

New Perspectives in Global Latin

Roma Sinica

Mutual Interactions between Ancient Roman
and Eastern Thought

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New Perspectives in Global Latin



Second Conference on Latin as a Vehicle of Cultural
Exchange Beyond Europe

Edited by

Elisa Della Calce, Paola Mocella and Simone Mollea

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Preliminary Notes

The comparison of different civilisations has now become an essential research topic within so-called “global history”. In the *Roma Sinica* series, the editors have promoted various publications in which the conjunction “and” was intended to represent a bridge between different worlds, certainly distant in language and traditions, history and cultural contexts, but very close to, and eager to communicate with, one another. The proceedings of the conference “Global Latin II. Latin as a vector of Cultural Exchange beyond Europe” fit perfectly into this framework, giving rise to a varied fresco dedicated to both linguistic themes and cultural perspectives, which are inevitably intertwined and stand in continuity with the “Global Latin I” conference, which back in 2020 began to explore the forms and ways in which Latin had constituted a cultural bridge not only with the East, but also with South America. “New Perspectives in Global Latin” deals with the Far East – and not only that – on a broad spectrum, and provides an important contribution to understanding in what ways the Latin language was the privileged communicative medium mediating between Western and Eastern cultures. These proceedings are also closely connected to the ELA (Eurasian Latin Archive), SERICA (Sino-European Religious Intersections in Central Asia. Interactive Texts and Intelligent Networks) and CLASSICA SERICA projects, which bring together groups of scholars from different backgrounds and research fields who share an interest in the Latin language, thereby providing a sign of the growing need for multidisciplinary approaches to research.

According to the idea of Latin as Global language, these proceedings, after a general introduction by Francesco Stella, are divided by geographical criteria, taking as a starting point Rome and Italy for the sole reason of their being the birth place of the Latin language. This literary and linguistic journey then moves eastwards through the route initially followed by Christian missionaries, thus first touching on African shores, followed by India, China, Korea and, finally, Japan. As for chronology, all papers in this volume primarily deal with texts from the Middle Ages onwards, while also focusing on the reception of classical elements.

In light of this, the book opens with **Adriano Prosperi**’s paper on the role of Latin as sacred language from the Council of Trent in the XVIth century until the Second Vatican Council in the XXth century. **Leonardo Cohen** and **Paul Rodrigue** lead us to Ethiopia, focusing in particular on the figure of Afonso Mendes, the first

Acknowledgements: The editors of this volume as well as the organisers of the conference from which it derives are grateful to Università degli Studi di Torino, Università di Pisa, Università di Siena, Dipartimento di Filologia, delle Letterature Antiche e Moderne (DFCLAM) dell’Università di Siena and Centro di Studi Comparati “I DEUG-SU” for supporting the conference.

catholic patriarch of Ethiopia. His correspondence, mainly written in Latin, is very revealing of the religious policy of the Jesuit missionaries towards local religious practices. Despite finally arriving in Japan with an analysis of Francisco Pacheco's martyrdom in Bartolomeu Pereira's *Paciecidos libri XII*, **Yasmin Haskell** first takes us to India by investigating Francesco Benci's *Quinque martyres libri VI*. Her focus is on the reception of Virgilian epics and, especially, on the representation of Greco-Roman and Asian gods in the two aforementioned neo-Latin poems. There follow several papers dealing with China. The first one, by **Fritz-Heiner Mutschler**, addresses the problem of to what extent Latin can be regarded as a "world language", taking as a case study its role in late medieval and early modern China, while **Philipp Roelli** looks at the distribution of grammatical categories in the scientific and philosophical Latin used by some key European authors in China. In a dyptich of papers, the focus is on a poem which tells of Michele Ruggieri's visit to China and of his efforts to introduce Catholicism there. In the first one, **Massimiliano Carloni** and **Xie Mingguang** comment on and provide the Latin text and an Italian translation of this piece. In the second, **Charles Burnett** proposes a different outline of the text and highlights some echoes coming from Western classical mythology, as well as from Vergil. Furthermore, he provides English translations for a good number of lines. Particular attention to style is what characterises **Maria Cristina Pimentel's** investigation of the Latin letter that Father Manuel Dias Júnior sent to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus from Macau in December 1616, which provides an account of the funeral of the Chinese Emperor's mother. The last paper dealing with China is by **Anna Di Toro** and **Luisa M. Paternicò**. Taking as starting and ending points Martini's (1651–1656) and Prémare's (1728) works respectively, they analyse various grammars of the Chinese language written in Latin and explain in what ways Chinese lexical and grammatical categories are rendered into Latin. Next to China lies Korea, regarding which **Jaewon Ahn** provides a brief report on an ongoing research project aimed at publishing a series of *Hagiographica Coreana*, that is, testimonies and evidence of the martyrs executed in Korea between 1839 and 1846. The topic changes while the regional focus remains on Korea in **Kukjin Kim's** paper on the medical knowledge that, thanks to Latin, reached Korea from the West during the XVIIIth century. Farthest eastward from Rome lies Japan, which, like Korea, is here represented by two papers. In the first, **Aldo Tollini** looks at the teaching of Latin in Japanese seminars between the XVIth–XVIIth centuries, whereas **Akihiko Watanabe** investigates the intersections between Japan, Catholicism and Greco-Roman Antiquity as they emerge from the *Iaponiae Argovictoria* (1628) and *Novus Mercurius* (1701).

Andrea Balbo, Università di Torino
Series Editor

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Francesco Stella

The Global Latin Research Project: A Foreword

East Asian Latin has become a stable research perspective in the University of Siena thanks to the founder of the Center for Comparative Studies that I have the honour to manage: the medievalist and Koreanist I Deug-Su, born in Pusan in 1938 and deceased in Florence in 2004. Continuing his legacy, the Italian, German, and Korean team of the Center has already digitized, transcribed and studied about 1,000 of the 5,000 pages of the Latin, French, and Korean versions of the Acts of the Korean Martyrs of the 19th century (*Hagiographica Coreana*, Pacini Editore 2007–2017), which we are editing volume by volume in cooperation with the National University of Seoul.

In tune with this project, since 2019 we have been encoding and collecting, first in the *Eurasian Latin Archive*¹ and then in the *S.E.R.I.C.A.*² database, Latin texts concerning East Asia from the late Middle Ages into early Modernity, which were written by merchants, explorers, missionaries, teachers, scientists, most of all Franciscan and Jesuits: a huge heritage consisting of thousands of documents. With these documents we have experimented for the first time with new methods of automatized multi-linguistic analysis. The research focus aims to be the *Latin language as a tool able to illuminate cultural transfer*. Therefore, this second *Global Latin* conference, which aimed at presenting the 2022 state-of-the-art concerning Latin works written in East Asia (and Africa) and the historical relationships between East Asian culture and classical and medieval European culture, represents for us a continuation and a strengthening of a challenging program of research. Through its connection with the *Roma Sinica* series,³ edited by Andrea Balbo of the Turin University since 2017, this project and this volume will hopefully contribute to building new bridges between civilizations which are often thought to have been distant from one another.

1 <https://ela.unisi.it/>.

2 *Sino-European Religious Intersections in Central Asia. Interactive Texts and Intelligent Networks*, awarded by a FISR financing 2020–2022, responsables A. Balbo and C. O. Tommasi, web site www.serica.unipi.it. Now the baton of *SERICA* has been passed to three different National Research Projects, among them *Classica Serica* led by the University of Turin (A. Balbo) in partnership with Siena (me) and Venezia (T. Lippiello).

3 <https://www.degruyter.com/serial/ros-b/html?lang=en>.

In the presentation of the first workshop⁴ I reminded us that Latin is the language through which documents of the history of Europe, and partially Asia, North Africa, and America, were transmitted for centuries. Over a long period, Latin was used in a vast number of forms: Antoine Meillet (1977) reminded us that

Autant le pouvoir a été divisé, émietté, autant a été complète en Occident l'unité de culture. Jusqu'au seuil de l'époque moderne quiconque a pensé n'a pensé qu'en latin. Les mêmes maîtres ont enseigné d'un bout à l'autre de l'Europe, de l'Espagne et de la France jusqu'à la Pologne, de la Scandinavie à la Sicile; les étudiants ont voyagé d'un pays à l'autre; les mêmes livres ont été lus. L'Occident a été pendant plus de mille ans le domaine de l'unité intellectuelle.⁵

Some years ago, Françoise Waquet masterfully demonstrated in *The Empire of a Sign*⁶ to how great an extent Latin was the most recognizable mark of European identity, citing the Polish saying, «Europe ends where Latin ends» and Diderot's assertion that Latin «is the language of European scholars» or, as Leibniz wrote, «*lingua Europaea universalis et durabilis*».⁷

But this is not true only for Europe. Jürgen Leonhardt began to extend the scope of analysis in his 2010 volume, for which he chose the title *Latein: Geschichte einer Weltsprache* ("Latin, the History of a World Language").⁸ And the more recent *Geschichte der neulateinischen Literatur* by Martin Korenjak,⁹ as well as many projects about modern Latin (some of which will be presented here), confirm the fascination and circulation of this immense and neglected heritage, which can in no way be reduced to the mere afterlife of the classics. One of the innovative aspects of his overview is that it enhances the cultural role of scientific and religious literature, including what is known as late or baroque scholasticism, treatises of natural science and scientific theory, Jesuit theatre, and so on. Such an expansion of scope completely changes the panorama of the history of Latin as a cultural language. In particular, research on Latin used for scientific communication in modern times is now in the spotlight of projects like a Canadian one led by Wesley Stevens and the Swiss one planned by Philipp Roelli, and others carried on at the Universities of Freiburg i.B. and Innsbruck.

⁴ Stella (2020). Some parts of this welcome speech have been taken up by that Foreword.

⁵ Meillet (1977) 282–283.

⁶ Waquet (2001).

⁷ I take this information from Waquet (2001).

⁸ Leonhardt (2009).

⁹ Korenjak (2017).

Thanks to these new research trends, we are now realizing that the scope of Latin textuality is not limited to Europe, but extends its radius to 6th-century North-Africa, 15th–17th-century America and above all to Asia, both near Asia, with its remarkable Latin production of the 12th-century crusaders State, and (mostly) East Asia.

The history of scientific development in China outlined by Benjamin A. Elman, across many volumes published by Harvard University Press a few years ago, frequently recalls the role of Latin in the transmission of scientific culture and the unimaginable extent of this phenomenon:

previous estimates of Jesuit authors worldwide have suggested that between 1600 and 1773 they wrote more than 4,000 works, 600 journal articles (almost all after 1700) and 1,000 manuscripts dealing with the sciences. More recent estimates indicate that some 450 works were translated or compiled by the Jesuits and their converts in China between 1584 and 1790.¹⁰

Independently from Elman, Michele Ferrero, Professor of Latin at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, compiled a long list of works *about China* published in Latin from 1600 to 1800, which has already been improved by Gong Sunlong Zi (公孫龍: 西班牙文翻譯作者).¹¹ The Austrian project *Sinica 2.0* made accessible a large amount of digitized Western material about China; yet the portion devoted to Latin sources is extremely limited and only includes texts that are digitized but not searchable. The same can be said of newly developed databases such as *Chinese Christian Texts*, promoted by Nicolas Standaert in Louvain, and other projects.

Recent Insights by Haskell, Golvers, Prosperi and Watanabe

In her introduction to the pioneering collection of essays of 2010 intitled *Latinity and Alterity in the Early Modern Period*,¹² Yasmin Haskell reminds us that

¹⁰ Elman (2005) 8: «For Example, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) translated Christopher Clavius' (1538–1612) 1607 *Elementarium* in this manner, as did Sabbathin De Ursis (1575–1620) for his *Taixi Shuifa* (*Western Tehcniques of Hydraulic*). Jean-Nicholas Smogolski (1610–1656) and his collaborators introduced the European method for calculating eclipses in an astronomical work of circa 1656, which was also the first to introduce spherical trigonometry and logarithms. Later, Ferdinand Verbiest's (1623–1688) 1672 *Kunyu I shuo* (*Maps and Explanations of the Earth*) furnished further information on world geography beyond Ricci's earlier *mappa mundi*».

¹¹ Ferrero (s.d.).

¹² Haskell/Feros Ruys (2010) 1–18, 4.

the student of Jesuit culture cannot fail to be aware of a Latin presence in Asia from early modern times, at least in tableau: the early Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci translated Chinese classics into Latin; Latin was taught in Jesuit schools, seminaries, and universities in Goa, Macau, China, and Japan, some of which were equipped with their own printing presses; a legation of Jesuits from Goa was entertained by the Mughal emperor Akba (reigned 1556–1605), and a Latin account survives of their spirited debates at court with representatives of other faiths; the Tyrolean Joseph Tiefenthaler, S.J. (d. Lucknow, 1785) wrote a treatise in Latin on the language of the Parsees, as well as works on Indian geography, natural history, and religion. I am just skimming the surface. Noël Golvers, an authority on the intellectual culture of the Flemish Jesuits in China, reminds me (*per litteras*) that the whole field of early modern Sinology was born in Latin. He cites treasures in print and manuscript, for the most part untranslated, on geography, geometric cartography, Chinese history and chronology (including recent history), flora and fauna, medicine («first description of acupuncture, pulse diagnostics, moxibustions»), linguistics (first grammars of Chinese and Manchu, «both after the model of Alvarez's and Despauterius' Latin grammars»).

Haskell remarks on several touch-points concerning the Latin language in Western and Eastern pedagogy, and one can rightly speak about a «cooption of the “New World” into this unitary vision of the Latin pedagogy».¹³ The history of the dissemination of Latin in Asia is first of all a history of a successful pedagogical model, which in some ways is now spreading again over Asia through the models of American and European Universities. Yet Latin extended its globalising function by absorbing elements of local cultures and individual experiences. To quote again Haskell:

Latin and its meanings were for the most part developed and dictated by powerful European patriarchies. But Latin and its meanings were regularly contested, negotiated, locally appropriated, and sometimes cunningly subverted in the early modern period. There are, in short, plenty of *other* stories to be told about Latin since the Renaissance [. . .] First, there are the stories in the Latin voices of *others*, of marginal European, women (European and non-European), indigenous and colonial peoples, and even slaves. These may be fruitful compared and contrasted with stories in Latin *about others*.¹⁴

That is the horizon which we face in approaching this area of studies, and therefore we chose the Latin language as the common ground of research.

The bridging capacity of Latin also emerges in the works of the Jesuits living in Japan in the 16th century, as recently reported by Mayu Fujikawa in *Studies on the Jesuits Japan Mission*¹⁵ and Ichiro Taida in *The earliest History of European lan-*

¹³ Haskell (2010) 7.

¹⁴ Haskell (2010) 7.

¹⁵ Fujikawa (2017).

guage education in Japan: focusing on Latin education by Jesuits missionaries,¹⁶ as well as the 2018 and 2020 articles by Akihiko Watanabe.¹⁷

Thanks to these waves of travellers, who left behind the initial push of commercial or religious interests, we have the first European eye-witness accounts of the history and customs of the Mongolian, Chinese and Japanese peoples and, from the 16th century, the beginning of what Geoffrey Gunn called «first globalisation.»¹⁸ Through the Jesuits, hundreds of Greek and Latin treatises on geometry and mathematics, botany and hydraulics, mechanics, and astronomy (including Galilei), and vice-versa, reached China and Japan, made accessible in Chinese, Japanese or Latin translations. The first reliable information on Chinese culture, on Confucian morality as well as on the history of the Tartars or on local fauna and flora arrived in Europe in the 16th century often by way of Latin texts, giving rise to European sinology. Adriano Prosperi accordingly defined the 16th century of Jesuit missions as «the great century of the Eastern enterprise», the result of the «immeasurable ambition of a religious body determined to bring the Christian faith throughout the world with the sole force of intelligence and dialogue» by building a worldwide network of contacts linked together through a dense epistolary network, in Latin and in modern languages.¹⁹ In his opinion, this process favoured the «discovery of diversity» and the relativization of European conscience, but was viewed with suspicion by the papal curia, triggering the so-called «ritual controversy» brutally concluded with a bull from Benedict XIV in 1742. The institutional stop returned to its isolation the two spaces of civilization that had learned to dialogue and which would meet again in the period of colonial clashes. But thousands of documents remain from the centuries of peaceful interaction, many of which are in a modern Latin, which is not part of the high school curriculum but is responsible for transmitting precious knowledge through a world language about lands and peoples unknown to Europeans.

Digitization of Eastern Latin Texts

My experience in digitizing and digitally analysing Latin texts developed, after starting with the philological pioneering experience of the 2007–2022 *Corpus Rhythmorum Musicum* (<www.corimu.unisi.it>), from the project ALIM (*Archive*

¹⁶ Taida (2017).

¹⁷ Watanabe (2018).

¹⁸ Gunn (2003).

¹⁹ Prosperi (2019, our translation).

of the Medieval Latinity of Italy: <alim.unisi.it>), which I had the chance to direct from 2012 to 2016 and which is hosted and managed by the University of Siena: this is the largest digital archive of medieval and early modern Latin texts *written in Italy* or by Italian authors, encoded in XML-TEI, which embeds tools such as *Lexicon* – a software able to analyse lexical forms statistically and hosting the first semi-automatic lemmatizer based on Medieval Latin.²⁰ Being ALIM devoted to texts and documents from Italy, we limited the first stage of our research to authors from Italy; yet a vast number of key texts must be taken into account, such as John of Plano Carpini's *Historia Mongalorum*, the earliest description of China and its neighbouring countries in the 13th century, and the merchant Marco Polo's *Description of the World* (the Latin version of the Z manuscript), as well as Odoricus from Pordenone's *Relatio*, the first European account of East Asia that included Tibet, which concerns a time relating to two generations after Marco Polo.

The Asian collection of ALIM was moved to the ELA library in 2019, which can rely on more sophisticated and, I would say, cutting-edge tools of linguistic analysis, developed by Emmanuela Carbé and other scholars;²¹ ELA was implemented until 2021 with about 70 texts, also by non-Italian authors, and the encoding plan includes all the 300 works listed in the Census page.²² It comprises the many Franciscan travellers of the 14th century whose letters and reports are printed in the first two volumes of the *Sinica Franciscana*, and is on the way to being extended to texts of Jesuit authors, such as Francis Xavier's Latin letters, Nicolas Trigault's *Regni Chinesis descriptio*, Niccolò Longobardi's *De amplissimo regno Chinae*, Giovanni Pietro Maffei's *Rerum in Oriente gestarum volumen*, Martini's *Sinicae historiae decas*, and Prospero Intorcetta's large production and documentation, as well as documents drawn from the *Monumenta Historiae Iaponica* of the Jesuit congregation and texts from the Korean collection gathered by Juan Ruiz de Medina in a book which had no circulation.²³ Further additions may include many of the documents hidden, so to speak, throughout the 18 volumes of the *Monumenta Indica*, given that what Europeans called *Indiae* in the first centuries of the modern era encompassed some parts of Thailand, Vietnam, Goa, and Korea.

The topics range from the description of countries, peoples, customs, food, fauna, and climate to handbooks of Western scientific work, geometry, mathematics, optics, hydraulics, and medicine, and to the Latin translations of literary monuments to Eastern wisdom such as the Confucian *Four Books*, which have been the subject of investigations published in the proceedings of the conference *Confucius*

²⁰ www.lexicon.unisi.it.

²¹ Carbé/Giannelli (2020).

²² Provisionally address <http://212.110.20.141:86/dasmemo/>.

²³ De Medina (1994).

and Cicero.²⁴ This is the evidence of a great circulation of knowledge in both senses and a widespread globalization of Latin language and Eurasian culture.

Now the ELA library, still under development in itself, is on the way to being further extended in the S.E.R.I.C.A. platform, including also *non-Latin* texts such as those Greek and Sanskrit. This platform's alpha version, with 38 documents, is ready to be deployed under the direction of Chiara Tommasi and Andrea Balbo. Our aim is to make accessible to corpus-linguistic search and semantic search functions – that is, social and scientific keywords, a large part of the textual heritage documenting the Europe-East Asia relationship in the late medieval and early modern centuries – which we hope will be a significant and permanent contribution to the knowledge of this extended movement of civilizational interaction.²⁵ Some of those texts will also be printed, translated and provided with a commentary in Italian in the brand new series that Andrea, Chiara and myself have launched with the publisher Pacini and which started in May 2023 with Giovanni de' Marignolli's amazing *Relatio* in the new edition of Irene Malfatto and the translation and commentary by Paola Mocella.²⁶

Working on this project has opened to us a continuous discovery of exchanges on philosophical, mathematical, religious, astronomical, zoological, botanical topics which were written by men that we usually classify, by simplification, as merchants or missionaries but who have to be labelled as conscious cultural mediators, vectors of a great knowledge enlargement. By reading their texts, it emerges that knowledge, including religious knowledge, was their main and real purpose, beyond the official motivations of their travels. Recent research, including Adriano Prosperi's studies and many of the publications listed in Euchina's reports, has shown that cultural purposes often prevailed over the alleged political or economic goals. This gave rise to a production whose dimension, ambition, scope, breadth, and depth are unimaginable even today. Despite this, many literary works from both sides remain unknown and will continue to be overlooked in both the East and the West, where the relationship is currently hindered by political obstacles and ideological prejudices. We work towards a time which will again open the doors of mutual interest beyond economic benefits and political alliances between East Asia and its socio-linguistic contexts and the Western European world and its languages.

²⁴ Balbo/Ahn (2019).

²⁵ A first attempt has been made and presented by Stella/Paccara (2025).

²⁶ Malfatto/Mocella (2022).

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Adriano Prosperi

Il latino come lingua sacra

Abstract: The Latin of the early Roman liturgy – teste Christine Mohrmann – was anything but the vernacular Latin of its time. But after the Concile of Trent, the Catholic Church forbade to lay people the lecture of the sacred scriptures and made mandatory the liturgical employ of the Latin. So in the five centuries since the Council of Trent to the Second Vatican Council, the Italian people was forced to listen the Messe in Latin. What they realized is the question.

Keywords: Roman liturgy, Council of Trent, Italy

«Carneade, chi era costui?» Questa domanda che don Abbondio “ruminava fra sé” (Manzoni, *I promessi sposi*, capitolo VIII) è diventata proverbiale. Considerata in sé è rivelatrice della mezza cultura di un curato cattolico così come fu ricostruita dall’attentissima ricerca storica del Manzoni. Don Abbondio era l’idealtypus di un clero che nella sua funzione di governo del popolo dei laici aveva un ruolo fondamentale. Il clero collegiato delle pievi aveva conosciuto una crisi nei secoli fra il XIV e il XVI quando, abbandonando la cura delle anime nelle mani di cappellani ignoranti e mal pagati, si era visto sostituire nelle funzioni fondamentali dei sacramenti e delle prediche dagli ordini mendicanti. Nella fase di decadenza delle istituzioni ecclesiastiche fra ‘300 e ‘500 l’ignoranza e i vizi di frati e preti erano stati oggetto di satire diffuse come quelle di Boccaccio, del piovano Arlotto e di Erasmo da Rotterdam. Ma poi il papato aveva fatto suo il programma di restaurazione varato dal concilio Tridentino e si era avuta una fase di ripresa in cui alla preparazione superficiale si era sostituito per il clero l’obbligo di formarsi nella scuola speciale per il clero, il seminario diocesano e di imparare sui libri i rudimenti di latino, filosofia, teologia e sacra Scrittura. La cultura di don Abbondio apparteneva a questa fase. I pensieri intorno a Carneade aprono una spia sulla cultura dotta di un curato che ha evidentemente una buona biblioteca, legge libri e conosce il latino. Lo conosce e lo usa: vedremo più avanti come.

Torneremo su Manzoni e su questo suo romanzo più avanti. Intanto bisogna premettere a queste considerazioni una cosa nota, cioè che nella storia italiana il latino ha una lunghissima presenza. L’eredità della lingua della grande civiltà romana fu accolta e conservata nella tradizione italiana lungo tutto l’arco dell’epoca che indicheremo come il “lungo Medioevo” ricorrendo alla periodizzazione proposta da Jacques Le Goff: dal secolo X al 1860. Lo si studiava nelle scuole e lo si usava nel mondo dei dotti, mentre nell’uso quotidiano andavano prendendo posto i volgari. A differenza della Francia, in Italia l’assenza di uno Stato nazionale impedì

l'affermazione di un unico volgare come lingua unitaria di tutta la popolazione. Fu lo sviluppo di una precoce tradizione letteraria a far sì che il volgare conoscesse in Italia la sua affermazione e la sua codificazione come lingua di una società di scrittori e di letterati che scelsero di comunicare fra loro e coi lettori attraverso una lingua comune, il toscano della triade Dante-Petrarca-Boccaccio. Le sue regole furono fissate da Pietro Bembo e vennero poi sottoposte al controllo di una specifica Accademia, quella toscana della Crusca. Il latino continuò a essere la lingua d'uso nel mondo sovrnazionale delle università, nelle scienze del diritto e nella teologia e nei riti religiosi, specialmente nella recitazione della Messa.

Questo latino è quello che la popolazione italiana conobbe e sentì parlare ininterrottamente nell'arco di circa mille e ottocento anni ogni volta che si raccolse in preghiera e specialmente quando nei giorni festivi si riunì nelle chiese per ascoltare la Messa. Era una lingua speciale perché aveva un potere performativo che si esercitava attraverso i sacramenti: il battesimo cancellava il peccato originale, la confessione con l'assoluzione cancellava i peccati personali, e l'eucarestia comunicava l'unità in Cristo a tutti i fedeli attraverso il consumo di un pane e un vino comune benedetti dal sacerdote e così trasformati in carne e sangue di Cristo. Poteri grandi e misteriosi, di cui si parlava con curiosità nella società pagana dei primi secoli cristiani, cercando di capire che cosa fossero e come ci se ne potesse impadronire. Emblematico e destinato a lunghe risonanze nella cultura cristiana fu il personaggio di Simone Mago, il samaritano che, secondo il racconto degli Atti degli Apostoli, cercò di acquistare da Pietro e Giovanni il potere di fare miracoli. La sua ombra rimase incombenza nelle polemiche contro i sacerdoti che dai sacramenti traevano le loro ricchezze. Questo carattere segreto alimentò la leggenda dell'eucarestia come infanticidio rituale cristiano – una accusa che poi i cristiani rivolsero contro gli ebrei. Lo si ricorda per far presente che la Chiesa cristiana fin dall'inizio volle celare nel mistero i suoi riti per impedirne imitazioni e deformazioni. Chi ha cercato di ricostruire il modo in cui si è formato il rito sacro fondamentale della Chiesa, la Messa, ha dovuto riconoscere che è impossibile conoscere esattamente le varie forme assunte dal rito antico proprio perché non furono fissate con precisione in testi scritti.¹ La Messa fu un rito di unità² che si concentrò sulla benedizione e il consumo di uno stesso pane e uno stesso vino consacrati dal celebrante. Questi concetti il popolo li doveva accogliere come dati indiscutibili restandogliene oscuri i significati. La Messa si ascoltava, anzi si “sentiva”, senza comprenderne il latino. “Sentir Messa” è il titolo di una raccolta di scritti di Manzoni sulla questione della lingua. Qui si vuol sottolineare il fatto che il latino della liturgia veniva sentito ma non intellettualmente compreso.

¹ Così si spiega la «rhetoric of secrecy in Christian authors», secondo Lang (2022) 52–53.

² Così l'ha definita un libro recente di Al Kalak (2022).

La Messa era nata per unire i cristiani, quelli presenti e quelli assenti, secondo le parole della preghiera sacerdotale di Gesù (Gio. 17,11). E la parola Messa si era fissata fin dai tempi della prima comunità cristiana. Era l'annuncio del celebrante che la riunione poteva sciogliersi perché intanto l'eucarestia era stata mandata anche agli assenti.³ Quel rito di un tempo diverso, praticato da una piccola comunità osteggiata e calunniata che aveva nel pane e nel vino consacrati nella preghiera il vincolo di unione, fu intanto materia per una calunnia: come si è accennato sopra, si accusarono i cristiani di infanticidio rituale – una accusa che doveva poi essere scagliata dai cristiani contro gli ebrei. Ma l'eucarestia doveva assumere ben altra dimensione e suscitare più forti suggestioni nella pratica collettiva della cristianità medievale. Gli studi storici dedicati alla Messa da specialisti di storia del dogma e della liturgia hanno indagato a lungo nella raccolta delle tracce dell'emergere della forma della Messa nei più antichi testi conservati nelle raccolte manoscritte.

Questo carattere del latino dei riti cristiani fa sì che lo possiamo definire una lingua sacra. La definizione vale per tutti i secoli del lungo Medioevo, quell'epoca che per le plebi d'Italia si estende ininterrotta dall'anno Mille fino al 1860, secondo l'autorevole tesi di Jacques Le Goff. La frattura della cristianità provocata dalla riforma protestante e dalla risposta della Chiesa cattolica non cambiò questo carattere se non nel senso che lo rese più rigido in area italiana. Per avere un'idea dei cambiamenti introdotti nel '500 basta limitarsi a confrontare tra di loro le due messe, quella luterana e quella cattolica. Nella Messa solenne luterana la musica dell'organo (bellissima quella composta da Johann Sebastian Bach) accompagnava letture dalla Bibbia in tedesco, canti dei salmi o dei Lieder di Lutero. La possiamo immaginare nella grande basilica di Norimberga spogliata di immagini di santi e madonne e di ogni insegna nobiliare, presente solo il crocifisso. Invece la messa cattolica assunse allora caratteri del tutto diversi. Parliamo di quella detta di San Pio V o anche messa tridentina. Attraverso una selezione e un riassetto dei rituali antichi fu redatto un canone rigidamente fissato e valido per tutto il mondo cattolico (con poche eccezioni come quella del rito ambrosiano per la provincia ecclesiastica di Milano). Questo *Missale Romanum* fu promulgato da papa Pio V nel 1570. Il sacerdote celebrante lo recitava rivolto verso l'abside, volgendo le spalle ai fedeli. Nella forma più solenne, si poteva ascoltare la messa cantata con la musica di Lorenzo Perosi in una chiesa cattolica, ricca di immagini di Madonne e di reliquie di santi, con tante candele accese e offerte di fiori da parte dei fedeli per chiedere grazie. Il sacerdote intanto recitava la messa rivolto verso

3 Questa è la tesi del linguista Pagliaro (1955) 104–135. Invece secondo uno studio recentissimo e molto erudito non è possibile individuare origini e significato della formula: Lang (2022).

l'abside e voltando le spalle al popolo. Agli astanti si rivolgeva solo per la lettura di brani tolti dal Nuovo Testamento e per la predica. Ma che cosa capisse il popolo non sappiamo. Ben poco, comunque. Basta citare l'osservazione di un viaggiatore inglese, John Sandys, pieno di simpatia per la religiosità degli italiani, il quale verso la fine del '500 scrisse una ampia relazione sulla religione italiana con la collaborazione di fra Paolo Sarpi. Sandys notò che quando il sacerdote si rivolgeva al popolo con la frase *sursum corda* si vedevano i fedeli portarsi la mano alla gola. Pensavano che si trattasse di una formula apotropaica contro l'impiccagione.⁴ È un esempio di quello che accadeva normalmente nell'impossibile dialogo tra il latino del clero e il volgare del popolo. Lo storico e filosofo italiano Benedetto Croce ha scritto che alla chiesa cattolica va riconosciuto un merito: l'aver salvato l'unità religiosa del popolo italiano. Sui caratteri e sui limiti di quella unità si discute da molto tempo. È un fatto che la religione degli italiani apparve a molti testimoni fatta di obbedienza passiva a riti e pratiche esteriori di una disciplina guidata dal clero, che aveva nella parrocchia vicina e nel lontano papato romano i suoi punti cardinali di riferimento. Certo, per l'appartenenza a una Chiesa non c'è bisogno di comprenderne intellettualmente i fondamenti dottrinali. Esiste anche una adesione che nasce dal senso del mistero. Si pensi per esempio al fascino del rito e all'emozione che può dare la partecipazione collettiva a un grande miracolo salvifico, come la condivisione dell'Eucarestia, la consacrazione del pane e del vino che divengono la carne e il sangue di Cristo. L'incomprensibile latino della messa e dei sacramenti circondava di un alone misterioso l'efficacia garantita dalle parole sacre. Quanto al clero parrocchiale, la sua funzione di governo e di orientamento nella custodia del popolo a lui affidato fu di tipo pastorale, alternativa rispetto a quella esercitata dai poteri statali. Mentre il potere del papa si presentava – come ha scritto lo storico Paolo Prodi – composto di sovranità politica e di supremo pontificato sacerdotale, lo Stato moderno chiedeva al suddito una delega totale di obbedienza, come un moderno Leviatano. La veste talare e la chierica conferivano al clero una identità diversa da quella degli altri esseri umani. E il possesso del magico “*latinorum*” ne rafforzava il prestigio. Quello fu il punto d'arrivo del compromesso stipulato dal potere ecclesiastico con la società italiana. Qui il popolo delle campagne era generalmente analfabeta. E a lui come a chi sapeva leggere e scrivere, la nuova disciplina religiosa imposta dalla Chiesa sottraeva la lettura dei testi della Sacra Scrittura che invece Lutero aveva tradotto in tedesco e che costituiva la lettura fondamentale nelle lingue nazionali delle chiese riformate. Oltre a questo, nell'Italia cattolica furono vietati a

⁴ L'osservazione si legge nella sua Relazione sullo stato della religione a cui collaborò fra Paolo Sarpi. Cf. Prosperi (2015) 29–48.

tutti una grande quantità di libri indicati negli elenchi di libri proibiti continuamente aggiornati dal secolo XVI al secolo XX a cura della Congregazione cardinalizia dell'Indice. Si partiva dalla convinzione che con la stampa la circolazione dei libri in volgare nelle mani del popolo fosse diventata causa di eresie e ribellioni. Così il divieto fu esteso anche ai testi filosofici antichi di orientamento materialistico. Tutti questi divieti in realtà non impedirono alle classi dominanti – nobili, alto clero – l'accesso ai libri vietati agli altri. Come mostrano gli studi sul caso più importante, quello del poema materialistico di Lucrezio, si trattò di misure che non incisero sulla lettura del testo latino ai livelli alti della società e della struttura ecclesiastica perché vietarono solo la loro traduzione in volgare. Funzionò allora quello che di recente una studiosa ha definito un «codice dissimulatorio».⁵

Torniamo dunque alla storia del latino come lingua usata dal clero. La scelta delle culture della Riforma protestante di tradurre la Bibbia in volgare fu rigettata e la liturgia di obbedienza romana venne mantenuta rigorosamente in latino. Questa fu dunque la lingua della Chiesa, quella che i parroci usarono nei riti religiosi e che la popolazione sentì parlare da loro nel più importante di tutti, la Messa, che era il momento fondamentale dell'incontro collettivo e pubblico dei battezzati.

Che cos'è la Messa? Se è vero, come ha scritto Nietzsche, che è definibile solo ciò che non ha storia, per conoscere la Messa bisogna farne la storia. Compito tutt'altro che facile, anche se grazie alle opere del gesuita austriaco Joseph Andreas Jungmann e degli storici anglosassoni John Bossy, Miri Rubin,⁶ e adesso Uwe Michael Lang⁷ abbiamo potuto averne ricostruzioni dettagliate sia per quanto riguarda l'evoluzione formale della liturgia sia per le ricerche su fonti iconografiche e per quelle sugli usi sociali. Miri Rubin ha scoperto per esempio come l'immagine di un bambino sia posta a commento della storia di un santo padre che aveva nutrito dei dubbi sulla presenza di Cristo nell'ostia e che li aveva cancellati proprio grazie all'apparizione di un bambino angelico nel momento della consacrazione.⁸ L'immagine del bambino significava l'innocenza della vittima del sacrificio e creava un collegamento con la storia biblica del sacrificio d'Isacco. Ma intanto possiamo trovare in questo documento la forma di devozione che accompagna nei secoli la celebrazione della messa e il momento culminante della consacrazione quando lo sguardo del fedele veniva sollecitato a spiare l'attimo in cui Gesù discendeva dal cielo nell'ostia. Era una *figura veritatis* come aveva scritto S. Agostino, cioè

5 Prosperi (2004).

6 Rubin (1991).

7 Lang (2022).

8 Rubin (1991) 135–139.

nasceva per mostrare con la sua miracolosa apparizione che nel sacramento c'era veramente il corpo e il sangue di Cristo.

È una iconografia che trova riscontro nella storia del miracolo parigino dell'ostia e dell'ebreo raccontata dalla Cronaca di Giovanni Villani all'altezza del 1290 (capitolo 43 del libro VIII) e che venne dipinta da Paolo Uccello nelle celebri tavolette di Urbino. Qui dopo l'eresia degli albigesi combattuti nella crociata indetta contro di loro si fa avanti la figura dell'ebreo come usuraio che si fa consegnare un'ostia consacrata e ne fa uscire il sangue. E altre storie di miracoli di ostie sanguinanti e di visioni di bambini Gesù erano entrate in circolazione nel corso di quel secolo – celebre quella di Bolsena – tanto che si giunse all'istituzione della festività del *Corpus Domini* da parte di papa Urbano IV nel 1264, con grandi celebrazioni di processioni e inni. Vi collaborò san Tommaso d'Aquino, a cui si dovette una messa a punto teologica che ha trovato espressione nelle dense pagine della sua *Summa Theologica* dove il deposito di fede più prezioso del cristianesimo venne tradotto nella razionalità della logica aristotelica.⁹ È qui che leggiamo le sue riflessioni a proposito delle visioni miracolose che si verificavano nelle chiese al momento della consacrazione del pane e del vino. Nelle nitide e minuziose osservazioni della *quaestio LXXVII* della terza parte della *Summa*, l'Aquinate affrontò l'analisi degli "accidenti" restanti nel sacramento e del loro rapporto con la modificata sostanza. E qui si può conoscere la sua opinione sulla natura delle apparizioni miracolose. San Tommaso ne riassunse quelle a lui note dividendole in due tipi: la comparsa di un bambino (*puer*) e la materializzazione della presenza divina in carne e sangue. Era un inganno come quei prestigi di cui erano capaci i maghi? No, non un inganno ma nemmeno una realtà. Si trattava di una immagine creata per volontà divina. Potremmo tradurre San Tommaso dicendo che il prestigiatore qui era Dio stesso. Da lui dipendeva il fatto che l'immagine fosse percepita dall'occhio di uno o più vedenti mentre gli altri continuavano a vedere solo il pane consacrato; la figura miracolosa poteva apparire allo sguardo e poi scomparire. E poteva apparire anche a tutti e non solo attraverso una modifica della loro vista ma talvolta grazie al materializzarsi della visione in qualcosa dotato di consistenza durevole. Tuttavia secondo San Tommaso d'Aquino quella che si palesava non era una vera presenza del corpo di Cristo. Quel corpo umano aveva lasciato la terra con la sua gloriosa ascensione al cielo e da allora poteva essere visto come corpo reale nel solo luogo dove era la sua sede definitiva e dove veniva adorato, cioè nei cieli. Se e quando compariva come corpo glorioso in altro luogo, lo faceva solo come immagine e poi spariva senza lasciare traccia. Così era accaduto al temine dell'incontro di Emmaus. Così accadeva ora nell'ostia che rimaneva non consumata nella pisside.

9 ST III q77.

Ma la dotta analisi di San Tommaso restò lontana dalla fede di chi voleva vedere coi suoi occhi la miracolosa discesa divina sull'altare. La devozione collettiva si concentrò sempre più sul momento della consacrazione alla ricerca della visione di Gesù che entrava nell'ostia e immaginandolo appunto come bambino. A questo sguardo devoto incitavano i consigli dei direttori di coscienza. Si sosteneva che lo sguardo carico di desiderio concentrato sul cibo divino poteva sostituire il cibo materiale: come hanno mostrato diversi studi storici su figure come Lucia Brocadelli, Francesca Fabbroni e altre devote donne vissute tra '400 e '600, ci furono allora forme di santità che consistettero nel sostituire il cibo con la comunione frequente. Si trattò di pratiche con cui all'interno dei conventi o anche in movimenti religiosi di devozione laicale alcune donne riuscirono a farsi credere sante "viventi", cioè dotate già in vita di virtù e doni eccezionali. Si diceva che vivessero miracolosamente senza cibarsi se non di ostie consacrate. Ma la diffidenza del governo ecclesiastico prese forma nei processi dell'inquisizione dove furono perseguite con l'accusa di "santità affettata" cioè finta. E le inchieste degli inquisitori scoprirono spesso che si trattava di elaborate finzioni con le quali le donne reclusi in convento cercavano di conquistarsi fama e potere.

Tante altre forme di ricerca di poteri speciali si concentrarono a lungo nell'uso dell'ostia consacrata. Questo probabilmente fu l'impulso che spinse l'ebreo di Parigi nel 1290 a sottoporre l'ostia consacrata alla dissezione. Quella vicenda maturò in un contesto in cui l'ostilità cristiana verso gli ebrei prendeva forme con provvedimenti come l'imposizione del segno di riconoscimento da parte del concilio lateranense del 1215. Doveva seguire l'ossessione dell'infanticidio rituale che portò a episodi noti come quello del Simonino di Trento nel 1474 e il caso spagnolo del "santo bambino de La guardia", premessa dell'espulsione generale degli ebrei dalla Spagna nel 1492.

E intanto altri frutti faceva maturare la convinzione che riti e parole nell'atto della consacrazione potessero far scendere Cristo sull'altare. Ci furono molti tentativi di deviare altrove la potenza veicolata dalla presenza divina. L'altare della consacrazione divenne spesso il luogo dove sotto il candido lino si nascondevano oggetti da usare per riti magici. Erano pratiche dovute alla convinzione che la Messa mettesse in azione forze e poteri sovrumani. Di questi poteri si cercava di intercettare l'efficacia per interessi e odi personali, per trovare tesori, guadagnare amori, mandare in malora i propri nemici. Protagonisti di queste vicende furono soprattutto i frati o i preti celebranti, che ricorrevano a simili mezzi per sé o dietro richieste altrui. Si trattò di episodi tutt'altro che eccezionali. Questo fu solo uno dei tanti modi in cui la società cristiana tentò di tradurre i poteri della presenza divina sull'altare e di ridurli a scopi personali. Si chiedeva di celebrare messe non solo per chiedere benefici per i propri morti in purgatorio ma anche per sé e per la propria parte. Ed era normale far recitare messe per chiedere

danni, disgrazie e anche la morte dei propri nemici. Pratiche di questo tipo erano state a lungo diffuse nei secoli dal XIII al XVIII. Lo ha scoperto lo storico John Bossy in una ricerca sugli usi della Messa come istituzione sociale.¹⁰ Quando il concilio di Trento dovette occuparsi della Messa il primo obiettivo fu quello di vietare e perseguire questo genere di pratiche, che nella vita della società continuavano a diffondersi.

