

Diverse standards in the pre-modern Japanese orthography

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1. Summary

- Variations in the pre-modern Japanese orthography can be captured as coexistent standards rather than simple irregularities
- Graphic variations consist a continuum with orthographic variations
- Modern 'standardisation' mostly unified graphic standards rather than orthographic ones

2. Modern varieties

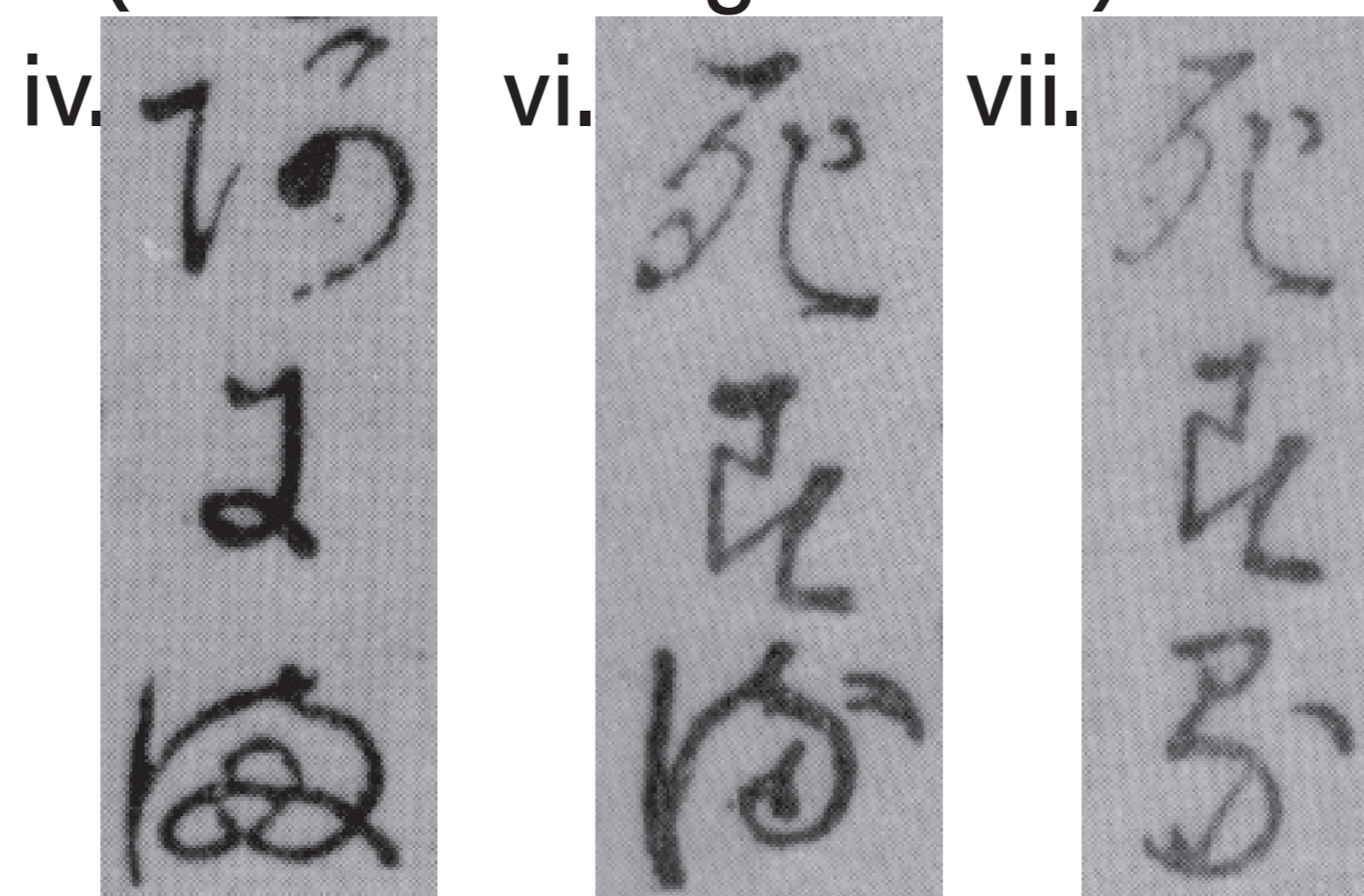
- The Japanese writing system is a multi-script system that employs *kanji*, *kana* (*hiragana* and *katakana*) and Latin alphabets
 - » 下取/リ/セール/開催中 (si-ta-dori sēru kaisai-tyū)
- Ogura, et al. (2010) illustrates orthographic variations in the contemporary Japanese
 - » The verb 'au' (to match, meet, ...): 1. 合う 2. 会う 3. あう (part)
 - » freq 2 (10k) > 1 (6k) > 3 (2k) ...
 - » The verb 'osamaru' (to be settled, ...): 1. 修まる 2. 収まる 3. 収る 4. 治まる 5. 納まる 6. 納る 7. 蔵まる 8. おさまる
 - » 8 (844) > 2 (649) > 4 (243) > ...
- Some can be accounted for by disambiguation of nuances
- '[O]rthographic variation is a major characteristic of the Japanese writing system' (Joyce, et al., 2012, 269–70)
 - » In a contemporary corpus, a lemma has two orthographic representations on average

