangelized Koreans. The outcome of encounters between gender ideologies was not always conflict. The reported missive of Crown Prince Sohyeon to the Jesuit scholar Schall articulated a brotherhood bound by shared intellectual interests that transcended even faith. Moreover, despite employing them for quite different aims, assumptions about the importance of male heads of household to the continuance of Christian faith seemed to be shared by both European missionaries and Japanese authorities. On the other hand, envoys from Joseon saw visualized in artworks of Christ and his worshippers that they encountered in Qing China, Christian emotional expressions they deemed inappropriate for adult men.

Crucial to these considerations about evangelized Korean women and the representations that followed was the power of their bodies, particularly as they were interpreted almost exclusively in terms of their sexual dimensions. Women in Joseon, the Jesuit Luís Fróis informed his readers in his narrative of the invasion of their lands, were "reputed for being chaste, honest and modest."⁴ It was this perception that made the treatment of their bodies a perfect vehicle for Fróis's demonstration of the

⁴ Fróis, *Historia de Japam*, 5:549: "terem fama as mulheres córays de serem castas, honestas e recolhidas." This was not a claim made uniquely of Korean women. The Jesuit Alonso Sánchez, in Macao in the early 1580s, claimed Chinese women were "extraordinarily chaste, serious, modest," cited in Boxer, "Macao as a Religious and Commercial Entrepôt," 66.

distinction between the moral standards and bodily continence of *Kirishitan* soldiers from that of other Japanese military forces. As Korean women moved around the region, the mission archives suggested how the desire to control access to their own bodies might have attracted women to Christianity. Then, as Korean women became evangelized, attention to their bodies' vulnerability became a point of concern for Catholic men and their sense of identity, as well as for the kind of Christian experience they perceived possible for these women. While Korean women's words and actions emphasized a desire to renounce their bodies, at least in its sexualized dimensions, the work of Catholic authors made it central to their accounts. Finally, as women were subjected to multiple forms of violence, their bodies were described in Catholic texts as capable of hosting supernatural energy and displaying remarkable resilience. The power accredited to women's bodies, to determine signs of faith and Christian masculinities as well as women's realities, were palpably present throughout the mission archives' discussion of Korean women.

The striking power narrated in the mission archives attached to Korean women's bodies was also made in relation to perceptions about those of Korean men. The particular qualities perceived of Korean male corporeality in these accounts were rendered determinative in the communication of their experience of Christianity too. Their bodies were sites permeable to Christian teaching, practice, and interpretation. Their bodily labour to build and care with others, their corporeal experiences of pain and suffering, and their demonstrative affective performances were all legible for Catholic authors as signs of their intense fervour. Detached from linguistic, social, economic, and political structures of power in their new locations through which they might otherwise have conveyed their faith experiences, the majority of Korean men communicated through their bodies in the mission archive.

The gender ideologies that Catholic male authors both lived and endorsed, produced mission archives that remain vital documentation for how Korean women and men experienced Christianity as a cohort and as individuals at this period. Through these, evangelized Koreans went even further into the world as part of a global Christian community.⁵ They were read and written about from Goa to Rome, in the pages of Colín's history of the missions in the Philippines and Guerriero's expansive contemporary reporting on the Society's global missions. Their textual travels reached beyond the Catholic world, thanks to translations of works such as those of Morejón.⁶

Through the archive, now increasingly accessible to scholars worldwide in digitalized form, they also travel across time, their voices available if we choose to listen. In our

⁵ As Amsler also recognized for Candida Wu in the Jesuit mission in China; see *Jesuits and Matriarchs*, 153.

⁶ See for example, Wright, trans., *A Briefe Relation of the Persecution Lately Made Against the Catholike Christians*.

present day, the remote island of Kōzushima, on which Julia resided during her exile, has become a place of spiritual and secular pilgrimage, marked by a cross erected to her memory in the 1980s that is depicted on the front cover of this book.⁷ Evangelized Korean women are still moving others to travel the world following the path of their spiritual experiences.

7 See for example, the long-running “Julia Festival” on the website of the Kōzushima Tourism Association: <https://kozushima-tokyo.com/discover/>. On the afterlives of the evangelized Korean woman known to missionaries as Julia, see studies by Park Hyunok 박현옥, “Mori reikoui ‘samchaeui yeoja’ron – Joseon yeoin Ota Julliareul jungsimeuro.” 모리 레이코의 『삼채의 여자』 론 - 조선 여인 오타 줄리아를 중심으로 [Mori Reiko’s *Sansai (Three Color) Women*: Focusing on the Korean woman Ota Julia]; Park Hyunok 박현옥, “Endo syusakuui ‘Yuriago bureuneun yeoja’ron – ‘Yuria’e tuyeongdoen Ota Julliaui imji.” 엔도 슈사쿠의 「유리아라고 부르는 여자」론 - 「유리아」에 투영된 오타 줄리아의 이미지- [The image of Ota Julia projected in Endō Shūsaku’s *A Woman Called Yuria*]; Park Hyunok 박현옥, “Gojeusima (Sinjindo)ui Joseonin ‘Oda Jyuria’ui suhosinjeok seonggyeokgwa keuriseucheon chumojeui wisang.” 고즈시마(神津島)의 조선인 ‘오다 줄리아’의 守護神적 성격과 크리스천 추모제의 위상 [Status of the Festival and Guardian God, Christian Oda Julia, a Korean in Kozushima]; No, Sung Hwan 魯成煥 / 노성환, “Joseonin imnanporo oda jyuriae gwanhan ilgochal.” 조선인 임란포로 오다 줄리아에 관한 일고찰 [A study of the Christian Ota Julia].