La Chiesa di Roma davanti alla rivoluzione religiosa del '500 fondò la propria autoaffermazione di unica vera chiesa apostolica sulla sua presenza a lungo esclusiva nelle terre d'America conquistate dalla Spagna. Fu così che scelse di definirsi "cattolica", cioè universale. Questo suo carattere venne sostenuto e celebrato da una letteratura che trovò nelle "Relazioni Universali" di Giovanni Botero il suo capolavoro. Il fenomeno della diffusione extraeuropea della religione romana aveva suggerito molto presto visioni esaltanti dell'unità del globo terrestre nel segno della diffusione della liturgia della Messa. Negli anni '30 del secolo XVI, in un opuscolo di meditazioni spirituali di Tullio Crispoldi da Rieti, si invitava il lettore a por mente al fatto che sulla terra come globo a ogni ora del giorno e della notte c'era un sacerdote che celebrava la messa. E questo è l'aspetto che richiama all'importanza del rito fondamentale del mondo cattolico. La riforma tridentina conobbe proprio nella Messa un punto capitale, dove il latino come lingua sacra trovò la sua consacrazione. Ma negando ai laici l'accesso alle sacre Scritture in volgare e riservandolo esclusivamente alla Chiesa come corporazione ecclesiastica si scelse di puntare sulla carta del dominio su di un popolo ridotto a gregge e costretto a dirigere le sue speranze verso la vita ultraterrena dell'anima immortale. La scelta nacque dalla paura: si era visto che dalla lettura delle sacre Scritture e dalle diverse e conflittuali interpretazioni del messaggio evangelico erano nati gli sconvolgimenti dell'ordine sociale. Così si decise che solo la Chiesa come corpo ecclesiastico doveva poter leggere e interpretare le Scritture. Inutilmente Galileo Galilei tentò di spiegare che Dio aveva fatto ricorso a due libri per spiegare il mondo, quello scritto nelle parole della Bibbia che si abbassavano al modo di parlare del popolo, e quello della Natura che invece era scritto in caratteri matematici. Sappiamo come finì. E intanto si fece assidua la caccia di inquisitori e confessori a stampatori e lettori di vangeli e di bibbie in volgare, col sequestro e l'eliminazione di qualunque testo biblico in volgare. Questo accadde in modo speciale nei piccoli stati italiani, tutti molto legati allo stato della Chiesa e che perciò accolsero e sostennero l'azione degli inquisitori affidando loro la funzione di sorveglianti contro gli eretici come minacce di sovversione sociale. La popolazione italiana si trovò dunque a sperimentare per secoli una forma di unità religiosa fondata sull'ignoranza e sull'ascolto di una incompre-

¹⁰ Bossy (1983) 29–61.

sibile lingua sacra. Ci sono documenti molto interessanti su come molte energie venissero investite nell'instillare ai contadini una religione dell'obbedienza e dell'accettazione del loro stato come voluto da Dio. Ne citerò solo uno: un dialogo tra un giovane contadino e diversi interlocutori opera di Bernardino Carroli stampato a Ravenna nel 1583: nelle tre parti dell'opera il giovane contadino viene informato di ciò che deve credere, di come deve comportarsi in pubblico per non apparire rozzo alla gente di città e di come deve coltivare la terra per farla rendere bene.¹¹ Le regole che gli vengono insegnate hanno per fondamento l'accettazione delle differenze sociali tra poveri e ricchi come fissate da Dio e dunque immutabili. Quanto alle conoscenze religiose del contadino, ecco una sua frase: «Io so il Credo benissimo, ma non l'intendo perché non so latino, né tampoco legger o scrivere».¹² Era una realtà che la Chiesa conosceva benissimo. Ma l'unico rimedio che mise in campo fu l'insegnamento orale della dottrina cristiana come dovere del parroco. A questo si aggiunse dal '600 in poi il ricorso alle missioni popolari di ordini e congregazioni religiose, coi loro periodici cicli di prediche e di processioni teatrali. Nel secolo XVIII le doveva criticare l'erudito Ludovico Antonio Muratori che invitò a una «regolata divozione». Nelle raccolte a stampa delle prediche modello per i missionari si venne evidenziando un tipo speciale di prediche destinate «in luoghi alpestri e contadineschi».¹³ Vi si impartivano insegnamenti orali e soprattutto istruzioni su come accostarsi ai sacramenti unite a esortazioni a guardarsi dall'ubriachezza (per gli uomini) e dai peccati del sesso. Le raccolte di relazioni sulle missioni fatte dai gesuiti in Italia riempiono molti scaffali dell'Archivio Romano della Compagnia di Gesù che forse un giorno qualcuno studierà in modo sistematico.

La domanda che ci si pone sulla base di questa sommaria descrizione delle modificazioni nel mondo del sacro e del sapere è come si riempì il vuoto creato dal divieto di leggere e di parlare delle questioni religiose, cioè delle origini del mondo e del destino umano. La risposta la troviamo nelle scelte operate allora dalla Chiesa, che appaiono dominate dalla moltiplicazione di presenze del sacro nella vita sociale. Si pensi alla questione della venerazione dovuta ai santi e alle loro immagini e alla soluzione che si dette alla questione se tale venerazione fosse della stessa natura di quella dovuta ai prototipi evocati dalle immagini. Sul piano teorico ci si rifece a san Tommaso per sostenere la tesi affermativa. E sul piano pratico prese forma un'arte sacra che, come ha mostrato Federico Zeri,¹⁴ doveva assoggettare il pittore a regole rigide riducendo l'immagine sacra al santino devoto. Avvenne allora una grande diffusione di sacre reliquie per gli altari

¹¹ Carroli (1583); nuova edizione a cura e con introduzione di Casali (2004).

¹² Carroli (1583) 134.

¹³ da Crescentino (1771).

¹⁴ Zeri (1979).

delle chiese non solo nelle nuove parrocchie erette in area italiana ma anche in quelle delle chiese dell'America spagnola. E intanto la devozione alle immagini della Madonna produceva eventi miracolosi che fecero sì che alla devozione per il Cristo presente nell'ostia consacrata si aggiungesse quella decretata a quelle immagini come luoghi dove si manifestava la presenza della Madonna sulla terra.

È un fatto che la svolta della riforma operata sul corpo ecclesiastico dalle misure tridentine portò a una preparazione culturale e dottrinale più rigorosa del clero e a una forte disciplina istituzionale nel governo delle cose sacre. Ma l'arrocamento della gerarchia ecclesiastica ebbe effetti negativi sulla vita sociale del popolo. Bisogna a questo punto ricordare che la messa conferiva alla chiesa come edificio sacro il grande valore di luogo di incontro dei fedeli. Ma la riforma tridentina portò a una sfondatura di tante pratiche tradizionali delle popolazioni – come le veglie notturne e l'uso della messa e dei riti collettivi come momento di incontro sociale e di intreccio di relazioni tra i due sessi. Dall'età tridentina in avanti la Chiesa come edificio con l'annesso camposanto cessò di essere un luogo di vita sociale e si chiuse nella sacralità di luogo custodito dal sacerdote e interdetto a tutti fuorché quando veniva aperta per i riti. Va detto che con tutto questo restò vivo nella tradizione italiana il senso della chiesa e della messa come occasione di incontro e di mutuo riconoscimento. Ne ha esperienza chi entra nella grande basilica cattolica eretta a Washington con i contributi degli emigranti italiani attestati all'interno dai messaggi e dalle firme sui biglietti da un dollaro donati per la sua costruzione. Quegli emigranti portavano con sé la povertà ma anche l'analfabetismo che li collocava all'estremo livello della società, subito prima della popolazione di colore. Ma si ritrova spesso in loro un carattere che Antonio Gramsci sottolineò nelle osservazioni dei suoi quaderni, il cosmopolitismo dell'orizzonte mentale ereditato dal cattolicesimo che precedette a lungo il senso di identità nazionale.

La liturgia sacra vi doveva avere gran parte. Lo si vide nell'evento centrale che abbiamo sopra evocato: quella Messa latina del 1570. Una breve considerazione sui caratteri di quel rito aiuterà a precisare meglio l'intreccio di messaggi che ne partivano per il popolo dei fedeli. Intanto col messale di rito romano imposto come l'unico che i sacerdoti dovevano usare si realizzava il decreto approvato nella XXV sessione del concilio di Trento che stabiliva di sostituire le varie liturgie della Messa in uso nelle diverse tradizioni con una sola forma. Era questa unità del rito che doveva essere specchio e garante dell'unità della chiesa (restò in vita solo qualche altro rituale valido localmente, come ad esempio quello ambrosiano per la chiesa milanese). E il rito doveva vedere il popolo come presenza passiva in ascolto, ai piedi del sacerdote che offriva a Dio il sacrificio dell'altare in espiazione dei peccati. Ci sarebbe ancora molto da osservare su questa Messa tridentina: basti ricordare che la Messa cattolica poneva al suo centro il rito della

consacrazione dell'ostia e del vino come veri carne e sangue di Cristo, rigettando quelle interpretazioni della Riforma che giudicavano la condivisione del pane e del vino come un rito di memoria e rifiutavano la dottrina della transustanziazione, cioè il mutamento materiale del pane nel corpo e del vino nel sangue di Cristo. Questo dogma cattolico era stato fissato nel concilio Lateranense IV del 1215 da papa Innocenzo III, che aveva reagito così alle dottrine catare. La Chiesa dell'età tridentina e dei secoli moderni scelse di arroccarsi sulle dottrine definite nel suo passato e di combattere le tendenze scettiche e negatrici. Inoltre sottrasse ai laici la lettura della Bibbia e guardò con sospetto alle scoperte di Galileo.

Oggi quel rito è visto dai cattolici col distacco della lontananza storica, data la riforma della liturgia attuata nel secolo scorso col Concilio Vaticano II. L'apertura alle lingue nazionali qui si è congiunta con sollecitazioni molteplici alla partecipazione attiva del popolo cristiano allo svolgimento del rito che adesso vede il sacerdote rivolto non più a Dio ma agli altri cristiani, con un capovolgimento dell'assetto antico. Non per caso la riforma ha prodotto la minaccia di uno scisma da parte di una minoranza che si è rifiutata di accettare tale riforma e si è riconosciuta nella Messa latina del concilio di Trento. Ma nei secoli dell'età moderna e contemporanea quella in uso era stata proprio la Messa latina. La si sentiva per obbligo e per consuetudine tutte le feste comandate.

Sottolineo il sentire. *Sentir Messa* è il titolo di una raccolta di scritti di Alessandro Manzoni sulla lingua. Com'è noto, la mancanza di una lingua degli italiani fu il problema che Manzoni decise di affrontare e su cui rifletté a lungo. Sentire è un dato fisico, la Messa la si sente ma non la si capisce. Il popolo non conosceva il latino. Da qui le false rappresentazioni che nacquero dall'abituale ascolto di formule liturgiche. Non si contano i casi di stravolgimento dei significati di preghiere e riti cattolici in latino nella mente degli ascoltatori che storia e cronaca ci hanno tramandato. Alcuni sono diventati celebri perché raccontati da autori molto letti. Basti ricordare come secondo Antonio Gramsci le parole finali del Pater Noster – *Da nobis hodie* – avessero dato nascita nella sua mente alla figura di Donna Bisodia.

All'origine di questi stravolgimenti c'era il fatto che il popolo delle campagne italiane non sapeva leggere né scrivere. E per ogni problema che richiedesse l'uso della scrittura doveva rivolgersi ad altri. In questo vediamo come nell'età della riforma e della controriforma il rapporto tra laici e clero si fosse capovolto. Se nell'età di Boccaccio e di Savonarola l'ignoranza del clero era il tratto maggiormente preso di mira, dopo il Concilio di Trento ci troviamo di fronte al diffondersi di un clero parrocchiale ben preparato che ha ottenuto l'affidamento di una parrocchia dopo studi regolari, dispone di una biblioteca ben dotata di bibbie e di testi di teologia. Invece i contadini della parrocchia sono analfabeti. Nei loro confronti il parroco aveva l'obbligo di amministrare i sacramenti, celebrare la messa e spiegare loro la dottrina cristiana, ma non quello di insegnare a leggere e scrivere.

Il popolo sentiva ciò che il sacerdote diceva, rispondeva ai suoi inviti a recitare preghiere e formule liturgiche ma non “lo intendeva”, cioè non sapeva che cosa significassero quelle parole. E naturalmente attribuiva a quei suoni dei significati del tutto diversi da quelli che avevano per chi il latino l’aveva studiato. Era qui che nascevano personaggi come la “donna Bisodia” di Gramsci. Quando poi erano i parroci a scrivere quello che doveva essere il comportamento del buon contadino allora si dichiaravano del tutto contrari all’aprire per loro le scuole dove andavano i figli dei proprietari. Nel suo ritratto ideale del “buon contadino” don Luigi Martini, il sacerdote mantovano che si trovò a condividere la tragedia dei condannati a morte di Belfiore, scrisse che si doveva evitare in ogni modo tale commistione perché questo avrebbe corrotto i figli dei contadini e li avrebbe spinti a andare al di là dei limiti a loro assegnati.¹⁵

E il popolo era fatto nella sua stragrande maggioranza di analfabeti. Ora, visto che si è ricordato Manzoni non possiamo ignorare un carattere del suo romanzo che è stato sottolineato in un saggio al solito molto acuto di Italo Calvino, «Il romanzo dei rapporti di forza».¹⁶ Qui Calvino ha sottolineato in modo speciale la barriera dell’analfabetismo che si alza tra i personaggi del romanzo – Renzo e Lucia – nel momento in cui sono separati fisicamente e hanno bisogno urgente di comunicare. Non staremo a ripetere qui le osservazioni di Calvino. Il suo merito è l’aver capito e mostrato la profondità con cui Manzoni aveva preso coscienza della secolare condizione storica del popolo italiano. Quello che si era trovato davanti era non un popolo ma “un volgo disperso” che da secoli passava sulla terra in silenzio, senza lasciare traccia. Lo si scopre come un limite insuperabile quando si cerca di conoscere sul piano storico gli italiani dell’epoca precedente all’introduzione nel 1859 della scuola statale con la legge Casati da parte del regno di Sardegna, destinata a valere subito dopo per il Regno d’Italia. Fu allora che per la prima volta in Italia lo Stato si assunse il compito di organizzare un sistema scolastico completo, dalle classi elementari all’università, sottraendolo alla Chiesa. Dall’età del Concilio di Trento, era stato al governo delle diocesi che era spettato il compito di organizzare scuole di dottrina cristiana. La condizione dei contadini lombardi descritta nel romanzo di Manzoni era quella di un popolo condannato all’analfabetismo da un sistema di potere che lo metteva nelle mani di classi dominanti e faceva del latino l’ostacolo insuperabile davanti al progetto di matrimonio di due contadini. Solo entrando nel sistema di formazione dei sacerdoti, fossero i seminari diocesani o i collegi gesuitici, anche i figli delle classi subalterne avevano potuto accedere alla conoscenza del latino. Questa condizione fu caratteristica dell’Italia. In una ricerca

¹⁵ Martini (1859) 25.

¹⁶ Calvino (1995) 328–341.

dedicata ai contadini italiani dell'800 ho potuto confrontare l'analfabetismo collettivo nelle campagne della penisola con la diversa realtà di borghi cattolici svizzeri: qui poteva accadere che un contadino poverissimo vissuto tra '700 e '800 tenesse un diario durante tutta la sua vita (oggi di recente pubblicato a stampa¹⁷).

Invece per il clero italiano delle parrocchie minori quella dell'età tridentina fu un'epoca di apertura degli orizzonti del sapere. Non si trattò solo di conoscenza della lingua della teologia e della liturgia ma anche del possesso di libri e biblioteche. L'elenco di quelli che il cardinale arcivescovo di Milano Federico Borromeo o il cardinale Gabriele Paleotti indicano come necessari nelle biblioteche parrocchiali dà un'idea del processo che trasformò il prete ignorante e superstizioso che si incontra a lungo negli atti delle visite diocesane o nei processi dell'inquisizione nella figura di un lettore che meditava su questioni di teologia e filosofia e passeggiando nel tempo libero si chiedeva chi fosse Carneade.

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17 Prosperi (2021).

Leonardo Cohen, Paul Rodrigue

Afonso Mendes, the Catholic Patriarch of Ethiopia, and His Debates With Salomon: A Jew From Vienna, at the Court of the King of Ethiopia

Abstract: Afonso Mendes was the first and only Catholic Patriarch of Ethiopia: he is a crucial figure in the early modern history of European-Ethiopian interaction. His intolerance towards Ethiopian religious practices is widely believed to have contributed to the failure of the Jesuit mission. His reprobation of Jews, as in the case of Salomon from Vienna, is just one illustration of his overall critical attitude towards non-Catholics. At the time Mendes was Patriarch of Ethiopia, a Jew from Vienna by the name of Salomon arrived in the country, where he imparted rabbinic interpretations of the Bible. This episode sheds light on the development of Betä ʾĪsraʾel's Ethiopian-Jewish identity in a global context, as Salomon also participated in a religious debate with Afonso Mendes at the court of Emperor Susānyos. Because Jesuits were very hostile towards many rituals of the Ethiopian Church, which they qualified as “obsolete Jewish traditions”, such as circumcision and the observance of certain elements of the Sabbath, Salomon was perceived as an alien presence who planned to influence the correct developments of the Catholic tradition in Ethiopia and to corrupt it.

Keywords: Ethiopia, Jesuits, Latin, Christianity, Jews

Afonso Mendes was the first and only Catholic Patriarch of Ethiopia. He joined the Jesuits in 1593, studied philosophy and theology at the University of Coimbra, and was appointed there to a professorship in Holy Scripture. In 1618, he obtained a doctorate in theology from the University of Évora, where he also taught for some years. He arrived in Färemona, Təgray, on June 24, 1625. In Färemona – one of the main places where Jesuit missionaries operated – he gathered a community of Ethio-Portuguese followers.¹ In February 1626, in Dänqāz, situated 30 kilometers south-east of Gondär, he was welcomed with great honor by Emperor Susānyos.² During his patriarchate, Mendes attempted to strengthen and centralize Catholicism in Ethiopia. Some of the reforms that he enforced run as follows:

1 Martínez (2005) 525–526.

2 Cohen (2010) 770–772; Orlowska (2002) 422–434.

no clergy were to celebrate Mass or perform any ecclesiastical function before receiving his permission; churches were re-consecrated; liturgy was reformed; feasts and festivals were arranged according to the Tridentine calendar; disputes between husbands and wives were transferred from civil to ecclesiastical courts; circumcision was prohibited; and the faithful were re-baptized *sub conditione*. When Emperor Susānyos realized that he was losing his grip on the kingdom due to a strong opposition to Catholicism, Mendes proposed to decree religious freedom, but in the form of a compromise: this freedom would be granted to those who had not been received into the Catholic faith, but not to those who had already converted and communed as Catholics, so that the latter might not change their decision afterwards. When Susānyos refused and abdicated in favor of his son Fasilādās, the Jesuits were expelled from Ethiopia and Mendes left for India together with nine other missionaries. After a year of captivity in Sawākin (1635), he arrived in Goa.³

Modern historiography considers Mendes a controversial figure. He is regarded as a great preacher and a man of outstanding erudition. However, his toughness and rigidity are emphasized in contrast to the flexibility of the Jesuit Pedro Páez, who died three years before Mendes arrived.⁴ It has been argued that Mendes' personality is what ultimately caused the failure of the Catholic mission. To be sure, as a result of his intolerant attitudes towards local rites and customs, and of his inability to adapt Catholicism, the Catholic mission did not take root in Ethiopia.⁵

Mendes, like many other Jesuits in that period, was greatly dedicated to recording his own testimony and his thoughts on history, on everyday life, and on the religious controversies between the Catholics and the Orthodox Christian Ethiopians. Although Pedro Páez⁶ and Manuel de Almeida⁷ did so too, Mendes was the

3 Cohen (2007) 920–921.

4 Martínez (2010) 89–90.

5 The many scholars who have presented Pedro Páez, who was responsible for converting Emperor Susānyos, as the tolerant intellectual who built relations, tended to consider Mendes as an intolerant hard-liner who destroyed these relations by attempting to impose culturally unacceptable religious practices. See, for instance, Aregay (1998) 31–56; Pennec (2003). Noteworthy is the fact that, in 1622, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide was founded by Pope Gregory XV (1621–1623) during the last period of the Jesuit mission in Ethiopia. Therefore, Mendes' patriarchate began when the new instructions issued by the congregation in Rome took effect. Eventually, the missionaries had to cope with great demands and with the control of Rome, so as to centralize and unify the missionary methodology. This factor must be taken into account in the analysis of Jesuit activity and method in its last decade in Ethiopia.

6 Páez (1905–1906).

7 De Almeida (1907–1908).

only one who wrote in Latin. His book, *Expediitio Aethiopica*, was published in two volumes by Camillo Beccari at the beginning of the 20th century.⁸

When Mendes was Patriarch of Ethiopia, a Jew from Vienna by the name of Salomon arrived in the country, where he started to impart rabbinic interpretations of the Bible. This episode sheds light on the development of Betä ʿĪsraʾel's Ethiopian-Jewish identity in a global context, all the more that Salomon also participated in a vivid religious debate with Afonso Mendes at the court of Emperor Susānyos. Because Jesuits were very hostile towards many rituals of the Ethiopian Church which they qualified as “obsolete Jewish traditions”, such as circumcision and the observance of certain elements of the Sabbath,⁹ Salomon was perceived as an alien presence who planned to influence the correct development of the Catholic tradition in Ethiopia and to corrupt it.¹⁰

In chapters 12 and 13 of the second volume of his *Expediitio Aethiopica*, Mendes explained how the debates with Salomon ultimately prompted his expulsion from Ethiopia. By sharing the details of the controversy, he purported to denounce what he regarded as lies spread by this European Jew at the Ethiopian court.¹¹ This episode also casts light on the type of debates that the missionaries could have with local Church leaders. The missionaries' confidence that their arguments could defeat those of the Ethiopian priests and monks was rooted in the belief that the Ethiopian Church was a degenerate form of Christianity: in their view, although it had originated in Christian Orthodoxy, the Ethiopian Church had become heretical over the course of time.¹² Disputes thus became a legitimate tool in recovering theological truths which, though hidden, were still considered to be present in Ethiopian Christianity. That being said, the Jesuit passion for the art of dispute no doubt was also stimulated by the Ethiopian emperors' interest in religious polemics. One of Susānyos' favorite pastimes, which he shared with Ethiopian emperors and noblemen, seems to have been attending the religious discussions that took place at the emperor's compound (even though not all attendees

8 Mendes (1908–1909).

9 Cohen (2001) 209–240.

10 The Jesuit Manuel de Almeida reviewed in a short paragraph the controversy between Salomon and the Catholic Patriarch. See Cohen/Kaplan (2003) 211–216 [Hebrew].

11 Mendes (1908–1909), vol. 8, 231–255.

12 Cohen (2003) 649–655. According to Steven Kaplan and Chaim Rosen, «no group has as long and consistent a record of attempting to “correct” (that is undermine) Betä ʿĪsraʾel religious life as do those associated with the Israeli Chief Rabbinate.» Kaplan and Rosen adduce examples from commentaries in which rabbis state that «crucial progress was made toward returning them [the Ethiopians] to Judaism.» These efforts aimed at homogenizing the beliefs and practices of Ethiopian Jews so as to form a single universal tradition. See Kaplan/Rosen (1993) 35–48.

possessed the education required to understand them fully).¹³ As Donald Levine has remarked,

Amharic conversation gravitates toward a highly argumentative style. Casual disagreement, or even neutral deliberation over a common problem, often engenders a kind of protracted bickering [. . .]. In its more institutionalized form, this argumentativeness becomes litigation, which has long been regarded as the national sport of Abyssinia.¹⁴

A central issue in the debates between Salomon and Mendes was the question of the Messiah's divine nature. During 1626, Emperor Susənyos conquered the region of Səmen, home to the Betä ʾĪsra'el community. Mendes commented as follows:

At that time, as the emperor had left for war, a famous debate with a European Jew took place in the quartering camp of the Patriarch, one that gained significant renown among Roman affairs [. . .]. This man had brought some offerings with him: profusely laden with those, he had the books of Divine Scripture as well as those of the rabbis, which were set down in Hebrew characters. Furthermore, a rumor had spread among all: he had equipped himself with weapons to consolidate the basis of his pestilential teaching in the mountains of Səmen (which are commonly said to belong to the Jews).¹⁵

Mendes meant to demonstrate that the Jewish faith was wrong and that the population of Səmen was influenced by “the Jewish fables and the delusions of the Rabbis”.¹⁶

[Salomon] wanted to implant nothing more stinging in the mind of his audience than [the belief] that Christ, whom we Christians worship reverently, was not God, nor the Jews' Messiah who was to become God, but that he was limited to the worth of a mere man. As he noticed that he was being incriminated, he argued that, if he had taught anything, he had devoted himself to his own house, fowling after no one else's audience but that one. In response, the Patriarch said: “The same treatment is inflicted, Salomon, upon whoever mints fake coins of his own house and displays it for sale in the forum. And if you do not consider

13 Aregay (1984) 127–147, in particular 144. Hagar Salamon devotes a chapter of her book, *The Hyena People*, to the subject of religious controversies between Jews and Christians in Ethiopia. «Everybody loves to argue that the inhabitants regard disputation as a form of entertainment.» See Salamon (1999) 83–95.

14 Levine (1965) 230.

15 “*Id temporis, Imperatore ad bellum egresso, in statariis castris Patriarchae celebris obtigit cum Iudaeo europaeo velitatio, quae non minimam peperit romanis rebus existimationem. [. . .] Qui merces aliquas secum invexerat, quarum opimior erant libri tam Divinae Scripturae, quam Rabbiorum, hebraicis characteribus exarati. Et omnium linguis pervulgata erat opinio, his se armis instruxisse, ut in montibus Semen, qui vulgo Iudaeorum dicuntur, pestilentis doctrinae suae cathedram firmaret*” (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 231).

16 Mendes (1908–1909), vol. 8, 231. See fn. 26.

that you are to pay penalties owing to your impudence, you, who are unfair not only to Christians but also to yourself and to your kind, [still] neither at home nor abroad should you behave like a teacher of lies. When you [people] could pride yourselves on [having] an advocate of your submission to God and to the son of God, you prefer to have a ragged beggar.”¹⁷

Mendes quoted Salomon’s response as follows: “What are such things? What about the Messiah, God’s son? Is there a son born to God like a twig from underneath a tree? Who could have conceived such absurd things about God?”¹⁸

During the debate, Patriarch Afonso Mendes rejected Salomon’s statements before Emperor Susenyos and quoted the Psalms:

God himself wrote it, and it is not shameful to observe it on the basis of Psalm 2: “You are my son. I have begotten you today”; and Psalm 109: “I have begotten you from the womb before daylight, as well as dominion along with you on the day of your virtue, among the splendors of the Saints.” Therefore, these things, which you think are absurd, can be conceived, and it is not inappropriate for God to have a son.¹⁹

Throughout the course of the 17th century, other vernacular languages gradually replaced Latin. However, even after the Reformation, the official texts of the Catholic Church remained in Latin, as illustrated by the Jesuit correspondence from Ethiopia. *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* reveal the importance of the Latin language in Jesuit daily life: “Everyone, and especially the humanists, should speak Latin regularly, and should remember by heart whatever their teachers teach them, and they should practise their style in compositions, [al-

17 “*Sed opus non fuit testium aliunde evocatu, cum duo illi senatores et plures, qui aderant, unanimes oratione affirmarent Salomonem diversis locis docentem a se auditum et nihil acrius velle adstantium animis inculpere, quam nec Christum, quem christiani reverenter colimus, Deum esse, nec Iudaeorum Messiam Deum futurum sed puri hominis censu conclusum. Se convictum ille perspicies, dixit, se, si quid doceret, domi suae tradidisse, nec cuiusquam audientiam extra illam aucupatum. Cui Patriarcha: Eadem, inquit, Salomon, illi poena irrogatur, qui adulterinam pecuniam domi suae cudit et illi, qui venalem in forum producit. Nec domi nec foris mendaciorum doctorem agas sin minus scias te debitas tuae proterviae poenas daturum, qui non solum christianis, sed tibi ac tuo generi sis iniurius, ut, cum Deo ac Dei filio vestrae servitutis assertore gloriari possitis, panosum hominis mendicabulum habere malitis*” (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 232–233).

18 “*Hic Salomon: Quid, inquit, sunt isthaec? Quid Messias Dei filius? Quid Deo filium, quasi arbore stolonem subnasci? Qui possint in Deo haec absurda componi*” (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 233).

19 “*Sed quia eum librum hebraice non habetis, composuit Deus ipse, quem non suppudivit in secundo Psalmo testari: Filius meus es tu. Ego hodie genui te; nec in centesimo nono: Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae in splendoribus sanctorum, ex utero ante luciferum genui te. Possunt igitur ea, quae tu reris absurda, componi, nec Deo dedecorum esse filium habere*” (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 233).

ways] having someone correct them.”²⁰ The goal of teachers and pupils was to understand classical authors, to speak the language properly, and to write it with Ciceronian eloquence. The *Ratio Studiorum* (“The Official Plan for Jesuit Education”) stated that

at home the use of the Latin language is careful maintained among the students. They should not be exempted for this regulation about speaking Latin except for break days and recreation hours, unless in some regions it seems to the provincial that the practice of Latin can easily be kept during these times as well. He should also make sure that when Jesuits who have not yet finished their studies write letters to one another, they should write it in Latin.²¹

The Jesuits in Ethiopia alternated between writing in vernaculars and writing in Latin. Consequently, a broad spectrum of Jesuit correspondence was not conducted in Latin, but rather in Portuguese, in Spanish, or in Italian, the mother tongues of the missionaries who arrived in the country. Their reasons for choosing a particular native language over Latin varied. For instance, the Jesuits in Ethiopia, who depended on the *Portuguese Padroado* (an agreement through which the Holy See delegated administration of its churches to the Portuguese Empire), saw themselves as an extension of the Portuguese maritime empire. This naturally granted the Portuguese language a special status. However, when corresponding directly with the Holy See, Latin was preferable, and many authors actually gave preference to Latin when composing theological and historical works, especially Mendes. His hagiographers wrote extensively about his admiration for Greek and Latin eloquence, and for the writings of Demosthenes and Plutarch in particular. “Among the Latin poets, he [Mendes] was the most elegant of his time”, wrote the Portuguese Jesuit historian Balthazar Tellez in 1660.²² Father Bruno Bruni, who was born in Rome, was also said to have a great command of Latin. As Tellez remarked in the same volume, Bruni, who went to Florence to study Latin, became “famous in this language, [being] an eloquent rhetorician.”²³

On the whole, the Latin of Afonso Mendes says as much about himself as it does about the characters of his epistles. In the debate that took place at the Ethiopian court on the divine nature of Christ, and which set apart two rival doctrines, Christianity and Judaism, he often appears as a colourful character. He could be flippant, biting, or stubborn, and often ended up playing a role in the dispute that he purported to recount as a mere observer; his views on the matters discussed he almost always expressed, either explicitly or by way of innuendo.

²⁰ Arzubialde *et al.* (1993) 181.

²¹ Pavur (2005) 32.

²² De Almeida (1660) 385.

²³ De Almeida (1660) 637.

An unbending perversity, like the Jewish one, usually comes with wariness, but not with improvement, and it progresses in a way that is all the more destructive that it is stealthy.²⁴

Mendes' style is personal and sharp. Certain unsavoury remarks highlight his extreme hostility towards Jews; some certainly overshadow the initial subject of the debate by focusing on the danger that Judaism generally represented:

From the beginning, the fathers have been warning the Patriarch of the damage that the harmful teaching of the Jew brought about. When, at the gates of the palace, *Ras Sə'älä Krastos* first found a man on his way (although he did not trust this man, he gladly listened to him on account of the attractiveness of the novelty), he admonished him so that he might keep away from these fables of his, which should be scattered in the dust, and so that he might do like him, should he really want to teach anything about the Holy Scriptures and their interpretation. While using his livelihood as an excuse, this man replied that it was all that he had, with the merchandise business.²⁵

When reading these letters, one often wishes that Mendes had addressed more promptly and directly the “fables” of this man. He eventually does so later in the narrative by discussing theological matters at length and by citing Biblical sources; his first response, however, suggests that his priority was to warn the reader: the divine nature of Christ is a foregone conclusion that should not require any arguing, all the more when a Jew initiated this debate. Indeed, in Mendes' view, that a Jew disputed the nature of Christ should exhibit his dishonesty in the first place. In the end, it is clear that the fact that such a debate could happen concerned him more than the debating itself, as he firmly believed that the falsity of the Jewish doctrine reflected the immorality of Jews in general.

When this very Salomon found the emperor in the middle of an argument with the Jews of Sæmen ([the emperor's goal was] to pluck them off the ancient nest that was stuck into these stones), he aimed his weapons against the Christians in order to drive them away from the path of truth and to force-feed them Jewish fables and rabbis' delusions.²⁶

24 “*Praefracta perversitas, qualis est iudaica, cautionem sibi adhibere solet, sed non correctionem, et tanto perniciosius grassatur, quanto et occultius*” (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 243).

25 “*Patriarcham a principio patres iacturae a Iudaeo illatae et damnosae doctrinae admonuerunt. Et cum primo obvium habuisset in foribus aulae Ras Selä Christôs (a quo, si non credebatur, ob novitatis illecebram benevole audiebatur) hominem commonuit, ut a suis fabulis in rudes spargendis abstinere, et secum ageret si quid vellet de Scriptura Sacra et illius interpretatione edoceri. Qui, sui quaestus excusatione usus, respondit, unum sibi esse cum mercibus negotium*” (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 232).

26 “*Sed cum is Salomon Imperatorem cum Semen Iudaeis confligentem reperisset, ut eos ab antiquo nido petris illis affixo deturbaret, arma convertit in christianos, ut eos a veritatis itinere deduceret et iudaicis fabulis atque Rabbiorum somniis infeciret*” (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 231).

Again, Mendes' assertive way of expressing himself showed his desire to end a debate which he considered desecrated the Christian faith and humiliated an overly gullible audience. Although the emperor was warned that he himself was in danger, he allowed the Jew to stay and carry on: Mendes accounted for this, with regret, as an act of cultural and intellectual curiosity on the emperor's part.

There was no great response among the petty rabble before the novelty of this teaching; on the other hand, those left among the most elevated and honourable Catholics [reacted] with great indignation. How many times had the fathers unsuccessfully fought to chase him away from Ethiopia; still, their commercial bonds, whereby Salomon supposedly sold goods, kept him there. There is even some kind of pastry which he gave in return (swallowing this type of food, once sliced, is easy, and it is not at the risk of vomiting). The return of this man seemed dangerous even to the emperor as [the latter] feared that [the Jew] might complain among the Turks of Spain and the group of Abyssinians, as though they were at fault. He did banter very often about this, in a wanton and disgraceful way.²⁷

One may sometimes sense a hint of sarcasm in Mendes' tone. Before he actually engaged in the dispute itself and began to use theological weapons against what he perceived as a threat to the Catholics' dignity, he repeated that he tried his best to have the Jew expelled from the emperor's entourage. However, the Jew had outwitted him in this respect.

Later on, it suited the Patriarch to have him as his mediator with the emperor, which job the man did not turn down; through him, he could command that money be paid from his debtors to him, or that his merchandise be confiscated. Then, he would understand that he was responsible for the justice that dealt not only with Christians, but also with heathens and Jews; then he would understand that this might be an opportunity to drive him out of Ethiopia more promptly. But as this man took his time, he did not interrupt the harmful teaching that he forced into many an ear.²⁸

27 "*Nec magni tantum fiebat ob doctrinae novitatem a vili popello, sed eum magna reliquorum offensione a summatibus ac probatissimis catholicorum. Saepius patres connixi fuerant, sed frustra, ut Aethiopia extruderent, eum tamen illorum vincula pecuniaria retinebant, quibus merces credito tradiderat. Est enim, quod mutuum datur, instar hami, qui esca abductus facile hauritur, nec postea nisi cum vitae dispendio evomitur. Imperatori etiam periculosus ipsius regressus videbatur quod timeret, ne apud Turcas Lusitanorum et Abassinorum societatem, quasi ipsi noxiam, incusaret, quam saepius impudenter et indecore cavillabatur*" (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 231–232).

28 "*Postea Patriarcham convenit, ut illius esset apud Imperatorem deprecator quo sibi a suis debitoribus pecuniam solvi iuberet, vel suas merces redhiberi, quod officium ille non detrectavit, tum quod intelligeret se iustitiae procurandae non solis christianis, sed ethnicis atque Iudaeis esse debitorum, tum quod illa esse posset ansa illum citius Aethiopia pelli. Cum vero ille cunctaretur, nec a perniciose doctrina multorum auribus ingerenda otia retur*" (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 232).

Once Salomon had succeeded in disseminating his ideas, Mendes made it clear that it was then too late to react: “Some had been contaminated by their contact with him since the beginning; in particular, Senator Læssanä Krəstos who, as a result, from then on, owned a psalter that had been disfigured by the interpretations and comments of this man”.²⁹

Mendes eventually decided to fight fire with fire in employing an array of theological points based on Scripture in order to address the very subject of the debate. As he failed to have the Jew expelled, his goal was then to disparage his dangerous teaching and to avert its propagation.

Conclusion

Much of the official correspondence between the missionaries and the Jesuit and ecclesiastical authorities in Goa and Rome remains inaccessible to an audience that has not been initiated into Latin, as is the case with many scholars of Ethiopian and African studies. Particularly significant in this regard are the letters of Patriarch Mendes, who, unlike many of his peers, conducted most of his correspondence in Latin. Mendes is a crucial figure in the early modern history of European-Ethiopian interaction. His intolerance towards Ethiopian religious practices is widely believed to have contributed to the failure of the Jesuit mission. His reprobation of Jews, as in the case of Salomon from Vienna, is just one illustration of his overall critical attitude towards non-Catholics.

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²⁹ “Aliquī ex primoribus illius contagione essent infecti et praecipue senator Lessana Christôs, de quo infra, qui Psalmos habebat illius interpretationibus et notis deturpatos” (Mendes, 1908–1909, vol. 8, 232).

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Yasmin Haskell

Deities, Demons or Decoration? Asian Religions in Two Jesuit Latin Martyr Epics

Abstract: This paper explores the representation of Greco-Roman and Asian deities and demons in two Jesuit neo-Latin epics: Francesco Benci's *Quinque martyres libri VI* (Rome, 1592 [Venice, 1591]), on the martyrs of Cuncolim (1583), and Bartolomeu Pereira's *Paciecidos libri XII* (Coimbra, 1640), on the martyrdom of his cousin, Francisco Pacheco, in Japan (1626). Both poets orient to Virgil, but where Benci channels the spirit of Trent in his cautious handling of the apparatus of pagan poetry, Pereira invites us into a more florid metaphysical landscape. The Olympian gods are joined in the *Paciecis* by the gods of Japan, as well as by personifications of the virtues and vices. A comparison of these two poems, separated by half a century, is suggestive of a diversity of approaches to divine (and infernal) machinery in Jesuit epic. A unifying element is the more didactic parsing, vis-à-vis Virgil, of the passions of the protagonists.

Keywords: Neo-Latin epic, Jesuits, Cuncolim martyrs, Francisco Pacheco (Jesuit martyr), Francesco Benci, Bartolomeu Pereira, gods, demons, emotions

Francesco Benci's (1542–1594) *Quinque martyres* (“Five Martyrs”) (Venice, 1591; revised edition Rome, 1592), a cultivar of Renaissance Christian Latin epics by Marco Girolamo Vida, Jacopo Sannazaro, and Girolamo Fracastoro, seems to be the first neo-Latin epic to set its sights on a “new world” beyond the Americas.¹ It commemorates the martyrdom of five Jesuit missionaries, led by Rodolfo Acquaviva (1550–1583), nephew of the Jesuit Superior General, Claudio Acquaviva, at Cuncolim in Southern India in 1583.² Benci himself did not see active service as a missionary but bore the

1 See Gwynne (2017) 2. All references in this essay to the *QM* are to Gwynne's edition and translation (2017). Benci's stated programme is to console his companions in the missions «whether detained in far-off America or upon the remote shores of China [. . .] fearing for your life [. . .] whatever worries beset you, whatever duties, whatever task oppresses you» by sharpening their «resolution as you imbibe courageous draughts with their honey coating. Simultaneously out brothers' proven valor will instil itself and stir your emotions with a hidden sweetness, and encourage you to hope for heaven by means of a similar death» (*QM* 1.20–35; pp. 106–109).

2 The Cuncolim Jesuit martyrs were the Italians Rodolfo Acquaviva (1550–1583) and Pietro Berno (c. 1550–1583), the Spaniard, Afonso Pacheco (c. 1551–1583), and the Portuguese Francisco António (c. 1553–1583) and Francisco Aranha (c. 1551–1583). Their Christian supporters were also slain, including two young Indian Jesuit catechumens, Dominico and Afonso. For the context, see Aranha (2006), Županov (2006), Xavier/Županov (2015) and Xavier (2011) 19–41.

“burden of the schools” as professor of rhetoric at the newly established Roman College. Given his heavy teaching and administrative load, including responsibility, from 1586, for the growing Society’s “annual letters” (a digest of the year’s activities in all the provinces), Benci’s half-length epic must be seen as something of an heroic paragon.³ While chiefly modelled on Virgil’s *Aeneid*, the Jesuits’ lodestar in Latin poetry, the poem also shows the significant influence of Lucretius’s *De rerum natura* and of late – antique and Renaissance Latin Christian epics, notably Vida’s *Christiad*.⁴

As a powerful ideological re-imagining of a critical moment in the historical encounter between early modern Catholicism and Hinduism, the *QM* is a provocative text on many levels, not least in its representation of Indian culture, caste and religion.⁵ The terms *caelicoli* and *superi*, as Gwynne observes, are reserved in the poem for Christian saints, angels and the host of heaven; the plural *dei* is used only of the Hindu gods. But do we find any hint in the epic of that famous Jesuit principle of “accommodation” to local beliefs and customs? Or, if not sympathy for the devil *per se*, echoes of Virgilian “other voices” in Benci’s characterisation of the Indians who passionately defend their ancestral gods against the Portuguese?⁶ In his description of the Hindu temple at Cuncolim at the beginning of the third book, Benci remarks its grandeur and the deep reverence shown by the common people to the Brahmans,⁷ but not before reporting that the Indians are

3 Gwynne (2017) explains Benci’s efficient, centonic method of composition; a set of student notes from his lectures on *Aeneid* 11 is preserved in the Vatican and may account for a concentration of allusions to that book in the *QM* (p. 46).

4 Gwynne (2017) finds echoes of, *inter alios*, Ovid, Lucan, Silius Italicus, Statius, Valerius Flaccus, Prudentius, Juvenius, and neo-Latin epic poets Pier Angeli da Barga and Francesco Mauri.

5 Contemporary reports of the Cuncolim massacre by Niccolo Orlandini and Alessandro Valignano constitute Benci’s main historical sources (Gwynne 2017, 690–708). I am grateful to Paolo Aranha for bringing to my attention Casanatense MS 1889, which contains illustrations of some of the religious practices described by Benci, probably by a local artist. (Benci cannot have seen it as it was held in Lisbon until 1628.) See “The Codex Casanatense 1889”, special issue of *Anais de Historia de Alem-Mar* 13 (2012).

6 For a recent review of Jesuit “accommodation”, which has its origins in a letter of St Ignatius in 1549 to Salmeron and Canisius on adapting to the “wits and affections” of those with whom they had to deal in their mission to Ingolstadt, see Prieto (2017) 395–414. On “other voices” in early modern epic, see Kallendorf (2007).

7 «There was a temple of munificent wealth in the very heart of the ancient city, surrounded by a long portico of solid marble; a noble gift of the Brahmans. India venerates these Brahmans, who are proud of their power and wealth (for they trace their origin from ancient kings), and has honored them as divine, and ordered them to defend the gods and their shrines» (*Templum erat antiquae mediis in sedibus urbis, / Munifico luxu, Brachmanum nobile donum, / Brachmanum, quos imperiis superbos / (Nam regum veteri ducunt ab origine gentem) / India caelestum venerata aequavit honori, atque deos, et fana deum defendere iussit*, 3.16–22; pp. 174–175). Gwynne (2017) cites a 1577 letter sent by Afonso Pacheco to then Jesuit Superior General, Mercurian, on the mis-

converging here in fear and «great uproar» (*ingenti fremitu*), like rivers rushing to the ocean, «venerating their false gods with suppliant prayers and tiring the mute breezes with their empty shouts» (*Falsaque supplicibus venerantes numina votis / Muta fatigabant vanis clamoribus aera*, 3.14–15). Where Girolamo Fracastoro, in the Columbus epyllion of the third book of his didactic poem, *Syphilis* (Verona, 1530), had envisioned Europeans observing indigenous American rituals in a spirit of respectful curiosity,⁸ Benci unceremoniously pollutes his *locus amoenus* of Hindu worshippers purifying themselves in fresh, running water with a sudden and shocking report of human (self-)sacrifice, as willing victims offer themselves to be impaled on a column of bronze: «they hang their hips where the backbone divides their legs, and oozing with gore and putrefaction they eventually die a lingering death» (*QM*, pp. 175–177).⁹ We are being primed to view the alleged death cult of the Hindus, branded “dire superstition” (*dira superstitio*, *QM* 3.33, p. 174), as a grim parody of the glorious Christian martyrdoms described (in equally graphic detail) in the first book of the poem.

The historical action and spiritual meaning of Benci’s epic is imprinted on the minds of readers as it unfolds via a series of didactic diptyches, in which Christian thoughts, prayers, ceremonies, offices, and characters are contrasted with their Hindu (per)versions. Our affective response to these portraits is guided, moreover, by the poet’s strategic evocation of classical intertexts. In the course of their fateful journey to Salcete – a passage in which Virgilian *katabasis*¹⁰ doubles as missionary manual – Afonso Pacheco, *de facto* Sibyl to Rodolfo Acquaviva’s Ae-

sion to Salcete, which Benci may have known (p. 479). Pacheco stated that they were «la gente principal, más blanca y bien proporcionada, ingeniosos y agudos» (Wicki 1964–1988, vol. 10, 983–984, quoted from Županov 2006, 17).

⁸ Significantly, the Atlantean Amerindians of Fracastoro’s third book are on the point of sacrificing the blasphemous shepherd, Syphilus, to Juno, to rid themselves of the venereal plague, but are saved from this atrocity by divine intervention: *tutatrix vetuit Iuno, et iam mitis Apollo, / qui meliorem animam miseri pro morte iuvenum / supposuere feroque solum lavere cruore* («But Juno the protector and Apollo, now appeased, forbade the sacrifice. In place of the death of the poor man, they found a more fitting victim, a bullock, and bathed the ground with the blood of this beast»), 3.361–368; *Latin Poetry*, trans. Gardner (2013) 80–81.