3. Diversity in the pre-modern Japanese orthography

- Pre-modern Japanese orthography (c. 900–1900)
 - » Develops multiple syllabaries, kana, from Chinese characters
- Chinese characters and hiragana have plenty of variations within a script
 - » 'Mine / Hō' (peak): 峰, 峯 /
 - » 'Karada / Tai' (body): 体, 體, 體 /
 - » 'Ataru / Tō' (to match): 当, 當
 - » 'ka': 1. か 2. 俵 3. 加 4. 窩 5. う...
 - » 1 & 3, 4 & 5 share their origins, but distinct graphs
- Are they simply irregularities or coexistent standards?

4. Standards in the diversity

- 'Bauchizumo no sazukeyō' (*On Baptism and preparation for death*) printed by the Jesuit mission to Japan in c. 1593 in movable type
 - » Allows observing choices between various orthographies
- あにま (L. *anima*, soul) in i. あよま: 1, ii. あよほ: 2, iii. 何よま: 2, iv. 何よほ: 5
- 死する (die-ADNOMINAL) in v. 死すふ: 1, vi. 死むほ: 9, vii. 死むふ: 3 (i.e. no all hiragana exs)



- Different material shows different tendencies
 - » In 'Dochiriina kirisitan' (*Christian doctrine*) in 1591 by the same publisher, it is solely used for 'anima'
 - » As for same verb-ending 'sinuru', all of 8 examples are in 死ふ

5. Conclusion

- As a rule, if there are two or more graphical choices in a given orthography, the attestations are not evenly distributed
 - » These tendencies are not mere chances of irregularities, but coexistent standard(s)
- Also, these irregularities even can be compared to variations of orthographical units
 - » cf. Korciakangas (2018) on tendencies in irregularities of Mediaeval Latin documents
 - » More historical and comparable observations are needed
- Modern varieties wiped away these graphical orthographies in hope of using 'meaningful' orthographies

6. Bibliography

- * Joyce, T., B. Hodošček, K. Nishina. 2012. Orthographic representation and variation within the Japanese writing system: Some corpus-based observations. *Written Language & Literacy* 15
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- * Ogura, H. T. Ogiso, H. Koiso, Y. Hara, S. Miyauchi. 2010. Keitaiso kaiseki jisho Undic ni okeru goiso midashi no rikkō hōshin. *Tokuteiryōiki kenkyū 'nihongo kōpasu' heisei 21 nendo kōkai wākushoppu (Kenkyū seika hōkokukai) yokōshū*