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An Addendum to “Patristic Studies in East Asia (Mainly in Japan)”

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In 2015 my article titled “Patristic Studies in East Asia (Mainly in Japan)” was published in the proceedings of the anniversary conference of the International Association of Patristic Studies¹. It is included in the section “Overview of Patristic Studies”, the purpose of which is to present the history as well as the current state of patristic studies in each region of the world. I regret to say, however, that this article, as noted in its beginning, suffered from various imperfections, notably linguistic, since it was almost totally impossible for me to deal with patristic studies in Korea and other east Asian countries (including Taiwan and Hong Kong) because of my ignorance of the languages concerned (Korean and Chinese). Thus the purpose of my limited contribution was to present the history as well as the current state of patristic studies in Japan.

And yet another deficiency which is not to be passed over in silence was regrettably found, while the article was going through the press, and this is the reason I have decided to publish here an addendum to the article. Although publishing such an addendum is something to be

¹ B. BITTON-ASHKELONY, Th. DE BRUYN & C. HARRISON (eds.), *Patristic Studies in the Twenty-First Century. Proceedings of an International Conference to Mark the 50th anniversary of the International Association of Patristic Studies*, Turnhout: Brepols, pp. 125-143.

ashamed of, the decision was taken because, as an oriental saying goes, “To learn is a momentary shame, and to remain ignorant (or to neglect) is a shame for life (Shiru-wa ichiji-no haji, shiranu-wa issshō-no haji)”.

The deficiency in question concerns (the lack of mention of) a Japanese scholar’s bibliographical contribution to an international bibliographical tool known as the *Bibliographia Patristica*². The initial editor of this series was Wilhelm Schneemelcher (until his position was succeeded by Knut Schäferdiek from volume 26/27), and he was assisted by many scholars of the world. Thus from volume 1 of the series, the names of the collaborators are honorably listed in the title page of the volume, and from the third volume figures the name of a Japanese scholar, i.e. Prof. Dr. Mayeda Gorō (前田護郎, 1915–1980)³.

Mayeda obtained his doctorate at Marburg in 1944, and his dissertation, which dealt with a New Testament apocrypha, was published in 1946⁴. Furthermore, he also obtained the so-called Habilitation in

² For convenience’ sake, the bibliographical data of this series are presented here once for all. Vol. 1: W. SCHNEEMELCHER (ed.), *Bibliographia Patristica. Internationale patristische Bibliographie*, vol. 1: *Die Erscheinungen des Jahres 1956*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1959; vol. 2 (*Die Erscheinungen des Jahres 1957*): 1959; vol. 3 (1958): 1960; vol. 4 (1959): 1961; vol. 5 (1960): 1962; vol. 6 (1961): 1963; vol. 7 (1962): 1964; vol. 8 (1963): 1966; vol. 9 (1964): 1967; vol. 10 (1965): 1969; vol. 11 (1966): 1971; vol. 12/13 (1967 & 1968): 1975; vol. 14/15 (1969 & 1970): 1977; vol. 16/17 (1971 & 1972): 1978; vol. 18/19 (1973 & 1974): 1980; vol. 20/21 (1975 & 1976): 1981; vol. 22/23 (1977 & 1978): 1982; vol. 24/25 (1979 & 1980): 1984; K. SCHÄFERDIEK (ed.), vol. 26/27 (1981 & 1982): 1986; vol. 28 (1983): 1987; vol. 29 (1984): 1989; vol. 30–32 (1985–1987): 1994; vol. 33–35 (1988–1990): 1997. After this last volume, the publication of the series was apparently discontinued.

³ Here Mayeda’s name is written according to Japanese manner, i.e., family name followed by given name.

⁴ G. MAYEDA, *Das Leben-Jesu-Fragment Papyrus Egerton 2 und seine Stellung in der urchristlichen Literaturgeschichte*, Bern: P. Haupt, 1946. I found this book donated

Geneve soon after the end of the World War II⁵, and in Geneve he published another work⁶. Thus along with Ariga Tetsutarō (有賀鐵太郎, 1899–1978, a patristic scholar mentioned in “Patristic Studies in East Asia”) and Sekine Masao (関根正雄, 1912–2000, an Old Testament scholar who also obtained his doctorate in Germany almost at the same time as Mayeda, although the title of his doctoral dissertation, probably unpublished, is unknown to me), Mayeda was one of the first Japanese scholars in the field of Christian studies broadly understood, who obtained doctorate in Europe or the United States.