⁹ Paolo Aranha informs me (*per litteras*) that there is no reliable evidence for human sacrifice, voluntary or otherwise, in Goa in this period. If not here, at 3.737–742 Benci describes the devotional practice of “hook-swinging”, still practised in the region today. Cf. Aranha (2006) 151–162. On the contested presence of human sacrifice on the Konkani coast in early modern times, see Gonçalves (1957) vol. 3, 47–48 and Xavier (2011), who suggests that those who participated in the Conculim massacre may have understood it as a ritual killing.

¹⁰ See Gwynne (2017) 26. As if to accentuate the Stygian associations and the permeability of worlds and underworlds, Benci has Afonso explain that there used to be a ferry-man but that a toll is no longer charged (*QM* 3.439–447).

neas, informs his companion about the local geography, politics, and people. We learn that they are ruled by the Brahmans, described in terms reminiscent of Lucretius's wily *vates*. The Brahmans are arrogant but anxious about threats to their religion; they «whip up great anger in the people» and «manipulate the fickle mob with empty speeches (as when the winds mass together raindrops in the clouds floating across the sky) and stir up trouble everywhere» (p. 195).¹¹ But Afonso also concedes that they are *intellectuals* who «inquire into nature's secrets and produce what they have found for an uneducated public, and indicate the direction they must take; if won over from this blindness, the Brahmans could be good leaders, like someone who has lost his way and come upon a gaping ditch, but has changed direction, and has not stumbled over in his madness, dragging headlong those following behind; thus both avoiding a double ruin» (p. 195).¹² Benci's Brahmans, then, are not simply Lucretius's fear-mongering ancient priests reanimated, they are constructed as *antitypes* of the learned but true-God-fearing modern Jesuits.¹³

When we first meet Rodolfo Acquaviva he is languishing in the spiritual doldrums at the court of the Mughal emperor, Akbar.¹⁴ After much anguish and meditation he is transported to heaven in a dream, where his guardian angel consoles him with visions of the grisly deaths of the early Christian and English martyrs. If the angel's arrival recalls Mercury's in *Aeneid* 4, his appearance is not as it were, «out of the blue». The Jesuit's fervent prayers have given off an odor pleasing to heaven (1. 82), and his yearning for martyrdom is described in a long prelude to the visitation, redolent both of Dido's passion for Aeneas and of Virgil's georgic bees, ready to lay down their lives for their king. Jesuit scholastic readers will have been prompted to

11 The Brahmans are compared to bats, who cannot bear the light (of Christianity): «shunning the daylight [they] chose dark hiding places, where many clouds had gathered, and finally settled upon this place [sc. *Salcete*]» (p. 197).

12 See Trento (2018) 91–121 for later, more nuanced, Jesuit views on Brahmanical culture.

13 Similarly, at 6.554–579, the ekphrasis of a lost painting by Ascanio Dudoni of the ecstasy of St Francis seems to answer the portrait of the hypocritical ascetic in book 5.96–106: «In this place there is a pitiable race of men [sc. *yogis*]. Yet the wretched Indians admire them and honor them with great titles. They are believed to be gods who have come to live on earth because they wrap their foul bodies and bristling limbs with ragged clothes and wander among the deserted mountains living an austere life upon the roots they have torn up» (p. 377).

14 Structurally, at least, Akbar functions as the poem's Dido. In the fourth book, Acquaviva complains to his companions about his fruitless religious dialogues at the Mughal court. Where Aeneas had recounted his adventures to the rapt Carthaginian queen, Rodolfo narrates the life of Christ to Akbar – to no avail. Impatient for spiritual fruit, he finally escapes, resisting the emperor's gifts and pleas to stay. On this mission, see, most recently, Coello de la Rosa/Melo (2023) 16–40.

ponder the very nature of such supernatural revelations, recalling Ignatius's rules for spiritual discernment.¹⁵ Acquaviva's rapture may owe something to the *Somnium Scipionis*, and the angel's commentary to Anchises' on the parade of Roman heroes in *Aeneid* 6, subliminally preparing us for Benci's Tartarean temple at Cuncolim.¹⁶

At the beginning of the third book Benci transports us to a gloomy cave in the inner recesses of the temple, where the Hindus worship their «monstrous» and «foul-smelling» gods (3.36–41). The poet guides our attention to the darkness, smoke, perfume, shrieking and clapping of the devotees, effectively inviting us to «compose the place» and «apply the senses» as per Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*.¹⁷ In this lascivious inferno, boys and young girls – reminiscent of the lost souls of Virgil's limbo – mingle with old men and married women: *Ipsius ante adyti fauces caecumque cubile / Agminis horridi, Stygiarum lustra ferarum, / Permisti senibus pueri, nuptisque puellae* («At the entrance to this sanctuary, the dark lairs of this horrific swarm, the haunts of these hellish beasts, old men and boys, maidens and married women» (3. 49–51; p. 176–7).¹⁸ The identity of these «Stygian beasts» is ambiguous. Benci's verses onomatopoeically mimic the ritual dance with their plosive «ps», almost conjuring the spectre of a hybrid demonic organism. Is the poet referring here to the heathen idols, or their frenzied, animalistic worshipers, black-chested and half-naked? (*Pectora nigri omnes, nec operi vestibis omnes, / Inguinibus tenus (albenti nam cetera lino / Membra tegunt) vario suspendunt corpora saltu*)?¹⁹ («All black, naked

15 Cf. the conversation between the Jesuit Provincial of Goa, Rui Vicente (1523–1587) and [the martyred] Rodrigo, which, as Gwynne (2017) points out, alludes to *Aen.* 3.294–343.

16 Via the Lucretian window allusion to *Aen.* 6.724 at *QM* 1.305: *Principio*. But cf. Gwynne (2017) on the allusion at *QM* 1.254 to *Aen.* 1.495, of Aeneas in Juno's temple at Carthage (*Obtutuque haeret longum defixus in uno*) (p. 420).

17 «Like that infernal place and those accursed doors that administer punishment to the guilty under a dark night, they bristle with perpetual shadows and a gloomy light» (*non secus infernae sedes, scelerataque claustra / Quae poenas solum exercent sub nocte profunda, / Perpetuis horrent tenebris, ac lumina furvo*, 3.46–48). Cf. Ignatius's meditation on Hell in the *Spiritual Exercises* (First Week, 5th Exercise).

18 Benci's attentive students will have caught the verbal echo of, and moral contrast with, the female martyrs praised in book 1.465–471: *Sic Christi exemplum, et vestigia magna secuti, / Permistique viris pueri, castaeque puellae, / Supra annus, corpusque (animos sensusque viriles / Namque gerunt) animas in aperta pericula mittunt*.

19 Again, there seems to be a memory of Fracastoro's poem: «As it happened, there was just then a holiday in those parts, as the natives prepared to perform their annual rites in honor of the Avenging Sun, within the shady forest. In a hollow cave, upon a green riverbank, a large crowd of select people, all mingled together, men and women, nobles and commoners, young and old, stood in sadness, their wretched bodies covered in scabs and oozing pus. As they lay about, a priest, clad in white vestments, touched them with pure water and the wood of the leafy guaiacum tree» (trans. Gardner 2013, 73–75).

down to their waist (for they cover their lower limbs with a white shift), [they] leap and jump about", 3. 52–4)

It is, in fact, a demon that has inspired this frenzied confluence,²⁰ not the Hindus' dog-faced, tiger-chested, and snake-tailed idol/deity, which they vainly entreat to turn on the foreigners, to roar, extend its claws, and spit poison.²¹ Their prayer, as on other occasions in the poem when Benci allows us to hear the (muted) protest of the rebellious unconverted, is futile; their god is powerless, indeed *lifeless*. The fallen angel, "Phorbus", has been engaged in a long-standing battle for the souls of the Indians.²² Catching wind of the Jesuits' mission, he issues his own blood-curdling prophecy, «stirred up by rabid anger like a wounded stag, he turns his wild eyes here and there, his horrible mouth flecked with bloody foam, and belching fire mixed with black sulphur, spat out these words in hellish tones» (*QM* 2.392–397; p. 161). Disguised as "Battus", he approaches the elderly priest, "Phialtes", warning him of renewed threats to the local gods; he then fans the anger of "Alexindas", the poem's (wholly unsympathetic) Turnus.²³ As Gwynne (2017) points out, Phorbus's snaky physical incarnation recalls Virgil's *Allecto*, and his first speech tracks Juno's opening harangue against the Trojans (p. 50). Phorbus's machinations are no mere mythological pretext for the Indians' cultural hostility to the missionaries, however. Nor, indeed, does this demon appear to be a local deity in Virgilian dress. Benci elevates historical events to the cosmic plane by casting the encounter between Christian and Hindu as a supra-temporal battle between God and the rebel angels for redemption of the world.²⁴

20 «The grievous frenzy of the demon has wounded and stung them with bitter fury. Roused from the borders of their homeland, they rush together from all Salcete and fill the temple with screaming and prayers that the winds then whirl through the void» (*quos grave vulnifici percussit daemonis oestrum / Tristibus accendens furiis, e finibus omnes / Exciti patriis, propere Salsethidae tota / Conveniunt, templumque altis clamoribus implent, / Et votis, quae mox rapiunt per inania venti*, 1.60–64; pp. 176–177).

21 Xavier (2011) 27–28 notes that the goddess Shantadurga, by turns peaceful and bloodthirsty, had a temple and cult at Cuncolim which was affiliated with that of Mahadeva, a South Indian form of Vishnu. Benci's descriptions of the god of the temple and festival do not convincingly match her iconology, however. Gwynne (2016) 12 wonders about an allusion to the cobra festival of Nag Panchami.

22 See especially *QM*, pp. 159–166, for Benci's carefully observed study of anger's power both to impede and erupt into speech.

23 "Battus", Gwynne suggests (2017, p. 472), may be a reference to a local term for Brahmins, and of course Alexindas is a calque for "best of the Indians". As for "Phialtes", could there be a subliminal association with the archetypal Greek traitor, Ephialtes?

24 It is tempting to see a symbolic significance even in the contrast at the beginning of book 5 between the two Salcetan towns, the godly Orlim and the recalcitrant Cuncolim, and see them as reflections, respectively, of Augustine's Earthly City and City of God.

The Hindus' rejection of the Christian cult is framed, not as pathos-inspiring historical resistance to the religion of a colonial oppressor, but as a perennial and diabolical revolt against the one true God.²⁵ Even less than in Virgil can the supernatural machinery of Benci's poem be reduced to "veiled naturalism".²⁶ The Christian God, angels and rebel angels are *real* presences and agents in the *Quinque martyres*. Conversely, Benci does not concede any power or even fictional existence to the Hindu gods.²⁷ As such, *pace* Phorbus's lies to the Brahmans, they cannot enjoy even interim temporal success in the battle for the soul of India. Nor, for that matter, is there room in Benci's Tridentine epic for even the *decorative* presence of the Muses or Olympian gods.

The third book climaxes in a raucous Hindu festival (3.589–777), since «the godless people of Cuncolim, [have] postponed their gods' sacred rites for many days [. . .]» (*At Coculinorum gens impia, sacra deorum / In multum dilata diem* [. . .]). The paradox *impia / sacra deorum* almost certainly recalls Lucretius's preamble to the sacrifice of Iphigenia: «on the contrary more often it is that very Superstition which has brought forth criminal and impious deeds» (*quod contra saepius illa / religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta*, 1.81–83). The Jesuit poet proceeds to pique the curiosity of his readers/future missionaries by specifying the different costumes of men and women, young and old, and of the different castes (shepherds, fishermen, hunters, farmers), and distinguishing the comportment of the haughty Brahmans from that of the bellicose Naires. In the climactic revelation of the hybrid animal god himself, tottering on his terrifying float, Benci reprises and amplifies the theme of human sacrifice.²⁸ The *tour-de-force* of ethnographic ekphrasis is designed to inspire

25 Cf. German Jesuit Jacob Masen's "Miltonian" *Sarcotis*, first published in the third part of his *Palaestra Eloquentiae Ligatae* (Cologne, 1657).

26 See Feeney (1991) 163–169, refuting such interpretations of Amata's possession by Allecto.

27 The insensibility of the Hindu idols is forcefully reiterated by the martyr Aranha when he is hounded to worship a statue by the murderous crowd: «Madman, do not hope to escape our hands. Only this image, once it has been venerated, will give you safety.» "Pitiable crowd," exclaimed Francisco, "whom face, feet, eyes, ears and hands of rock make a laughing stock, it will never hear, or speak, nor see anything, nor walk anywhere, it cannot do anything" (*QM* 5.1079–1085, pp. 342–345). Just so, the children of Japanese noblewoman and convert, Gracia Hosokawa, refuse their father's demand that they worship "fotoke" in the Jesuit musical drama, *Mulier Fortis* (Vienna, 1698), by calling him a "stone", "just wood", "a demon from Hell", and "not a god" (Act 2, scene 5).

28 There are those who «spear their entrails with a sword and slice their limbs with its blade and take delight in inserting the point so that their blood flows endlessly [. . .] and their life slowly ebbs away through many channels»; others who throw themselves under the wheels of the cart; others who «provoked by wicked Furies [. . .] at the doors of the great temple, they hang suspended from the spokes of the column and draw out their life in a funeral rite. The Indians' under-

both wonder and horror, no doubt, but also, through the kaleidoscope of Lucretian allusions,²⁹ to induce us to associate Hindu polytheism with ancient paganism at its most primitive and irrational. It is no accident that the noisy public spectacle of the Hindu festival is immediately followed by the reasoned, private prayers of the Jesuit brothers, their introspective review of sins, confession, (moderate!) self-flagellation, and celebration of Mass in preparation for the trials to come.

To a much greater extent than in the *Aeneid*, in fact, the “action” of Benci’s poem transpires internally, in the despondent, fearing, doubting, swelling, hopeful, and finally determined hearts of its protagonists. And just as he tracks the edifying emotions of his Christian heroes, the poet repeatedly underlines the anxieties and excessive passions of the Hindus, passions which cloud their reason. With the exception of the wise, old Codrylus, whose counsel of restraint is rejected by the contemptuous young warriors,³⁰ the people of Cuncolim are consistently portrayed as angry and vengeful.³¹ Alexindas is chief of the young hot-heads:

always ready to stir up trouble, start a fight, launch an ambush or rebellion [. . .] like a bucking horse that despises the reins, he cannot bear bridle or crop [. . .] Often consumed by uncontrollable rage, this man had regularly incited the mob to arms. He was the first to enter the fray, last to leave the fight. He was always planning some crime or other. (*QM* 2.561–567; p. 169)³²

The *QM* is, then, as much as a hagiography of the Cuncolim martyrs, a *psychomachia* between Christian emotional clarity, charity and cheek-turning – especially at the point of torture and death – and the confused, turbulent emotions, above all rage, which possess the Hindus.

standing is so weak that they are driven to such wickedness by their impious superstition» (*QM* 3.723–742, pp. 210–211). *Impia religio potis est suadere malorum* ~ Lucretius *DRN* 1.101.

29 Primarily to the description of the procession of Cybele in *DRN* 2 and her maddened priests. See Gwynne (2017) 510, on *QM* 3.658–776, who also notes an allusion to the raving Dido (*Aen.* 4.300–303) at *QM* 1.661–667.

30 Gwynne aptly compares this episode with Nicodemus’s speech before Caiaphas and the Hebrew elders in Vida’s *Christiad.* 2.151–215 (*QM*, p. 606).

31 Simmering anger is attributed to the courtiers of Akbar – which, however, the mild Muslim Emperor keeps in check. Interestingly, Queen Elizabeth of England – a country «not more remote in the world than in custom from blessed Italy» – is described as being «driven mad by the monstrous affliction of the Furies, and her inflamed lust for ruling unjustly», in terms again reminiscent of Amata’s possession by the Fury Allecto (*QM* 1.576–581, pp. 134–135).

32 Idal Khan (= Ali Adil Shah I, sultan of Bijapur (r. 1558–1579)), the Muslim ruler of the Bahmani state which bordered Salcete, is introduced by Vicente as *atrox*; he is later blamed by Berno for surprise attacks on the Christian churches and is compared to a wolf attacking and withdrawing to the mountains after slaughter; a sudden hailstorm that flattens crops; a swelling sea threatening to flood cultivated fields; and a snake sleeping through winter (*QM*, p. 193).

On one occasion, it is true, the Jesuits themselves seem to have exceeded the bounds of righteous anger, when the zealous Berno reminds his comrades of his earlier desecration of Hindu shrines:

“Are we going to that place (on behalf of those wretches, whose minds are enmeshed in such great error!)”, exclaims Berno with his heart racing, “where we smashed the shrines and images of their mute gods in broad daylight, and enveloped the odious altars in smoke, and laid everything round and about to waste with firebrands?”³³

The continuation of these lines, in which the Jesuit boasts about his slaughter of a sacred cow, is difficult to read. But if we, from a post-colonial vantage point, are bound to view Berno’s actions as cruel and inflammatory, a more than reasonable motive for the Indians’ hatred of the Europeans, Benci does *not* allow us to view them as morally disordered. Indeed, Berno’s ardour is promptly commended by the Jesuit provincial, Rui Vicente (1523–1587), and his anecdote is met with (ill-omened) laughter from his companions.³⁴ Through careful patterning of contrasting episodes, epideictic speeches, authorial interjections, and especially through his spiritual running commentary on his heroes’ thoughts and emotions, Benci leaves us in no doubt as to whose side we are meant to be on.³⁵

Benci’s spiritual semiotics are for the most part unambiguous. As readers we proceed through the *QM* with the benefit of the poet’s God’s-eye view. Our freedom to think “other-wise” is constrained – not only to hear the “other voices” of the Hindu characters, but even to regard the massacre at Cuncolim as a humiliating, if temporary, defeat for the Christians. The heroes’ «happy . . . deaths» (*felices . . . obitus*) are foretold in the first line; at 5.636–728 God convenes a heavenly

33 The sacrilege perpetrated by Berno is corroborated by contemporary reports, as is the grisly retribution exacted on him at Cuncolim. Benci’s account is less explicit, though, than that of Alegambe (1657) 119, who says he was fed his own genitals while dying (*QM*, pp. 629–631). Cf. Henn (2014) 61.

34 «We ripped open its stomach, tore out its entrails and threw them into the marble pool before the temple doors, where they were accustomed to bathe themselves before attending their sacred rites, and we bloodied those fountains with black gore. It did not help the wretched beast that she had been regularly invoked in prayer, had harmed her own worshippers, or that she had an ancient temple and altar decorated with paintings, when she defiled the images of the gods with her own miserable death, or when the sad animal was sacrificed at her own altars. The cow collapsed, pouring out a river of hot blood from her stomach, yet I consecrated this right hand with such blood» (*QM* 2.273–283, p. 155). The passage is reminiscent of Lucretius’s sacrifice of Iphigenia, e.g. *Nec quicquam miserae . . . profuit* (*QM* 2.277–279) ~ *nec miserae prodesse* ... (*DRN* 1.93).

35 There is an unsettling parallel in Benci’s comparison of Christ’s delivery by Pilate to the Jewish mob, who delight in torturing him, to the sacrifice of an innocent young bullock (*QM* 4.812–816).

council to approve the martyrdom of the Cuncolim five, to the delight of St Ignatius and the first companions. From Acquaviva's vision of the early Christian and English martyrs in book 1 to his radiant, posthumous appearance to Vicente in a dream in book 6 (410–454; pp. 368–371), Benci's divine mouthpieces guide and reassure us. Consolation and resolve is granted directly to the Christians through divine revelations, via angels, dreams, portents, and prophecies. Thus Acquaviva is directed to journey to Salcete by the aged Portuguese provincial Vicente, through whom, we are told, «the Lord was accustomed to [speak] as a conduit of his lofty will whenever he wished the brothers to be guided by a human voice». And Berno is possessed by a prophetic spirit when he foretells the martyrdoms that are to come:

“O that I may be allowed to wipe out that undeserved honor from those wicked images, and destroy those abominable cults, although the price be bloodshed, my blood will not be worth so much; believe me, fathers, great rewards are waiting at a small price [. . .] Salcete will never devote itself completely to Christ; it will shine when compost has been spread; summer will never come for this ripening harvest unless the fields are soaked with our blood”. (*QM* 2.290–303; p. 155)

Berno's fiery prophecy³⁶ is capped by Vicente's ardent prayer for the toppling of the pagan religion, which is compared to an ancient oak tree, the upper branches of which steal the light, ready to fall under the axe.³⁷ If the Christians are guided by God through His agents, angels, dreams and visions, the Hindus are *misled* by demonic forces and fickle *Fama* and are prone to see false signs or misinterpret true ones. Thus the sight of swans on a beach being torn apart by a flock of crows and scattered on the sea (5.425–458; p. 311) and an eerie dust storm (5.480–505; pp. 312–315) are wrongly interpreted by their augur, Myndius, as foretelling their victory over the Christians.³⁸ Their “superstition” makes them vulnerable to infil-

36 His speech is supernatural kindling for his companions: «He stopped speaking and the fire left his eyes and the ardor his whole face. Yet Rodolfo was inspired and keeps turning over in his anxious heart the visions he had recently seen and heard in his sleep»; *Haec fatur, et ignis / Ex oculis, totoque ardor absistit ab ore / Rodulphum incendens, memori qui pectore versat / Quae dudum in somnis audire et cernere visus* (*QM* 2.312–315; pp. 156–157).

37 *QM* 2.324–331. The model, as Gwynne (2017) points out *ad loc.*, is the simile at *Aen.* 2.626–630, where Troy is compared to a tottering ash tree.

38 Shortly before their martyrdom in book 5, the Jesuits notice in the distance, on the edge of the forest, «one of the mystics whose prophecies the people of Cuncolim were accustomed to obey. These men pretend to voice the oracles of the gods and implant foolish ideas in their minds. Indeed, he was raving wildly, shaking his body and rolling his eyes around in his crazed head, snatching up dust and throwing it in the air [. . .]» (*QM* 5.740–746, pp. 326–327). Ironically, the false prophet correctly “predicts” their imminent ambush and deaths.

tration by the demon, and their surrender to the passions of pride and especially anger prevents them from seeing the “reason” of the Gospel.³⁹

On arrival in Salcete, Acquaviva is immediately startled by what appear to be rainbows flashing in the sky; these turn out to be a flock of colourful birds. Our hero can hardly believe that this beautiful natural environment is inhabited by such barbaric men, but Berno reminds him that, before the coming of Christianity, this forest was infested with ravening and venomous beasts (*QM* 3. 475–483).⁴⁰ While it is natural to assume that he is referring to wild animals, it becomes clear that Berno is in fact referring to demons. As the companions proceed to Cuncolim, the sky darkens and they witness an «incredible portent» (*mirabile monstrum*), «as when the clouds press close together, the sky reveals various forms and presents the shapes of wild beasts»:

*Tartarei hic uolucres, miris simulacra figuris
Monstrorum et facies obsceno corpore reddunt.
Hic Sphinx horrida, et flammis armata Chimaera,
Gorgoneum hic monstrum, diris hic feta colubris
Hydra nocens, Harpyia rapax, et Scylla biformis,
Turgidus hic Python, triplicique immanis hiatu
Cerberus, ac uario concretæ semine pestes.
Illic Geryones, Polyphemi, magna gigantum
Corpora, Centaurique truces, tristesque Megaerae,
Et Lamiae epoto ducentes sanguine uitam.
Omnibus his uertex saeuos pro crinibus angues
Erigit, horrendum, rutila stant lumina flamma,
Et trahitur spisso sinuosa uolumine cauda,
Ventosaeque patent humeris nigrantibus alae.
Scilicet et uersat celeri per inania motu
Corpora turba leuis, Stygiisque excita cauernis
Certatim properat Coculini uisere pompam.*

Here, winged creatures from hell, and images of monsters with incredible shapes, restore their appearance in their repulsive bodies. Here the dreadful Sphinx, and the Chimaera armed with fire; there the monstrous Gorgon, here, the poisonous Hydra, having newly

³⁹ When an arrogant yogi arrives at the repurposed Hindu temple at Margao, he is *infuriated* at the sight of Christian altars, candles, and worshippers, and even begins to froth at the mouth. A gesture of friendship from the local priest results in sudden conversion and expulsion of the demon (*QM* 5.136–142, pp. 294–297).

⁴⁰ The appearance of parrots may be an homage to Fracastoro’s *Syphilis*. When Columbus’s men shoot parrots, sacred to the sun, their leader utters a terrible prophecy, in imitation of the Harpy Celaeno in *Aeneid* 3.

brought forth deadly snakes, the greedy Harpy, twin-shaped Scylla, swollen Python and huge Cerberus with his triple maw, and other hybrid creatures. There were Geryones, Polyphemuses, the great bodies of giants, and savage centaurs and bitter Furies, and the Lamia who live by drinking blood. All had savage snakes on their heads for hair, horrific to behold, and their eyes are fixed with fiery flame; they drag their huge tails in numerous coils and unfurled wings adorned their black shoulders. This fickle crowd, stirred from the caverns of hell, whirl their bodies swiftly through the void and were obviously hurrying to visit the procession at Cuncolim. (*QM* 3.569–586, pp. 202–205)

At one level, of course, this unsettling vision serves as spiritual inoculation for the target audience of Jesuit scholastics against the seductive colours and sensations to which we will be exposed in the description of the Hindu parade. The cloud simile implies insubstantiality, and we may recall Lucretius's comparison of cloud shapes to monsters at *DRN* 4.134–140. The catalogue itself recalls Virgil's Underworld (*Aen.* 6.285–289), a topos revisited, as Gwynne notes *ad loc.*, in several Renaissance Christian Latin epics, including Vida's *Christiad* at 1.143–146. Perhaps the beginning of Vida's second book is also at play at the edges of Benci's imagination. There the infernal cohorts escape from Hell on the eve of Christ's betrayal, settling on towers and temple roofs, hanging from rafters, some creeping into bedchambers and causing «manifold dire dreams to sleeping souls, thus deluding human hearts with false semblances», others taking on human form to inflame the city with evil rumours (*Christiad* 2.22–64).⁴¹ But by having his classical monsters hasten to a festival which culminates in the appearance of a “god” *combining the forms of tiger, dog and snake*, Benci seems to want us to conclude that the rebel angels are *literally* – albeit supernaturally – manifesting themselves to the Indians in these (hybrid bestial) forms.⁴² That the Indians' idols are, in fact, *animated* statues is suggested by Benci's description of the god's float, in which the reader almost shares in the intoxicated double vision of the devotees:

a large group of gods sits upon the back wheels, displaying the monstrous countenances of abominable beasts as they show themselves to the multitude [. . .] the float goes along teaming with wild monsters, a dire spectacle, and threatens to topple as it shudders and overawes. (*QM* 3.709–723; pp. 210–211)

⁴¹ Trans. Gardner (2013). This Vidan passage seems also to have influenced Benci's account of Phorbus's infiltration of the hearts of the Hindus.

⁴² He will have assumed from his reading of Church Fathers such as Tertullian and Lactantius that demons appeared to the pagans of antiquity as their gods. On the associations between demons and idols in late antiquity see Barbu (2022) 389–418, Borgeaud (2010) 80–95, Vercruysse (2005) 117–128.

But what is actually going on here? Are the Indians seeing *effigies* of their gods, imagining them to be sentient, or real demons impersonating them? Given the baseline intertextuality with Lucretius's description of the cult of Cybele it is quite possible that Benci is *also* remembering St Augustine's account of the festival of the Great Mother.⁴³ Indeed, having personally witnessed these orgiastic celebrations as a young man in Carthage, Augustine reflected in older age on how feeble souls, in the context of prayer, sacrifice, and mass veneration, might come to believe that senseless idols were alive and breathing.⁴⁴ Benci seems to hedge his bets as to whether the Hindu idols are "possessed" by evil spirits, but at the very least he suggests that the people of Cuncolim have summoned up very real demonic forces.

Pacheco versus the Passions

It is *prima facie* curious that so few post-Bencian Jesuit epics commemorate modern, let alone Jesuit, martyrs.⁴⁵ Bartolomeu Pereira's *Paceicidos libri xii* (Coimbra, 1640) is a glorious exception.⁴⁶ Pereira, professor of Scripture at Coimbra, celebrates the mission and martyrdom in Nagasaki (1626) of his cousin, Francisco Pacheco, in his aspirationally Virgilian poem, published in the year of the Society's first centenary.⁴⁷ In fact, the *Paciecid* heaves with marvelous creatures and alle-

43 *De Civ. Dei* II. 4–5. Augustine's emphasis on the sexual immorality of the rites of the Great Mother may find a distant echo in Benci's Bacchic simile: «not only the mob rages, excited by horrific monsters, but also the nobles of ancient stock, the priests in their linen robes, and the Naires. The whole crowd was singing frantically, jumping about, and shaking their heads; you would have thought that, upon the command of Bacchus, the Bacchantes were conducting an orgy» (*QM* 3.661–666; pp. 206–209, my emphasis).

44 Thus MacCormack (2006) 629, quoting Augustine, *Epistulae* (CSEL, vol. 34), ed. A. Goldbacher (Vienna: F. Tempsky 1895), 102, 18.

45 Were the Society's (epic) poets perhaps hesitant to impute the ultimate rewards of spiritual heroism – beatification and canonization – to figures not yet "processed" by the Sacred Congregation of Rites and ratified by the Pope? But see Döpfert (2022) 57–83 on Japanese Jesuit martyr *dramas*.

46 Gwynne (2017) suggests that Pereira followed the precedent of *Quinque martyres* in having his own poem culminate in the reception of its eponymous hero and eight companions in paradise (*QM*, pp. 101–102). Klecker (2002) 105–106 (n. 25), on the other hand, has proposed Maffeo Vegio's Renaissance supplement to the *Aeneid* as the model (death and apotheosis of Aeneas); and for the triumph at the end of the poem, Scipio Africanus in Silius Italicus's *Punica*. For an introduction to Pereira's poem, with book synopsis, see Urbano (2005) 61–95.

47 *Marone cantamus Chorididascolo* (unnumbered preface to reader). Klecker unwinds the subtle Virgilian thread that runs through Pereira's epic, which extends even to the imitation of half-

gorical figures, which are as reminiscent of late-antique and even vernacular epic, especially Camões, as they are of Virgil.⁴⁸ We encounter weeping mermaids, an army of dragons, a cruel emperor who descends to Hell, a maddened governor and his beautiful daughter, kindly Japanese peasants and “Amazons”, tattling nobles and scheming *bonzes* (Buddhist monks). A tangle of plot twists and subplots, analepses and prophecies, conversions and apostasies, hagiography and fantasy, the *Paciecid* is a tour de force and was published in the context of a ferment of centenary festivities and self-congratulation by the Jesuit order – yet not long after their Japanese project had faltered.⁴⁹ Pereira’s baroque overkill even runs to two divine councils: a Christian one and a Japanese one, under the premiership of “Xaqua” (i.e. Shaka Buddha). In short, we find ourselves in a much more florid and fabulous metaphysical landscape than that of Benci’s *Quinque martyres*. The supernatural cast of Virgilian epic – e.g. Vulcan favouring the Japanese, Neptune the Portuguese⁵⁰ – is joined in the *Paciecid* not just by the Christian God, angels and saints, but by Japanese Buddhist and Shinto deities, a bespoke guardian angel of Japan, and a host of personified virtues and vices.⁵¹

Near the beginning of the poem “Japponiel”, the *angelus custos Iapponiae*, intercedes with the Christian God on behalf of the Jesuit missionaries, playing Virgil’s Venus to Jupiter in book one of the *Aeneid*. He complains *inter alia* about the altars of Amida running with sacrificial blood – a travesty, of course, of the non-violent cult of Amithaba Buddha, who was primarily worshipped by the Pure Land sect. In a parallel scene of supplication, “King” Amida beseeches Vulcan (again, in Venusian form) to destroy Pacheco’s boat, which is returning to Japan.⁵²

lines. The *Paciecid* begins not with the departure of the hero from his homeland or arrival in Japan, but with his flight by sea (Klecker 2002, 101).

48 On the influence of Camões, see Urbano (2005) 80, 83.

49 The ultimate *sakoku* (“closed country”) law was issued in 1639, forbidding Portuguese ships from Japanese ports and any trade with Christian states.

50 Vulcan (representing the fires of Hell) responds to a request by Amida to oppose the Portuguese by supplying a thunderbolt to burn their ships. In book 5 the poet appeals to Apollo for courage and sight to sing about the sufferings of the Christians imprisoned in the dungeon of Shimabara.

51 I am grateful to Rômulo da Silva Ehalt, Akihiko Watanabe, and Linda Zampol D’Ortia for their advice on Japanese religious terminology.

52 *Ast ubi conspexit tenebrarum ab sede profunda / Rex Amida illusos astus, atque irrita Amoris / Tela, nihilque sibi fraude hac prodesse . . . / Inde pio questu, & precibus sub nocte rogaes / Urgentem incudes, fulmenque ignesque trisulcos / Tudentem, & rigidos stimulantem voce sodales, / Vulcanum aggreditur, tristisque hæc voce precatur. / Fabrorum decus Ignipotens, flammæque furentis / Regnator, rerum afflictus, pressusque ruinis / Ad te confugio, & supplex tela ignea posco. / Ipse vides, Vulcane, vides quot vulnera, quotque / Jesuada quondam strages Iapponie sub alto / Ediderint, quantoque illos Cubosama labore / Expulerit, nostrisque ferox eiecerit oris. . . (p. 30).*

But if the god of fire should refuse, Amida challenges him to «direct all your rage, and at the same time your furious fires, against me [. . .] that I may perish; overturn and destroy my temples, burn my idols to the ground, and let the proud name and ancient honour of Amida be exiled to distant altars» (*Vel rabiem, cunctosque simul Vulcane furores / In me verte ignis, peream, mea templa ruinis / Subuerte, exure effigies, nomenque superbum, / Atque Amidae decus antiquum procul exulet aris*, 1640, 30). Amida has something of the petulance of Aristaeus invoking his nymph-mother in the *Georgics*; but are Pereira's Japanese gods all pale shadows of Virgil's pagan ones? How faithfully does he represent the religious landscape of early modern Japan?

The indigenous *Camii* (*kami*) and Buddhist *Fotoques* (*hotoke*) are frequently collocated and remain largely undifferentiated as to their cults and powers.⁵³ “Xaqua”, glossed in the index as “King of the Japanese, whom they venerate among their chief gods”, is almost a cartoon character, petty and sulky.⁵⁴ He convenes a council on the volcanic Mt Unzen⁵⁵ and upbraids the minor gods for their laziness in permitting the defection of the Japanese to the Jesuits. Needless to say, he exhibits none of the equanimity of the historical Shaka, but there may be a sarcastic allusion to Buddhist “detachment” when Pereira has him exclaim: «*May I return happily to my paternal gods and the temples of our Sion. But that labour [i.e. stopping the Jesuits] will weigh on you, not me!*» (*Lætus ego patriosque lares, nostrique Sionis / Templa adeam, non me, sed vos labor iste grauabit*). It is, moreover, tempting to see a sly reference to meditative chanting in the conclusion to Xaqua's speech: «he says these things and tearfully strikes the twin peaks of the mountain with his sceptre, and, groaning sadly, murmurs with his mouth» (*Hæc ait, & montis ferit dua culmina sceptro / Cum lachrymis, & triste gemens obmurmurat ore*). Unlike Benci's Phorbus, however, who interacts directly with the human characters, Xaqua leaves the dirty work to his underlings. Chief among

53 In the poem's index they are identified simply as “gods of the Japanese”, conflating Shinto deities (*kami*) with Buddhist saints and statues (*hotoke*). Zampol D'Ortia *et al.* (2021) 78 (n. 43) point to the *Summary of Errors*, completed around 1560, as an important Jesuit source for Shinto beliefs, though «[t]he *Sumario* is somehow unusual in presenting the followers of the *kami* as a separate group from the Buddhists [. . .]».

54 *Rex Iapponum, quem inter divos praecipuos ipsi venerantur*. Pereira is aware of the Great Buddha at «Nara, where there is a crazy temple to Xaqua, and a statue greater than the Colossus, but the earth groans equally under its weight»: *Nara, / Qua Xaquae templum insanum, majorque Colosso/ Effigies, at aequae gemit sub pondere tellus* (p. 46).

55 An appropriate venue for Pereira's “Underworld” council, since it is surrounded by hot springs.

these is the aged *hotoke* “Roncharus”,⁵⁶ who reassures the assembly that a Japanese Judas, Chusamonus, will betray Pacheco (with a little help from Allecto . . .).

In his description of the Japanese deities as landscape features and seismic forces, Pereira seems (at least dimly) aware of the animistic nature of the Shinto religion. True, most of the names in his roll-call of the idols are made up.⁵⁷ Some, however, may allude to the major *kami* or their attributes:

The ugly shades convened: Abagon and Ullon, Chrisonos, and Ferrenus, the first father of black iron, and Borcandus, Avon, Taricanta, Faredos, and loquacious Roncharon, and Abeno, huge of nose,⁵⁸ and Tisson, and Fumasus the father of fumes, and Uston. Here too comes Curvassus, whose hunched back has the form of a mountain, and he greets the earth with his lower chin. Also present is Achamonus,⁵⁹ for whom the altars of a hundred vast temples smoke, and Chromius, proud in hearths and incense, and Oros with his servant Fenus, and sad Nifranus: all shaggy with curls, wearing dusky robes. Onolinus comes, together with Bonzaius – he is the source of the name and race of the *bonzes* – and you Varel-las, who boasts of founding the sacred temples [*varelas*] on this soil, with his right hand, and of teaching the hymns and prayers, and rites of the gods.⁶⁰ Cleaving to his side is his companion Achus, his body frozen with shivering cold, and gloomy Monos, and pale Iro, aged Iro, his limbs completely covered with a flowing robe, in which mice have taken up residence, in a hundred rooms. And other horrible [gods] hurry there, their necks and shoulders adorned with snakes, and their shaggy beards are stiff with horned serpents, and sulphur blazes in their eyes and their mouths with flames.

*Conueniunt umbræ informes, Abagon & Vllon,
Chrisonos, primusque nigræ ferruginis author
Ferrenus, Borcandus, Auon, Taricanta, Faredos,
Roncharonque loquax, nasoque immanis Abeno,
Et Tisson, fumique parens Fumasus, & Vston,
Huc quoque Curuassus, gibbum qui tergore montis
Instar habet, mentoque solum propiore salutat:*

⁵⁶ Possibly a mangled form of “rakan”, the Japanese term for “arhat” (one of the protectors of the Buddha).

⁵⁷ “Ferrenus” < *ferreus*, “iron”; “Fumasus” < *fumosus*, “smoky”; “Curvassus” < *curvatus*, “crooked”; “Uston” < *ustus*, “burnt”; “Oros” < *Gk oros*, “mountain”. “Abagon” may recall “Abaddon”, the Hebrew angel of the abyss. A word search of “Data Collection of the Research Project Interactions Between Rivals: The Christian Mission and Buddhist Sects in Japan (c. 1549–c. 1647) edited by Ana Fernandes Pinto and Linda Zampol D’Ortia” does not yield any likely candidates for Pereira’s demons/deities.

⁵⁸ Was Pereira aware of the long-nosed “Tengu” spirits? And might “Iro” bear some relation to the agricultural deity Daikokuten, traditionally accompanied by mice, and worshipped as the god of Mount Miwa in the Nara prefecture?

⁵⁹ The Shinto god of war, ‘Hachiman’?

⁶⁰ “Varela” is a Malay/Javanese loan-word for temple or idol. I am grateful to Romulo Ehalt for directing me to Dalgado (1919–1921) 405–406.

*Hic & Achamonius cui centum ingentia fumant
 Templa aris, Chromiusque focus, & thure superbus,
 Atque Oros, seruiusque Fenus, tristisque Nifranus,
 Crinibus hirsuti, furuisque in vestibus adsunt.
 Venit Onolinus, cui se Bonzaius addit,
 Nominis ille author Bonzani, & gentis origo.
 Tuque Varellasi, cuius se dextra Varellas
 Prima solo fundasse sacras, & cantica iactat,
 Atque preces, ritusque deum docuisse priores.
 Huic comes horrenti concretus frigore corpus
 Hæret Achus, tristisque Monos, & pallidus Iro,
 Iro senex, longoque artus contextus amictu,
 Quo nidum, & centum posuere cubilia mures,
 Horribilesque alii properant, ornata colubris
 Colla, humerosque gerunt, rigidis hirsuta Cerastis
 Barba riget, sulphurque oculis, flammae ore relucet.*

The clash of water (Neptune/ the Jesuits) and fire (Vulcan/ the Japanese gods) is a sustained metaphor for the battle between good and evil in Pereira's poem.

Carlota Urbano has noted the absence of any direct intervention by the Christian God in the action of the *Paciecis*, even if He does convene councils, console the angel of Japan, and welcome the martyrs into heaven in the final book. As she points out, Pereira is careful not to attribute any divine visions or revelations to his hero that might be mistaken for being historical.⁶¹ Indeed, rather than by apparitions of Christ, the Virgin, or even of saints and angels, the plot of the poem is advanced through spiritual battles between various personified virtues and vices. Marco Girolamo Vida had included a handful of such allegorical figures in his *Christiad*, which have an Ovidian (and for that matter Virgilian) pedigree,⁶² but their deployment in Pereira's epic is more widespread. "Love of Life", "Purity", "Blind Love", "Fame", "Vainglory", "Faith", "Heresy", "Piety", "Impiety", and "Constancy" fight over the souls of the protagonists. In contrast to the personifications of Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, for example, these figures interact directly with the human actors. It is tempting to view this feature as connected to the greater development and diffusion of Jesuit school drama by the time of the poem's publication.⁶³ Jesuit plays were populated with such personified virtues, vices and pas-

61 «[T]he inclusion of prodigious facts, whether real or imaginary ones, in the biography of the "candidate" for sainthood would clash with the papal decrees of Urban VIII concerning beatifications and canonisations» (p. 84, n. 33).

62 E.g. the terrifying monster "Fear" in *Christiad* 5.309–325. Cf. Lowe (2008) 414–434.

63 In the prologue to Johann-Baptist Adolph's Japanese-themed Jesuit musical drama, *Mulier Fortis* (Vienna, 1698), the singing parts of Rage and Cruelty attempt to topple the pillar of Con-

sions, which – often via musical *intermedi* and the use of emblematic props – provided a moral and spiritual commentary on the historical action. Klecker has drawn attention to the sufferings of the Japanese church as a favourite theme.⁶⁴ The figure of “Constancy” who, in the eleventh book of the *Paciecis*, hands our hero the obligatory ekphrastic shield – here foretelling the triumphs of the Jesuit martyrs – was especially associated with this Japanese sub-genre.

Conclusion

It would be foolish, of course, to extrapolate any general formula for the treatment of pagan gods/non-Christian religions in Jesuit Latin poetry from just two case studies. Nevertheless, a comparison of Benci’s and Pereira’s epics, separated by half a century, suggests a diversity of possible approaches to divine and demonic machinery by Latin poets of the order. It would seem that any lingering Tridentine scruples about poetic appeals to the classical gods — scruples that may have stayed Benci’s hand — have evaporated by the middle of the 17th century. And while both poets associate Asian religion with the forces of evil, the supernatural apparatus of Pereira’s epic is almost decorative by comparison with Benci’s, where the rebel angel “Phorbus” is more fully realised as a demonic agent. On the other hand, the implicit *psychomachia* of Benci’s *Quinque martyres* becomes explicit in the *Paciecis*, probably as much through the growing influence of Jesuit drama as of the epic tradition.⁶⁵ While Benci had also invoked, e.g., personified “Hope”, he does not deploy allegorical figures to the same extent as his Portuguese successor. Where our two Jesuit epicists converge, however, is in their careful tracking, and didactic dramatising, of the thoughts and passions of their protagonists.

stancy but are fettered by Restlessness and Repentance. A reliable English translation of this play is provided by Cole (2015) as an appendix to her doctoral dissertation.

⁶⁴ See e.g. Weber (1997). The presence of Japanese themes in early modern Jesuit drama is the subject of an ongoing research programme supported by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Neo-Latin Studies, the Austrian Science Foundation, and the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science. See: <http://neolatin.lbg.ac.at/past-conferences/japan-jesuit-stage>.

⁶⁵ A century later, the passions, ranged into classes of “mild” and “violent”, featured as allegorical actors and *de facto* gods in a twelve-book didactic poem, *De motibus animi* (Paris, 1741), by French Jesuit journalist and celebrated translator of Greek drama, Pierre Brumoy. See Haskell (2018) 43–62.

