

Military Project to Conquer Nagasaki, Hirado and Taiwan

Proposed by Fray San Martin de la Ascención, O.M.F

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The aim of this thesis is to clarify the main purposes and features of a military project offered by Fray San Martin de la Ascención to conquer Nagasaki, Hirado and Taiwan. He proposed to conquer them with a view to (1) replacing the Jesuits in ruling and leading the Japanese Christians, (2) obtaining profits from trade with Japanese merchants and (3) utilizing Taiwan as a “junction port” between Manila and Japan, Macao and other regions. Jesuit Visitor Alessandro Valigano naturally refuted Ascención’s project directly, making the following claims: (1) Japan belonged to the Demarcación of the Portuguese Crown and people, (2) Spaniards from Manila would ruin the profits from the silk trade between Macao and Japan and (3) if the Spaniards conquered Nagasaki or Taiwan, the Japanese people would grow more and more suspicious that missionaries and Christians would commit the crime of conquering Japan with armed forces. Many problems remain to be solved about the complicated connection between Christianity and military matters. In order to find a solution for the “aporia”, we must study and consider thoroughly the logical structure of the “Holy War” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.