Judging from the index of the *Bibliographia Patristica*, it seems that no Japanese scholar was mentioned in the third volume. However, from the fourth volume onward, Mayeda, who from the end of the year 1950 was working in University of Tokyo as the professor of (Western) classical studies, seems to have provided Schneemelcher with information of various Japanese scholars working in the field of patristic studies broadly understood. For instance, in the fourth volume the following Japanese scholars are mentioned (presented in alphabetical order): Arai S. (i.e., Arai Sasagu (荒井猷), a specialist of gnosticism who afterward got a position in University of Tokyo and finally succeeded Mayeda as the professor of classical studies in 1977), Ariga T., Ishiwara K. (石原謙), Kato T. (加藤武), Kawanaka N. (川中なほ子), Niheda R. (仁戸田六三郎), Sato Y.

by the author himself to the library of Hokkaido University to which I currently belong.

⁵ MAYEDA G., *Wakaki-hi-no Oushū-ki* (前田護郎『若き日の欧州記』) [*Remembering Europe as Experienced in the Days of My Youth*], Tokyo: Gakusei-sha, 1957, p. 81.

⁶ G. MAYEDA, *Le langage et l’Evangile*, Genève: Labor et fides, 1948; this book was also donated by the author to the library of Hokkaido University. Reworked and amplified, this book was subsequently published in Japanese in 1963 as *Kotoba-to Seisho* (前田護郎『ことばと聖書』) [*The Language and the Bible*], Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

(?), Simizu M. (清水正照), Sonobe F. (園部不二夫), Takahashi W. (高橋亘), Takeno K. (岳野慶作) and Tikayama K. (近山金次), all these scholars having published in Japanese. Mayeda's contribution to the *Bibliographia Patristica* continued uninterruptedly down to volume 11. Thus I have to say that, although participation of Japanese scholars in international conferences was far from frequent in 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, as pointed out in my "Patristic Studies in East Asia", during that period they were, bibliographically at least, somehow present and visible internationally in the field of patristic studies; or at the very least, they had the means to make the existence of their studies known internationally⁷.

Then Mayeda's name temporarily disappeared in volume 12/13 published in 1975, in which only two Japanese patristic scholars are mentioned (Arai S. and Nomachi A. (野町啓)). His name reappears in the next volume, i.e., volume 14/15, is mentioned again in the next volume 16/17 published in 1978, and finally disappears in volume 18/19 published in 1980. In this last volume two Japanese scholars, i.e. Hiraishi (平石善司) and Matsumoto N. (松本宣郎), are mentioned. After this volume, mention of articles etc. of Japanese scholars somehow continues, but it is now evident that the information was not gathered systematically any more. It is really regrettable that Mayeda's effort was not continued by another Japanese scholar after his retirement⁸.

⁷ However, it is not certain whether in every occasion an exhaustive investigation was made for the bibliographical contribution or not, because in volumes 9 and 10 no Japanese scholar is mentioned, which I find hardly believable. For reference, the number of Japanese scholars mentioned in each volume is as follows: vol. 5: four, vol. 6: one, vol. 7: two, vol. 8: three, vol. 9 & 10: zero, vol. 11: nine, vol. 12/13: two, vol. 14/15: eleven, and vol. 16/17: ten.

⁸ His retirement from his academic position in University of Tokyo took place in 1976, the moment which more or less coincides with the end of mentioning Mayeda's contribution in the *Bibliographia Patristica*.

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Although the bibliographical information in general has been greatly digitized for the last two decades or so, which should normally mean that one can perform bibliographical investigation much more easily than before, I am afraid that, because of the chaotic flood of information, one is not in a better position than in the earlier period when one could profitably consult bibliographical tools such as the *Bibliographia Patristica*, especially because those tools were *systematic* tools. For thirty years or more, studies published in Japanese by Japanese scholars have again been largely clandestine, so to speak, and are basically limited to domestic consumption, which I think is a lamentable fact.

May this essay serve as a *mea culpa* for the precious contribution made for patristic studies in Japan by one of the most eminent earlier Japanese scholars in the field of Christian studies.