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Latin a World Language? China as Test Case

Abstract: The subject of this paper is the role of Latin in late medieval and early modern China and the extent to which this role supports the claim that Latin was a “world language”. The first part of the paper analyzes the use of Latin in China: Latin as a liturgical language, as an administrative and working language, as language of theology and philosophy, as language of science and technology, as language of diplomacy. While the content of the respective texts was rich and varied, the authors in charge were exclusively Europeans. The involvement of a small number of Chinese collaborators remained limited. In the second part of the paper the role of Latin is compared to that of today’s “world language” of English in countries where it is not the population’s mother-tongue. The results are unambiguous. Despite its central importance for the exchange of information between China and Europe, the status of Latin in China never came anywhere near that of English among the majority of countries in the present world. In some of them (as in India), it is the or one of the official languages, while in many others (such as China) it is the favorite foreign language in the education system.

Keywords: world language, Jesuit mission, role of Latin in China, Latin and English compared

The first years of the new millennium saw the publication of three impressive histories of the Latin language, those by N. Ostler, W. Stroh, and J. Leonhardt.¹ In all three, an essential story line is the development of Latin from the language of a region, Latium, to a language of the world, from local language to global language. But none of the three works discusses the role of Latin in China.² Thus, when I was invited to participate in the Siena conference on “Global Latin” and give a paper within the subject area of “Latin in China from ca. 1300 to ca. 1700”, I thought: why not address the topic *in toto* and try to find out how the history of Latin in China during these centuries fits into its development from local language to global language? Or, to give the question a sharper edge: to what extent does this history support its claim of being a “world language”, and to what extent does it not?

1 Ostler (2007), Stroh (2007), Leonhardt (2009/2013) (in what follows I refer to the English edition of 2013).

2 Stroh and Leonhardt do not mention China at all. Ostler refers to China and Chinese a few times for reasons of comparison. The role of Latin in China is not touched upon by him either.

A The Uses of Latin in China

In order to provide a basis for the discussion of our question, in the first part of my paper I give a very plain overview of the uses of Latin in China in the aforementioned period.³ I distinguish five kinds of use and I characterize them with respect to the subject matter and to the social framework, in particular the participants, of the respective discourses.

1 Latin as a Liturgical Language

I start with the use of Latin that is the subject of our earliest testimony, its use as the language of the Christian ritual. In 1294, the Franciscan priest Giovanni da Montecorvino arrived as the first Catholic missionary in Khanbalik, the capital of the Yuan Dynasty, present-day Beijing. He stayed there for 34 years until his death and pursued his missionary work.⁴ In his first letter from China he reports *inter alia*:

Item emi successive XL pueros, filios paganorum etatis infra VII et XI annorum, qui nullam adhuc cognoscebant legem, et baptizavi eos, et informavi eos licteris latinis et ritu nostro, et scripsi pro eis psalteria cum ymnariis XXX et duo breviaria, ex quibus XI pueri iam sciunt officium nostrum. Et tenent chorum et ebdomadas sicut in conventu, sive sim praesens sive non. Et plures ex eis scribunt psalteria et alia opportuna. Et dominus imperator delectatur multum in cantu eorum. Campanas ad omnes horas pulso et cum conventu infantium et lactentium divinum officium facio.⁵

This is an amazing testimony, even independent of its early date. Latin communication is here presented as vertical communication – communication between

3 Of great help for the 17th century, and inspiring in general, is Golvers (2020).

4 For a concise survey of this work, see Cameron (1970) 90–106.

5 Wyngaert (1929) 347–348. For textual variants see Moule (1921) 86. For a brief presentation of Giovanni's missionary achievements, including translations of his letters, see Moule (1930) 166–215: Chapter VII: *The Mission of the Franciscan Brothers*. His translation of the passage quoted reads as follows (173): «Also I have bought one after another forty boys, the sons of pagans, of an age between seven and eleven years, who were as yet learning no religion. And I have baptized them and taught them Latin letters and our rite; and I have written for them thirty Psalters with Hymnaries and two Breviaries, with which eleven boys now know our Office and maintain the choir services and weekly turns as [we do] in a convent whether I am present or not. And several of them are writing Psalters and other necessary things. And the lord emperor is greatly delighted with their chanting. I strike the bells at all the hours, and perform the divine Office with a congregation of babes and sucklings».

human believers and God. Its content is characterized as prayers and praise, and it includes among its human participants Chinese youths.

This story line finds its continuation three hundred years later, when Matteo Ricci reports on the «diligence» of some members of his flock «in learning the Latin prayers, such as the wife of Li Yingshi, who could recite the *Confiteor*».⁶

2 Latin as an “Administrative” or “Working Language”

Moving from vertical to horizontal communication, the letter by Giovanni da Montecorvino just mentioned belongs to the numerically largest and chronologically most extensive corpus of Latin texts connected with China: the correspondence between the Christian missionaries and the centers in Rome, be it the central offices of their orders or the Vatican itself. That Latin served as a working language within the missionary orders and the ecclesiastical apparatus should cause no surprise. The personnel involved were international, representing most European nations and languages. Since everybody had excellent training in Latin, its use as general medium of communication was natural.

Many letters of this kind are preserved, not least from missionary stars like Matteo Ricci or Ferdinand Verbiest.⁷ As for their content, these letters were, of course, basically concerned with the mission: its strategy, its progress, its difficulties. Topics were organizational matters, theological questions, the structure of the Chinese state and of Chinese society, the obstacles put up and the avenues offered by Chinese culture etc. Since the content of these texts was rich and varied, many of the “business” letters contained the seeds of other types of discourse and other uses of Latin, which we will have to consider.

But first let us look once more at the personnel active in these exchanges. They, obviously, took place between China and Europe. What we must not overlook, however, is the fact that at both ends of this communication there were exclusively Italian, Portuguese, French, German, Dutch, Belgian etc. participants, which is to say that we have here, in terms of national or cultural affiliation, a purely intra-European discourse in which no Chinese were involved.⁸

6 Hsia (2010) 255, with reference «to eight letters written by Ricci in 1605 that testify to his optimistic attitude» at the time.

7 For Ricci's letters, see D'Arelli (2001); for Verbiest's letters, see Golvers (2017).

8 Exceptions are late and small in number. About the earliest example see Poole (2015).

3 Latin as a Language of Theology and Philosophy

One of the central problems of the mission was the question of how to make the contents of the Christian creed accessible to potential Chinese converts. This was a task that could not be undertaken successfully without developing an understanding of Chinese religious and philosophical traditions and without finding ways to relate the Christian message, and more generally Western ways of thinking, to them. In this endeavor, Latin played a crucial role.

On the one hand, pertinent problems were discussed in the correspondence between China and Europe, in which, in addition to the religious personnel, leading European intellectuals from various backgrounds took part as well.⁹

On the other hand, both in China and Europe independent publications began to appear which conveyed relevant information. In this case, too, Latin was of central importance. Michele Ruggieri, the often-underestimated older companion of Matteo Ricci, can serve as example. Recognizing the necessity of providing his potential flock with a brief exposition of the new creed, he started working on a catechism in Chinese. At the beginning of 1584, he informed the Jesuit general of this endeavor, announcing «that he would submit a Latin synopsis to the other fathers of the Company to obtain approval for publication».¹⁰ At the end of the year, the catechism – which was called by a visiting fellow Jesuit a «translation from Latin» – was published under the title *Tianzhu shilu*, «A Veritable Record of the Lord of Heaven».¹¹

But Ruggieri was also active “in the other direction”: while a missionary in Guangdong province, he started the translation of the central Confucian corpus, the *Sishu*, the *Four Books*. After his return to Europe, he continued and completed the work between 1590 and 1592 in Rome. It was, of course, a translation into Latin. A small portion of it was published in 1593, but because of doubts about Ruggieri’s Chinese language skills, most of the work remained in manuscript form.¹²

In Matteo Ricci’s much richer production one can observe the same pattern of bidirectionality,¹³ and in the years and decades that followed the number of Latin

⁹ In the early years, correspondence with the latter, too, was mostly in Latin; in later years it was increasingly in French. See the example of Leibniz, whose exchange with Jesuits in China is easily accessible in Widmaier/Babin (2006).

¹⁰ Hsia (2010) 87. According to Hsia, the Latin synopsis is published in Tacchi-Venturi (1913) 498–540.

¹¹ Hsia (2010) 94.

¹² For a more detailed account, see Beecroft (2016).

¹³ Cf. Hsia (2010) *passim*.

works translated into Chinese and of Chinese works translated into Latin kept growing. As eminent examples of translations from Latin into Chinese I mention only Francisco Furtado's and Li Zhizao's translation of the Coimbra (i.e. Latin) edition of Aristotle's *Categories* (Hangzhou 1631)¹⁴ and Ludovico Buglio's translation of large parts of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* (Peking 1654–1677). As examples of translations from Chinese into Latin I highlight the translation of three of the *Four Books*¹⁵ in the first great exposition of Confucianism to the west: *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive, Scientia Sinensis Latine Exposita* by four Jesuit successors of Matteo Ricci (Paris 1687),¹⁶ and François Noël's *Sinensis Imperii Classici Sex* (Prague 1711).¹⁷

As for the personnel, we can repeat that the correspondence between China and Europe was a purely intra-European affair. Concerning the independent publications, the situation was more complex. On the one hand, for the publications in both Europe and China, the decisive figures were without doubt the missionaries. On the other hand, it is also clear that for the Chinese publications they had from early on the support of indigenous assistants or collaborators. The question is how we should imagine this collaboration. The source material is scanty, and undoubtedly the individual cases differed from each other. But overall, the most recent biographer of Matteo Ricci, R. Po-chia Hsia, is probably on the right track when he sees the contribution of the majority of the Chinese helpers as having consisted in copy-editing rather than in direct input into the translation.¹⁸

14 For an interesting analysis of the work, see Wardy (2008).

15 The three books included are *Daxue* (*Great Learning*), *Zhongyong* (*Doctrine of the Mean*), and *Lunyu* (*Analects*). Not included is *Mengzi* (*Mencius*).

16 For a critical appraisal, in particular of the presentation of the *Lunyu*, see Meynard (2015). Apart from the translations, which are accompanied by notes, the work contains also a *Proemialis Declaratio*, an introduction to numerous aspects of the Confucian tradition (cf. Balbo 2020), a *Philosophorum Sinensium Principis Confucii Vita*, and a *Tabula Chronologica Monarchiae Sinicae* with a longish *Praefatio*.

17 The work contains for the first time all of the *Four Books*, including the *Mengzi* (*Mencius*), and in addition the *Xiaojing*, the *Classic of Filial Piety*, and the *Xiaoxue*, *Lesser Learning*, a central work of the most important Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi (12th cent.).

18 The first relevant case may be not atypical. We have already touched upon it. Francisco Cabral, the rector of the Jesuit college in Macao, after a visit to Zhaoqing, Ruggieri's and Ricci's first inland station, speaks of one of the earliest Chinese converts, with the Christian name Paul, as the "translator" of Ruggieri's catechism (Hsia 2010, 94). But apart from the fact that it is unclear whether or not in this case one should speak of a Latin original that was translated into Chinese, it is rather improbable that Paul, who had been hired as a tutor only a few months before the publication of the catechism, had acquired so swiftly the linguistic competence necessary to translate a Latin text into Chinese. So, «it is probably more accurate to think of him as the copy-editor or translation consultant of Ruggieri's Chinese text» (Hsia loc. cit.). For two other contem-

4 Latin as a Language of Science and Technology

As is well known, one precondition of the success of the Jesuit mission in China was the interest and competence of many of its protagonists in science and technology. Based on this competence, men like Matteo Ricci, Adam Schall, and Ferdinand Verbiest became central figures in the exchange of scientific and technical knowledge between China and Europe. The communicative constellation was pretty much the same as in the theological-philosophical discourse. The exchange took place in the correspondence between missionaries and European experts, often in Latin, and in independent publications, in the production of most of which Latin played a role as well.

To point only to a few cases: In the last decade of his life, Matteo Ricci produced a translation of the first six books of Euclid's *Elements*, i.e. of the Latin version of the *Elements* by Christopher Clavius (Peking 1607), into Chinese. Some 30 years later, Johann Adam Schall von Bell translated Georg Agricola's *De re metallica* (Peking 1640). And in the next generation, just as Schall von Bell had done before, Ferdinand Verbiest published *inter alia* several works in Chinese on Western astronomy – surely based, to a large extent, on scholarly literature and correspondence in Latin.

As concerns output in “the other direction”, Nicolas Trigault's Latin adaptation of Matteo Ricci's Italian China Journal *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas Suscepta ab Societate Jesu* (Augsburg 1615, Lyon 1616, Cologne 1617), was crucial for informing about and arousing interest in many aspects of Chinese geography, history, and culture.¹⁹ Interest in special fields was served by works like Michael Boym's *Flora Sinensis* (Wien 1656) and his *Specimen Medicinae Sinensis* (Frankfurt 1682)²⁰ and *Clavis Medica* (Nürnberg 1686).

Both lists could be expanded *ad libitum*. But for our theme of Latin as a world language, two testimonies about the specific nature of the cooperation between the missionaries and their Chinese helpers is of greater interest. They concern Xu Guangqi, one of the most erudite and certainly the most powerful supporter of the missionaries in the first part of the 17th century. Xu had found the Christian creed through Matteo Ricci and had been baptized in 1603. Given their close relationship and Xu's proven qualification as a scientist, it was natural that he became Ricci's most important collaborator in the translation (of Clavius' Latin

porary statements about the nature of Jesuit-Chinese collaboration, which point in the same direction, see below.

¹⁹ On the relationship between Ricci's Italian original and Trigault's Latin adaptation, see Gernet (2003).

²⁰ The authorship of this work is disputed: see Golvers (2000) and Kajdański (2017).

translation) of Euclid's *Elements*. In his preface, Ricci describes the nature of their cooperation: He himself «first translated the books into Chinese orally and Xu wrote down the statements and then polished them to the style of the classical Chinese. Xu even revised the translation three times after that».²¹ This corresponds to what Adam Schall reports about Xu Guangqi's linguistic contribution to the great project of the translation of astronomical works that Xu, by then of high rank within the imperial bureaucracy, directed a quarter of a century later: «These [works] . . . saw the light of day, having been compiled with persistent labor during a period of around five years and then polished in Chinese by Doctor Paul [= Xu Guangqi]: Additionally favored by the fact that they had found a man who not less with facility and elegance of style than with knowledge of the subject matter adorned and gave splendor to everything».²² That Schall doesn't claim any knowledge of Latin for Xu is hardly a coincidence.²³

5 Latin as a Language of Diplomacy

Perhaps the most curious use of Latin in China is the fifth: its use as a language of diplomacy. In the 1670s, tensions between China and Tsarist Russia developed over the border area along the Amur river. In 1676, the Tsar sent Nikolai Govri-lovic Spathary Milesco as envoy to Beijing to discuss the matter. The problem was that Spathary, a polyglot with rich experience as an interpreter and diplomat, knew neither Manchu nor Chinese. Since none of the officials in the imperial apparatus spoke a western language, Verbiest was asked to talk to Spathary.²⁴ This he did, and they used Latin to communicate. The two men got along very well, but Spathary's visit stabilized the situation only temporarily. About ten years later tensions arose again, but fortunately, before military skirmishes developed

21 Translation Wu (2008) 259. Similarly Hsia (2010) 252–253. For the original wording, see Xu (1949) 262.

22 Schall (1672) 14: *Haec . . . , quinque plus minus annorum spatio, assiduo labore compilata, ac tum a Doctore Paulo Sinice limata, prodierunt in lucem: Hac insuper re felices, quod Virum in eo nacti essent, qui non minus facilitate & elegantia styli, quam subjectae materiae notitia, omnia & ornaret & illustraret.* [The antecedent of *felices* – and the subject of the *quod*-clause – is unclear.]

23 Things may have been different with Li Zhizao, the collaborator of Francisco Furtado (see above 57). Although in his case there exist no clear contemporary testimonies and other scholars disagree, the most profound analyst of Furtado's and Li Zhizao's translation of Aristotle's *Categories* assumes for Li Zhizao a contribution far beyond mere copy-editing: Wardy (2008) 69–149 (= Chapter 2).

24 For analyses of Verbiest's role in this affair, see Miasnikov (1994) and Hao (1994).

into war, the two sides re-opened negotiations, this time in Nerchinsk.²⁵ Although Spathary was not part of the new Russian delegation and Verbiest had died shortly before, the talks were once again carried on through the mediation of three Latin-speakers: a Pole, Andrzej Bielobocki, for the Russian side and a French and a Portuguese Jesuit for the emperor. The result of the negotiations was the treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689, with the authoritative version formulated in Latin, and accompanying versions in Russian and Manchu. This means that, Latin, once again, did play a role in China, but also that “Latin in China” was once again the Latin of Europeans.

B Latin a World Language?

What do these observations tell us about our guiding question: do they support the claim of Latin being a “world language”? Everything depends, of course, on definition. If we understand by “world language” “a language that is used in many parts of the world”, then our survey of the uses of Latin in China supports this claim. So, for Latinists, the temptation is great to simply leave it at that and enjoy their ward’s success.

However, I suggest that we not do this but instead have a comparative look at the language that is *the* world language of our time, namely English. My idea is to see whether the features that define English as a world language apply also to “Latin in China”. The purpose of this endeavor is less to justify or contest the designation of Latin as a world language – which, as we said, is and will always be a matter of definition –, than to gain a deeper understanding of the role of Latin in China by putting it in historical perspective.

1 “World Languages”: Latin and English

As a point of reference, I take David Crystal’s classic *English as a Global Language*.²⁶ Here we read that «no language has ever been spoken as mother-tongue in more than a few countries» and, therefore, to achieve «global status», «a language has to be taken up by other countries around the world».²⁷ This happens in two main

²⁵ For a recent reconstruction of these negotiations, see Perdue (2010).

²⁶ Crystal (2003).

²⁷ Crystal (2003) 4.

ways: either a language is made the official language or one of the official languages of a country in which it is not the mother-tongue of the majority of the population, or a language becomes the favorite foreign language in a country's education system.²⁸ Both possibilities can currently be observed regarding English. English is one of the official languages in India and several other countries with a comparable initial language-situation, and it is the favorite language in the foreign-language teaching of more than a hundred countries in the world.²⁹

Looking at the situation of Latin in China, one might be tempted to say that some of our observations support the claim of Latin being a world language. Thus, its role in connection with the treaty of Nerchinsk arguably gave it the status of a semi-official language, and the fact that Giovanni da Montecorvino taught it to a group of little boys shows that already in the late medieval period it was part of foreign-language instruction in China.

But we must admit that this line of argument would be rather forced. Even at its height during the "Jesuit centuries" Latin did not have an official role in China comparable to that of English in countries like India. And concerning the study of Latin, it was taught by missionaries to potential converts and collaborators (though scarcely in institutionalized settings, it seems), but it never made its way into the Chinese educational system, i.e. into the imperial exams or the preparatory courses for them.

Thus, we must state that, as far as China is concerned, even in its best centuries Latin was not playing the role of a world language in the sense that English is today.

2 Tentative Explanation of Differences

The above observation is trivial, but apart from the fact that it sometimes cannot hurt to explicitly state the trivial, it leads us to a final question of greater historical interest. This question is: how can we explain the fact that, despite its central importance for the exchange of information between China and Europe, the status of Latin in China did not come anywhere near to that which nowadays English has reached in so many countries of the world, including China? As in most cases of the kind, several factors were of significance. I will address four of them.

²⁸ Crystal (2003) 4–5.

²⁹ Crystal (2003) 5.

a Socio-Linguistic Character

First, there was the special sociolinguistic character of the Latin of the period. Latin was no longer the mother-tongue of a people or of the populace of a state. Instead, it was the liturgical language of a religion, the business language of institutions related to that religion, and the *lingua franca* in which the intellectual elite of one part of the world discussed its scholarly problems. This is to say that Latin was no longer a language of daily life, a fact which *a priori* eliminated it at least as an object of learning in wider circles.³⁰

On the other hand, China was a special case. It had a centralized administrative system, with a civil service composed of intellectually gifted and systematically trained men, who were carefully selected through an ascending sequence of exams. This would seem to have offered an ideal opportunity to quickly and effectively institutionalize training in an important foreign language, even if it was not a language of daily life. This did not happen, and it stands to reason to ask why.

b Chinese Self-Perception

At least to some extent, Chinese self-perception was probably a factor involved, something that played a role in all Chinese dealings with the outside world. Although it is always risky to generalize, one can probably safely observe that for a long time Chinese self-perception was characterized by the view that the Middle Kingdom was the most powerful state in the world, politically, economically, and culturally superior to the countries around it, and therefore, in principle, self-sufficient. For centuries, representatives of foreign states encountered this attitude in Chinese authorities, with the notorious embassy of Lord Macartney, at the end of the 18th century, being one of the most prominent examples.³¹ This sense of self-sufficiency was not conducive to the stressful study of a difficult foreign language.

³⁰ See Ostler (2007) 292–293: «Latin was widespread, certainly, but only in the highest strata of society, and among men. When education was expanded to take in larger segments of Europe's population, including many more women, Latin was seen as too impractical for local, daily life to be offered much more widely».

³¹ Cf. Spence (1991) 122–123. The mission was financed by the British East-India Company but was undertaken in agreement with King George III's government. Macartney made it to Beijing and was even granted an audience with Emperor Qianlong, but in the end achieved nothing, either with respect to the opening of ports for international trade or to establishing a permanent diplomatic residence in Beijing. Instead, he was handed a message for his king, which stated that China needed nothing from other countries and that the development of closer relations was therefore of no use for either side.

c Jesuit Availability

This is, of course, only part of the picture. Another part, one decisive for the Jesuit mission, was that, starting with Matteo Ricci, the competence of the missionaries in cartography, astronomy, mathematics etc. aroused the interest of members of the bureaucratic elite, who realized that in these fields much was to be gained from the West and who therefore encouraged and supported the translation of pertinent European – which at the time meant Latin – texts into Chinese. Interestingly, this led to the launch of concrete projects, like the afore-mentioned translation of scientific and technological texts,³² but not to the institutionalization of Latin language programs.

Why not? I suspect the most important reason for this was lack of necessity or, to put it positively, the steady availability of the Jesuits. Out of strategic considerations, from a certain point of time the missionaries to be sent to China were partly selected for their scientific competence. Given the additional linguistic talent of many of them, this had as a result that for many years there were always highly qualified Western specialists around who could take the lead in the ongoing translation activities. Their competence and dedication allowed the Chinese collaborators to stay in the second row and to contribute to the common undertakings more through their excellence in literary Chinese than through their knowledge of Latin.

d Lack of Political-Military Backing

Fourthly and finally, we have to look in a very different direction. We observe that another important factor for the propagation of a language in foreign territory did not exist for Latin in China. Two unlikeable contemporaries of Ruggeri and Ricci had this factor clearly in focus. In 1584, the Spanish Jesuit Alonso Sanchez wrote in a letter to the Jesuit Vice-Provincial of Japan that the «conversion of China by preaching» seemed to be impossible and that he tended to believe those who say «that this business will have to be concluded by God in the manner of New Spain and Peru».³³ A little later, Juan Batista Román, a Spanish envoy to the Far East, conveyed Sanchez's position in a letter to his king. One passage is of particular interest because it includes the problem of language in the argument:

³² See above 58–59.

³³ Quoted in Hsia (2010) 85 with reference to Tacchi-Venturi (1913) 425–426.

The Chinese, with their impossible language, cannot be converted to Christianity, being a proud people disdainful of foreign ways. We will never in our whole lives come to an understanding with them until some minimum part of Your Majesty's *power* has entered into this territory and necessity *forces* them to learn our language which is easier (for them) than for us to learn theirs.³⁴

Having tried for many years to make some progress with this “impossible” language, I can, to a certain extent, sympathize with Sanchez’s impatience, but I reject, of course, his conquistadorish solution to the problem. This does not exclude, however, the possibility that he was right to assume that the strongest motivation for the study of a foreign language is the political and military pressure exercised by speakers of this language. Our global-language authority Crystal, at any rate, explicitly agrees, observing that «a language has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people – especially their political and military power».³⁵

Now, it is obvious that Latin did not have this kind of political or military backing in the one and a half centuries during which it had a chance to spread in China. It was not the language of a state from whose political and military pressure it could have profited.³⁶ In addition, the European powers acting in East Asia were not yet prepared to exercise the violence towards China that they were already exercising in other parts of the world. Thus, there was no support for the propagation of Latin from this side either.

3 English as Counterexample

By way of contrast, it would be illuminating to look at what happened around the same time with Spanish and Portuguese in Middle- and South-America. But in a short paper one cannot do everything. Therefore, I will simply stay with China and with English. If I am not mistaken, the development of this relationship in the last two centuries supports our explanatory reflections about Latin in China *e contrario*.

During the 19th century, the Western powers abandoned every restraint with respect to China. By brute violence they forced their way into the country, compelling it to open its doors to military detachments, businessmen and missionar-

³⁴ Quoted in Hsia (2010) 85 with reference to “Archivo General de Indias, Patronato 25, 22, available online www.upf.es/fhuma/eeao/projectes/che/516/roman.htm/”.

³⁵ Crystal (2003) 9.

³⁶ When Sanchez and Román spoke of “our language” they spoke, in all probability, not of Latin but of Spanish.

ies alike. The superiority of the foreign powers was such that it could no longer be denied by anyone. The necessity for reform was as obvious as the fact that such reforms had to include the acquisition of at least part of the knowledge and the capacity upon which Western superiority was based. Since Great Britain and, increasingly, the United States were playing a leading role in the Western activities – Hong Kong was even made a British colony – it was natural that English gain preeminence as a linguistic medium within the Chinese endeavor to gain ground in her involvement with the West. English, a language of daily life as well as of scholarship, was taught in part of the missionary schools and, starting in the 1860s, also in a number of state institutions. In addition, of the men and women sent in mounting numbers to study abroad, many went to England and the United States, such as e.g. Yan Fu, who around the turn of the century became one of the most important mediators of Western ideas to the East through his translation of works like Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, Herbert Spencer's *The Study of Sociology*, and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*.³⁷

This development did not continue straightforwardly. Years of turmoil and chaos were followed by the establishment of the People's Republic in which, for some time at least, Russian was the language of communication with the West. During the last decades, however, English has been firmly established as the foremost foreign language in Chinese education. It is now taught in middle schools all over the country and university studies are hardly possible without it. In addition, despite recent developments, it is still an official language in Hong Kong.³⁸

³⁷ For Yan Fu's role in those years, see Spence (1991) 301–304 and 314–315.

³⁸ On the whole, the history of English in China appears simply as part and parcel of its history in the world, as summarized by Crystal (2003) 10: «English [. . .] was apparently 'in the right place at the right time'. By the beginning of the 19th century, Britain had become the world's leading industrial and trading country. By the end of the century, the population in the USA [. . .] was larger than that of any of the countries of Western Europe, and its economy was the most productive and fastest growing in the world. British political imperialism had sent English around the globe, during the 19th century, so that it was the language 'on which the sun never sets'. During the 20th century, this world presence was maintained and promoted almost single-handedly through the economic supremacy of the new American superpower».

Conclusion

Looking from here back to the position of Latin in late medieval and early modern China, we may take its multiple uses there as a justification for calling it a “world language”. At the same time, however, we should remain conscious of the fact that its role in China was never even close to that of today’s indisputable “world language”, English.

Of course, for us Latinists this admission is painful. But there is a consolation. The name of this consolation is script. As is generally known, the earliest English or Anglo-Saxon script was runes (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: Row of runes (Wikipedia, s.v. “Anglo-Saxon runes”).

They did not last long and never achieved international status. Instead, if we again take China as test case, we observe that the script the Chinese chose with which to reproduce their language phonetically and which nowadays can be seen, beside the Chinese characters, e.g. on street signs all over the country is not English runes but the Latin alphabet (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Street name sign in Beijing (Private photo).

Thus, the test case China might fail to support the claim that Latin can count as a (one-time) world *language*, but it unquestionably supports the claim that the Latin alphabet can count as a world *script*.

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Philipp Roelli

On the Types of Scholarly Latin Used by Authors in China

Abstract: This article examines the distribution of grammatical categories in the scientific and philosophical Latin used by some key European authors in China, especially in translations from the Chinese into Latin. These values are compared to other texts' distribution of grammatical features. The texts were automatically lemmatised and PoS tagged. As a basis of comparison, five large samples of Latin prose texts from five important time-frames were used.

I digitised a number of texts related to the Far East, especially three Latin translations of the Confucian Analects (论语, *Lúnyǔ*) and a collection of sphygmological Chinese treatises published by Andreas Cleyer in 1682. The grammatical composition of these texts as well as their translations of technical Chinese terms into Latin were compared to those of similar European Latin texts. The Confucius translations were found to differ relatively little from other scholarly Jesuit Latin, whereas the medical texts differ greatly from European medical texts on a similar topic.

Keywords: Corpus Linguistics, Jesuit Latin, Confucius, Analects, Parts-of-Speech, Andreas Cleyer, Sphygmology

1 Background on Types of Scientific Latin

I recently proposed a way to characterise scientific Latin compared to other types of Latin based on the distribution of grammatical categories in the texts. First, I here recapitulate some of the methods I used to this end briefly.¹ I defined five large samples of non-scientific Latin prose texts from five important time-frames.² They were automatically part-of-speech (PoS) tagged and lemmatised.³ Words un-

1 For more details compare Roelli (2021) 398–438.

2 The differences between these five time-frames (from antiquity to early modern times) were smaller than expected for most grammatical parameters.

3 All the texts discussed here can be found on my free and open full-text repository Corpus Corporum (mlat.uzh.ch). The lemmatisation and PoS-tags are based on the word and form lists of Perseus plus (for forms unknown to Perseus) on a large experimental word list that CompHist-Sem Frankfurt kindly shares with us. The quality of this process was assessed in Roelli (2021) 400–401. We hope to be able to improve the automated tagging in the future once even larger and more accurate word lists become available.

known to our word lists have been removed from the samples for this study, many of them being place names or transliterated Chinese terms. In Roelli (2021) a group of some forty texts from a variety of epochs and fields that can be considered to be of a scientific nature were compared. Besides these, I used some thematically defined samples, for instance arithmetical and medical texts. Some further non-scientific out-groups were compared to the general sample: poetry, the *Vulgate*, the *Digesta*, a collection of medieval charters, and some scientific translations from the Greek. I identified grammatical categories that differ significantly from the five benchmark samples, then used these in Principal Component Analysis (PCA) plots to find groups within the scientific Latin texts. Some of the results were surprisingly different from what one would expect from contemporary scientific English or German.⁴ For instance, scientific Latin tends to use fewer nouns and verbs than the general benchmarks, but more adjectives and prepositions. Some parameters known to be typical of scientific English – the use of non-conjugated verb forms, the passive voice, a lack of the first-person singular, and nominalisation of processes – were tested for Latin as far as they were applicable. Some of them were found to be typical also of scientific Latin (especially: high numbers of third-person passive forms; low numbers of first-person singular forms and of possessive pronouns), but others were not (e.g. non-finite verb forms). Some were found to be typical of Latin science but not directly comparable to, or not yet studied for, English (high numbers of the nominative case, the verb *esse*, words with suffixes; low numbers of *ablativus absolutus*), some seemed typical of Greek translation style (more sentence-modifying particles like *autem*, *enim* etc.), and some opened up new questions: low textual entropy,⁵ which had hitherto not been studied for scientific texts. The PCA plot based on the ten most significantly different grammatical categories is here reprinted as Fig. 1.

In the same study (Roelli 2021, 441–443), I identified several clear-cut types of scientific Latin; they were labelled: (i) “Hexametric” (didactic and scientific poetry), (ii) “Rhetorical” (e.g. Cicero, Quintilian), (iii) “Plain” (e.g. Pliny the Elder), (iv) “Bombastic” (e.g. Martianus Capella), (v) “Scholastic” (e.g. Albertus Magnus), (vi) “Mathematical” (e.g. Newton), (vii) “Modern academic” (e.g. Spinoza). For Latin’s roughly 2,000 years of use in scholarship and science, the sample is admittedly rather small and the identified categories quite general. Due to Latin’s deep memory, these approaches and their respective styles of writing did not supplant one another chronologically; for instance, Vesalius could still use a rather rhetorical approach in

⁴ See a comparison in Roelli (2021) 389–397.

⁵ This is – roughly speaking – a measure of how expected the next word in a text is. Its strict definition is quoted in Roelli (2021) 406–407.

there is a tendency toward what could be called “early modern academic Latin”. This is the language we would expect scholarly authors in China to use.

This same methodology is applied in this contribution to scholarly and scientific Latin texts from China, especially by Jesuit authors. The main question we try to answer is this: are there differences based on the distribution of grammatical features between texts translated from the Chinese, texts by Chinese Jesuits, texts on China in general, and translated Chinese medicinal texts compared to Western medicine in Latin? As hardly any of these texts were available in digitised and OCRed form,⁶ I mostly had to digitise them myself, which put limits on their size and number. Therefore the results achieved here are provisional. Apart from this, it must be stressed that such an approach, focusing on the distribution of grammatical features, is an approach that by design will not be able to detect other, more subtle differences between the texts.

2 Comparison Set of Related Texts

The texts used below are now briefly introduced. These constitute four groups of texts related in one way or another to the Confucian and medical Chinese texts. Here is a list including year of publication and total number of words (rounded to hundreds) for each:⁷

Pre-Jesuit texts about the Far East (all by Franciscans):

- Julianus OFM (fl. 1250), *Epistula de vita Tartarorum*; 2,000 words.
- Gulielmus de Rubruquis OFM († before 1293), *Itinerarium*; 41,600 words.
- Odoricus de Porto Naonis OFM († 1331), *Relatio de mirabilibus orientalium Tartarorum*; 91,600 words.

Texts by Jesuits on topics that have nothing to do with China or Asia:

- Franciscus Suárez SJ, *Disputationes metaphysicae* (published 1597); 1,376,000 words.
- Nicola Orlandini SJ, *Historia Societatis Iesu* (published 1615); 1,387,700 words.
- Carolus Frank SJ, *Philosophia naturalis* (published 1949); 83,100 words.
- Carolus Boyer SJ, *Cursus philosophiae* (published 1952); 291,200 words.

⁶ Some texts could be found on the *Eurasian Latin Archive* (<http://ela.unisi.it>) and on *noscemus* (<https://wiki.uibk.ac.at/noscemus>).

⁷ The editions used are cited at *Corpus Corporum*.

Jesuit texts from or on China that are neither medicinal nor translations:

- Mateo Ricci SJ,⁸ *Catechismus Sinicus* (written 1603); 3,500 words.⁹
- Martino Martini SJ,¹⁰ *Brevis relatio de numero et qualitate Christianorum apud Sinas* (published 1654); 6,300 words.
- Athanasius Kircher SJ,¹¹ *China illustrata* (part III only) (published 1667); 14,200 words.
- Philippe Couplet SJ,¹² *Proemialis declaratio* (published 1689); 42,000 words.

Descriptive botany; a work from China, one from ancient Rome:

- Michaelis Boym SJ,¹³ *Flora Sinensis* (published 1656);¹⁴ 9,700 words.
- Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* XII–XXVII (ca. AD 79); 165,600 words.

The results for short texts (fewer than c. 10,000 words) will have to be treated with caution. In summary: the first sample I used contains three pre-Jesuit texts about the Far East. These are travel reports from trips to Mongolia and/or China from the 13th century. The second one is made up of four texts on philosophical or historical topics written by Jesuits that have nothing to do with China or Asia. Third, some Jesuit texts from or about China whose content is scholarly but

8 See Pfister (1976) 1, 22–42. Ricci wrote a work in Chinese: *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (天主實義, *tiānzhu shíyì*). He wrote this brief recapitulation in Latin in order to gain the Jesuit *imprimatur*.

9 Transcription by Douglas Lancashire SJ from Roma, Bibliotheca Casanatense, Ms. 2136, f. 1, 2r, 4–10r. Print version in Lancashire (1986) 459–471.

10 On Martini: <https://www.martinomartinicenter.org/martino-martini.html> and Pfister (1976) 1, 256–262. Martini's book is a short report on the Chinese mission, including numbers of converts, gifts sent to the emperor, and Jesuit books printed in Chinese.

11 Kircher's book was a *summa* of what he could find out about China from Jesuit publications and correspondents. Although Kircher himself never left Europe, he had access to first-hand information at the Jesuit headquarters in Rome. His book was to remain one of the most important sources on China in Europe for at least a century.

12 See Pfister (1976) 1, 307–313. For a biography: Heyndrickx (1990) 17–19. Couplet's introduction to the Confucius translations is «the first broad presentation of some texts of Chinese ancient thought to a Western audience» (Balbo 2022, 119). His aim was: *propositum nobis non est tam servire oblectamento & curiositati eorum qui in Europa degunt, quam utilitati eorum qui ex Europa lucem Evangelicam ultimis hisce terris allaturi navigant* (p. ix). The Confucian classics are said to *longe ante Moysem fuisse conscripta* (xvi). The *litterati* are *philosophi* (xxxiv). Basic philosophic tenets (yin/yang, the sixty-four hexagrams of the *Yijing*) are explained. Some further important matters: accommodation theology (§6), the old Chinese term for God being sought and claimed as *Xam ti* (*Shàngdì*; §8), the neo-Confucians (*neoterici*) being rejected (§11).

13 See Pfister (1976) 1, 269–276.

14 https://wiki.uibk.ac.at/noscemus/Flora_Sinensis. Initial verse parts were removed from the sample.

which are neither medicinal nor translations from the Chinese. After Couplet's *declaratio* used here, the same book contains a short life of Confucius and a translation of the first three of the four Chinese Classics.¹⁵ A final set of comparison are two works of descriptive botany. Pliny's books on botany and medicinal plants and Boym's much shorter book, which introduces the European reader to twenty useful oriental plants, usually including an image and their Chinese name.

3 Chinese Philosophy in Latin

The first specific sample I prepared are Latin translations of Confucian texts. The main Chinese Classics, The Four Books and Five Classics (四書五經; *Sishū wǔjīng*), were enthusiastically received in Europe when they first became available in Latin translation.¹⁶ Of these I chose to use the *Analects* (论语, *Lúnyǔ*) for this study. There are six known Latin translations, but three of them are of a very late date and are not used:¹⁷

- Michele Ruggieri (Rogerius),¹⁸ 论语 *id est De consideratione* (written around 1592), 24,600 words. The first Western translation of the *Analects*.
- Prospero Intorcetta et al.,¹⁹ *Confucius Sinarum philosophus, sive scientia sinensis latine exposita, Liber tertius* (its own pagination within the book; published 1687), 61,100 words.
- François Noël,²⁰ *Sinensis imperii libri classici sex, Libri sententiarum* (p. 83–198; published 1711), 38,600 words.²¹

¹⁵ *Liber Primus (Da xue), Liber Secundus (Zhong yong), Liber Tertius (Lun yu)*; see below). The fourth classic, *Mencius*, is not included. The book ends with a *tabula chronologica* (on which David E. Mungello, 'Preface to Tabula Chronologica' in Heyndrickx 1990, 183–199) and a map of China.

¹⁶ And remained so for more than a century; cf. still Christian Wolff in his *Oratio de Sinarum philosophia practica* of 1721 (ed. Albrecht 1985).

¹⁷ See Ferrero (2019b) 73. Ferrero provides further examples for all six translations while studying the rendering of key Chinese terms.

¹⁸ Edited by Ferrero (2019a). «Trascrizione a cura di Michele Ferrero del manoscritto conservato nella Biblioteca nazionale Vittorio Emanuele II a Roma (fondo gesuitico n. 1185/3314), scritto tra il 1591 e il 1592». The text was digitised by the Eurasian Latin Archive. On Rogerius: Pfister (1976) 1, 15–21.

¹⁹ <http://www.fondazioneintorcetta.info/biblioteca-virtuale.html>; on this book, see Meynard (2011) and Meynard (2015).

²⁰ Pfister (1976) 2, no. 262.

²¹ Online scan: <http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10219788-8>.

Rogerius' translation is by far the shortest and is the only one that is shorter than Legge's relatively close English rendering.²² Intorcetta's, in contrast, is very prolix. A comparison of a passage (1.4) illustrates the great differences in their translation styles; indeed, it provides a glimpse of how much the early European translators struggled with the rendering of this Classical Chinese text. For comparison, the Chinese original and Legge's English translation are also provided:

Original ²³	English (Legge 1861, 139)	Rogerius (114)	Intorcetta et al. (3)	Noel (83)
曾子曰：吾日三省吾身：為人謀而不忠乎？與朋友交而不信乎？傳不習乎？ [Céng zǐ yuē: Wú rì sān xǐngwú shēn: Wéi rén móu ér bù zhōng hū? Yǔ péngyǒu jiāo ér bùxìn hū? Chuán bù xí hū?]	The philosopher Tsang said, 'I daily examine myself on three points: – whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; – whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been not sincere; – whether I may have not mastered and practised the instructions of my teacher.'	<i>Cencius: Tria haec utrum sim assecutus, in dies singulos diligenter inquirō. Unum, ut improbitatis atque adeo perversitatis famam declinem. Secundum, ne qui mecum agunt, circumveniri se a me putent. Tertium, ne quos doceo falsam se a me doctrinam haurire suspicentur.</i>	<i>Discipulus Çem Çù ait: Ego quotidie de tribus maximè rebus examino me ipsum & rationem exigo; an scilicet pro homine quopiam negotium tractandum susceperim, & non tractaverim illud ac conatus sim conficere eâ quâ par erat cum fide & contentione animi, nec ita prorsus ac si mea res ageretur & non aliena: an cum sodalibus & amicis meis familiariter & amicorum more agens, tamen haud egerim eo candore eâque fide quâ oportebat agi, contentus inani quâdam specie benevolentiae observantiaeque, & mendacio veriùs amicitiae quàm amicitîâ. Denique an doctrinam mihi traditam à Magistro meo non recoluerim, eamque exercitaverim impigrè & constanter.</i>	<i>Tsem tsu Confucii Discipuli effatum: Ego quotidie in tribus rebus me ipsum discuto: 1. utrùm præstando alteri obsequium, me forum impenderim? 2. utrùm frequentando amicos & socios, candorem servaverim? 3. utrùm excipiendo Magistri doctrinam, eam in praxim redegerim?</i>

²² Legge's *Analects* contain 28,700 words (counted from this online text: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/409>).

²³ Source: <https://ctext.org/analects/xue-er>.

Medieval Latin translators usually used a *verbum de verbo*²⁴ translation technique when translating Greek, and to some extent also Arabic, into Latin. This method strove always to translate words with the same counterpart in the target language and to preserve the grammatical forms and even the word-order of the original; the aim of this was to make sure that the translator interfered as little as possible in the work he was translating. For a philosophical text in a language that differs as much from European languages as Classical Chinese does, there can be no question of this approach. The result would become completely incomprehensible; it could look like this (first without then with grammatical adjustments and some changes in word order):

Ceng zi dicere: ego quotidie tres examinare ego corpus. Se gerere conspiratio vel non fides an? Cum amicus frequentare vel non confidens an? Docere non exercitare an?

Ceng zi dixit: ego quotidie ter examino me ipsum. Utrum me gessi conspirative vel infideliter? Utrum frequentando amicos non fui fidelis? Utrum doctrinam non exercitavi?

The most literal possible translation that is still more or less intelligible would be the second one. But after Renaissance translators had discredited the *verbum de verbo* technique, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries translators no longer resorted to this. Instead, translators of Chinese often took to numbering the words in their translations in order to show the reader the original word order, which they did not attempt to preserve in order to avoid bad Latin style.

In the present example, Rogerius did not seem to understand the original sufficiently, Intorcetta reformulated and enhanced strongly, whereas Noel stayed reasonably close to the original while still being readable. Noel's translation is indeed more literal than Legge's English and deserves to be praised. Ferrero (2019b) 74, accurately describes Intorcetta's translation style as typically baroque. We would expect Intorcetta's freely paraphrasing Latin to be the least influenced by the Chinese language in terms of the grammatical features studied below.

4 Chinese Medicine in Latin

As a final sample I used some works on a more strictly scientific topic, in this case sphymology, the medical discipline of studying the pulse.²⁵ In general, the Ming

²⁴ On which see Marti (1974) 64–81.

²⁵ As an introduction to this topic, cf. Marié (2011).

dynasty produced some important new medical works.²⁶ The most important ancient Chinese text on the pulse, however, had been written long before by Wáng Shūhé (王叔和, early Jin or late Han dynasty²⁷): namely the *Màijīng* (脉经, *Pulse Classic*), in ten books. The Chinese text begins by listing twenty-four types of pulse.²⁸ Wang's terminology for types of pulse has remained standard in Chinese.²⁹ There is a Persian translation of the text (edited by Guang Shi 2020) and a modern English one (Shouzhong Yang 1997).

By coincidence, the earliest extant classical Western texts on the pulse date from roughly the same time as Wáng Shūhé's, although we know of lost earlier treatments, especially by Archigenes of Apamea (fl. around AD 100),³⁰ but «Galen's extant works are the only significant account of Western views surviving from ancient times».³¹ Galen's theory of blood movement forms the basis of his understanding of the pulse. For Galen (c. 129–c. 216) the heart is not so much a blood pump as a kind of bellows for the pneuma.³² Galen differentiated twenty-seven kinds of pulse,³³ determined by three parameters in all possible combinations (*Ad tirones*, Kühn VIII, 455): μήκος, βάθος, πλάτος; ἐλλείπειν, σύμμετρον, ὑπερβάλλειν; σφοδρότης, σύμμετρον, ἀμυδρότης. He wrote four works comprising four books each on differences, distinctions, causes, and prognostications of the pulse. Kühn edited them and added Latin translations.³⁴ After these sixteen books, Kühn also prints a *Synopsis* by Galen himself in the translation of the 16th-century editor Agostino Gadaldini, which I will use as a *comparandum* to the translated Chinese texts.³⁵ The Greek text in Kühn is incomplete. Its final part is extant in some

²⁶ Especially the *Běncǎo Gāngmù* (本草綱目, *Compendium of Materia Medica*) by Lǐ Shízhēn (李時珍), on herbs. Its first draft was completed in 1578, it was printed in Nanjing in 1596. See Angela Ki Che Leung in Petruccioli (2001–2004) 2, 511–516 and Marta Hanson in Petruccioli (2001–2004) 2, 516–531.

²⁷ See Etsuo Shirasugi in Petruccioli (2001–2004) 2, 232 (dating the text to ca. AD 280).

²⁸ Cf. Catherine Despeux in Petruccioli (2001–2004) 2, 241.

²⁹ *Eadem*, in Petruccioli (2001–2004) 2, 437.

³⁰ The most important contender of the pneuma theory, which was en vogue among Stoics, for whom the role of pneuma in the body determined diseases.

³¹ Cover text of the forthcoming book by Johnston/Papavramidou (2023).

³² Pithis (1983) 28. Galen's view is closer to that of Herophilus of Chalceldon.

³³ *De pulsibus ad tirones* VIII.455, similarly in *Synopsis* Cap. III.

³⁴ For *De pulsuum differentiis* the one by Janus Cornarius (c. 1500–1558).

³⁵ Venice: Iunta 1556, vol. 5, see Martínez Manzano/Cortés Gabaudan (2013) 72–77, and cf. 62 on its genuineness. Galen also wrote a *De pulsibus ad tirones*, ed. Kühn VIII/2, 453–492.

manuscripts but seems to be a forgery by Camillo Zanetti, alias Veneto,³⁶ made by excerpting from Galen's works. Kühn also edited a spurious short introductory text on the pulse, *De pulsibus ad Antonium*. Zipser speaks of a «aus pneumatischen und galenischen Quellen zusammengesetztes Kompendium».³⁷ I also use its Latin translation, produced by René Chartier (1572–1654; Kühn VIII, 333–337).³⁸

As for the Chinese side, in 1682 Andreas Cleyer published a Latin translation of several works on the pulse that – although the first and the fifth of which are explicitly ascribed to *Vám Xó Hó*, who is presumably Wáng Shūhé – only occasionally show close parallels to the *Pulse Classic*. Cleyer was a physician and merchant based in Jakarta who collected these anonymous translations but did not master Chinese himself. The translations were apparently made by Europeans in China, with a high likelihood that they were Jesuits such as Couplet or Boym. This book was very successful: in 1846 Pierre Victor Renouard (1846) 1, 47, could still write: «[. . .] les fragments de la médecine chinoise, traduits en latin par le père Michel Boym et publiés par Cleyer, ont fourni les matériaux de presque tout ce qu'on a écrit jusqu'à présent sur ce pays (that is, concerning medicine)». The book includes excerpts from three Chinese works, the mentioned *Maijīng*, the *Huángdì Nèijīng* (黄帝内经; *Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor*)³⁹ and the *Nánjīng* (难经, *Canon of Difficult Issues*). It is made up of the following seven independent texts:

- I. *De pulsibus libros quattuor e Sinico translatos / De explanatione pulsuum regulae et discursuum verorum, authore Vam Xo Ho*, in four books (8).⁴⁰
- II. *Tractatus de pulsibus ab erudito Europaeo collectos / . . . ex codice vetustissimo Nuy kim* (56), i.e. the *Nèijīng*.
- III. *Fragmentum operis medici ibidem ab erudito Europaeo conscripti* (72). This fragment contains chapters 17 to 21 of a medical treatise mostly on the pulse, probably translated from the Chinese.
- IV. *Excerpta litteris eruditi Europaei in China* (130). Some excerpts from a collection of anonymous Latin letters about Chinese medicine, some treating the pulse, others e.g. the blood flow.
- V. *Schemata ad meliorum praecedentium intelligentiam*:

³⁶ Martínez Manzano/Cortés Gabaudan (2013) 89.

³⁷ Zipser in Pithis (1983) 31–32. This text was the main source of *Philaretos* (Pithis 1983, 188), a Byzantine treatise on the same topic.

³⁸ <http://data.onb.ac.at/rep/10566E30>. On his falsifications: Kollesch (1967).

³⁹ *Nèijīng* (内经), a text attributed to the mythical Yellow Emperor. It consists of two parts: *Sùwèn* (素问; *Basic Questions*) and *Língshū* (灵枢; *Spiritual Pivot*). This and the next text go back to the Han dynasty.

⁴⁰ I add here the page numbers of the *noscemus* online edition, where the work was first digitised, as the print version uses several paginations. First I quote the title given in the index (p. 4), then the usually fuller one at the beginning of each part (if the two differ).

- (a) *Auctoris Vam Xo Ho pulsibus explanatis medendi regula* (164), a recep(?)tarium,
- (b) *Medicamenta simplicia quae a Chinensibus ad usum medicum adhibentur* (192), a list of 289 medically relevant items.
- VI. *De indiciis morborum ex linguae coloribus et affectionibus. Cum figuris aeneis et ligneis. / De indiciis morborum ex linguae coloribus et affectionibus* (220).

Thus, parts I–III treat the pulse, IV various medical topics, V pharmacology, VI the tongue. Hanson/Pomata (2017) see these texts as a collaboration by Jesuits, possibly including Couplet and Boym (9). The German botanist Georg Eberhard Rumphius (1628–1702) is another candidate for some of the texts’ translations (10). The receptarium (Va) seems to be translated by Boym (11); V(b) maybe by Couplet (15). Others (Holler 2001, 795) argue against an attribution to Boym. The book’s printing manuscript is extant.⁴¹ Concerning the direct Chinese sources, some similar texts have been identified by Hanson/Pomata (2017), 16–17.

In summary we have these texts on pulse in both cultural spheres:

- Andreas Cleyer, *Specimen medicae Sinicae sive Opuscula medica ad mentem Sinensium* (published 1682), seven works totaling 61,200 words.
- Galen, *Synopsis de pulsibus* (Kühn IX, 431–549), 19,100 words.
- Ps-Galen, *De pulsibus ad Antonium* (Kühn XIX, 629–642), 1,800 words.

We also compare with these texts a diachronic sample of six European medical writers made up of Celsus, Gariopontus, Gordonius, Vesalius, Sennert, and von Bene.⁴²

5 Terminology

When the Jesuits arrived in China, there had been no previous contact between European and Chinese intellectuals. Thus, translations for abstract terms from either intellectual environment needed first to be found and agreed upon in the other. As for translating into Chinese, there was the problem that Chinese characters always have their inherent meaning. So, when Ricci wanted to explain how we Europeans refer to “Lord of Heaven” – namely *deus* – he uses: 陡斯 *dǒu sī* (ed. Meynard 2013, 11). These characters mean “abrupt/steep” and “thus”. Other

⁴¹ Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin–Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS Lat. Fol. 95.

⁴² These were used already in Roelli (2021) 482–504. In total they comprise 856,200 words.

possibilities (with other tones and characters) could have meant “tremble die”, “provoke four”, or other things. Ricci (and other translators) will have chosen characters that did not mean something ridiculous. In some cases Ricci was able to take over existing terminology, especially from Buddhist metaphysics,⁴³ e.g. 神灵 *shénlíng* for *anima spiritualis* (ed. Meynard 2013, 9), but in other cases he had to resort to coining new character combinations. For instance, *intellectus* becomes *língcái* (灵, “intelligence”; 才, “talent, ability”; 9). This is a combination that does not seem to have remained in use.⁴⁴ Kurtz (2001) provides a case study of another difficult Western term and attempts of rendering it into Chinese: *logica* “logics”.

Cleyer’s book on pulse medicine provides examples of difficult translations the other way round. For instance, book 2 begins by explaining the three positions for the wrist pulse and refrains from translating their Chinese names; they are given as *cun*, *quoan*, *che*, corresponding to 寸 *cùn* (“inch; very short”), 关 *guān* (“barrier, confine”), 尺 *chǐ* (“foot, = 10 cùn”). This is surprising, as it would seem that these positions on the wrist should not be too hard to translate and would remain mysterious in their transliterated forms. On the other hand, the technical term 经络 *jīngluò*, “meridian” is translated with the simple Latin *via*, which obscures this medical concept seriously. These early translators clearly still struggled with a basic understanding of their source texts.

These scattered examples show that the problem of translating abstract terminology existed (and sometimes still persists today) in both directions.

6 Grammatical Parameters Most Strongly Differing from the Benchmark

Table 1 shows the automatically determined frequencies of grammatical categories for the texts introduced above. The PoS and the more detailed categories that were found to be telling for scientific texts are shown. The table also indicates whether the categories were found to be higher or lower in the diachronic sample of scientific texts in Roelli (2021) (second row as “+/-”). The lengths of the texts in words and characters are shown in thousands; the characters were counted without spaces or punctuation. Average word lengths do not differ greatly among the texts, except that the texts by Franciscans and many of the Chinese medical ones

⁴³ As an intellectual product of India, expressed in an Indo-European language (Sanskrit or Pali), its concepts are much closer to European ones.

⁴⁴ I checked in the large online dictionary MDBG (<https://www.mdbg.net/chinese/dictionary>) as well as the Pleco android app.

exhibit low values whereas some scholastic, not China-related Jesuit texts have relatively long words. The respective word-counts show that some of the texts are rather short and thus that their results should be taken with a pinch of salt. The relative amounts of the seven PoS are shown as percentages, the nominatives (nom) as percents of all nouns, imperatives (imp) and participles (ptc) as percents of all verbs, the entropy in bits of information⁴⁵ per word; all other values are simple percentages of all words. “Esse” denotes the frequency of the verb *esse*, “3rd” third-person passive verb forms, “1st” first-person singular verb forms, “poss”/“rel” possessive/relative pronouns, “adj-suf”/“n-suf” a set of representative adjective/nominal suffixes respectively, “modif” sentence-modifying adverbs,⁴⁶ and “num” numerals. The values are compared to the five general prose samples (bottom). Colours are used to depict differences of at least one standard deviation within these five samples, while underlining is added in the case of differences of at least three standard deviations. Thus, coloured and (even more strongly) underlined values show a strong deviation from what would seem to be normal values for Latin prose as measured diachronically. Of course, in some cases the topic of a text favours certain word classes; thus Cleyer Va as a receptarium quite naturally uses a lot of imperatives of the kind “take” (this ingredient). The following further categories were also automatically counted, but they did not show conspicuous numbers for our texts and are not printed in the table: abbreviations, interjections, proper names, coordinating vs. subordinating conjunctions, demonstrative and indefinite pronouns, gerunds, gerundives, infinitives, supines, indicatives, subjunctives, and the genitive, accusative, and dative/ablative cases.

At a first glance, it is striking among the PoS that most of the texts studied here display high amounts of adjectives, but low amounts of pronouns and conjunctions. Among the texts in this sample only the medical writings can be considered scientific texts in a strong sense, but many others of these scholarly texts display similar numbers in at least some of the frequencies that are typical of scientific texts: especially low values of possessive pronouns and the first-person singular, high values for adjectives and adjective-suffixes and often for nominatives and third-person passive forms. Other values differ: nouns are frequent (especially in Cleyer, but also in the Jesuits concerned with China; not so in the Confucius translations and the Franciscans), prepositions are not very frequent and are especially rare among the Con-

⁴⁵ Entropy was only measured for texts longer than some 10,000 words (see Roelli 2021, 407).

⁴⁶ As already in Roelli (2021), the sample of the common adjective suffixes *-alis/-aris*, *-bilis*, *-eus*, *-icus*, *-inus*, *-ivus*, *-orius*, *-osus* was used. For nominal suffixes: *-tio/-sio*, *-tas*, *-itia*, *-ntia*, *-mentum*, *-tor/-sor*, *-tudo*. For modifiers: *at*, *autem*, *enim*, *ergo*, *igitur*, *nam*, *vero*.

Tab. 1: Values to be used for the following graphics and argumentation. Further explanations in the main text.

words		chars	w	length	ADJ	ADV	CONJ	N	PREP	PRONV	nom	esse	3rd	1st	poss	adj	suf	entropy	num	rel	ptc	imp	n-suf	modif
Julianus OFM	2.0	11.6	5.75	11.56	8.14	8.19	24.47	10.21	13.22	24.11	21.38	1.92	6.02	6.24	1.19	1.66	-	-	2.38	3.99	27.10	1.29	1.66	2.70
Rubruk OFM	41.6	224.8	5.41	8.32	8.60	10.80	21.31	10.77	16.59	23.51	20.33	3.38	5.03	8.61	1.68	1.64	8.71	8.71	1.92	4.06	14.21	0.98	1.64	1.38
Odoricus OFM	91.5	483.9	5.29	12.12	8.36	9.50	23.42	10.48	14.58	21.45	25.94	3.67	9.37	6.28	1.23	2.28	8.76	8.76	3.21	3.42	16.88	2.77	2.28	1.85
Starez SJ	1376.0	7845.6	5.70	11.10	11.14	11.89	19.96	10.26	11.95	20.92	28.17	5.24	11.27	1.39	0.47	6.74	8.48	1.44	2.89	16.03	0.48	6.74	2.47	
Orlandini SJ	1387.7	8634.1	6.22	12.42	10.48	6.59	28.88	8.92	8.65	21.04	17.85	2.21	7.81	1.78	1.00	4.59	9.53	1.00	3.07	27.30	0.73	4.59	0.62	
Frank SJ	83.1	515.3	6.20	18.33	8.04	7.29	24.50	9.53	10.78	20.75	29.44	3.29	13.78	3.44	0.57	6.27	9.06	5.00	3.10	22.33	1.06	6.27	1.85	
Boyer SJ	291.2	1798.7	6.18	14.71	8.56	9.29	23.64	9.96	10.56	22.82	33.85	5.01	13.78	3.74	0.60	7.11	9.02	3.43	3.32	16.61	1.15	7.11	2.06	
Ricci SJ	3.5	19.4	5.56	11.92	7.52	9.75	25.85	9.03	12.34	23.47	19.30	4.48	18.46	0.90	0.78	3.46	*	2.14	4.06	14.74	0.13	3.46	1.14	
Martini SJ	6.3	37.5	5.97	16.66	5.83	6.24	31.01	7.82	11.74	20.58	25.76	2.59	9.02	4.06	1.38	3.73	*	3.51	3.82	21.77	1.41	3.73	0.82	
Kircher SJ	14.2	83.5	5.88	15.42	7.16	4.58	28.95	9.77	11.15	22.04	20.16	2.05	7.74	5.49	0.87	2.87	9.63	2.64	3.03	22.28	4.75	2.87	1.09	
Couplet SJ	42.0	252.8	6.02	15.55	9.62	7.43	27.19	6.43	12.92	20.53	24.37	2.93	7.92	3.47	1.29	4.14	9.77	2.61	3.84	18.34	1.11	4.14	2.34	
Boym SJ	9.7	58.1	5.99	16.24	6.38	5.18	31.62	7.99	8.98	23.11	25.10	2.05	11.30	5.10	0.87	1.94	9.58	1.42	2.69	17.81	3.63	1.94	1.29	
Plinius	165.6	960.3	5.80	15.09	6.84	8.78	31.66	8.44	8.20	20.90	19.59	2.06	14.79	2.17	0.27	2.13	9.70	3.38	2.22	25.05	0.89	2.13	1.41	
Rogerus SJ	24.6	138.8	5.65	10.34	10.95	7.73	22.54	6.34	11.86	30.12	26.31	4.31	5.54	5.37	0.66	3.28	9.06	1.27	2.65	16.79	2.08	3.28	1.71	
Intorcetta SJ	61.1	354.6	5.80	12.86	10.67	7.98	24.99	5.27	13.24	24.64	26.44	3.31	7.82	5.74	1.64	3.13	9.71	1.34	2.87	17.77	2.05	3.13	2.34	
Noel SJ	38.6	220.4	5.70	13.95	9.28	5.83	25.45	5.31	12.29	27.47	28.05	2.25	5.44	5.93	1.29	3.30	9.60	1.72	2.05	17.90	2.86	3.30	1.97	
Cleyer (all)	61.2	341.3	5.58	16.66	5.72	6.16	31.72	8.56	5.96	24.78	25.95	3.82	11.13	2.59	0.26	2.50	9.14	4.06	1.97	18.61	2.98	2.50	0.84	
I	14.1	82.6	5.86	17.14	5.40	6.02	31.92	8.05	4.45	26.68	28.01	4.35	10.67	1.14	0.12	2.86	*	3.59	1.10	21.18	2.38	2.86	0.48	
II	3.6	21.5	5.96	15.97	7.87	7.50	30.30	8.71	11.13	18.39	22.72	2.05	12.80	2.19	1.14	3.70	*	3.16	4.34	16.82	2.19	3.70	1.95	
III	22.4	121.9	5.44	15.18	6.28	7.54	31.15	8.87	6.48	24.12	26.94	3.15	11.94	2.18	0.26	2.63	*	3.55	2.38	18.65	2.09	2.63	1.22	
IV	8.3	47.1	5.65	15.64	6.22	7.14	31.71	11.19	7.14	20.74	22.22	3.54	11.46	6.08	0.40	3.18	*	3.96	2.60	22.28	0.85	3.18	1.07	
Va	4.7	21.5	4.59	20.01	5.96	2.64	29.73	12.05	4.65	32.42	16.02	1.31	1.77	4.35	0.10	0.70	*	6.85	0.64	19.59	19.05	0.70	0.13	
Vb	6.1	35.1	5.76	20.14	2.56	2.58	33.64	3.30	4.74	32.33	27.62	7.85	13.49	3.17	0.11	0.97	*	6.49	1.42	10.73	1.70	0.97	0.06	
VI	2.0	11.6	5.78	16.81	5.39	4.46	36.41	7.83	3.13	25.45	33.33	3.65	9.79	0.46	0.00	1.97	*	1.57	0.93	20.05	1.37	1.97	0.29	
Galenus	19.1	113.3	5.92	12.63	13.78	10.94	21.09	8.70	11.62	21.22	21.60	3.95	9.31	3.55	0.06	5.86	8.44	1.93	4.01	21.93	1.42	5.86	6.76	
Ps-Galenus	1.8	10.7	5.88	13.91	9.37	11.61	25.00	9.14	10.06	20.86	28.24	3.51	15.15	3.86	0.00	5.86	*	2.41	3.33	26.45	0.55	5.86	7.30	
Avg 6 Medical Authors			6.25	14.06	10.01	12.00	25.04	8.41	8.15	21.96	26.44	3.70	13.81	2.35	0.20	1.62	8.80	2.19	2.56	19.53	2.21	2.96	2.12	
Stdev			0.56	3.13	0.82	3.77	3.34	1.33	2.18	2.07	3.91	1.64	3.37	1.10	0.08	0.97	0.26	1.18	0.83	6.36	1.19	0.12	0.66	
Avg 5 Benchmark Samples		6.09	10.06	8.95	9.93	25.69	8.30	14.13	22.93	23.71	3.72	9.14	4.44	1.57	1.25	9.15		1.43	3.53	18.64	1.86	4.19	1.46	
Stdev		0.43	0.87	0.53	0.43	1.40	0.77	1.12	1.03	1.10	0.26	0.97	1.94	0.21	0.18	0.20		0.41	0.53	1.71	0.41	0.51	0.28	

fucius translations. The *verbum essendi* is for the most part no more common than average, and the same goes for entropy. Among the other values, high frequencies of numerals are conspicuous.⁴⁷ Suffixes and modifiers are very high for Galen and Ps-Galen (both translated from the Greek), to a lesser degree for Jesuits not concerned with China – in contrast to texts concerned with China. Both of these features (suffixation and sentence-modifying adverbs) do not exist in Chinese, so this will be expected. It also looks as if texts concerned with China have higher entropy; this would indicate an unexpected and non-monotonous vocabulary – in contrast to most texts of the science sample in Roelli (2021).

Now, in order to identify grammatical parameters for which text groups differ clearly from the Latin prose benchmarks, I have divided the texts into the following five groups and averaged their values:

- Franciscans who travelled to Asia (3#): Julianus, Rubruk, Odoricus;
- Jesuits not in China (4#): Kircher, Suarez, Frank, Boyer;
- Jesuits in China (7#): Couplet, Ricci, Martini, Boym, Rogerius, Intorcetta, Noel;⁴⁸
- Confucius translations (3#): Rogerius, Intorcetta, Noel;
- Translated Chinese medicine (7#): the seven works in Cleyer's book.

Table 2 lists those grammatical parameters that differ significantly for at least one of these groups; besides this, all ten parameters that were found to be indicative of scientific Latin in Roelli (2021) are included.

Especially striking cases are the following: in all samples adjectives are more common, conjunctions less so. The Confucius translations and the Chinese medical texts often exhibit the opposite: the latter tend to follow the ten parameters for scientific Latin. For instance, possessive pronouns are much more frequent in the former than in the latter; the third-person passive is more common in Cleyer and the Jesuits, but rarer in the Confucius translations. The first-person singular, adjective suffixes, and entropy behave similarly. Only a few differences between Jesuits in Europe and in China can be detected: Jesuits in general seem to be fond of suffixes, which are a typical feature of scholastic terminology, but Jesuit texts from China incline much less in this direction. Besides their entropy values are much higher.

⁴⁷ They were also high for the forty scientific texts in Roelli (2021), but their standard deviation was very high (2.07 ± 1.30), so these values were not used for the calculations there. Some but not all sciences have a propensity for numbers.

⁴⁸ Although Kircher contains many quotations from Chinese Jesuits and Cleyer is likely also written by Jesuits, these texts are not included.

Tab. 2: Sharply divergent grammatical features for five groups of texts (defined above) compared to variation within the five benchmark samples. Differences are given in standard deviations from the benchmarks' averages. The ten typical parameters for scientific texts (as found in Roelli 2021) are italicised. Values more/less than three are highlighted (bold).

Category	Franciscans in Asia	Jesuits not in China	Jesuits in China	Confucius translations	Chinese medicine
<i>Adjectives</i>	+0.8	+5.6	+4.5	+2.7	+8.3
<i>Adverbs</i>	-1.0	-0.3	-0.6	+2.7	-6.1
<i>Modifiers</i>	+1.8	+1.4	+0.7	+1.9	-2.5
<i>Conjunctions</i>	-0.9	-3.8	-6.3	-6.3	-10.2
<i>Nouns</i>	-1.0	-0.9	+1.0	-0.8	+4.6
<i>Nominatives (among N)</i>	-1.0	+3.8	+1.2	+2.9	+1.5
<i>Numerals</i>	+2.6	+4.1	+1.4	+0.0	+6.6
<i>Prepositions</i>	+0.4	+2.1	-1.8	-3.4	+0.4
<i>Pronouns</i>	+0.7	-2.7	-1.9	-1.4	-7.3
<i>Relative Pronouns</i>	+0.6	-0.8	-0.7	-1.9	-3.0
<i>Possessive Pronouns</i>	-0.9	-4.4	-2.0	-1.7	-6.0
<i>Verbs</i>	+0.2	-1.1	+1.5	+4.5	+1.7
<i>Imperatives (among V)</i>	-0.4	+0.0	+0.1	+1.1	+5.4
<i>The verb esse</i>	-2.8	+0.6	-2.2	-1.6	-0.0
<i>3rd Pers. Pass.</i>	-2.4	+2.6	+0.2	-3.0	+1.3
<i>1st Pers. Sing.</i>	+1.3	-0.5	-0.0	+0.6	-0.8
<i>ADJ Suffixes</i>	-1.4	+8.6	+0.0	-0.9	+2.3
<i>N Suffixes</i>	-4.6	+3.1	-1.8	-1.8	-3.7
<i>Entropy</i>	-2.1	-0.5	+2.0	+1.5	-0.0

If we compare the average of the Chinese medical texts to that of the sample of the six Latin medical texts mentioned above, we find that they differ in many respects. Compared to the latter, the former are conspicuous in having more adjectives (differing by +3.0 benchmark standard deviations), nouns (+4.8), and verbs (+2.8), especially imperatives (+2.6), but on the other hand a lot less adverbs (-8.2), conjunctions (-13.6), modifiers (-4.6), and less pronouns (-2.0) and third-person passives (-2.7). Modifiers do not exist in Chinese as they do in Greek; the imperatives show that the reader is often directly addressed in the texts, in contrast to Western medical works. So these differences make some sense intuitively. It would be interesting to compare the PoS distributions of Chinese medical texts in Chinese.⁴⁹ The seven Cleyer texts differ among themselves quite strongly on some parameters: V(b) is very high on *esse* (definitions!), and only II is not very

⁴⁹ This is not easy to check, as even the definitions of PoS in Chinese are disputed. See Giannino (2014) for details.

low in possessive and relative pronouns, nominal suffixes, and modifiers. In the PoS plot below (Fig. 3), the list-like VI and V(b) are far out in the plot, but also I and V(a).

Two-dimensional plots are presented below, in which all of the mentioned texts (including the six Western medical Latin ones) are depicted. Cleyer's texts II, V(a) and VI are a bit short for providing reliable data, so in all cases the Cleyer texts, taken together, are also depicted. A first simple graphic (Fig. 2) shows the percentages of nouns versus verbs. My earlier study showed that scientific, especially scholastic, texts tended to use fewer nouns than the benchmark samples. Poetry, on the other hand, used both more verbs and nouns. Especially the texts in Cleyer contain a lot more nouns. So do Pliny and two of the Jesuits in China, the botanist Boym and the 'statistician' Martini. The Confucius translations use more verbs than other texts (the freely translating Intorcetta less so).

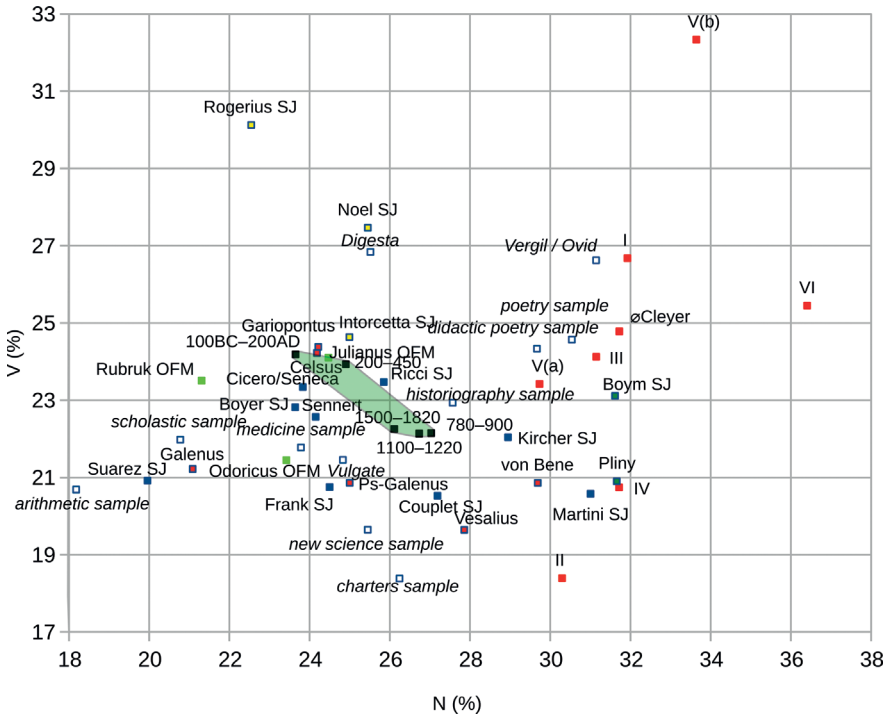


Fig. 2: Nouns vs. verbs plot for the texts in question (values in %). Various colours are used to differentiate the groups of texts: red denotes Cleyer's medical treatises, red-in-blue other medical texts, yellow the three Confucius translations, green the Franciscan texts on Asia. White-in-blue with italicised name tags are groups of texts from Roelli (2021) that were meant to illustrate the Latin of certain types of texts.

A second plot considers all seven PoS (Fig. 3). The same PCA parameters that were optimal for the sample of forty scientific texts (Roelli 2021) were used.⁵⁰ The Cleyer texts here demonstrate an even greater variance, the Confucius translations somewhat less so (except Intorcetta, again), but in another direction. Among the medical texts not related to China, the medical compendium by the 19th-century Hungarian physician von Bene lies closest in both of these plots to Cleyer's texts. Cleyer's texts differ greatly among themselves: the list-like V(b) is somewhat of an outlier, while the non-translated letters in IV (but even more so the translation II) are closer to other Latin texts, especially Pliny.

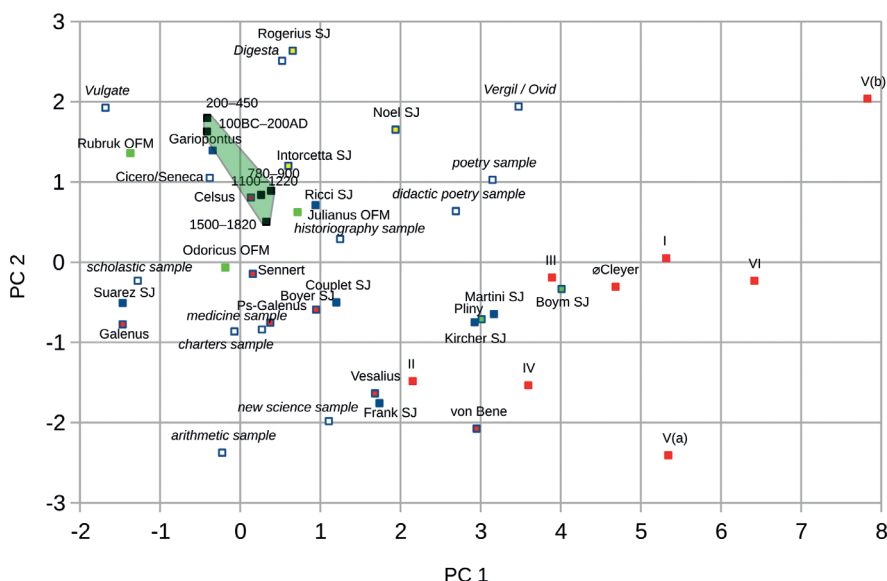


Fig. 3: PCA plot for the seven PoS. The PCA vector for the forty scientific texts (from Roelli 2021) is used. Note that the numbers do not have an intuitive meaning; the distances between items simply express their differences in PoS composition, optimised for the forty scientific texts.

Finally, the ten parameters found to be most telling for scientific texts are used for another PCA plot (Fig. 4).⁵¹ This plot is meant to depict to what extent these texts are typically scientific texts. Many of the texts are relatively close to the benchmark samples; thus their parameters are not very typical for science texts.

⁵⁰ The values for the PCA vectors are (for ADJ, ADV, CONJ, N, PREP, PRON, V): PC1 0.23, -0.46, -0.43, 0.53, -0.10, -0.48, 0.18; PC2 0.58, 0.21, -0.09, -0.10, 0.39, -0.26, -0.62.

⁵¹ The values: (for ADJ, N, PREP, nom, esse, 3rd, 1st, poss, adj-suf, entropy): PC1 0.03, 0.39, -0.23, -0.42, -0.44, -0.25, 0.28, 0.26, -0.21, 0.43; PC2, -0.47, -0.20, -0.22, 0.22, 0.26, -0.41, 0.12, 0.41, -0.42, -0.19.

The Cleyer texts, which are again closest to von Bene, as well as some Jesuit texts that have a (in some cases a strong) tendency towards scholastic Latin, are the conspicuous exception, but Kircher, Boym, Martini, and Couplet as well as the Confucius translations stay close to the benchmark samples and therefore to ordinary non-scientific Latin prose, as do the Franciscans except Rubruk. Unexpectedly, the most literal Confucius translation by Rogerius remains closest to the benchmark, while the other two have a tendency toward the poetry samples. It is unclear why this is so.

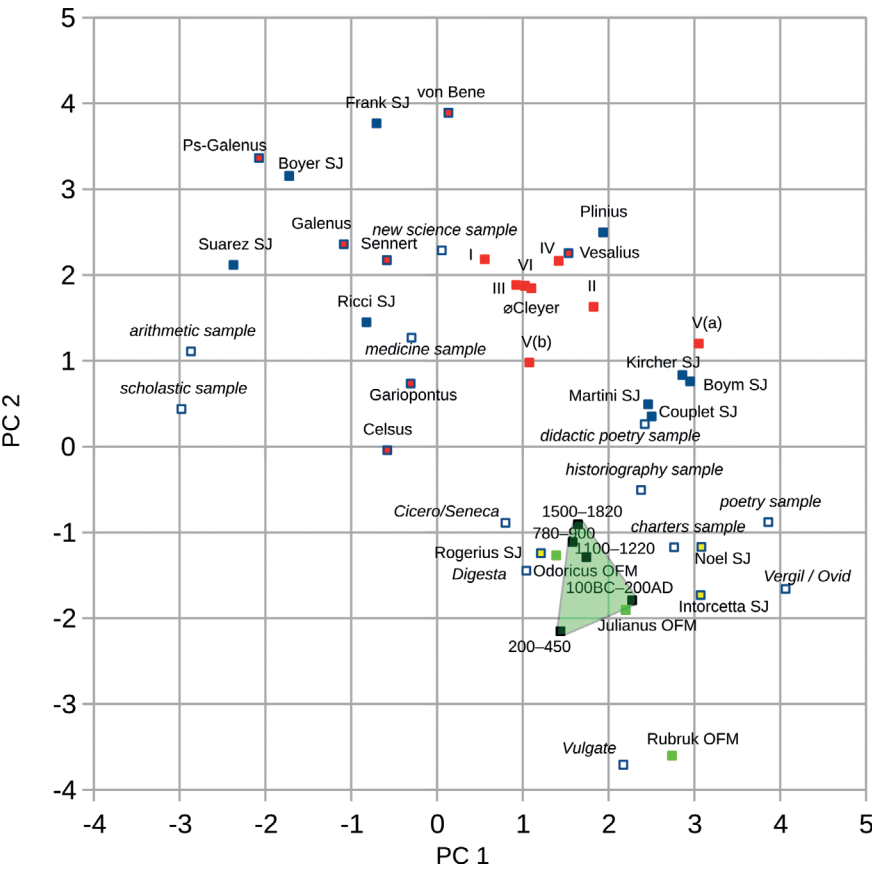


Fig. 4: PCA plot for the ten parameters for scientific Latin as described in the main text. For the colours, see. Fig. 2.

In order to improve the validity of these findings, more and better annotated data would help. I have used what is currently available. The future will certainly provide more digitised and encoded texts, for instance at the ongoing projects *SER-ICA* and *noscemus*, and at Corpus Corporum we are working on an improved POS tagging and lemmatisation tool upon which the annotation is based. Despite these caveats, the results seem reasonable overall.

7 Conclusion

We have studied the Latin of some groups of texts related to China by automatically analysing the frequencies of their grammatical categories. By and large, the Latin used by Jesuits in China could not be found to differ greatly from other kinds of scholarly or scientific Latin in this respect. The Confucius translations, and even more Cleyer's collection of Chinese medicine texts, differed more strongly from other Latin in our samples. The more verbatim the Confucius translations the more they differed in the composition of PoS. Cleyer's texts differed to some extent among one another: the two list-like parts of V were most conspicuous. In general, Cleyer's texts tended to have numbers similar to those of Pliny's botanical Latin and differed strongly from the Galenic texts on the same topic. At least some of these differences have clearly to do with the differences between Chinese and Latin/Greek, for instance the high numbers of suffixes and modifiers compared to low incidences of these in Cleyer's texts.

These methods of statistically studying grammatical features of texts have as yet not been used widely and certainly still need some refinement, but they do seem to have the potential to broadly group various types of Latin texts surprisingly well. In the texts' vocabulary, the most conspicuous differences were terms that seemed hard to translate and that were left in transliteration. This could be observed in both directions of translating, illustrating the considerable gap between the two cultures that had first to be bridged. From Chinese to Latin we mentioned cases of rendering basic sphygmological terms by just transliterating them, the other way round in Ricci's theology for instance the word *deus*.

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Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607), S.J., and the Latin Poem on His Missions in China

Abstract: The Italian Jesuit Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607) is considered one of the pioneering missionaries in China, having played a crucial role in facilitating communication between China and the West. A Latin poem preserved in a manuscript of the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* serves as an *epicum carmen*, recounting Father Ruggieri's heroic endeavors in introducing Catholicism to China. It provides a third-person account of what he witnessed, heard, and suffered during his expedition.

The present study focuses on this text – one of the earliest Jesuit epic poems – and its context. First, it presents fundamental information about the poem, including its origin and its connection to Michele Ruggieri's accompanying report. Then, the study delves into the analysis of the poem's text and authorship, aiming to make clear its relationship with Michele Ruggieri and his missions in China. Lastly, the paper includes a transcription of the Latin poem along with a translation into Italian.

Keywords: Michele Ruggieri, Latin Poem, Poetic Composition, Jesuit Mission in China

During the latter half of the year 1580, the Italian Jesuit Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607), known by his Chinese name Luo Mingjian (羅明堅), accompanied by a group of Portuguese merchants, found himself in Guangzhou (廣州), the bustling metropolis of the Guangdong (廣東) Province, for the first time. Ruggieri harbored a strong desire to befriend the local officials, and his wish came true when

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he managed to win the favor of a Mandarin who was responsible for the administration of justice there. As a result, Ruggieri was granted a house near the Pearl River, known as Zhujiang (珠江) in Chinese. It was there that he began constructing a chapel, where religious services such as Mass were held for Portuguese merchants and some Chinese Christians.

According to Ruggieri's own account, one day, after a ceremony in the chapel, a Chinese man possessed by a *demonio* entered. The chapel, with its exotic style, intrigued him, but he struck his head three times with an oyster (or perhaps on the oyster-shaped decoration of the altar), which caused him to bleed.¹ Then he rushed out of the chapel, exclaiming: «The foreign father wounded me, but this crime should not have been allowed to pass without worthy punishment, and with the father's own blood.»² His cry was loud, and immediately attracted a crowd around Michele Ruggieri. Word reached the local officials, who arrived promptly to address the situation. Ruggieri managed to defend himself and was cleared of all false accusations by an official investigation. Consequently, he was permitted to continue his religious mission in the city.

The incident of the possessed man may have left a lasting impression on Michele Ruggieri during his initial experiences in Guangzhou. It was referenced multiple times in various reports, including a Latin poem about the early years of Ruggieri's mission in China (ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, ff.118b–131a). The poem intertwined this story with other elements, such as the causes and consequences of Ruggieri's expedition to China, as well as the difficulties he faced during his journey. It also explores various aspects of China, such as its geography, nature, climate, products, arts, and religious beliefs. Of course, the poem delves into the obstacles Ruggieri encountered in his missions and his interactions with Chinese officials. With its distinctly classical style, the poem depicts Ruggieri's heroic deeds in a profound and moving manner.

This Latin poem, blending a Chinese context with elements from classical literature, represents the convergence of humanism and the Jesuit missions to China. Surprisingly, it has been largely overlooked in scholarship. This article aims to shed light on the significance of the poem by examining it from both a contextual and a textual perspective, offering a closer examination of Michele Ruggieri's journey to China and its literary representation.

1 The story is documented at least five times in *M. Ruggiero: Relationes 1577–1591*, four of which are in the report (ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, ff.13a–14a, ff.21a–b, f.94b, ff.118a–b), and one appears in the Latin poem examined below (ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, ff.126b–128b = lines 276–348 of the poem). Some details vary between the different reports.

2 Original quotation: «Il padre forastiero mi hà ferito, che però non si doveva lasciar passare questo delitto senza condegno castigo, et col sangue istesso del padre» (ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.118a).

I

This poem lacks a title, a specific date of writing, or detailed author information, which raises several questions. It is attached to a report titled *Relatione del successo della missione della Cina dal mese di novembre 1577, sino all'anno 1591 del padre Michel Ruggiero al molto V. P. padre Claudio Acquaviva Generale della Compagnia di Giesu nostro padre* (hereafter *Relatione*). In this report, Michele Ruggieri addresses Claudio Acquaviva (1543–1615), the fifth Superior General of the Society of Jesus (1581–1615), providing an account of his missions in China. However, contrary to what the title suggests, Michele Ruggieri only covers events from his entry into the Society of Jesus in Rome in 1572 to his first visit to Guangzhou in 1580. As a result, the report describes only a partial fragment of Michele Ruggieri's mission in China, rather than providing a complete history. In other words, the *Relatione*, even if composed by Ruggieri after 1591 or much later, remains an unfinished report for unknown reasons. This incomplete nature of the report aligns partially with the Latin poem, as we will discuss later, though the poem's recounting ends a little later than that in the *Relatione*, as will be explained in section III of this paper. The Latin poem must have come into Ruggieri's hands in Europe and have been inserted into his own *Relatione*. Today, both the *Relatione* and the poem are bound together with other documents under the title *M. Ruggiero: Relationes 1577–1591* and preserved as a whole in the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, with the collection number Jap.Sin.101, I.

Apart from the *Relatione*, another Italian report can be found at the beginning of the *M. Ruggiero: Relationes 1577–1591* collection, bearing the same title and partially identical in content. However, this report is much richer and more detailed, covering Ruggieri's missionary activities up until the year 1591, aligning with the title's scope.³ Interestingly, although there is a mention there of a Latin poem composed by a Jesuit father describing the aforementioned case with Michele Ruggieri, the poem itself is absent from this report.⁴ In other words, those interested in reading the poem would have to refer to the unfinished report, *Relatione*. On the other hand, one must turn to the (much) longer report for a comprehensive knowledge of Michele Ruggieri's missions both in China and in Europe.

3 In addition to this longer report (ff.8a–103b) at the beginning of the collection, there are three manuscripts following it, namely: a non-titled list of Jesuit residences in China (ff.104a–b), *Alcuni avvisi circa il modo di aiutare i cinisi* (ff.106a–111a), and *Le cose il padre Michele Ruggieri ha lasciato di cose chinesi* (f.115a). These are not part of Michele Ruggieri's report and were written much later than 1591.

4 «Questo caso si riferisce in un poema latino, fatto d'un nostro padre, mandato al Padre Ruggiero che si mette sul fine» (ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.21b). See also below, note 13.

At the end of the *M. Ruggiero: Relationes 1577–1591* collection, there is another Italian manuscript consisting of six chapters. It lacks a title and authorial attribution. However, its content is translated from two different texts, both dedicated to China. The first five chapters are identified with the work of the Portuguese Jesuit writer João de Lucena (1549–1600), titled *Historia da Vida do Padre Francisco de Xavier e doque fizeram na India os mais Religiosos da Companhia de Iesu*, while the last chapter is translated from the work of the Spanish writer Bernardino de Escalante (ca. 1537–1605), titled *Discurso de la navegacion que los Portugueses hazen à los Reinos y Provincias del Oriente, y de la noticia que se tiene de las grandezas del Reino de la China*. Although there are differences and modifications between the original texts and the translations, the manuscript is one of the earliest Italian versions of both, representing the transmission of Sinology from the Iberian Peninsula to Italy.

Therefore, the *M. Ruggiero: Relationes 1577–1591* collection represents a collective effort by modern Europeans, namely Michele Ruggieri, João de Lucena, and Bernardino de Escalante (or those who translated their texts) to expand knowledge about China in Europe. The Latin poem is closely related to these texts, focusing on Michele Ruggieri's initial successes in China.

II

Michele Ruggieri is known as one of the earliest Sinologists in Europe.⁵ He was born in 1543 in Spinazzola, Italy, and his father Lodovico had served the Duke of Gravina in Naples for many years. In 1560, Michele Ruggieri began studying both civil and ecclesiastical law (*ius utrumque*). As a student in Jesuit schools, he must also have studied Italian, Latin, and many classical authors such as Cicero, Horace, Virgil, and Martial. Before dedicating himself to the work of evangelization, Ruggieri served in the government of the Spanish King, Felipe II (1527–1598), in Naples. However, due to an unfair and tragic incident involving his friend, he left his position.

⁵ For references to biographical sources regarding Michele Ruggieri, cf. (but not limited to) Zhang (2001), Lo Sardo (1993), Brunello (2013), Lo Sardo (2016), Wang and Canaris (2023). Professor Ronnie Hsia has dedicated a separate chapter to Michele Ruggieri and his life in Po-chia Hsia (2010) 97–115. Father Tacchi Venturi (1861–1956) was the first to publish some letters and manuscripts of Ruggieri, which contain valuable material for understanding his life: see Tacchi Venturi (1913) 396–408, 410–425, 434–436, 446–450, 498–540.

On October 28, 1572, Michele Ruggieri relocated to Rome and registered as a student at the Collegio Romano, where he commenced regular studies in theology and other subjects. On March 12, 1578 he departed from Lisbon for India, accompanied by other Jesuits, including Matteo Ricci, who was still a novice at the time. They arrived in Goa on September 14, 1578, and Ruggieri was assigned to Malabar, a coastal city near Goa, for the purpose of preaching Christianity. Later, under the direction of Visiting Father Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606), Ruggieri embarked on a ship in Cochim destined for Macao, arriving there on July 20, 1579. He immediately immersed himself in the study of the Chinese language. Concurrently, he took advantage of the annual Portuguese trading expeditions to Guangzhou, which allowed him to venture into the hinterland of China in the second half of 1580, as mentioned above. From then on, Father Ruggieri devoted himself to his Catholic mission in China until he was sent back to Europe on November 20, 1588, never to return. He passed away in Naples on May 11, 1607.

Michele Ruggieri's greatest contribution was to open the door for the spread of Christianity in early modern China, particularly preparing the ground for Matteo Ricci. Italian Sinologist Pasquale D'Elia (1890–1963), a scholar from the Society of Jesus, evaluated their relationship as follows:

Therefore, it seems legitimate to argue that Ruggieri's role in the organization of the Chinese Mission was that of John the Baptist. From both an apostolic and a literary perspective, he paved the way for Ricci, introduced him to the Middle Kingdom, and then quietly disappeared as a discreet 'friend of the bridegroom'.⁶

After Ricci took center stage in history, Ruggieri, the 'friend of the bridegroom', seemed to fade from public view. Moreover, some of his writings, such as those included in the collection *M. Ruggiero: Relationes 1577–1591*, were unjustly and intentionally forgotten. An anonymous individual wrote the following words in the manuscript: «Do not trust it, as three-quarters of the truth are false in many narratives.»⁷ The judgement is unfair, but in the end Michele Ruggieri did not fall into silence. He was not forgotten. Over time, increasing attention was given to this document in academic circles.⁸ As a matter of fact, his knowledge of China

⁶ Original quotation: «Ci sembra dunque legittimo di sostenere che l'ufficio del Ruggieri nell'organizzazione della Missione Cinese fu quello del Battista. Dal punto di vista sia dell'apostolato, sia dell'opera letteraria, egli preparò le vie al Ricci, l'introdusse nell'Impero di Mezzo e, da vero e discreto 'amico dello sposo', scomparve in silenzio dalla scena». See D'Elia (1934), in particular 222.

⁷ Original quotation: «Non è da fidarsene punto che il falso v'è a tre quarti del vero in molte narrazioni», in ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.2a.

⁸ As we can see in Lo Sardo (2016), Po-chia Hsia (2010), Song (2011), Gisondi (1999), Wang and Canaris (2023).

entered European intellectual circles at an early stage, becoming an important source of information for Europe's understanding of China. This can be observed in Antonio Possevino's (1533–1611) work, *Bibliotheca selecta qua agitur de ratione studiorum in historia, in disciplinis, in salute omnium procuranda* (Rome, 1593). Possevino, an Italian Jesuit and a learned man to whom Ruggieri reported on various aspects of China upon his arrival in Italy, included information on religions, culture, society, and so on in his *Bibliotheca selecta*, which then circulated within the European academic community.⁹

III

To some extent, the Latin poem serves a similar purpose by recounting from a third-person point of view the challenging process of how a Catholic hero from Rome (in this case, Michele Ruggieri) brought Catholicism to China. However, the content of this poem does not entirely align with the historical facts of Ruggieri's experiences. For example, what Ruggieri said during the discussion with the officials in Guangzhou regarding the reason for his journey to China is not mentioned in his missionary report.¹⁰ Instead, this poem combines elements of fiction and employs a rhetorical style to depict the actions of a great hero, in much the same way as Aeneas' adventures in laying the foundations of Rome. Besides this, the poem incorporates some aspects of an image of China already present in early Western literature, such as details concerning its wealth, geography, religious practices, superstitions, and the diligence of its people.¹¹ However, other details are taken from *topoi* and traditional figures of classical literary sources to express what Ruggieri had seen and heard in China.

⁹ Possevino (1593). The book was reprinted at least twice in subsequent years (1603 and 1607), with the sections on China being retained.

¹⁰ For Michele Ruggieri's travelling as depicted in the poem, see ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.123a–b (lines 150–173 of the poem). For his discussion with the governor of Guangzhou, see ARSI, Jap. Sin.101, I, ff.125a–126a (lines 224–264 of the poem).

¹¹ For example, a similar exposition of China's geography can be found in González de Mendoza (1585) 1–10. Additionally, Antonio Possevino mentioned that China was surrounded by the Massageteans and Scythians, stating: «a Septentrione autem cingitur Massagetarum, Scytharumque limitibus,» in Possevino (1603) 453. The worship of stones can be found in “De los dioses y dolos sacrificios y fiestas” in Martín de Rada, *Relación Verdadera de las cosas del Reyno de Taibin*, Bibliothèque nationale de France with collection number Fonds Espagnol, 325.9 (MF 13184), f.29b.

For instance, when the author describes China's wealth, he draws a comparison with the figure of Berecynthia (i.e., the goddess Cybele), and mention of Avernus, a name unfamiliar to China at the time, is made by a Chinese official to describe the actions of the false accuser.¹² This portrayal of the remote East by way of European literary motifs creates an image of China that is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar to Westerners. However, it should be noted that even this image of China remains one-sided, being limited primarily to Southern China or, more precisely, to the province of Guangdong.

Now, the question arises: Who created this image of China? In other words, who is the author of this poem? In the manuscript, the poem is attributed to one of Ruggieri's companions: «For this reason, one of our fathers composed this poem to further explain the aforementioned event. I have thus included it here as follows».¹³ Unfortunately, no additional information is provided about this 'father'. It can be assumed that Ruggieri shared his experiences in China with this companion, who then wrote them down in poetic form, drawing upon his own creative abilities. Such things were not uncommon. For example, Duarte de Sande (1547–1599), a Portuguese Jesuit, was ordered by Alessandro Valignano to translate into Latin the diary of the Japanese envoys to the Roman Curia.¹⁴

However, in this case the situation appears more complex. As mentioned earlier, the event discussed in this poem took place in 1580, when Ruggieri was alone in Guangzhou in the province of Guangdong. During his second visit to Guangzhou in the first half of 1581, he was accompanied by Francisco Pires (?–?), a Portuguese Jesuit about whom little information is available.¹⁵ And the poem provides a clue to its creation date. It relates to the fact that Ruggieri presented an exquisite clock to the Viceroy, referred to as *Tutanus* in the poem, in Zhaoqing (肇慶), a city (also in Guangdong) described as very famous in China.¹⁶ Initially, when Ruggieri first arrived in China, he would often bring European items, including clocks, as gifts for Chinese officials as a way to establish good relations. The second visit he made to Zhaoqing began on December 18, 1582, on which he was accompanied by Francesco Pasio (1554–1612), an Italian Jesuit from Bologna. Ruggieri brought with

12 For Berecynthia, see ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.121a (lines 88–94 of the poem); for Avernus, see ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.128b (line 340 of the poem).

13 Original quotation: «Perilchè un nostro Padre compose questo poema per maggior dechiaratione del sudetto caso l'ho perciò voluto mettere qui come si segue». Cf. ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.118b.

14 See Burnett (1996).

15 ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.15a, f.22a, and for a short biography of Pires, see D'Elia (1942–1949) vol. 1, 156, n. 3.

16 ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.130a: *celeberrima Cinę / Urbs hæc* (lines 389–390 of the poem).

him at that time a clock as a gift for the Viceroy.¹⁷ The Jesuits arrived in Zhaoqing two days after Christmas, where they received a warm welcome from the Viceroy.¹⁸ The poem, in mentioning that Ruggieri presented a clock to the *Tutanus*,¹⁹ likely refers to this event. Since the poem does not mention any other activities related to Ruggieri's missions in China, it is reasonable to assume that it was completed at the end of December 1582 at the earliest. Could Francesco Pasio be the 'father' mentioned in the note preceding the poem? It is worth noting that Francesco Pasio left Macao for Japan on July 14, 1583. There is much information available about his further interactions with China until his appointment as the Visitor of China and Japan in 1608, a year after Ruggieri's death. However, there are no records that specifically link Father Pasio to this poem.²⁰ Therefore, delving deeper into the sources might divulge more information. However, there is another possibility to consider: the person who wrote this poem might have been Michele Ruggieri himself.

Ruggieri possessed a talent for literary creation, a tradition that had been upheld within the Society of Jesus. This tradition can be observed in figures like Duarte de Sande, Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688), a Flemish Jesuit missionary in China during the Qing dynasty, and Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (1674–1743), a French Jesuit who specialized in China despite never having been there.²¹ Michele Ruggieri deserves recognition as one of the finest representatives of this tradition, having maintained a strong passion for Western literature. As evidence of this, in the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* one finds Chinese documents used or composed by Ruggieri, some of which are translations from Western literature, including Aesop's *Fables* and stories from the Bible.²²

17 The first time he visited Zhaoqing was much earlier in the same year. He stayed there for fifteen days, and no gift is mentioned; cf. *Michele Ruggieri S.I. al P. Claudio Acquaviva Prep. Gen. S.I. a Roma (Sciaochin, 7 febbraio 1583)*, in Tacchi Venturi (1913) 414; and for Zhaoqing, cf. *Michele Ruggieri S.I. al P. Claudio Acquaviva Prep. Gen. S.I. a Roma (Macao, 14 dicembre 1582)*, in Tacchi Venturi (1913) 407.

18 For their arrival in Zhaoqing, cf. *Michele Ruggieri S.I. al P. Claudio Acquaviva Prep. Gen. S.I. a Roma (Sciaochin, 7 febbraio 1583)*, in Tacchi Venturi (1913) 414.

19 ARSI, Jap.Sin.101, I, f.130a (lines 391ff. of the poem).

20 Francesco Pasio is considered one of the founders of the Jesuit missions in China, who – in Matteo Ricci's words – had «already been a member of the China Mission, deeply loved China and, thus, greatly encouraged the mission»: cf. D'Elia (1942–1949) vol. 2, 256, translated in López-Gay (2001) 28. For a brief biography of Father Pasio, cf. Pfister (1932) 21–22.

21 For the case of Verbiest, cf. Golvers (2017) 75–79. Regarding Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, see Landry-Deron (2002) 50–51.

22 Michele Ruggieri had incorporated some biblical stories into his *Tianzhu shengjiao shilu* (《天主聖教實錄》), in ARSI, Jap.Sin.I, 189, ff.6a–9a; while in the *Tongsu gushi* (《通俗故事》), namely *Exempla vulgaria* (ARSI, Jap.Sin.58a), some biblical stories were translated into Chinese. This is a text considered to have been written by Ruggieri as an exercise in learning Chinese.

It seems that Ruggieri had a personal inclination toward poetry. He translated one ode written by a Chinese *literatus* into Latin meter, attaching it as an appendix to one of his letters.²³ Additionally, he composed numerous poems, all of which discovered thus far are written in Chinese. These poems amount to a total of 52 pieces, covering various topics such as missions, Chinese rites, religious education, and the philosophy of life; some are antiphonal poems. Similarly to the Latin poem discussed earlier, Ruggieri incorporated Western literary material into his poetry, including Aesop's *Fables* and the *Epigrammata Bobiensia*. Through these works, Michele Ruggieri introduced Western stories into China. To illustrate this, consider his Chinese poems titled 莫枉勞心 (*mò wǎng láo xīn*) and 避剛全柔之身 (*bì gāng quán róu zhī shēn*), in which he utilized fables that can be identified within collections of Aesopic fables. The former corresponds to the fable of *The Aethiop*, while the latter relates to *The Two Pots*, and both can be seen below:

莫枉勞心²⁴
 黑人洗白最為難，
 賤望榮華命又慳。
 黑夜誰能為白晝，
 天高人手那能扳。

The text in the Aesopic tradition (more precisely, in Aphthonius' collection of fables) is as follows:

The Aethiop²⁵

The purchaser of a black servant was persuaded that the color of his skin arose from dirt contracted through the neglect of his former masters. On bringing him home he resorted to every means of cleaning, and subjected the man to incessant scrubbing. He caught a severe cold, but he never changed his color nor complexion. What's bred in the bone will stick to the flesh.

23 The Latin version of the poem can be found in a letter dated 30 May 1584, in ARSI, Jap.Sin.9–2, f.264a.

24 All the poems were translated into English by the late Jesuit scholar Albert Chan: cf. Chan (1993). Literally, the title 莫枉勞心 (*mò wǎng láo xīn*) can be translated as “Do not labor yourself in vain”. Father Albert Chan translated the poem as follows: «Why Worry? – It would be most difficult to scrub a black man white, so with those in inferior positions to look for honor and prosperity, if fortune does not favor them. Who is there who can turn a dark night into a bright noon? Or, what human hands are able to touch the high heaven?» – cf. Chan (1993) 167.

25 Translation: Townsend (1867) 73. Other editions: Hausrath (1959) 91–92 [Nr. 274], Perry (1952) 481 [Nr. 393], Chambry (1925–1926) vol. 1, 49 [Nr. 11]. The fable actually comes from Aphthonius' collection (Aphth. *fab.* 6), who might have reused and rewritten a text that was already part of the ‘Aesopic fable’ tradition.

避剛全柔之身²⁶
 水里兩缸浪輓推，
 一缸銅鑄一坭坯。
 銅呼泥的相鄰倚。
 泥傍銅邊免浪摧。
 坭識銅金剛不壞，
 坭知坭土易崩開。
 坭缸若靠銅缸住，
 浪打銅挨坭盡災。

While the text in the Aesopic tradition is as follows:

The Two Pots²⁷

A river carried down in its stream two Pots, one made of earthenware, and the other of brass. The Earthen Pot said to the Brass Pot, «Pray keep at a distance, and do not come near me; for if you touch me ever so slightly, I shall be broken in pieces; and besides, I by no means wish to come near you». Equals make the best friends.

Meanwhile, Ruggieri, in another of his Chinese poems titled 戲跛瞎相依 (xì jiǎ xiā xiāng yī), used the apologue known in English as *The Blind and the Lamé*. We find one version of this apologue in the *Epigrammata Bobiensia*, a collection of 71 poems written between the fourth and fifth centuries, under the title *In caecum et claudum*. Ruggieri utilized this apologue to show how friends can support and help each other. Ruggieri's Chinese poem reads as follows:

戲跛瞎相依(譬喻今之朋友互相依倚)²⁸
 長衢瞎子靠跛人，
 跛瞎相依甚苦辛。
 瞎靠跛人雙目看，
 跛依瞎子一身行。

²⁶ The English translation of the fable by Albert Chan is as following: «To Keep Oneself Free from Hardness and to Remain Entirely Gentle – Two crocks floating in the water were tossed by the waves, one of them of brass and the other clay. The brass crock called its neighbor to come closer, supported by the brass crock the clay one was safe from the pounding waves. The clay crock knows that the brass one is strong and unbreakable. It also knows that clay can be easily shattered. And if the clay crock depends on the brass one for its protection, it could suffer complete destruction when the brass crock is struck by the waves». Cf. Chan (1993) 169.

²⁷ Translation: Townsend (1867) 71. Other editions: Perry (1952) 477 [Nr. 378], Chambry (1925–1926) vol. 2, 560 [Nr. 355].

²⁸ The English translation of the poem by Albert Chan is as follows: «Parable of the Cripple and the Blind. A Parable to Show How Friends Can Help One Another – Along the long road the blind man depends on the cripple, it is indeed not easy for them to depend on one another; the blind man depends on the eyes of the cripple for direction, and the cripple on the feet of the blind for walking». Cf. Chan (1993) 162.

The English translation of *epigr. Bob.* 55 is:

A lame man rides on the back of a blind man, and what the one does not have he takes from the other: for the blind man lends his feet and step to the lame man, and the lame man gives the blind his eyes in exchange for his feet.²⁹

Due to the absence of Chinese language proficiency in Europe during that period, these Chinese poems were intended solely for Chinese readers, particularly the literati. In contrast, the Latin poem about Ruggieri's mission catered exclusively to European readers. It served as a means to describe the challenging beginning of Ruggieri's mission in China and the foundation he laid. Additionally, the Latin poem enhanced and molded the perception of China with the information that Ruggieri provided to European readers, influencing their understanding of the country. It is from this European perspective that we can better understand the historical background of this literary work. Through poignant writing and literary devices, this poem narrates the heroic deeds of Jesuit missionaries in China, thus constructing the image of the missionaries and showcasing their activities, possibly inspiring European support for missionary endeavors in China, in the same vein as the optimistic sentiment conveyed at the end of the poem (lines 425–428):

But you, O generous hero, persist in the endeavors already begun,
which are favorable – praise be to thee! – and see to it that all
minds entangled in the dark night of errors
From darkness rise to the lights of clear life.

IV

The following is a transcription of the Latin poem contained in Jap.Sin.101, I, ff.118b–131a. The folios are indicated by the two different numberings found on the manuscript (an older one, 3b–16a, and a more recent one, 118b–131a). As mentioned above,³⁰ the poem is attributed to a Father not explicitly named, who is said to have composed this text to better illustrate the events that happened to Michele Ruggieri (f.118b).

²⁹ Original Latin text: *Insidens caeco graditur pede claudus utroque: / quo caret alteruter, sumit ab alterutro: / caecus namque pedes claudus gressumque ministrat, / at claudus caeco lumina pro pedibus.* Cf. Nocchi (2016) 337–339.

³⁰ Cf. note 13.

The transcription follows rather closely the orthographical peculiarities of the manuscript. More precisely, the original spelling is maintained, including the spelling of diphthongs as *æ/œ/ē*, the use of *-i-* and *-j-*, upper and lower cases, diacritics such as apices. Particular care has also been taken to mark those letters that correspond to abbreviations in the manuscript (such letters are indicated in italics, and not in brackets, for better readability). The original punctuation is also preserved, although this is sometimes at odds with modern rules and in some places misleading. Square brackets indicate deletions in the manuscript, and the dots contained within them represent letters that are not better recognizable.

These transcription criteria have been chosen so as to support any scholars who might wish to examine the manuscript, in order to guide them in their reading or to provide a basis for further discussion and improvement of the transcription.

Where the sense of the text is not fully comprehensible, or where the text as given may be ambiguous, footnotes are provided with modern spellings of individual words or with brief explanations. The text of the manuscript is not free of errors, as can be seen from grammatical or metrical inconsistencies. Such errors are pointed out or corrected in the footnotes.

The transcription is accompanied by a translation into Italian. The sole purpose of the translation is to facilitate the interpretation of the text (hence some lines that are translated with rather long formulations aim at clarifying the meaning of the text as much as possible). The translation is based on the text as corrected and interpreted in the notes to the transcription (sometimes, for better understanding, the corrected reading is included between brackets in the Italian text); it does not necessarily follow the punctuation of the manuscript, especially where this leads to misinterpretation. Both the text and the translation retain references to the original folio numbers and have additional line numeration for easier referencing. An English translation can be found in the contribution by Professor Charles Burnett in this same volume;³¹ his translation, while largely following our edition of the text, may differ from our translation in certain passages because of different textual choices or interpretations of the text.

The text can be divided into the following sections (line numbers are given here):
 1–14: Proem
 15–94: Description of China
 95–149: The superstition of the Chinese and Michele Ruggieri's intervention
 150–173: Journey to China
 174–217: Macao

31 Cf. Burnett in this volume.

218–377: Canton (Guangzhou)

276–348: The false accusation against Ruggieri

378–412: Sciauchinum (Zhaoqing)

413–428: Closure

V

(Transcription)

[3b/118b]

- 1 Gesta cano, *sacrumque* virum, qui primus àb arce
- 2 Romulea, sancto procerum suadente senatu
- 3 Multa per insanj ferventes æquoris iras
- 4 passus, inaccessas Cinæ penetravit in oras;
- 5 Aut certus tandem miseræ succurrere genti,
- 6 Aut dare pro Christo mixtam cum sanguine vitam.
- 7 Huc ades interea celsi regnator Olympi,
- 8 cuius ter sanctum tulit ille, àc nobile nomen,
- 9 Barbaricisque sacrum patefecit numen in oris,
- 10 Cenatus³² humiles, aususque hos aspice dexter;

[4a/119a]

- 11 Tu quoque virgo potens vires animosque canenti
- 12 suffice; *nam[.l]que* tibi positum de marmore templum
- 13 surgit ibi primum, et iam aggestis undique donis,
- 14 Culta Sabæorum fumant altaria thure.

- 15 Est Asiæ extremæ regio notissima fama
- 16 Sinarum quondam, nunc verso nomine Cinam
- 17 vulgus habet, maior patulum qua nulla per orbem
- 18 visitur, aut gravidis late fœcundior arvis.
- 19 Flammigeri Eoos solis qua³³ vergit ad ortus,
- 20 flatibus Oceanj tumefactas excipit undas:

³² The text of the manuscript (*cenatus*) is probably wrong and should be corrected to *conatus*.

³³ The reading is uncertain; there seems to be another sign above *qua* in the manuscript, which may have been corrected/deleted. It may read *quae*, which would be a nominative feminine singular referring to China.

- 21 Quæ³⁴ Titana videt currus immergere ponto,
 22 Indos exiguo terræ discrimine tangit:
 23 Quē furit è gelida Boreas lactatus³⁵ ab arcto,
 24 Massagitæ, rabidique Scythæ circumdatur armis:
 25 Quæ Notus adverso Boreæ bacchatur ab axe,
 26 Seribus innatas opponit fluctibus arces.

[4b/119b]

- 27 Terra viris, opibusque potens, pecore, urbibus, agris,
 28 Fluminibusque, auroque aliisque beata metallis,
 29 Celsa superba caput nitidum inter nubila condit,
 30 Ter quinquena³⁶ regit vasta, et celeberrima Regna,
 31 Singula quæ centum leges, et iura resolvunt,³⁷
 32 Urbibus, et domino, sceptroque obtemperat unj.
 33 Excelsis, firmisque nova compage revinctis,
 34 Ordinibus laterum condunt se mœnibus urbes,
 35 Qualia nec Babylon vidit, nec prisca vetustas,
 36 Ingentem populj numerum non equoris æstus;
 37 Non maris eiectas quas littus combibit undas,
 38 Gramina non³⁸ æquant veris, non sydera cæli.
 39 Non tot vere novo profert fœcunda racemos

³⁴ The structure of these lines is somewhat complex. The first *qua* (in the sense of “where”) is answered by three *quæ*, of which the second should be interpreted as the object (neuter plural) of *furit*. But more likely the three *quæ* should all be corrected to *qua*; this is the solution adopted in the translation.

³⁵ Could be corrected to *iactatus*. Otherwise, we can interpret *lactatus* as “nourished by”.

³⁶ On the model of *septeni*, *deceni*, and similar adjectives, instead of the classical form *quini*. The resulting number of kingdoms is thus fifteen (“three times five”).

³⁷ The meaning of these lines is a little unclear. The verb *resolvo* can refer to the act of nullifying laws (*OLD* s.v. 7b). The sense here might be that the individual kingdoms do not need all the laws that are typically necessary in other lands to govern the cities, but they all follow the will of a single ruler. To accommodate this interpretation, the verb *obtemperat* (in the following line) should be corrected to *obtemperant* in order to match the previous *quæ* (or the singular form might be a sort of *concordantia ad sensum*, derived from *singula* in the previous line). Alternatively, another meaning of *resolvunt* must be assumed; here, for example, the word could take the post-classical meaning of “determine” or “settle”, as does the English “resolve” (as suggested by Burnett). This is the solution adopted in the translation.

³⁸ The manuscript reading *non* is the result of the correction of a word that cannot be better identified.

- 40 Vitis, et Autumno turgentes porrigit uvas
 41 Non tot monstra secant mare, non tot mella leguntur
 42 Attica; nec segetes tot flavas Gargara fundunt.
 43 Quot fert Cina viros, fruiturque beata per ævum.

[5a/120a]

- 44 Nec mirum: vetitus nam Regum lege colonis
 45 Exitus est quondam; nec fas excedere fines,
 46 Quos fortuna favens patribus quos arma dedere
 47 Hic omnes sua rura colunt; licet otia nulli
 48 Ducere, quin patria mulctatur³⁹ inertia lege
 49 Tantus amor gentj duro insudare laborj.
 50 Hoc decus est primum Cinæ. quid cætera narrem?
 51 Auriferos montes fœcundaque flumina gemmis;
 52 Necnon⁴⁰ flaventes adverso in littore arenas?
 53 Undique odora ferax effundit aromata sylva:
 54 Undique tarda strepit grato cum murmure lynfa
 55 Usibus humanis, atque usibus apta færarum.
 56 Hic ver perpetuum suaves diffundit odores;
 57 Hic formosa viget triferis proventibus æstas;
 58 Æternumque arbor nusquam deponit honorem.
 59 Non informis hyems riget hic, non frigus iniquum:
 60 Non ager assiduo languescens imbre fatiscit;

[5b/120b]

- 61 Omnia sed rident, lætos dant omnia plausus.
 62 Hic Pater Autumnus sedet, huic frons, rubraque circum
 63 Tempora collucent gravidis distincta racemis;
 64 Punica deinde tegunt impexos mala capillos,
 65 Poma, nuces, et castaneæ, àc post terga reflexa
 66 Persica; rugosisque immixta novo ordine palmis
 67 Caryca, quæ fælix una hæc fert omnia tellus.
 68 Hic varium arguto modulantur gutture carmen
 69 Depictę volucres sensum sua quæque voluptas

³⁹ Should be corrected to *mulctetur*.

⁴⁰ The -c- in this word is the result of the correction of a letter that cannot be better identified.

70 Mulcet, nec frustra hic oblectamenta requiras.
 71 Quid lenes fluvij cursu, fontesque perennes?
 72 Quid prædives aquis tellus? hinc flumina centum
 73 Non Gange inferiora Lycove, aut tigre⁴¹ potentj
 74 Apti rati, nil non portant, ducuntque per urbes
 75 His avidus lanas,⁴² rutilo pallentia serica filo
 76 Àc pelles mercator emens alio orbe petitas
 77 Evehit, et Regum mensis dignissima portat
 78 Porcellana: novum mel,⁴³ hinc Rhabarbarus, atque

[6a/121a]

79 Saccharus; et glasti tingendis vestibis apti
 80 Moschique⁴⁴ in reliquas ingens effunditur oras
 81 Copia; quin contenta sua claustra repertis⁴⁵
 82 Frugibus, atque opibus sibi nil aliunde requirit.
 83 At gens ingenio pollet, seu sydera cælj
 84 Tempore quo lateant, quo surgant mente tenere;
 85 Sive arcana iuvet naturæ exquirere mira,
 86 Seu cæli versare globos; dimensaque vastam
 87 Tellurem in spatia, et varios describere tractus.
 88 Qualis in aurato residens Berecynthia curru,
 89 Turrito caput excelsum diademate cincta
 90 Hinc pia versat opes, ceu pleno copia⁴⁶ cornu;
 91 Hinc frænis domat adductis fera colla leonum;
 92 Sicque per innumeras urbes invecta triumphat:
 93 Tales Cina gerens animos, caput inserit⁴⁷ astris

41 *Tigre* would be the ablative of *tigris*, but the context (*Gange . . . Lycove*) seems to suggest a reference to the river Tigris. Therefore, the ablative should probably be corrected to *Tigri*.

42 The word *lanas* seems to be the correction of a word that cannot be better identified.

43 The word *mel* seems to be considered metrically as *mēl*, although the vowel *-e-* is short. Or the text might need to be corrected.

44 *Moschique* is to be understood as *muscique* (“and of musk”).

45 The meter of the line is incomplete. Something may be missing or the text may be more extensively corrupt.

46 Here *copia* can be understood as the personification of “abundance” and could therefore be written with a capital *C*.

47 The *-e-* in *inserit* might be the result of a correction.

- 94 *Læta triumphales proprios dum ostentat honores.*
 95 *Ast tam fælicem gentem, cęlique beatam*
 96 *Muneribus, miraue soli ubertate fruentem*

[6b/121b]

- 97 *Falsa superstitio, pietatis nescia veræ*
 98 *obscurat, miseramque facit, cęloque carentem;*
 99 *Et quem cuncta ferunt genti, rapit una decorem.*
 100 *Inscia gens nempe hic Stygio suffecta veneno,*
 101 *In vetitum ruit omne nefas, sacra cuncta profanat.*
 102 *Pars cęlum (ò miseri) ceu summum numen adorant;*
 103 *Pars non auditis celebrant animalia formis*
 104 *Gorgonas, et Scyllas, portentificasque chymēras,*
 105 *Et quæ monstriparens solito edidit Africa portu.⁴⁸*
 106 *Nonnullj mutos lapides informia saxa,*
 107 *Oblongos quidam truncos sine cortice; quidam*
 108 *Artificum perfecta manu simulacra parentum*
 109 *More colunt patrio, templisque arisque dicatis,*
 110 *Tanta premit cæcas nox, atque inscia⁴⁹ mentes*
 111 *Ergo hæc dum volvit Michael Rogerius, unus*
 112 *Hos inter sacrum, quos nomen signat Iesu,*
 113 *Ingemit, et sortem gentis miseratus iniquam*

[7a/122a]

- 114 *Intermixta gravj singultu talia fatur.*
 115 *Ergo ne⁵⁰ tot populos seclis melioribus ortos,*
 116 *Tam fortunatam gentem, tot florida regna*
 117 *Usque ignara Dei patiar traducere vitam?*
 118 *Ergo tot exhaustis⁵¹ mortalibus, atra patebit*
 119 *Ianua ditis adhuc, atque infausto ore vorabit*
 120 *Dira lues, et flamma rapax Acheronta⁵² sub imo?*
 121 *Ergo nec⁵³ tot scęlerum illinc auctor inultus abibit,*

48 Should be corrected to *partu*.

49 Should be corrected to *inscitia*.

50 Would be written as *Ergone* in classical orthography.

51 We thank Burnett for the reading of this word. *Exhaustis* should refer here to the death of these people; otherwise, the word may be a textual corruption of *extinctis*.

52 Should be corrected to *Acheronte*.

53 Should be corrected to *Ergone* (cf. line 115).

- 122 Et *cęcam* immensam*que* trahet teterrimus inde
 123 Ad sua regna hominum mensura in secula prędam?
 124 Ergo tot erumnę à Christo, tant*que* labores
 125 Suscepti, fusus laniato è corpore sanguis
 126 Infernj studiis perdetur, et arte Draconis?
 127 Non patiar: moriar moriar, me nulla pericla;
 128 Non remoretur iter, non flumina vasta, nec imbres;
 129 Non Pelagi horrendus stridor, tumide*que*⁵⁴ procellę;
 130 Non Asię retrahent inserta cacumina cęlo,

[7b/122b]

- 131 Concretę*que* nives; non ursi, aut sęva leonum
 132 Abducat⁵⁵ rabies, importun*que* latrones.
 133 Quid rabidas⁵⁶ tygres, quid ne⁵⁷ agmina dira ferarum
 134 Quid Deserta Goę mihi, quid Calecutia iactant?
 135 Alea iām iacta est: hęc stat sententia mentj,
 136 Aut miseris veram finis monstrare salutem,
 137 Demissam*que* polo servandam indicare legem;
 138 Aut ibi in ærumnis fragilem consumere vitam.
 139 Sat Patrię, àc Italis; vixisse putabo⁵⁸
 140 Sat bene me, totidem Sinis si vixero menses.
 141 Talia vix heros, cum se prosternit ad aras.
 142 At duplices supplex tendens ad sydera palmas.
 143 O Pater omnipotens, inquit, qui solus in orbe
 144 Rex terre, cęlique potens moderaris habenas
 145 Conditor at*que* idem, Rector*que* at*que* arbiter ævj,
 146 Quas tibi fundo pręces, pręcor auribus excipe pronis.
 147 Da si digna peto, pater, et quem⁵⁹ concipit ardens

[8a/123a]

- 148 mens modo perficiam; da respondere petenti,
 149 Iussaque nunc patefacta mihi complere superna.

⁵⁴ Should be corrected to *tumidaeque*.

⁵⁵ Should be corrected to *abducet* (future indicative instead of present subjunctive).

⁵⁶ The *-b-* in *rabidas* seems to be the result of the correction of an original *-p-*.

⁵⁷ Would be written as *quidne* in usual classical orthography.

⁵⁸ Something is missing in this line, probably a sequence of two short syllables and one long syllable after *Italis* (*Italis* <uu> *vixisse*).

⁵⁹ Should be corrected to *quae*.

150 Assensere piis superæ vix vocibus aures
 151 Cum subitum ad Sinam Michael (sic numina mandant)
 152 Nactus iter, lætos cælo parat auspice cursus
 153 Scanduntur firmæ, solvuntque è littore puppes
 154 Itala deseritur tellus, littusque recedit.
 155 Tu modo Musa refer, quos hinc tulit ille labores,
 156 Effusosque imbres, tempestatesque potentes
 157 Cernis ut ira furit ventorum cæca per æquor?
 158 Turbine quo terras perflant, et ut agmine facto
 159 Invisos tollunt, crebrosque ad sydera fluctus?
 160 Cernis ut in syrtes tradit fremebunda carinas
 161 Tempestas? cernis tumefacta per æquora transtra
 162 Sparsa natant tabulæque et fracti robora malj;
 163 Corpora quot passim spumanti naufraga ponto,
 164 Ludibria undarum fluitant, navisque cadaver?

[8b/123b]

165 Scilicet Oceanum tristis turbarat Erynnis,
 166 ut Patrem sua iam properantem evertere signa
 167 Terreret, mediisque andantem⁶⁰ mergeret undis.
 168 His tamen[.] ereptus Michael, maiora manere
 169 ut vidit, sese ipse parat. Mox inde furentes
 170 Tranat aquas, victisque undantia flumina ripis.
 171 Aëreos montes⁶¹ superat, qua semita nulla
 172 Cernitur, illorumque minas contemnit, et altum
 173 Protinus æquor arat, Machaisque allabitur oris.
 174 Portus Amacanus est, statio tutissima classis
 175 Hispanæ; hic primus se regna petentibus offert
 176 Cinica, et haud longo à prima stat dissita urbe
 177 Sinarum tractu, miles quem servat Iberus.
 178 Comperit hic alios eadem quos lactat ab uno
 179 ubere religio, dulcisque in fœdera vitæ
 180 instituit, prius occiduis hos norat in oris.
 181 Fit plausus, circumque iuvat dare brachia collo;

⁶⁰ The manuscript seems to read *andantem*, a post-classical form. Otherwise, it would be possible to read *audantem* and interpret this as a mistaken form for *audentem*.

⁶¹ The *m-* in *montes* seems to be the result of the correction of an original *p-*.

[9a/124a]

182 Et novis incensis facibus⁶² superadditur ardor.
 183 Qua ratione queat, consultant, Cinæ⁶³ iuvarj;
 184 Ut tot mortales addicti faucibus orci
 185 Discere virtutem, superasque evadere ad auras,
 186 Æternamque Dei possint agnoscere prolem.
 187 Multa vident obstare patres, at iniquius illud
 188 Reddere spes omnes, curasque videtur inanes:
 189 Sinarum quondam proceres, seu Demonis arte
 190 Edixere mala impulsj; sive arma timentes
 191 Proxima; ne externo cuiquam penetrare liceret
 192 Cantonios ultra muros, qui faucibus hærent
 193 Cinarum, contra qui faxit, morte luendum.
 194 Advena mercari hac urbe, et consistere iussus,
 195 Non solum interiora nequit loca visere regnj;
 196 Sed neque in urbe potest nocturnum ducere tempus:
 197 Nam revocare gradum, stantesque revisere puppes
 198 Cogitur, ut Titan fessus circumdedit axem.
 199 Nulla videbatur tantis medicina⁶⁴ parari

[9b/124b]

200 Posse malis, præcluso aditu, medicisque remotis.
 201 Quid facerent Patres? qua vi transcendere fines
 202 Ignotos possent, et multo milite plenos?
 203 Quo tunc illorum se industria verteret, et vis?
 204 Adde sacerdotes (xifones nomine[]) dicunt
 205 Addictosque Diis, auri quos dira cupido
 206 Ingluviesque tenet, castisque inimica voluptas.
 207 Fertilitas tandem obstabat telluris opimæ;
 208 Et mala cum liquidis mellis simul haustibus hausta.
 209 Num vero hæc animum herois remorantur ad altam
 210 Suscipientis opem, totus cui subiacet orbis?
 211 Num Deus à tantis consuevit rebus abesse?
 212 Plurimaolvebat secum, lapidemque movebat
 213 Hic omnem Michael, nova cum sententia surgit.

⁶² The -a- in *facibus* seems to be the result of the correction of a letter that cannot be better identified.

⁶³ Should be corrected to *Cina*, as suggested by Burnett.

⁶⁴ The first -i- is probably the result of the correction of an original -e-.

- 214 *Neque*⁶⁵ per anfractus tres lunæ, quolibet anno
 215 Exterus ad libitum sinitur mercator adire
 216 Cantonium, seu vendendas exponere merces,
 217 Seu velit inde alio secum exportare coemptas.

[10a/125a]

- 218 Huic placido se hominum mercator numine iungit,
 219 Cantoniaque novas mox expositurus in urbe
 220 Fert merces, solo prætium si quæris, amore
 221 Vendendas. O Cina virum, o si in mœnia merces
 222 Invectas nosses, ad præda effusæ⁶⁶ volares,
 223 Atque æterna emerēs valituram in secula gemmam.
 224 Ergo simul noster pergit mercator ad urbem
 225 Et iaculo similis fertur Prætoris ad aulam;
 226 (Gens Mandarinum vocat) altumque ante tribunal
 227 Sistit, et intrepido sic illi pectore fatur.
 228 Salve heros ò magnanimo qui dignus honore
 229 Tanti frēna regis populj, gratissimus illi,
 230 Quem penes imperium est, et Regia sorte potestas.
 231 Te cæli Rex omnipotens per longa secundet
 232 Sæcula, felici, et faciat te prole parentem.
 233 Maxima me occiduj Latij dum regna tenerent,
 234 Ingens sepe meas Sinarum venit ad aures

[10b/125b]

- 235 gloria, Divitiæ, infinitaque copia rerum
 236 Hic quantis virtus decoretur honoribus alma
 237 Et pietas, artesque simul per compita fertur,
 238 Quaque maris circumsonat alto verberare littus.
 239 Has ergo emenso Oceano per mille pericla
 240 Ingens me studium felices duxit in oras,
 241 Ut liceat nostris artes coniungere vestras
 242 Quasque colit Latium vestris annectere musas
 243 Nunc si digna præcor, per te humanissime præses

⁶⁵ Should be corrected to *Namque*, as suggested by Burnett.

⁶⁶ Should be corrected to *effusa*, as suggested by Burnett. He also proposes that *præda* be read as a neuter plural, meaning that *effusa* would be controlled by *præda*. Otherwise, *præda* could be corrected to the expected form *prædam*, and *effusa* could be controlled by *Cina*, with a meaning like “unbound, free”.

244 hic habitare, domum hic tenuem mihi figere detur.
 245 Non huc me argentj transmisit cęca cupido;
 246 Non auri fulgor rapuit; non indica gemma;
 247 Aut quę mortales, sępe in mare tradis⁶⁷ inermes
 248 Spes lucrj, et nummj numquam saturata voluntas.
 249 Lympha siti sat erit; lana exilis teget artus:
 250 Pellet oriza famem; prębebit terra cubile.
 251 Nil reliquum: vos nulla mej cura improba tanget.

[11a/126a]

252 Hęc ubi dicta dedit, divinum pectore spirans
 253 Ardorem, ęc vultu referens pietatis honorem,
 254 Syderea extemplo defixit lumina terrę.
 255 Pręses miratusque hominem, aspectumque deorsum
 256 Verborumque salem, dictis compellat amicis
 257 Primum; dein quid agat, quis sit, quo venerit orbe,
 258 Ordine perquirat, pulchras quas calleat artes;
 259 Quęque gerantur ibj, unde novas decessit in oras;
 260 Quodque colant numen, patria qua lege fruuntur,
 261 Sępe audire iuvat dicentem ęc sępe rogare.
 262 Denique in urbe darj Patrj iubet illico sedes,
 263 Et capite edicit, ne illi quis nectere fraudem
 264 Audeat, aut unquam quicquam intentare periclj.
 265 Continuo urbe ruunt tota puerique senesque
 266 Turbaque feminea illustri iam concita fama.
 267 Res nova visa Patrem in sua littora fluctibus actum
 268 Assensu procerum media sedem urbe locasse.

[11b/126b]

269 Hic aliis alij cedunt diversa petentes
 270 Parvaque conteritur sedes noctesque diesque:
 271 ęc velutj cum æstate nova magno agmine lęta
 272 Ingentem populant formicę farris acervum
 273 It campo nigrans agmen, quo semita fervet;
 274 Dantque locum primi reliquis, callemque secundis

67 Should be corrected to *tradiť*, as suggested by Burnett.

275 ostendunt, tectumque urgent intrare sequentes.
 276 Quid facis, interea, caput o fērale Megeræ
 277 Nomina cui mille, atque artes sunt mille nocendi?
 278 Tisiphone quid agis? quid noxia turba sororum?
 279 Monstra venenatis, quid vos succincta colubris?
 280 Sic fertis Patris ex animo succedere cuncta?
 281 Non reor; ecce tibi angustas dum perforat ædes
 282 Turba sacerdotem studiis incensa videndj
 283 Demonis impulsu, furiisque agitatus iniquis
 284 Infamis quidam Stygio iam addictus Averno
 285 Terque quaterque caput dirum silicis ferit ictu,

[12a/127a]

286 Invitumque⁶⁸ trahit (scēlus) infandumque cruorem,
 287 Et clam tecta subit, proprio quæ sanguine fœdat;
 288 Egrediensque palam, extremum et lachrimabile fatum
 289 Civibus adventasse canit: sibi vulnera ferro
 290 Imposuisse patrem, quem mox tot honoribus auctum
 291 Cēpissent inopem: nulla hoc ratione ferendum:
 292 Non hoc posse luj facinus nisi sanguine Patris.
 293 Accumulat subito turbatrix fama furores
 294 Et cives odiis animisque audacibus implens,
 295 urbe furit tota, et fertur prætoris ad aures.
 296 Nulla sed arma Deum contra: tutissima virtus
 297 Perstat ubique, licet perfractus concidat orbis.
 298 Non inventa valent dirarum à sede sororum
 299 Eruta, non technas quotquot fabricatur Avernus.
 300 Virtus sola sibi satis est; se sola tuetur.
 301 Sistitur ergo Pater Mandarinj ante tribunal,
 302 Quem magna inspectura nefas comita⁶⁹ caterva est.

[12b/127b]

303 Queritur⁷⁰ an tantum facinus patrarit; et ausus
 304 Sit temerare manus fraterno sanguine sacras.

68 Should be corrected to *invisumque*.

69 Should be corrected to *comitata*, as suggested by Burnett.

70 Should be corrected to *Quaeritur*.

305 Obstupuit primum Michael: Stygij arte draconis
 306 Conflatum miratur opus, dein talibus inquit.
 307 Quandoquidem horrendi scæleris nunc inclite Præses
 308 Insimulor, iubeor*que* meam dicere causam⁷¹
 309 Si quæ vera loquor faciles admittere in aures
 310 Non dedigneris. cælum et vaga sydera; vos*que*
 311 Quæ penes imperium nostri stat numina; vos*que*
 312 cælestes animæ, æternum quæ ducitis ævum
 313 Testor, et obtestor, mea nunc si conscia tantj
 314 Mens scæleris vitam fragiles hos fundit in artus.
 315 Quæ nam⁷² causa præcor, potuit me impellere tale
 316 Ad facinus? subito aut quæ me dementia cœpit?⁷³
 317 Non, reor, Hircanæ me lactavere lænæ;
 318 Nec mihi crudeles admorunt ubera tygres
 319 Ut fraterna ruam audax in præcordia ferro.

[13a/128a]

320 Nunquid in ista vagus per mille pericula venj
 321 Littora, iucundam ut lucis mortalibus auram
 322 Eripiam? an potius vero ut cum lumine veram
 323 Restituam vitam, omnique urbs cumuletur honore?
 324 Ast quid ago? quid plura fero? quid numina testor?
 325 Num mea vivendi ratio, natura*que* tantum
 326 Admisisse scēlus possunt? Sed age optime Iudex,
 327 Iuridicum asto tuum lætus nunc ante tribunal,
 328 Si qua illati extant vestigia criminis, adsum,
 329 Promeritas tanto facilis dabo crimine pœnas.
 330 Dixit, et ingemuit, presso*que* obmutuit ore.
 331 Addidit una fidem perspecta modestia dictis,
 332 Et pietas Patris, et sacrum spirantia honorem
 333 Lumina, iam*que* virj nimium benè cognita virtus.⁷⁴

71 Something is missing in this line, probably between *meam* and *dicere* (either two short syllables or a long one).

72 Would be written as *quaenam* in usual classical orthography.

73 Must be understood as *cēpit*.

74 The full stop is the result of the correction of an original question mark, of which the upper part was deleted.

- 334 Inde tenax æqui Iudex miratus iniquum
 335 Impostoris opus, solio sic infit ab alto
 336 Parce metu Michael, curis iam pectora solve,

[13b/128b]

- 337 Talia non equidem credo te in crimina lapsum:
 338 Non me ignota latent sceleris vestigia tantj;
 339 Non veteratoris vanæ fallacia mentis:
 340 Novi hominem, recolo, est vafri molitor Avernj;
 341 Exosus pariter superis àc sedibus imis.
 342 Nocte dolos, et luce agitat, quos vertat in omnes
 343 Haud similes sibj, ut omnes una eademque trahat sors.
 344 Ergo pone metum, cœptisque insiste secundis;
 345 Vita virum, moresque mihj satis indicat una.
 346 Hęc ubi doctorum cœtu sunt dicta frequentj,
 347 Exemptus pater ingentj celebratur in urbe;
 348 Moxque patent conficta dolo mendacia turpi.
 349 Hinc postquam supero sunt debita vota tonantj
 350 Reddita, tum Michael permissu præsidis, unum
 351 E sociis sedes quos proxima forte tenebat,
 352 Evocat ad sese comitem, sociumque laborum.

[14a/129a]

- 353 Iamque Sinæ gentes certant sua dicta referre;
 354 Compositosque typis audent mandare libellos,
 355 Incrementa quibus fidej Sina edita lingua
 356 Inspicienda viris traduntur, ut impia cernant
 357 Dogmata quæ à pueris hausere, et recta sequantur.
 358 Magna videbatur spes affore frugis opimæ,
 359 Hic socio Michael animis iam care sodalis
 360 Macte novis, non hæc video primordia vanos
 361 Eventus habitura. decet maioribus ausis
 362 Fortunam hanc animare, vocat quibus illa sequatur
 363 Auspiciis, nec enim mediis succedere Regnis
 364 Cunctandum est; fato quid non penetrabile tali
 365 En aditum nobis primum sors læta secundat.
 366 Nec reor hic fidej cardo nunc vertitur omnis
 367 Maxima nec messis, credas hac pendet ab urbe
 368 urbe sed à media, surgunt ubi Regia tecta;
 369 Quamque colunt Cinæ proceres, clarique dynastę.

[14b/129b]

370 Hac arrepta fides reliquas penetrabit in urbes;
 371 Namque exemplum⁷⁵ Regis complectitur orbis:
 372 Atque Domus semper fit fermè simillima Petri.
 373 Ast opus, et labor hinc Regis contendere ad urbem;
 374 Et primam exæquare solo àc prosternere turrim.
 375 Non tamen hæc spernanda operis molitio tanti est.⁷⁶
 376 Maxima sic nempe exiguas augentur in horas;
 377 Debuit et tantæ hinc deduci molis origo.
 378 Sollicitam ergo Pater mentem dum vertit et illuc
 379 Si qua adsit melior penetrandi occasio Cinam,
 380 Ingressum tandem minus expectata cupitum
 381 Hora tulit. Tulerat solvens donanda dynastis
 382 [. . . .]⁷⁷ dona Pater tales quæ servabantur in usus.
 383 Hæc ergo inter erat gemmis auroque refulgens
 384 Arte laboratus varia solarius Index
 385 Horarum, qui nempè Diem partitus in horas
 386 Bis senas, momenta sono prope singula certo

[15a/130a]

387 Compellente rota canit, assidueque movetur.
 388 Qualis res numquam Synarum visa per orbem
 389 Sciauchinum ergo petens Micael (celeberrima Cinę
 390 Urbs hæc plus centum stadiis à littore distat)
 391 Hoc dono Tutanum illa qui degit in urbe
 392 Cui gentem imperio datur uni flectere donat.
 393 Inde quid exoptet paucis superaddit, idemque
 394 Tutanum ante refert, quod coram Præsidente dixit.
 395 Oblatum miratur opus, miratus et artem
 396 Inclusam Tutanus, et ingenium Europeum,
 397 Lumina in hanc partem letus modo vertit in illam,
 398 Singula quæque notans, nunc parvulo in orbe rotarum
 399 Multiplicem seriem; certo nunc pondere, solis
 400 Partiri intervalla videns, et ut inditus esset
 401 Spiritus, illum omnes vivax qui agitaret in horas,

⁷⁵ There must be a textual corruption in this line, probably in the first two words *namque exemplum*. However, the sense seems to be understandable.

⁷⁶ We thank Burnett for the correct reading of this line.

⁷⁷ The erased word could be *Digna*. In any case, the line is complete as it stands.

- 402 *Assiduas mutare vices, motuque cieri*
 403 *Diverso, et superos modo non describere cursus.*
 404 *Exin magnifico dignatus munere, verbis*
 405 *Egit honorificas primum pro tempore grates;*

[15b/130b]

- 406 *Accumulatque suis Patrem, sequiturque negantem*
 407 *Muneribus: sed tanta fuit mox gratia donj,*
 408 *Illa ut in urbe dari Michaeli iusserit ædes;*
 409 *Virginis àc dederit sacrum ædificare sacellum,*
 410 *Divinos in quo superis adoleret honores.*
 411 *Hæc igitur se prima dedit spes certa futuræ*
 412 *Messis, et oppressos hæc pascit sola colonos.*
 413 *Hic e[r]go quid referam concursus undique factos?*
 414 *Cœpta quid augustæ fidei primordia⁷⁸ nostræ*
 415 *Commomore? Sacroque viros iam fonte piatos,*
 416 *Sparsaque iam passim pietatis semina verè?*
 417 *Non mihi si linguæ centum, si ferrea sit vox,*
 418 *Hæc memorare queam: retro me lapsa reposcit*
 419 *Hora; sequor, finem iuvat his imponere: cedo.*
 420 *Interea Iuvenes manibus date lilia plenis.*
 421 *Hunc agitare diem festum iuvat, ora superba.*
 422 *Divitiis, rerumque potens iam numen adorat*
 423 *verum: Infanda solo iam sternit monstra, furentis*

[16a/131a]

- 424 *Instar; et electo iam iam iungatur ovili.*
 425 *Ast tu magnanime ò Heros insiste secundis*
 426 *Interea cœptis, age Macte, et perfice ut omnes*
 427 *Errorum mentes tenebrosa in nocte revinctę*
 428 *E tenebris surgant ad claræ lumina vitæ.*

Dixi

Laus Deo Virginique Mariae

⁷⁸ The *-i-* in *primordia* seems to be the result of the correction of a letter that cannot be better identified.

VI

(Italian translation)⁷⁹

[3b/118b]

- 1 Canto le gesta e l'uomo sacro che per primo dalla rocca
- 2 di Romolo, persuaso dal santo senato dei superiori,
- 3 molto avendo sofferto attraverso i furori impetuosi del mare
- 4 burrascoso, penetrò nelle terre inaccessibili della Cina,
- 5 certo o di soccorrere infine l'infelice gente,
- 6 o di offrire per Cristo la propria vita mista al sangue.
- 7 Vieni qui in nostro aiuto, frattanto, sovrano dell'alto Olimpo,
- 8 del quale costui portò il tre volte santo e nobile nome,
- 9 e del quale nelle terre barbariche dischiuse il sacro nume;
- 10 veglia propizio su questi umili tentativi (*conatus*) e su queste imprese.

[4a/119a]

- 11 Anche tu, Vergine potente, infondi energie e coraggio
- 12 in colui che canta; infatti, stabilito per te, si erge qui
- 13 per la prima volta un tempio di marmo, e ormai portati doni da ogni dove,
- 14 i ben curati altari fumano dell'incenso dei Sabei.

- 15 Vi è una regione dell'estrema Asia assai conosciuta per fama,
- 16 un tempo dei *Sīnae*; ora, cambiato nome, è chiamata comunemente
- 17 Cina, regione della quale per l'ampio mondo non si vede
- 18 nessuna più grande o molto più feconda nei fertili campi.
- 19 Dal lato in cui volge all'aurora mattutina del sole ardente,⁸⁰
- 20 accoglie le onde ingrossate dai soffi dell'Oceano.
- 21 Dal lato in cui (*qua*) vede il Titano⁸¹ immergere nel mare i carri,
- 22 confina con gli Indiani con un sottile lembo di terra.
- 23 Dal lato in cui (*qua*) viene invasa dalla furia di Borea,⁸² nutrito dalla ge-
lida Orsa,
- 24 è circondata dalle armi del Massageta e del rabbioso Scita.

⁷⁹ Come già menzionato nella sezione IV, quando la traduzione non segue il testo del manoscritto, ma una correzione proposta nelle note alla trascrizione (sezione V), la correzione viene segnalata fra parentesi.

⁸⁰ Comincia qui la descrizione dei confini della Cina, dove ogni coppia di versi si concentra su un determinato punto cardinale (qui est).

⁸¹ Cioè il Sole quando tramonta ad ovest.

⁸² Vento del Nord.

- 25 Dal lato in cui (*qua*) è percorsa dalla furia bacchica di Noto,⁸³ dal polo op-
posto a Borea,
26 oppone ai flutti i baluardi naturali dei Cinesi.

[4b/119b]

- 27 Una terra ricca di uomini e di risorse, bestiame, città, campi
28 e fiumi, fiorente d'oro e di altri metalli,
29 superba eleva il capo splendente fra le alte nubi.
30 Governa quindici⁸⁴ regni vasti e assai popolosi,
31 ognuno dei quali stabilisce cento leggi e vincoli
32 per le città, e obbedisce ad un unico signore e scettro.
33 Le città si proteggono con mura alte e solide,
34 fatte di ordini di mattoni tenuti insieme in una nuova struttura,
35 mura quali neppure Babilonia ha mai visto, né i tempi antichi.
36 La straordinaria moltitudine del popolo non è eguagliata
37 dai flutti dell'acqua, né dalle onde impetuose del mare, che la costa inghiotte,
38 né dai fili d'erba della primavera, né dalle stelle del cielo.
39 Non tanti tralci produce la fertile vite
40 all'inizio della primavera, e tanti turgidi grappoli protende in autunno;
41 non tanti esseri prodigiosi solcano il mare, non tanti mieli attici
42 vengono raccolti; né tante bionde messi effonde il Gargaro,
43 quanti uomini genera la Cina, godendone felicemente in eterno.

[5a/120a]

- 44 Niente di cui meravigliarsi: infatti agli abitanti, un tempo, è stato vietato
45 dalla legge dei Re di uscire, né è lecito oltrepassare i confini
46 che furono dati dalla fortuna, propizia ai padri, e dalle armi.
47 Qui tutti coltivano le proprie terre; a nessuno è permesso di stare
48 in ozio, così che la pigrizia non venga punita dalla legge degli avi;
49 tanto desiderio ha questa gente di sudare sulla dura fatica.
50 Questo è il primo ornamento della Cina. Perché dovrei descrivere gli altri?
51 I monti che producono oro e i fiumi fecondi di pietre preziose;
52 e inoltre, le spiagge dorate sulla costa di fronte.
53 Da ogni parte la rigogliosa foresta effonde aromi odorosi;
54 da ogni parte risuona con mormorio piacevole la lenta acqua,
55 adatta all'uso degli uomini e all'uso degli animali.

⁸³ Vento del Sud.

⁸⁴ Letteralmente: “tre volte cinque”.

56 Qui una primavera eterna diffonde dolci profumi;
 57 qui la bella estate è in pieno rigoglio, dando frutti tre volte l'anno,
 58 e l'albero non depone mai il suo ornamento eterno.
 59 Qui non sopraggiunge rigido il brutto inverno, né il freddo ostile;
 60 il campo non si sbriciola fiaccato dalla pioggia continua.

[5b/120b]

61 Tutto, invece, ride; tutto applaude felicemente.
 62 Qui siede il Padre Autunno: a lui risplendono la fronte e
 63 tutto intorno le rosse tempie, intervallate dai carichi tralci;
 64 le melagrane, poi, coprono i capelli scarmigliati;
 65 vi sono frutti, noci e castagne, e pesche che si ripiegano
 66 dietro le sue spalle; fichi secchi mescolati a rugosi datteri
 67 in un'insolita successione: tutte cose che produce questa sola terra felice.
 68 Qui gli uccelli variopinti modulano un canto variegato
 69 con il loro gozzo melodioso; ogni loro diletto
 70 blandisce i sensi, né invano ricercheresti qui svaghi.
 71 Che dire dei fiumi dal mite corso, delle fonti perenni?
 72 Che dire della terra ricchissima di acque? Da qui cento fiumi
 73 non inferiori al Gange o al Lico o al Tigri (*Tigri*) potente,
 74 adatti alla navigazione, portano e conducono per le città ogni cosa.
 75 Per questa via l'avidò mercante, comprando lane e stoffe di seta dal tenue
 colore,
 76 intessute di filo rosso, e pelli cercate in altre parti del mondo,
 77 le trasporta, e reca porcellana degnissima
 78 delle mense dei re: miele nuovo; da qui il rabarbaro, e

[6a/121a]

79 lo zucchero; e nelle restanti terre viene riversata
 80 un'abbondanza di guado, adatto a tingere le vesti,
 81 e di muschio; così che, contenta dei prodotti e delle ricchezze
 82 trovate nelle sue terre, <la Cina> non si procaccia nient'altro altrove.⁸⁵
 83 E per altro la gente eccelle per intelligenza, sia che si tratti di capire
 84 in quale tempo gli astri del cielo si nascondono, in quale sorgono;
 85 sia che si voglia investigare i mirabili segreti della natura,

⁸⁵ Il testo latino è qui incerto, e in queste righe manca qualcosa (vedi nota nella trascrizione). Tuttavia, il significato generale è chiaro: la Cina non ha bisogno di trovare prodotti altrove perché ha tutto all'interno dei suoi confini. Il soggetto «la Cina» è integrato nella traduzione per rendere il testo più comprensibile.

86 sia che si voglia volgere le sfere del cielo, e delimitare
 87 la vasta terra in spazi determinati e diverse regioni.
 88 Quale la Berecinzia,⁸⁶ sedendo sul carro dorato,
 89 cinta nell'alto capo di una corona turrita,
 90 da una parte, benevola, brandisce ricchezze, come l'Abbondanza (*Copia*) con
 il corno ricolmo,
 91 dall'altra, tirati i morsi, doma i selvaggi colli dei leoni,
 92 e così, passando per innumerevoli città, celebra il suo trionfo,
 93 con tale sentimento la Cina eleva il capo fra le stelle,
 94 mentre mostra felice i propri onori trionfali.
 95 Ma una gente tanto fortunata e beata per i doni
 96 del cielo, e che gode della fertilità straordinaria del suolo,

[6b/121b]

97 è ottenebrata da una falsa superstizione, ignara della vera
 98 devozione, che la rende misera e priva del Cielo;
 99 e quell'ornamento che viene a questa gente da tutte le cose, lei da sola glielo
 strappa via.
 100 L'ignara gente, appunto, macchiata qui dal veleno dello Stige,
 101 precipita in ogni empietà proibita, profana tutte le cose sacre.
 102 Una parte adora il cielo – o sventurati! – come se fosse il sommo dio;
 103 una parte celebra animali di forme inaudite,
 104 Gorgoni, e Scille, e chimere portentose,
 105 e quelle creature che l'Africa, genitrice di mostri, produce con il suo abi-
 tuale parto (*partu*).
 106 Alcuni celebrano mute pietre, informi sassi;
 107 certuni lunghi tronchi senza corteccia; certuni
 108 venerano, secondo il costume patrio, statue degli avi
 109 scolpite dalla mano di artisti, avendo dedicato loro templi e altari.
 110 Una tanto profonda notte e ignoranza (*inscitia*) opprime le loro menti
 accecate.
 111 Dunque, mentre considera queste cose, Michele Ruggieri – uno
 112 fra coloro che sono insigniti del sacro nome di Gesù –
 113 geme e, avendo commiserato la sorte ingiusta della gente,

86 Appellativo della dea Cibebe.

[7a/122a]

114 frammiste ai profondi singhiozzi proferisce tali parole:
 115 «Dunque tanti popoli nati nei secoli migliori,
 116 una gente tanto fortunata, tanti regni fiorenti
 117 permetterò che passino ad altra vita ancora ignari di Dio?
 118 Dunque a tanti mortali, una volta defunti, si spalancherà
 119 ancora la porta dell'inferno, e li divorerà con bocca infausta
 120 un terribile flagello e la fiamma rapace nel fondo dell'Acheronte (*Acheronte*)?
 121 Dunque (*Ergone*) l'autore di tante malvagità⁸⁷ se ne partirà da lì impunito,
 122 e, odiosissimo, trascinerà da lì una cieca e immensa
 123 preda di uomini nei suoi regni per i secoli a venire?
 124 Dunque tante tribolazioni e tante pene
 125 sostenute da Cristo, il sangue versato dal corpo straziato
 126 sarà mandato in rovina dagli sforzi dell'inferno e dai maneggi del Serpente?
 127 Non lo permetterò: morirò, morirò piuttosto; nessun pericolo mi fermerà;
 128 non mi farà indugiare il viaggio, non i vasti fiumi, né le piogge;
 129 non l'orrendo muggiare del mare e le rigonfie (*tumidaeque*) tempeste;
 130 non mi tratterranno le vette dell'Asia che si elevano nel cielo

[7b/122b]

131 e le nevi congelate; non mi scoraggeranno (*abducet*) gli orsi o la selvaggia
 132 rabbia dei leoni e i crudeli predoni.
 133 Perché mi vengono rammentate le rabbiose tigri? Perché le schiere terribili
 di bestie selvagge?
 134 Perché i deserti di Goa, perché Calicut?
 135 Il dado è stato ormai gettato; questo proposito è fermo nella mente:
 136 o mostrare la vera salvezza della morte a loro sventurati
 137 e invitare al rispetto della legge discesa dal Cielo
 138 o lì nelle tribolazioni terminare la mia fragile vita.
 139 Abbastanza per la patria e per gli Itali; riterò di essere vissuto
 140 sufficientemente bene, se avrò vissuto altrettanti mesi per i Cinesi».

141 Aveva appena detto così l'eroe, quando si getta a terra davanti all'altare.
 142 Ecco che supplice, tendendo alle stelle le duplici palme,
 143 dice: «O Padre onnipotente, che da solo nell'universo,
 144 Re potente della Terra e del Cielo, reggi le briglie di questi,
 145 creatore e insieme governatore e arbitro del tempo,

87 Il diavolo.

- 146 le preghiere che pronuncio per te, ti prego di accoglierle con orecchie benigne.
 147 Concedimi questo, se chiedo cose degne, Padre, e ciò che (*quae*) ha concepito la mia zelante

[8a/123a]

- 148 mente, fa' sì che io possa portarlo a compimento; concedimi di rispondere a chi chiede,
 149 e di realizzare gli ordini celesti che mi sono stati manifestati adesso».
 150 Avevano appena assentito alle devote parole le orecchie superne
 151 che Michele, avendo trovato all'improvviso (così ordina la volontà celeste)
 152 una via per la Cina, prepara il lieto viaggio con il favore del Cielo;
 153 si sale sulle solide navi e si prende il largo;
 154 si lascia la terra italica, e la costa si allontana.
 155 Tu ora Musa, riferisci quali pene dovette poi sopportare costui,
 156 e le piogge che si riversavano dal cielo, e le potenti tempeste.
 157 Vedi come infuria l'ira cieca dei venti sulle acque?
 158 Con quale vortice soffiano sulle terre e come, in schiera serrata,
 159 alzano verso il cielo flutti odiosi e frequenti?
 160 Vedi come la tempesta impetuosa porta le navi
 161 sui banchi di sabbia? Vedi come i banchi dei rematori nuotano sparsi
 162 sulle rigonfie acque, così come le assi e i legni dell'albero infranto:
 163 quanti corpi, naufraghi sul mare schiumoso, galleggiano
 164 qua e là, zimbelli delle onde, insieme alla carcassa della nave?

[8b/123b]

- 165 Senza dubbio la funesta Erinni aveva sconvolto l'Oceano
 166 per terrorizzare il Padre, che già si affrettava a rovesciare
 167 le sue insegne, e per annegarlo mentre procedeva nel mezzo delle onde.
 168 Scampato a questi pericoli, tuttavia, Michele, poiché vede
 169 che cose più importanti lo attendono, si prepara. Subito dopo passa a nuoto
 170 le acque che infuriano e fiumi ondosi che hanno rotto i loro argini.
 171 Supera alti monti, per dove non si scorge nessun
 172 sentiero, e disprezza le loro minacce, e solca
 173 senza fermarsi il profondo mare, e approda alle rive di Macao.
 174 Il porto di Macao è stazione sicurissima della flotta
 175 spagnola; esso si presenta per primo a chi si dirige verso i regni
 176 della Cina, ed è separato dalla prima città dei Cinesi
 177 da un tratto non lungo, che è sorvegliato dai soldati spagnoli.
 178 Qui trova altri che sono allattati dalla stessa religione,

179 come da una stessa mammella, e che sono educati da essa alle leggi
 180 della dolce vita; prima aveva conosciuto queste persone nelle terre occidentali.
 181 Si esulta, e fa piacere abbracciarsi a vicenda;

[9a/124a]

182 e, accese nuove torce, cresce il fervore.
 183 Deliberano in quale modo si possa aiutare la Cina (*Cina*);
 184 come tanti mortali, destinati alle fauci dell'Orco,
 185 possano imparare la virtù e salire all'aura celeste,
 186 e riconoscere la prole eterna di Dio.
 187 I Padri vedono che molte cose sono di impedimento, ma ancora peggio
 questo
 188 sembra rendere vana ogni speranza e sollecitudine:
 189 un tempo, i capi dei Cinesi, o perché spinti dai malvagi
 190 maneggi del Demone, o perché temevano le armi dei loro vicini,
 191 proclamarono che non fosse permesso a nessun forestiero di penetrare
 192 oltre le mura di Canton, che sono adiacenti al passaggio per la terra
 193 dei Cinesi; contro chi faccia questo, è prevista la pena di morte.
 194 Un forestiero cui sia ordinato di fare commercio e di sostare in questa città
 195 non solo non può visitare i luoghi più interni del regno,
 196 ma neppure può pernottare nella città:
 197 infatti è costretto a ritornare sui propri passi e rivedere le navi
 198 attraccate, non appena il Titano, stanco, ha finito di circondare il polo.
 199 Non sembrava fosse possibile preparare una medicina

[9b/124b]

200 per mali così grandi, dal momento che era precluso l'ingresso e i medici
 erano tenuti lontani.
 201 Che cosa potevano fare i Padri? Con quale forza potevano
 202 oltrepassare i confini ignoti e pieni di molti soldati?
 203 Dove, in quel frangente, poteva rivolgersi il loro zelo e la loro forza?
 204 A ciò si aggiunga che vi sono dei sacerdoti (li chiamano *xifones*),
 205 consacrati agli dèi, che sono dominati dal terribile desiderio dell'oro
 206 e dall'ingordigia, e dal piacere nemico dei casti.
 207 Era d'impedimento, infine, la fertilità della ricca terra,
 208 e mali assorbiti insieme ai liquidi sorsi di miele.
 209 Forse che davvero questi ostacoli fanno indugiare l'animo dell'eroe che
 210 si prepara a recare l'aiuto celeste, da cui dipende l'intero universo?
 211 Forse che Dio è solito essere indifferente a imprese tanto importanti?
 212 Michele considerava moltissime cose fra sé, e rivoltava qui

213 ogni pietra,⁸⁸ quando gli venne una nuova idea.
 214 Infatti (*Namque*), per la durata di tre giri di luna, in qualunque anno,
 215 ad un mercante straniero è permesso, secondo desiderio, entrare
 216 a Canton, se vuole esporre merci da vendere,
 217 o esportare da lì con sé, per un altro luogo, quelle che ha acquistato.

[10a/125a]

218 A costui si unisce il mercante di uomini, con il favore della divinità,
 219 e porta, per esporle nella città di Canton, nuove
 220 merci, da vendere – se chiedi quanto costano – al solo prezzo
 221 dell'amore. O Cina, se tu conoscessi l'uomo, o le merci
 222 introdotte nelle mura, vorresti verso il bottino che viene offerto (*effusa*)
 223 e acquisteresti una gemma destinata a valere nei secoli eterni.
 224 Dunque, il nostro mercante si dirige verso la città
 225 e subito, simile a un proiettile, si reca nel palazzo del sommo magistrato
 226 (la gente lo chiama Mandarino), compare davanti all'alto
 227 tribunale, e a lui parla così, con cuore impavido:
 228 «Salute, eroe, che degno di un nobile onore
 229 reggi le briglie di un così grande popolo, essendo graditissimo ad esso,
 230 presso il quale hai un comando e una sovranità pari a quella di un re.
 231 Il Re onnipotente del Cielo ti favorisca per lunghi
 232 secoli, e ti renda genitore di una fortunata prole.
 233 Mentre mi trattenevano i vasti regni del Lazio, ad Occidente,
 234 spesso venne alle mie orecchie la straordinaria fama

[10b/125b]

235 dei Cinesi, le loro ricchezze, e la loro infinita abbondanza di cose.
 236 Di quanti onori siano qui insignite la benevola virtù,
 237 la devozione e le arti, si riferisce sia nei crocicchi
 238 sia dove la costa risuona dei colpi profondi del mare.
 239 Avendo percorso l'Oceano, dunque, attraverso mille pericoli
 240 il mio desiderio straordinario mi ha condotto in queste terre fortunate,
 241 affinché fosse possibile congiungere le vostre arti alle nostre,
 242 e connettere gli studi che il Lazio coltiva ai vostri.
 243 Ora, se chiedo cose degne, mi sia concesso per tua volontà,
 244 umanissimo governatore, di abitare qui, di stabilire qui una piccola casa.
 245 Non mi ha mandato qui il cieco desiderio dell'argento;

88 Probabilmente una metafora per “considerare ogni possibilità”.

246 non mi ha trascinato lo scintillio dell'oro, né le gemme indiane;
 247 o quella che spesso consegna (*tradit*) i mortali inermi al mare,
 248 la speranza del guadagno e la cupidigia, mai soddisfatta, del denaro.
 249 Per placare la sete mi sarà sufficiente l'acqua; una lana sottile coprirà i
 miei arti;
 250 il riso scaccerà la fame; la terra offrirà un giaciglio.
 251 Niente altro: non sarete mai toccati da fastidiosa preoccupazione per me».

[11a/126a]

252 Dopo che pronunciò queste parole, spirando ardore divino
 253 dal petto, e riportando sul volto l'ornamento della devozione,
 254 immediatamente fissò gli occhi divini a terra.
 255 Il governatore, pieno d'ammirazione per l'uomo, per il suo guardare in
 basso
 256 e per l'arguzia delle sue parole, si rivolge a lui dapprima
 257 con parole amiche; poi, in ordine indaga che cosa faccia, chi sia,
 258 da quale terra sia venuto, e di quali belle arti si intenda;
 259 che cosa facciano nella terra che ha lasciato per recarsi in queste nuove
 regioni;
 260 quale dio venerino, di quale legge ancestrale godano;
 261 lo diletta spesso ascoltarlo mentre parla e spesso porgli domande.
 262 Infine, comanda che in città sia data al Padre, lì per lì, una dimora
 263 e ordina che nessuno, pena la morte, osi tramare un inganno
 264 contro di lui, o intorgli mai un pericolo.
 265 Immediatamente si precipitano per tutta la città sia giovani, sia vecchi,
 266 sia una folla di donne già richiamata dalla fama illustre.
 267 Era una cosa nuova a vedersi: un Padre, condotto nelle loro contrade dalle
 correnti,
 268 con l'assenso dei capi aveva posto la propria dimora nel mezzo della città.

[11b/126b]

269 Qui gli uni si susseguono agli altri, ognuno chiedendo una cosa diversa,
 270 e la piccola dimora è calpestata notte e giorno:
 271 e, come quando all'inizio dell'estate, in grande schiera,
 272 le formiche contente saccheggiano un grande mucchio di farro,
 273 per la campagna si muove una colonna nera, di cui la strada brulica;
 274 e i primi lasciano spazio agli altri, e mostrano ai secondi
 275 il sentiero, e li incalzano a entrare nella casa dopo di loro.
 276 Che cosa fai, nel frattempo, capo funesto di Megera,
 277 che hai mille nomi e mille arti per fare del male?

278 Tisifone, che cosa fai? Che cosa fate, crocchio dannoso di sorelle?⁸⁹
 279 Che cosa, voi mostri cinti di serpi velenose?
 280 Così tollerate di buon cuore che tutte le imprese del Padre abbiano successo?
 281 Non penso; ecco che – mentre una folla ti invade l'angusta
 282 dimora, accesa dal desiderio di vedere il sacerdote –
 283 per istigazione del Demone e spinto dalle Furie malvagie,
 284 un certo uomo malfamato, già consacrato all'Averno infernale,
 285 per tre, quattro volte ferisce il proprio capo funesto con colpi di pietra,

[12a/127a]

286 e trascina con sé (che misfatto!) l'odioso (*invitumque*) ed esecrabile cruore,
 287 e di nascosto entra nella dimora, che sporca con il proprio sangue;
 288 e, uscendo all'aperto, annuncia che un estremo e lacrimevole fato
 289 è sopraggiunto ai cittadini. Narra che a provocargli quelle ferite
 290 con una spada è stato il Padre, che loro avevano appena accolto, privo di
 mezzi,
 291 dopo averlo insignito di tanti onori; aggiungeva che ciò non era tollerabile
 in nessun modo:
 292 non si poteva spiare un tale misfatto se non con il sangue del Padre.
 293 La fama, seminatrice di turbamento, improvvisamente accresce i furori
 294 e, riempiendo i cittadini di odio e di sentimenti audaci,
 295 infuria per tutta la città e giunge alle orecchie del sommo magistrato.
 296 Ma nessuna arma vale contro Dio: la virtù, sicurissima,
 297 rimane salda ovunque, anche qualora il mondo crolli in mille pezzi.
 298 Gli inganni scovati dalla dimora delle terribili sorelle
 299 non hanno forza, né tutte quante le astuzie che l'Averno escogita.
 300 La virtù da sola è sufficiente a se stessa; da sola si protegge.
 301 Il Padre compare dunque di fronte al tribunale del Mandarino:
 302 lo ha accompagnato (*comitata*) una grande folla, venuta per assistere a
 questa empietà.

[12b/127b]

303 Gli si chiede (*Quaeritur*) se ha compiuto un tale misfatto e se ha
 304 osato macchiare le proprie sacre mani con il sangue di un fratello.
 305 Restò attonito dapprima Michele: si stupisce dell'azione
 306 ordita dall'arte del Serpente stigio; poi comincia con tali parole:

89 Megera e Tisifone sono due delle tre Furie o Erinni, divinità mitologiche della vendetta che erano sorelle. Qui sono considerate creature dell'inferno, che agiscono nel nome del diavolo.

307 «Dal momento che vengo ora accusato, o illustre governatore,
 308 di un delitto orrendo, e mi viene ordinato di difendere la mia causa,
 309 se dico qualcosa di vero, non sdegnare di accoglierlo
 310 nelle tue orecchie indulgenti. Il cielo e le stelle vaganti; e voi,
 311 divinità nelle cui mani sta il comando su di noi; e voi,
 312 anime celesti, che conducete una vita eterna,
 313 vi chiamo a testimonio, supplicandovi, se mai può essere che adesso la mia
 mente,
 314 consapevole di un così grande delitto, infonda vita in queste fragili membra.
 315 Quale motivo mai – vi imploro – avrebbe potuto spingermi ad un tale
 316 misfatto? O quale follia mi prese all'improvviso?
 317 Non mi allattarono, penso, le leonesse ircane,⁹⁰
 318 né mi accostarono le loro mammelle tigri crudeli,
 319 così che mi slanciassi, audace, con una spada contro un petto fraterno.

[13a/128a]

320 Forse che, errabondo, venni a queste contrade, attraverso
 321 mille pericoli, per sottrarre a mortali il dolce soffio
 322 della vita? O non piuttosto per restituire la vera vita
 323 insieme alla vera luce, e affinché la città sia colmata di ogni onore?
 324 Ma che cosa faccio? Perché tollero di più? Perché chiamo a testimonio
 gli dèi?
 325 Forse che la mia regola di vita e la mia natura possono
 326 aver ammesso un così grave misfatto? Orbene, eccellente giudice,
 327 sto ora, lieto, davanti al tuo tribunale che decide la giustizia;
 328 se sussistono indizi dell'accusa che mi viene mossa, sono pronto:
 329 subirò, senza oppormi, le pene meritate per un tanto grave delitto».
 330 Disse così, e gemette, e chiusa la bocca tacque.
 331 Accrebbe il credito delle parole, da sola, l'evidente modestia
 332 e la devozione del Padre, e gli occhi che spiravano
 333 onore sacro, e la virtù ormai fin troppo conosciuta dell'uomo.
 334 Quindi, tenendo fede alla giustizia, il giudice, stupito di fronte all'iniqua
 335 azione dell'impostore, così comincia a parlare dal suo alto seggio:
 336 «Non temere, Michele, libera ormai il cuore dalle preoccupazioni;

90 Dell'Ircania (regione dell'Asia sul mar Caspio), vista come simbolo di crudeltà.

[13b/128b]

337 non credo affatto che tu sia caduto in simili crimini.
 338 Non mi sfuggono gli indizi nascosti di un così grave misfatto,
 339 né l'intrigo della mente falsa di un esperto ingannatore:
 340 conosco quest'uomo, mi torna alla mente, è un macchinatore dell'astuto
 Averno;
 341 odiosissimo parimenti alle dimore celesti e inferi.
 342 Medita notte e giorno inganni da rivolgere contro tutti coloro che
 343 non siano simili a lui, affinché la stessa e sola sorte travolga tutti quanti.
 344 Dunque non aver paura, e dedicati a imprese propizie;
 345 il solo modo di vita mi rivela sufficientemente l'uomo e i suoi costumi».

346 Non appena furono dette tali parole nell'ampio convegno di uomini dotti,
 347 scagionato, il Padre viene celebrato nella grande città;
 348 e subito sono evidenti le menzogne macchinate dal vergognoso inganno.
 349 Quindi, dopo che furono resi al superno Tonante i voti a lui
 350 dovuti, allora Michele, con il consenso del governatore, chiama
 351 a sé, come socio e collega nelle fatiche, uno
 352 dei compagni che abitavano per caso in una dimora vicina.

[14a/129a]

353 Ormai le genti della Cina fanno a gara per riferire le sue parole;
 354 e osano commissionare libretti a stampa,
 355 attraverso i quali gli accrescimenti alla fede, pubblicati in lingua cinese,
 356 si rendono disponibili da esaminare agli uomini, affinché essi possano dis-
 cernere le empie
 357 dottrine che hanno assorbito fin da piccoli e seguire quelle giuste.
 358 Sembrava annunciarsi la grande speranza di un ricco raccolto.
 359 A questo punto, Michele al suo compagno: «Collega già caro,
 360 tu sia lodato per i tuoi nuovi propositi! Vedo che questi inizi
 361 non avranno esiti infelici. Conviene, avendo osato imprese maggiori,
 362 ravvivare questa Fortuna: essa ci chiama con quegli auspici sotto i quali
 363 può seguirci, e certo non bisogna tardare a raggiungere
 364 l'entroterra del regno. Che cosa non potremmo attraversare con un tale fato?
 365 Orsù, la sorte lieta ci rende fausto il primo accesso.
 366 Non penso che qui si apra ora ogni porta della fede,
 367 e non credere che il più grande raccolto⁹¹ venga da questa città,

91 Cioè "i più grandi risultati", secondo la metafora dei "frutti" dell'impresa già utilizzata qualche verso prima (cf. v. 358 *frugis opimae*).

368 bensì da una città centrale, dove sorge la dimora regale,
 369 e che è abitata dai capi della Cina e illustri sovrani.

[14b/129b]

370 Portata per questa via la fede penetrerà nelle altre città;
 371 infatti il mondo abbraccia l'esempio del Re;
 372 e la sua casa sempre diviene, per così dire, somigliantissima a quella di Pietro.⁹²
 373 Ma l'impresa e la fatica stanno nel raggiungere da qui la città del Re,
 374 e livellare al suolo e abbattere la prima torre.
 375 Tuttavia, non deve essere disdegnata questa preparazione di un'opera tanto
 grande.
 376 Così appunto le cose più grandi si accrescono per i brevi intervalli delle ore;
 377 anche l'origine di una tanto grande opera doveva essere tratta da qui».
 378 Dunque, mentre il Padre rivolgeva l'inquieta mente anche a quella questione,
 379 se vi fosse cioè una migliore occasione per penetrare in Cina,
 380 l'ingresso tanto agognato fu offerto infine dal momento
 381 meno atteso. Per adempiere i propri doveri di omaggi verso i sovrani,
 382 il Padre aveva portato dei doni che erano riservati a tali usi:
 383 dunque, fra di essi vi era un indice solare delle ore,
 384 risplendente di pietre preziose e oro, lavorato con versatile arte,
 385 che appunto, avendo diviso il giorno in dodici
 386 ore, sotto l'azione di una ruota annuncia con suono certo

[15a/130a]

387 quasi ogni singolo momento, e si muove senza interruzione:
 388 una cosa che non si era mai vista in tutta la terra dei Cinesi.
 389 Dunque, Michele, diretto verso Sciauchino (questa città, la più famosa
 390 della Cina, dista più di cento stadi dalla costa)
 391 offre in dono questo oggetto al Tutano, che risiede in quella città
 392 e al quale solo viene concesso di piegare il popolo ai propri ordini.
 393 Poi aggiunge, con poche parole, che cosa desideri, e ripete
 394 alla presenza del Tutano il discorso pronunciato davanti al governatore.
 395 Il Tutano ammira l'oggetto che gli è stato offerto, e avendo ammirato
 396 tanto la perizia racchiusa in esso quanto l'ingegno degli Europei,
 397 tutto contento ora rivolge lo sguardo da una parte, ora da un'altra,
 398 osservando ogni singola cosa; ora vedendo la lunga serie di ruote
 399 in quel piccolo cerchio; ora vedendo che gli intervalli del giorno

92 La casa di Pietro deve essere qui intesa come la sede del Papato.

400 sono divisi con esatta quantità, e come vi sia infusa
 401 un'anima, che vivace lo muove per tutte le ore.
 402 Vede che esso muta costantemente aspetto, ed è animato da movimenti
 403 opposti, e quasi riproduce i moti celesti.
 404 Perciò, stimato degno di un magnifico dono, dapprima,
 405 per il momento, con parole lo ringraziò onorevolmente;

[15b/130b]

406 poi colma di propri omaggi il Padre, e lo incalza mentre
 407 costui declina: ma tanta fu presto la gratitudine per il dono,
 408 che ordinò di dare a Michele una dimora in quella città;
 409 e gli concesse di edificare un tempietto sacro alla Vergine,
 410 nel quale potesse rendere onori divini ai celesti.
 411 Si offrì quindi, per la prima volta, questa speranza certa di un futuro
 412 raccolto, e questa sola nutre gli abitanti oppressi.
 413 Perché dunque narrare qui dell'affluire di gente da ogni parte?
 414 Perché richiamare le prime imprese della nostra
 415 fede augusta? Gli uomini ormai placati da una fonte sacra,
 416 e i semi della vera devozione sparsi ormai dovunque?
 417 Neppure se avessi cento lingue, neppure se avessi una voce di ferro,
 418 potrei ricordare queste cose: il tempo ormai passato
 419 mi richiama indietro; obbedisco, va bene mettere fine a queste narrazioni:
 mi ritiro.
 420 Nel frattempo, giovani, offrite gigli con mani piene.
 421 Giova celebrare questo giorno di festa: una terra superba
 422 per ricchezze e potente ormai venera un dio
 423 vero: ormai abbatte a terra mostri abominevoli, come in preda

[16a/131a]

424 a furore divino; e ormai, infine, sia annessa all'ovile eletto.⁹³
 425 Ma tu, o generoso eroe, persisti nelle opere già intraprese,
 426 che sono propizie – orsù, tu sia lodato! – e fa' in modo che tutte
 427 le menti avvinte nella notte tenebrosa degli errori
 428 dalle tenebre si innalzino alle luci della chiara vita.

Ho detto così.

Lode a Dio e alla Vergine Maria

93 La chiesa di Cristo.

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Charles Burnett

Humanism and the Jesuit Mission to China II: A Poetic Biography of Michele Ruggieri, the First Superior of the Jesuit Mission in the Far East

Abstract: This paper is about the Latin poem devoted to the life of Michele Ruggieri S.J. After briefly describing the material context in which it is to be found, it is shown how the poem conforms to humanist style and vocabulary. An English translation of the poem completes the paper.

Keywords: Jesuit, Michele Ruggieri, humanism, China, Vergil

Liceat nostris artes coniungere vestras ('Let your arts join ours'), Poem on Ruggieri, line 241

The Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu includes a very curious Latin hexameter poem of 428 lines devoted to the life of Michele Ruggieri, the first Superior of the Jesuit Mission in the Far East (1543–1607).¹ It is found within a series of documents with the classmark JAP.SIN. 101 I, which are described as *Relationi del successo della missione della Cina (Mich. Ruggiero) dal mese di Nov. 1577 alli 1591*. Among these are a *tractatus compositus . . . pro Philippo II ut legatio in Sinas mittatur* ("a treatise composed . . . for Philip II [king of Spain 1556–1598], that an embassy should be sent to the Chinese"), which includes descriptions of the land of China, the products of the land, and the size of its cities. The text on fols 118v–131 is described as a *Poema quoddam de P. Michaelae Ruggieri compositum a quodam Patre SJ (uti videtur in Collegio Romano)* ("A certain poem about Father Michaelae Ruggieri, composed by a certain Jesuit Father – as it seems, in the Collegio Romano"). The folio numbers are a modern addition, introduced when the various documents were put together. The poem itself has a separate foliation, of which 4r–16r

¹ This article complements the article by Mingguang Xie and Massimiliano Carloni in this volume, which provides a full account of the background to this poem, as well as an edition of the poem itself and a translation into Italian. My work on the poem was pursued independently of the project of Xie and Carloni, as a part of my interest in the humanism of the Jesuit missionaries to the Far East (see Burnett 1996). I am grateful to Xie and Carloni for showing me their article in advance of publication, which has allowed me to correct some errors. I have also benefited from the advice of Yifan Zhang, Qi Han, Marisa Addomine, and Lucy Nicholas.

show that it was a self-contained unit (perhaps with a loose binding accounting for the absence of fols 1–3r).²

A note in Italian (in different hands³) precedes the poem:

Perilché un nostro Padre compose questo poema per maggior dechiaratione del sudetto caso l'ho perciò voluto metter' qui come si segue ("Since one of our Fathers composed this poem for a better explanation of the aforementioned case I decided to put it here as follows").

The significance of the first inscription is not obvious (the writer could be a Chinese or Japanese Jesuit from Macau, who had to learn Portuguese). The second note clearly refers to the poem that follows, that the writer of the note has copied without giving the name of the author.

The poem is an encomium, addressed to Michele Ruggieri at the height of his career. Several 'set pieces' alternate with narrative and direct speech:

- 1) A statement of the topic of the poem ("the deeds of the holy man . . . who first penetrated the unapproached shores of China"): lines 1–6;
- 2) Direct speech: An appeal for God's (Jesus and the Virgin's) help in writing the poem: lines 7–14;
- 3) Set piece: A description of China (its modern name, its size, its fifteen constituent kingdoms, each with 100 cities; its fertility and the wealth of its natural resources; its huge population, ruled by a single emperor, continuously increasing as a result of the law that no one is allowed to leave the country; its hard-working inhabitants): lines 15–49;
- 4) Set piece: China's beauty, epitomised in an image of 'Father Autumn' (the season in which the poem was written?): lines 50–94;
- 5) Narrative: The absence of the true faith: lines 95–110;
- 6) Speech: Ruggieri has pity on the Chinese and determines to go to China: 111–154;
- 7) Set piece: A storm at sea and consequent shipwreck: lines 155–167;
- 8) Narrative: Ruggieri escapes and goes to Macau: lines 168–173;
- 9) Set piece: Macau is described: lines 174–177;
- 10) Narrative: Ruggieri meets his fellow Jesuits, with whom he tries to devise a means of entering China: lines 178–211;
- 11) Narrative: Ruggieri devises a plan by which to enter China as a merchant (offering the free gift of the Christian faith rather than merchandise) and obtain a house for the Jesuits: lines 212–227;

² I am indebted to Stefan Bauer for the transcription and translation of this Italian passage.

³ This appears to have been written in the same hand as the poem.

- 12) Speech: Ruggieri speaks before the ruler and asks to be given a house where the Jesuits can stay: lines 228–251;
- 13) Narrative: The ruler agrees to Ruggieri's request, and orders that the Jesuits should be given a house, where the missionaries are visited by many people: lines 252–275;
- 14) Narrative: A Chinese man unsuccessfully tries to bring disgrace onto Ruggieri: lines 276–348;
- 15) Narrative: Ruggieri chooses a companion for his mission, and his books are printed in Chinese for the promulgation of faith: lines 349–358;
- 16) Speech: Ruggieri tells his companion how important it is to go to the Middle Kingdoms of China: 359–377;
- 17) Narrative: Ruggieri goes to Zhaoqing, where he gives a clock to the ruler and is granted permission to build a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary in return: 378–410;
- 18) Set piece: Future salvation is assured by these events: lines 411–428.

The poem was written during Ruggieri's lifetime, because, in its final words, it encourages Ruggieri to continue to do the fine missionary work that he has begun (*insiste secundis / interea cæptis*, lines 425–426). If we trust the superscript, the poem was written in the Jesuit Collegium Romanum in Rome and may have been presented to Ruggieri when he was in Rome and at this college (from June 1590) and still expected to return to China. The poem is totally positive towards Ruggieri and does not hint at the criticisms of Ruggieri from his fellow Jesuits – about being weak, not sufficiently fluent in spoken Chinese, and not being a good leader – which led to him being sent back to Europe.

The drama of this poem is ensured by the variation between descriptions (set pieces), narrative and direct speeches. The poem encapsulates the high level of Latin composition that distinguishes Jesuit learning. For example, the annual performances at Jesuit schools both in Europe and in the fields of mission were entirely in Latin, and consisted of dramatic performances and the writing of poems, as well as enigmas which the students were supposed to solve.⁴ The dramas and poems were full of references to Classical mythology, whose contemporary significance was meant to be understood by the reader or (as is more likely) the reciter and audience. Examples from this poem include (the line numbers are given):

Regnator Olympi (7): the Christian Triune God;

Titan (21, 198): the Sun;

⁴ Burnett (1996). The numbers in the following references refer to the line numbers of the poem.

Boreas (23): the North Wind;

Massageta and *Scythia* (24): both individuals of the ancient peoples of Central Asia;

Notus (25): the South Wind;

Lycus (73): a river in ancient Phrygia;

Berecynthia (88): an adjective applied to Cybele, the mother of Hermes;

Acheron (120): a river of Hades.

Various names for the fates are given: the three *Erinyes* (sing. *Eryn(n)is/Erinye* [165]), two of which are *Magaera* (276) and *Tisiphone* (278);

Orcus (184): the god of the underworld;

Stygius Avernus (284) and *Avernus* (299, 340): the entrance to the underworld;

Hircanus (317): Hyrcanian, from a region in Northern Iran.

Ruggieri gives Classical forms to places and officials unknown in the Classical period: Macau gives rise to the adjectives both *Machaus* (174) and *Amacanus* (175). In the case of China itself, he substitutes a 'name used by the people' for the Classical name: *Cina* for *Sina* (16–17). But *Sina* (151) and *Cina* (4, 369), are both used for the name of the country, and *Cina* (193), *Sina* (189, 234, 389) and *Syna* (388) are also used as ethnic nouns (a "Chinese"). *Sericus* (75) and *Sina* (353 and 355) also occur as adjectives;

Calecutia (134): Calicut in Kerala;

xifones (*sacerdotes*, 204): "shifu" (teacher) (師傅/師傅);

Cantonium (216) with the adjective *Cantonius* (192 and 219): Canton, of Canton;

Sciauchinum (389): Zhaoqing (肇慶);

Tutanus (391, 394, 396): du tang (督堂) 都堂.

There are many direct allusions to Vergil, of which the most obvious is the first line (*Gesta cano sacrumque virum, qui primus ab arce / Romulea*) which deliberately recalls the beginning of the narrative of the *Aeneid*: *Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris*. . . . In both cases the poet provides a summary of the action of the poem.

But other lines are also taken from Vergil: verses 272–273 (*ingentem populant formicae farris acervum, it campo nigrans agmen, quo semita fervet*) repeat the ant simile in *Aen.* 4.402–407: *ac velut ingentem formicae farris acervum . . . it nigrum campis agmen . . . opere omnis semita fervet*. Verse 316 (*Subito aut quae me dementia cepit*) repeats Vergil's *Georgics* (*G.*), 4.487: *cum subita incautum dementia cepit amantem*. The next two verses (317–318. *Hircanae me lactavere leaenae? / Nec mihi crudeles admorunt ubera tygres*) expand into two the single verse of *Aen.* 4.367: *Hircanaeque admorunt ubera tigres*.

Other Vergilian phrases are: *Regnator Olympi* (7): *Aen.* 10.437; *positum de marmore templum* (12): *templum de marmore ponam*, *G.* 3.13; *atra patebit /ianua Ditis* (118–19): *atri ianua Ditis*, *Aen.* 6.127; *laniato e corpore* (125): *atque hic Priamiden laniatum corpore toto*, *Aen.* 6.494; *duplices tendens ad sidera palmas* (142): *Aen.* 1.93; *faucibus Orci* (184): *Aen.* 6.273; *superasque evadere ad auras* (185): *Aen.* 6.128; *dixit et ingemuit pressoque obmutuit ore* (330): *dixit pressoque obmutuit ore*, *Aen.* 6.155; *non mihi si linguae centum* (417): *Aen.* 6.624; *ferrea . . . vox* (417): *Aen.* 6.626; *manibus lilia plenis* (420): *manibus date lilia plenis*, *Aen.* 6.883. The set piece on a storm at sea (155–67) recalls *Aen.* 1.82–91 (*agmine facto* and *turbine* appear in both texts).

The imitation of Vergil throughout the poem is deliberate: Ruggieri's life has to be placed in the same epic dimension as Aeneas's. While the whole poem is about the bringing of a salvific Christianity to the Chinese, Christian terminology and echoes of the Bible and the liturgy are strikingly absent. Rather, the poet takes words and phrases from Vergil whenever possible, so that the poem becomes a pastiche of the *Aeneid* and *Georgics*.

Other classical writers make occasional entries:

Servius:

Sabæorum . . . thure (14): *Sabaeorum gens eadem est, apud quam tus nascitur* (Serv., *ad G.* 2.115);

Sedulius:

tumideque procellae (129): *tumidis procellis* (Sed. Scot., *Carm.* 45.58–59);

Cicero:

importunique latrones (132): *importunissimos latrones* (Cic., *Fam.* 12.12.2);

Ausonius:

arbiter aevi (145): Aus., *Ecl.* 4.10;

and Statius:

Accumulat subito turbatrix fama furores (293): *accumulat turbatrix fama pavores* (Stat., *Theb.* 4.369).

Alea iam iacta est (135) ('The die is cast') is a widely used proverbial phrase.

The author uses repetition for effect:

Undique. . . undique (53, 54);

Moriar, moriar (127);

Hic. . . hic (56, 57);

Ergo (115, 118, 121, 124);

Cernis ut. . . (157, 160 and 161).

He employs the poetic licence of altering the usual order of words (*omnia sed* 61; *hos inter* 112; *Nulla sed arma Deum contra* 296; *haec ergo inter* 383) and missing out the copula. Connecting words are sparingly used.

For an edition of the poem from the sole manuscript witness (AHSI, JAP.SIN. 101 I, fols 118r–131r = original foliation 3v–16r), see Carloni and Xie in this volume. The following English translation reproduces the Latin text quite literally, so bringing out the Classical flavour of the poem.

- 1 /3v/ I sing of the deeds and the holy man who,
- 2 persuaded by the sacred council of the elders,
- 3 and having suffered much through the seething angers of the wild sea,
- 4 first penetrated the unapproached shores of China from the citadel of
Romulus,
- 5 certain either of helping that wretched race at last,
- 6 or of giving up a life mixed with blood for Christ.
- 7 Meanwhile, you are present here, ruler of high Olympus,
- 8 whose thrice-sacred and noble name he bore
- 9 and revealed the Sacred Spirit on barbarian shores.
- 10 Look kindly on these humble and daring attempts!
- 11 /4r/ You also, powerful Virgin, provide strength and spirit
- 12 to the singer! For a temple of marble erected for you
- 13 rises there for the first time, and, now that gifts have been heaped up from
everywhere,
- 14 the tended altars smoke with Sabaeen incense.
- 15 A region of the far <East> of Asia is most famous –
- 16 once ‘of the Sinae’, but which now, with a changed name,
- 17 is popularly called ‘China’ – than which no region is seen to be greater
throughout the spread-out world,
- 18 or more widely fertile with fields heavy <with crops>,
- 19 which is adjacent to the dawn risings of the blazing Sun,
- 20 and receives the heaving waves with the blowings of the Ocean,
- 21 which sees Titan immerse his chariots in the sea;
- 22 and touches the Indies with just a small bit of intervening land;
- 23 where Boreas rages, nourished by the cold north;
- 24 it is surrounded by the weapons of the Massagete and wild Scythian,
- 25 where Notus (the South wind) rages from the opposite <end of> the axis of
Boreas;
- 26 and matches the citadels native to the Chinese with <the height of its>
waves.
- 27 /4v/ A land mighty in men, wealth, cattle, cities, fields

28 and rivers, and blessed with gold and other metals;
 29 lofty, proud, it hides its shining head among the clouds.
 30 It rules over fifteen vast and most celebrated kingdoms,
 31 each of which determines the laws and regulations for 100 cities,
 32 but it obeys one lord and overall rulership.
 33 The cities protect themselves with walls which are high and
 34 strong, bound by a new <kind of> bond with a regular series of bulwarks
 35 such as even Babylon did not see, nor did age-old antiquity.
 36 The huge number of the populace is not equalled by the seething of
 the deep,
 37 or the waves thrown up by the sea, which the shore drinks in.
 38 Neither the grasses of spring nor the stars of the sky equal <that number>.
 39 The fertile vine does not put forth so many tendrils in fresh spring,
 40 or provide in autumn so many swelling grapes.
 41 Not so many monsters cut through the sea, not so many Attic
 42 honeycombs are collected, not so many yellow crops does Gargara pour
 fourth,
 43 as China bears and enjoys men, being blessed throughout the ages.
 44 /5r/ And it is no wonder. For emigration was once forbidden to the inhabitants
 45 by the law of the kings, nor was it allowed to go outside the boundaries,
 46 which favouring fortune and <conquering> arms gave to <their> fathers.
 47 Here, all cultivate their fields; no one is allowed to rest,
 48 but idleness is punished by the law of the land;
 49 the race have such a desire to sweat over hard labour.
 50 This is the first distinction of China. Why should I mention the rest?
 51 The gold-bearing mountains, and the rivers fecund with gems,
 52 the golden yellow sands adjacent to the shore.
 53 Everywhere the fertile forest pours forth scented aromas;
 54 everywhere the gentle stream chatters with a pleasant murmur,
 55 suitable for the needs of both men and wild animals.
 56 Here, perpetual spring diffuses sweet scents.
 57 Here, beautiful summer is vibrant with a three-fold harvest,
 58 and nowhere does a tree shed its perpetual foliage.
 59 Ugly winter does not grow stiff here; nor is the cold excessive.
 60 Nor does the field grow weak, tired out with continuous rain.
 61 /5v/ But all things smile, all things give joyful applause.
 62 Here, Father Autumn sits, his forehead and ruddy temples
 63 shine, adorned with heavy tendrils;
 64 The Phoenician apples then cover his unkempt hair.
 65 Pears, walnuts and chestnuts, and peaches with the fold at the back,

66 and the coconut, mixed into his rough palms with a new order (?) –
 67 all these things are borne by this one happy earth.
 68 Here, colorful birds sing a variety of songs
 69 with clear voices. Each of their delights charms the senses,
 70 Nor do you look for entertainment in vain.
 71 What of the rivers, smooth in their flow, and the perpetual springs?
 72 What of the earth, very rich in waters? From her <flow> one hundred
 rivers
 73 not inferior to the Ganges, the Lycus, or the Tigris.
 74 They are fit for sailing; there is nothing they do not carry and bring from
 city to city.
 75 On them the greedy merchant conveys wools, pale silks with red threads,
 76 and pelts sought from another world,
 77 and he carries porcelains most fit for the tables of Kings;
 78 and new honey; from here, rhubarb
 79 /6r/ and sugar, dyer's woad fit for dying clothes, and
 80 a huge amount of musk is poured out into the rest of the world.
 81 But its confines (?) are satisfied with the fruit found <on the spot>
 82 and it requires for its wealth nothing from outside.
 83 Yet the race excels in intelligence, whether it behoves to hold in the mind
 84 The stars of the sky – the time they become hidden, the time they rise –
 85 or to investigate the hidden wonders of nature,
 86 or to turn the spheres of the heavens, to circumscribe the huge earth
 87 into measured spaces and various regions;
 88 how Berecynthia, sitting on a gold chariot,
 89 with her high head crowned with a turreted diadem,
 90 on this side kindly distributes wealth, like an abundance from a full horn,
 91 on that side tames the fierce necks of lions with reins.
 92 And thus she triumphs, carried through innumerable cities.
 93 China, bearing such souls, inserts her head in the stars,
 94 while she joyfully shows off her own triumphal honours.
 95 But false superstition, ignorant of true piety,
 96 keeps in darkness such a fortunate race, and one blessed with
 97 /6v/ the gifts of heaven and enjoying a wonderful fruitfulness of the soil,
 98 and makes it wretched and lacking heaven,
 99 and one thing takes away the beauty which all things promise for that race:
 100 that the ignorant race is affected here by a Stygian poison;
 101 it rushes into every forbidden scandal; it profanes all sacred things.
 102 Some, O poor people! worship the heavens as the highest deity,
 103 some worship animals in unheard-of forms:

104 Gorgons, Scyllas, and portentous chimaeras,
 105 and what Africa, the parent of monsters, has been accustomed to bring
 forth.
 106 Some worship mute stones, shapeless rocks,
 107 others, long trunks devoid of bark,
 108 others worship, in their country's tradition, statues of their parents
 109 perfected by the hand of craftsmen, having dedicated temples and altars
 to them.
 110 Such night and ignorance oppress their blind minds.
 111 Therefore, when Michele Ruggieri, one among those
 112 whom the sacred name of 'Jesus' marks out,
 113 considers these things, he grieves, having pity on the unfair lot of the race.
 114 /7r/ He says these things, intermingled with deep sighs:
 115 «Shall I, therefore, allow so many people, born for better ages,
 116 shall I allow such a fortunate race, so many flourishing
 117 kingdoms, to pass their lives ignorant of God?
 118 Will the grim door of Pluto, therefore, still lie open for so many
 119 and will dire plague and devouring flame be vomited from
 120 an ill-fated mouth deep under the Acheron?
 121 Will the dreadful Author of so many ills,
 122 go away from there unrevenged, and most dreadfully drag off
 123 to his kingdom an immense booty of men, to be measured in terms of ages?
 124 Are so many travails by Christ, therefore, so many toils
 125 undertaken, <so much> blood from a lacerated body,
 126 lost by the studies of the underworld and the art of the Dragon?
 127 Should I not suffer and die – die? No dangers
 128 will delay the journey, nor great rivers, nor storms,
 129 nor the dreadful clamour of the sea, nor blustering gales;
 130 nor will the mountain peaks of Asia, piercing the heavens and the impacted
 snows
 131 /7v/ draw me back; nor will the bears or the savage raging of lions,
 132 or bold robbers take away <the journey>. Why do they throw at me <as
 objections>
 133 fierce tigers, why the fearful ranks of wild animals,
 134 why the deserts of Goa, why those of Calicut?
 135 The die is now cast; this decision remains in my mind:
 136 either to show the true salvation of death to the wretched,
 137 and to indicate the law sent down from heaven to be obeyed,
 138 or to consume a fragile life there in travails.
 139 Enough of my homeland and Italians! I will think that I have lived

140 well enough, if I have lived so many months among the Chinese.»
 141 Scarcely had the hero <spoken>, when he threw himself before the altars
 142 and, stretching two suppliant palms to the stars, he said:
 143 «O all-powerful Father, who rule alone in the world.
 144 You powerfully guide the reins of earth and heaven,
 145 the same being creator, ruler and judge of eternity,
 146 accept, I pray, with open ears, the prayers I pour out to you.
 147 If I seek worthy things, give them to me, Father, and may I now complete
 148 /8r/ what an ardent mind conceives. Give a response to the one who seeks,
 149 and fulfilment of the high commands that have now been revealed to me.»
 150 The ears of the Gods had scarcely given assent to the pious voices
 151 when, immediately, Michele took up his journey to China (so the divinities
 command).
 152 He prepares a happy course, with a favouring heaven,
 153 the strong ships are boarded and released from the shore,
 154 the Italian land is left behind, the shore recedes.
 155 You, now, Muse, tell us what travails he bore from here on.
 156 Do you see the rains pouring down and the powerful storms,
 157 how the blind anger of the winds rages across the sea?
 158 With what whirling they blow over the land and, as if forming a battle-line
 159 raise hateful and teeming waves up to the stars?
 160 Do you see how the noisy storm carries the boat
 161 into the shallows? Do you see how the scattered crossbeams,
 162 the boards and the oak-beams of the broken mast float on top of the swollen
 seas?
 163 How many bodies everywhere, shipwrecked,
 164 bob on the foaming deep, playthings of the waves, and the carcass of the ship?
 165 /8v/ Doubtless a gloomy Erynis had annoyed Ocean,
 166 to terrify the Father, now hurrying to overturn her signs (?)
 167 and to drown him as he progressed through the middle of the waves.
 168 Rescued from these, Michele, as he sees greater things await him,
 169 prepares himself. Soon, he crosses the furious waters,
 170 and the swelling rivers which have burst their banks.
 171 He goes over the airy mountains, where no path can be seen,
 172 and scorns their threats, and he straightway
 173 ploughs the deep, and arrives on the shores of the Macaoans.
 174 Macao is a port, a very safe haven for the Spanish fleet.
 175 This is the first <port> to offer itself to those seeking
 176 the Chinese kingdoms, and is not far separated from the first city
 177 in the Chinese land, which an Iberian soldier protects.

178 Here he finds others which the same religion nourishes
 179 from a single breast and has instructed in the bonds of sweet life.
 180 He had known these <men> earlier on Western shores.
 181 There is celebration; everywhere they like to hug each other,
 182 /9r/ and, as new torches are lit, the fervour mounts.
 183 They debate how they can help China,
 184 so that so many mortals condemned to the jaws of Hell,
 185 might be able to learn virtue, and emerge into the upper airs,
 186 and be able to acknowledge the eternal descendants of God.
 187 The Fathers see that many obstacles stand in the way; but what seemed
 188 to render vain all their hopes and cares was something more unjust:
 189 once the rulers of the Chinese – whether compelled by
 190 the evil wiles of the Demon, or because they feared
 191 their neighbours' arms – ordered that no foreigner should be allowed
 192 to penetrate within the walls of Canton, which sealed
 193 the narrow passages into China, and that, whoever infringed <this law>
 194 should be put to death. When a foreigner has been ordered to trade and
 195 stay there, not only is he not able to visit the interior of the kingdom
 196 but also he cannot spend a night in the city.
 197 For he is forced to retrace his steps, and return to the awaiting ships as
 198 Titan (the Sun), exhausted, has turned round his axis.
 199 No medicine seemed to be able to be prepared for such great
 200 /9v/ evils, when entry had been denied and doctors kept away.
 201 What could the Fathers do? By what power could they pass through
 202 unknown frontiers, full of a large military presence?
 203 Whither, in this situation, could their hard work, or force, carry them?
 204 Add the priests (they call them 'Xifones'),
 205 and devotees of the gods, who are in thrall
 206 to lust for gold, greed, and desires inimical to the chaste.
 207 Finally, the fertility of the lush land was an obstacle,
 208 and the evils drawn up with the liquid drafts of honey.
 209 But do these <evils> delay the spirit of the hero in the face of the
 210 supreme help of the Supporter to whom the whole world is subject?
 211 Surely God has not been wont to be absent from such great enterprises?
 212 Here Michele thought over many things with himself,
 213 and turned every stone, when a new idea arose.
 214 For, at three turnings of the moon every year
 215 a foreign merchant is allowed to enter Canton at will,
 216 whether he wishes to exhibit merchandise to sell,
 217 or to export with him elsewhere merchandise that he has bought.

218 /10r/ The merchant of men joins this <merchant> with a favourable divine
 spirit,
 219 and soon carries new merchandise <to display> in the city of Canton
 220 which – if you ask the price – should be sold
 221 for love only. «Oh China, if you knew the man or the merchandise carried
 within the walls,
 222 you would fly to the poured-out booty
 223 and you would buy the jewel that would be valuable for all time.»
 224 Therefore, as soon as our merchant makes for the city,
 225 like a javelin he is borne into the hall of the Praetor
 226 (the people call him the Mandarin), and he stands before the high tribunal,
 227 and thus he speaks to him, with an intrepid breast:
 228 «Hale, nobleman, worthy of generous honour!
 229 You who hold the reins <of power> over such a great people, most pleas-
 ing to
 230 them; in whose hand is the empire and, by fate, the royal power,
 231 may the all-powerful king of heaven favour you for long
 232 centuries, and make you be the father of a happy progeny!
 233 While the very great realms of Western Latium detained me,
 234 the great glory of the Chinese often came to my ears –
 235 /10v/ its riches, the infinite abundance of things.
 236 Here, with how many honours, kind virtue, piety
 237 and the arts are adorned, is told both at the cross-roads
 238 and where the shore of the sea resounds with a deep throbbing.
 239 For this reason, having navigated the Ocean, a massive zeal
 240 has led me through a thousand dangers to these fortunate shores,
 241 so that your arts can join ours and, whatever Muses
 242 Latium cultivates, can be woven into yours.
 243 Now, if I beg for worthy things, through you, most kind ruler,
 244 may I be allowed to live here, to establish a small home here.
 245 It is not a blind desire for silver that has brought me here,
 246 the dazzle of gold has not seized me, nor the Indian gem
 247 or a hope for gain and a never-to-be-satisfied desire for money
 248 which often drags mortal men, unprotected, into the sea.
 249 Water will be enough for thirst; a thin woollen cloak will cover the limbs;
 250 rice will drive away hunger; the earth will provide a bed.
 251 Nothing more; no reprehensible concern for myself will affect me.»
 252 /11r/ When he had said these words, breathing out a divine passion
 253 in his breast, and displaying the nobility of piety in his expression,
 254 he immediately fixed his starry eyes to the ground.

255 The ruler, admiring the man, his lowered face,
 256 and the wit of his words, first urges him with friendly words:
 257 then, he asks in order: what he did, who he is, from what city he has come,
 258 which fine arts does he excel in,
 259 what goes on in that place from which he has left for new shores,
 260 what <divinity> do they worship, what law of the land do they enjoy.
 261 He enjoys repeatedly hearing the <Father> speaking, and often asking him
 <questions>.
 262 At last he orders that a base in the city should be given to the Father
 263 immediately, and he condemns to death anyone who dares to weave
 264 a deceit against him, or to attempt any danger at any time.
 265 Forthwith, in the whole city, young and old,
 266 and a crowd of women, aroused by the now shining fame <of the Father>
 rush <to see him>.
 267 This novel event is seen: that a Father, having been driven by the waves
 268 onto their shores, had placed a base in the middle of the city, by the assent
 of the elders.
 269 /11v/ Here people follow each other in succession, seeking different things,
 270 and the small house is overrun <with visitors> night and day;
 271 and just as in early summer happy ants in a great mass
 272 demolish a huge pile of grain;
 273 they advance over the field, as a black mass which makes the path seethe,
 274 and the first give way to the others, and show the way to those who follow,
 275 and they urge those behind to enter the house.
 276 What, meanwhile, do you do, O wild head of Megaera,
 277 who possesses a thousand names for and a thousand ways of harming?
 278 What do you do, Tisiphone? What <do you do>, you harmful crowd of
 Sisters?
 279 What do you do, you monsters, surrounded by poisonous serpents?
 280 Do you react in this way <to the fact that> all things from the mind of the
 Father succeed?
 281 I don't think so. Behold, while a crowd makes their way into the narrow
 confines
 282 of your house, urged on by their desires to see the priest,
 283 by the prompting of the Demon, and driven by unjust furies,
 284 a certain villain, already a devotee of the Stygian Underworld,
 285 thrice and four times hit his dreadful head with a blow of a hard stone
 286 /12r/ and draws out (O crime!) the hateful and despicable gore,
 287 and secretly enters the house, which he desecrates with his own blood.

288 Coming out in full view, he claims to the citizens that an extreme and lamentable fate
 289 has befallen <him>: that the helpless Father, whom they had just now begun to extol
 290 with so many honours, had inflicted the wounds on him with a sword.
 291 This should not be tolerated in any way
 292 and this outrage cannot be avenged except by the blood of the Father.
 293 Suddenly, crowd-forming rumour heaps up the rage
 294 and, filling the citizens with hatred and bold spirits,
 295 it rages in the whole city and is carried to the ears of the Praetor.
 296 But no arms <can prevail> against God. Virtue remains most secure
 297 everywhere, although the world, cracking apart, totters.
 298 The intrigues of the dire Sisters have no power, having been uprooted
 299 from their position; nor whatever number of wiles Avernus devises <have power>.
 300 Virtue alone is enough for itself; she alone protects herself.
 301 The Father is placed, then, in front of the tribunal of the Mandarin,
 302 whom a great crowd accompanied, wanting to scrutinize the crime.
 303 /12v/ He is asked whether he had committed such a great crime, and dared
 304 to profane sacred hands with a brother's blood.
 305 At first Michele was dumbstruck: he is amazed by the deed
 306 inspired by the Stygian dragon. Then he begins to speak with the following words:
 307 «Since I am now accused of a dreadful crime, honoured President,
 308 and am ordered to plead my case,
 309 if you do not scorn to accommodate the true words I say to your ears that are ready to hear,
 310 I call to witness Heaven and the planets, and you, divinities
 311 who guard our empire, and you,
 312 celestial souls, who lead an eternal life,
 313 and I swear and bear witness: if my mind, now conscious of such a great crime,
 314 pours life into these fragile limbs,
 315 what cause, I pray, could have forced me into such a misdeed?
 316 Or what madness suddenly took hold of me?
 317 The Hircanian lionesses did not, I think, give suck to me?
 318 nor did the cruel tigers move their breasts towards me
 319 so that boldly I would thrust a sword into the heart of my brother.
 320 /13r/ Have I come to these shores, wandering through a thousand dangers,

321 to seize the joyful breath of life from mortals?
 322 Or rather to restore the true life with the true light,
 323 so that the city can be heaped up with every honour?
 324 But what am I doing? Why do I bear more? Why should I have
 325 the divine spirits as witnesses? Could my reason for living and nature
 326 have committed such a crime? But come, good judge,
 327 now I stand happily before your judging tribunal.
 328 If any vestiges of that crime that has been committed remain, I am here,
 329 I am readily available to pay penalties befitting such a crime.»
 330 He spoke, and he sighed, and became silent with his mouth tight shut.
 331 A discrete modesty added trust to the words
 332 as well as the piety of the Father and eyes breathing out sacred honour,
 333 and now the very well-known virtue of the man.
 334 Hence the judge, holding onto fairness, surprised at the unfair
 335 act of the impostor, from his high throne began in this way:
 336 «Fear not, Michael; now clear your breast from worries,
 337 /13v/ I, at least, do not believe that you have lapsed into such crimes.
 338 The traces of such a crime do not lie hidden from me;
 339 nor the deceit of the vain mind of the scoundrel.
 340 I know the man, I remember, he is the scoundrel from crafty Avernus;
 341 hated in equal measure by those seated above and below.
 342 I know the wiles which he does by night and day, which he turns on all
 those
 343 who are different from him, so that one and the same fate drags off everyone.
 344 Therefore, put fear aside, concentrate on fortunate initiatives.
 345 Life itself sufficiently indicates to me the man and his character.»
 346 When these words had been passed round repeatedly among the gathering
 of learned men,
 347 the Father is released and he is honoured in the huge city,
 348 and soon the lies fabricated by base deceit become obvious.
 349 Hence, after the prayers owed to the high Thunderer
 350 have been made, then Michael, with the permission of the President,
 351 calls to himself one of the colleagues who by chance were in the nearest
 place,
 352 <as a> colleague and ally in his works.
 353 /14r/ And now the Chinese races compete with each other in reproducing
 his words,
 354 and dare to assign to type the little books that he had composed,
 355 by which the increases in faith, published in the Chinese language,

356 are handed down to men to be inspected, so that they might discern the
 impious
 357 doctrines which they had drunk in from from their boyhood, and follow
 correct doctrine.
 358 Great hope of a rich crop seemed to be promised.
 359 Here, Michael <said> to his companion: «Dear companion,
 360 honoured with new souls, I do not see that these first fruits
 361 will have useless outcomes. It is fitting that this good fortune
 362 should give life to greater things; she summons what <good>
 363 auspices should follow them (?). For, one should not
 364 hesitate to go to the Middle Kingdoms. What is not reachable by such a fate?
 365 Rather, a happy lot favours our first entry.
 366 Nor, do I think, every hinge of faith turns <only> here.
 367 The greatest harvest, you should believe, will not depend on this city,
 368 but from the Middle City, where the royal houses arise,
 369 and which the leaders and famous dynasties of China inhabit.
 370 /14v/ The faith taken up there will penetrate into the other cities.
 371 For it embraces the example of the king of the world,
 372 and (his) house always becomes very similar to <the house> of Peter.
 373 But the job and the task from here is to press on to the city of the king,
 374 and to level to the ground and overturn the first tower.
 375 The preparation for such a task should not, however, be despised.
 376 For, great things increase in a small number of hours.
 377 It is right that the origin of such a great work has been taken from here».
 378 While, therefore, the Father turns his anxious mind to asking
 379 whether there was a better chance for penetrating China,
 380 a less expected hour at last brought him the desired entrance.
 381 Fulfilling <the task of> what should be given to rulers, the Father
 382 had brought gifts which were reserved for this purpose.
 383 Among these <gifts>, therefore, was a solar index of the hours
 384 shining with gems and gold, elaborated by various arts,
 385 which, having divided the day into
 386 twelve parts, sings almost each time with a clear sound,
 387 /15r/ being driven by a wheel and moving continuously.
 388 The Chinese had never seen anything like this in the world.
 389 Michael, then, going towards Zhaoqing – this most celebrated
 390 city of China is more than 100 stades from the shore –
 391 he grants this gift to the Tutanus who lived in that city,
 392 who alone is allowed to bend the people to (his) rule.

393 Then he adds in a few (words) what he desires, and says the same thing
 394 in front of the Tutanus as he had said in the presence of the President.
 395 The Tutanus is amazed by the offered work, having admired the art included
 396 in it and the ingeniousness of Europe;
 397 he happily turns his eyes now in this direction, now in that,
 398 noting every individual thing, seeing now a multiple series of wheels
 399 in a small orb, now the intervals of the sun
 400 being divided by a certain weight, and, as if a spirit
 401 was put inside which, alive, moved it into all hours,
 402 <he sees them> frequently change their direction and agitated by different
 movements,
 403 and almost replicate the courses of the heavens.
 404 Hence, made worthy of a magnificent gift, he first
 405 thanked him honourably with words, for the moment,
 406 /15v/ and he heaps the Father with his own gifts, and persists when he re-
 fuses them
 407 but soon there was great thanks for the gift.
 408 He ordered that Michael be given a house in that city
 409 and he permitted him to build a sacred little chapel of the Virgin,
 410 in which he might worship the celestials with divine honours.
 411 This first hope, therefore, certain of a future harvest,
 412 presented itself and this alone gives nourishment to the oppressed inhabitants.
 413 Why, then, should I mention here the people gathering from all directions?
 414 Why should I relate the first steps of our noble faith?
 415 The men now saved by the sacred font,
 416 the seeds of true piety scattered everywhere?
 417 Not if I had a hundred tongues, if my voice was of iron,
 418 would I be able to relate these. The hour that has passed calls me back.
 419 I follow. It helps to make an end to these (words). I yield.
 420 Meanwhile, young men, give lilies with full hands.
 421 It helps to give movement to this festive day. The shore, proud of its
 wealth,
 422 powerful in possessions, now adores the true divinity;
 423 it throws to the ground the unspeakable monsters like a furious beast,
 424 /16r/ and it is more and more joined with the sheepfold of the elect.
 425 But you, Oh magnanimous Hero, persist in the fortunate things
 426 already begun. Do them, honoured one, and perfect <them>,
 427 so that all the minds, bound in a dark night of errors,

428 might rise from the darkness to the light of a brilliant life.

I have spoken
Praise be to God and the Virgin Mary!

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Maria Cristina Pimentel

Docere, Mouere Et Delectare: The Use of Latin in the Annual Letters Sent From China – Father Manuel Dias Júnior and the Letter of December 30, 1616

Abstract: We propose here a re-examination of the documents produced by Jesuit missionaries from a literary and stylistic viewpoint, since this perspective has remained in the background, to the detriment of these documents' importance as historical, ethnological, and sociological testimony. In order to explore this angle, we will analyse the account of the funeral of the Emperor of China's mother in the annual letter sent from Macau in December 1616, by Father Manuel Dias Júnior.

Keywords: Jesuit Missionaries, use of Latin in missions in China, Jesuit rhetoric and epistolography, Europe-China relations, annual letters, Ming dynasty, emperor Wanli, funeral ceremonies of the emperor's mother, Father Manuel Dias Júnior

[. . .] Tambem uai outra folha com titulo de carta annua em latim, que por ser o unico traslado uai tambem remetido a Vossa Reverencia para o promouer para Roma, emendando ahi os erros porque fui eu que a fiz a falta de Homens, e os meus Latinos sam de Penella como Vossa Reverencia sabe; pois na Companhia não tiue tempo de os aprender. [. . .]¹

This is an excerpt from a letter filled with information and sent from Beijing by a missionary to the Procurator General of China, Japan, and India, who was in Lisbon at the time. It raises what we consider to be an interesting question as a starting point for our reflection: how can a mid-18th century Jesuit confess his poor knowledge of Latin so far as to ask the Procurator General to ensure that the errors he had made in the annual letter were corrected before sending it to Rome? In fact, Father João Simões admits that the only reason he wrote the letter himself was the lack of someone else to do it for him, just as he admits that his command of Latin is minimal and incompatible with the linguistic correctness required in documents such as an annual letter, destined to be read by the highest authorities of the hierarchy of the Society of Jesus and disseminated in all Jesuit colleges.

1 Letter from João Simões to Marcelo Leitão, Procurator General. Beijing, November 13, 1749. ANTT, Jesuits, Mç. 98, No. 68 [Palaeographic reading by Maria João Pereira Coutinho].

But is the allegation that his knowledge of Latin is limited and inconsistent true? To begin, let us introduce, in a few words, Father João Simões.² Born in Penela, in the diocese of Coimbra, on September 8, 1713, he entered the novitiate on May 17, 1734 (aged 21, which is undoubtedly a little older than usual). He left as a missionary in 1741 and two years later he was in China where, in 1746, he was taken prisoner and sent to Macau. He was in Beijing in 1748, the year before the letter is dated. On August 15, 1751, he professed the four vows. The following year, he was the procurator of the Vice Province of China. He went to Brazil in 1758 and from there, following the order of the Marquis of Pombal concerning the extinction of the Society of Jesus in 1759, he went into exile in Italy in 1766, where he died after 1773. This biographical note raises new questions: what does Father João Simões mean by his *os meus Latins sam de Penella*? He no doubt speaks of what he learned before entering the Society, through the lessons of a master from his homeland, one of those who existed in many parts of Portugal as the only teachers of “reading, writing and counting”. These sometimes were parish priests, and other times teachers paid by the people but with the necessary approval from the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Therefore, it is not very surprising that in those early years of his life Father João Simões did not acquire a solid knowledge of Latin. But what about after he entered the novitiate? We know that this novitiate lasted two years, but it could be extended for another year or two if the young Jesuit was not well prepared. This applied specifically to Latin, which should have been consolidated in a total of five years of Grammar, Humanities, and Rhetoric classes. Only then could he go on to three years of Philosophy and, finally, Theology. João Simões undoubtedly had to follow this long path to be ordained a priest. Moreover, how could he have become Procurator of the Vice-Province had there been such a serious lack in his training?

There is no need point out what we all know: that the Jesuit educational model (as set out in the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599 but prepared as soon as Ignatius of Loyola considered education a priority) was very demanding, and normative. Just as in classical Rome, with the standardisation of a curriculum that began with the *litterator*, followed by the *grammaticus* and then the *rhetor* (a system that constituted a solid pillar of Romanisation and ensured the training of administrators, officials, magistrates, and politicians throughout the empire), also among the Jesuits what was taught and what was learnt, the methods and the results required, with few discrepancies, were the same in all colleges, whether in Lisbon or anywhere else. People studied in Latin, wrote in Latin, and read the classics, the philosophical and theological texts, in Latin. People spoke and argued in Latin. Latin was the language

2 Cf. Dehergne (1973) 252–253.

of work and study, the lingua franca that allowed access to works and documents which, if written in the vernacular languages, would not have the desired range.

Therefore: unless Father João Simões was an exception, what seems to motivate this claim of unskillfulness is perhaps an excuse or a concern with which he intends to guarantee the revision, and consequent refinement, of a document of such importance and with which his name would be associated. In other words, evoking his incapacity recovers the topic of the *locus humilitatis*, and this strategy was also learnt in rhetoric classes. It is also a means of *captatio beneuolentiae*, which predisposed the addressee, Father Marcelo Leitão,³ to a certain degree of indulgence, empathy, and understanding regarding possible mistakes or less-accomplished phrasings.

In fact, other data can be added to our reflection. If, at first, the Jesuit missionaries realised that the interpreters they used not only had serious gaps in their knowledge of Portuguese (or another European language) but also frequently altered or omitted what they were supposed to translate – not to mention being in danger from the Chinese political and religious authorities, because they could be seen as collaborating with foreigners, particularly foreigners who were possible heretics – learning Mandarin was soon made a priority, so that they themselves, having mastered the language and contacts, could fulfil the goals of the mission and reach those they intended to call to the Catholic faith and to the Church of Christ.

This, however, never meant that Latin ceased to be a matter of constant study and teaching in everyday life and in the various circumstances of the mission in China. The Latin readings continued. It was not by chance that the Jesuits carried books with them – some were personal, but most were destined for the Colleges and, therefore, also for teaching. Let us remember the enormous number of volumes that Nicolas Trigault carried with him, about seven thousand, on leaving Lisbon in 1619. These books were obviously intended for teaching, but also for reading and for the benefit of the Priests of the Society, who were living, evangelising, and continuing their training during their mission in China. Even when the owner died during the journey, the books he carried were incorporated into a common heritage from which all benefited. The detailed study by Golvers (2011) provides a revealing overview of the books that circulated in China and were printed in Portugal. Unsurprisingly, we can find among them Manuel Álvares' *Gramática*, Jerónimo Cardoso's *Latin-Portuguese / Portuguese-Latin Dictionary*, Cipriano Soares' *De Rhetorica libri tres*, and Bento Pereira's *Prosódia*. These four

3 About Marcelo Leitão, cf. Pereira Coutinho (2021).

works represent, not least because of their wide distribution, the indispensable tools of those who read, wrote, and taught in Latin.

Latin was also used as an intermediate language for conversation manuals, dictionaries, and glossaries created for learning Chinese. We have manuscripts of these instruments which, more than serving those who created them, allowed for a wider use by the missionaries, whatever their native language, through Latin. They all shared a knowledge of Latin. Thus, not infrequently, a dictionary would have three entries: Portuguese, Latin, and Chinese characters. Latin was fruitfully suited to the specification of different characters for the same reality or object with, for example, dimensions, weights, or different uses. Furthermore, it was an instrument of great richness and rigor for explanatory periphrases, as well as the contextualisation of realities that decency did not recommend translating directly into vernacular languages.⁴

Lastly, Latin was necessary for drafting most of the documents through which they communicated with the hierarchical superiors of the Society, or for personal correspondence when it was addressed to priests who spoke other languages. The documents produced were widely disseminated, so the use of Latin as the *lingua franca* was the most appropriate. Even when these documents were not originally written in Latin, they were translated to widen their reach. One last observation: it was no coincidence that even the documents that were not written in or translated into Latin incorporated (with great semantic and syntactic pertinence) words, phrases, and quotations from the Bible or classical authors which, clearly, both the author of the text and its recipients were expected to understand perfectly, both in meaning and in scope.

We have thus reached the core of our reflection, based on the assumption already sufficiently evident in what we have said so far: that of the mastery of Latin by the Jesuit missionaries in China and the dexterity and naturalness with which the rhetorical norms were learned, ingrained, and applied over many years. This breaths and shines through their texts, particularly when the subject matter of a document goes beyond the standardised model of official documents. This happened, for example, when a report of exceptional, non-routine events was given. In cases like these, we can more easily appreciate a less-studied aspect of the textual production of the Jesuits, specifically the missionaries of the East:

⁴ As part of his PhD project, integrated into the project '*Res Sinicae*, Base digital de fontes documentais em latim e em português sobre a China (Séculos XVI a XVIII). Levantamento, edição, tradução e estudos', (*Res Sinicae*). A Database of Latin and Portuguese Sources on China (16th–18th Century). Survey, Edition, Translation and Studies (PTDC/LLT-OUT /31941/2017), of the University of Lisbon Centre for Classical Studies, João Pedro Riso is currently working on two unpublished dictionaries, one from the 17th century (1640), the other from the 18th century (1725).

the literary value, the stylistic mastery, and the beauty of the narrative with which they made Europe and the world aware of a distant, different reality, of places, customs, and people barely known until then. The Jesuits, who thus assumed the role of what we would today call world reporters, did not hide their own fascination, mistrust, or strangeness, just as they did not fail to use all the stylistic techniques that would produce the three effects that rhetoric taught them to achieve: inform, move, delight. Or, in Latin words, *docere, mouere, delectare*. Moreover, let us not forget a particular detail: the Jesuit missionaries were fully aware that the dissemination of their texts, read or heard by the young novices would ignite in them the missionary vocation, translated into the desire to face the adversities of travel, rough stops, and illness, as well as the danger of being unwelcome, or even persecuted, for the noble purpose of revealing the Christian faith; but they also knew that the same desire that would make them fiery and insistent *indipeti* would be born from their human curiosity to know a reality that was very different from the one in which they lived, which was for that very reason more attractive and full of challenges. That was the *mouere*. The *docere*, of course, would come with the volume of information produced and disseminated about history, geography, customs and practices, and religion: in short, the culture of China, with all its sociological, anthropological, ethnological, and historical interest.

It is worth remembering that this type of account, disclosing the way of life of distant and different peoples, as well as their intended effect (knowledge of the Other), already existed in classical literature. Many of the authors who developed it were certainly known to the Jesuits, either because they had studied them or because they had found and read their works in the libraries of the Colleges and Residences. Of these, I will note a few names: among the Greeks, Herodotus, the father of history, who spoke sublimely of Egypt; the geographers Strabo and Ptolemy; Pausanias, the great traveller on a tour of the known world. Among the Romans, Tacitus and his texts on Germania and Britannia, where his father-in-law, Agricola, had been imperial legate; Quintus Curtius and the romanticised biography of Alexander, during his adventures and conquests in exotic places such as India; Pomponius Mela and his *Chorographia* on the peoples and places around the *Mare Nostrum*; Pliny the Elder, with his encyclopaedia of knowledge that was read and accepted as a scientific authority until the 19th century, despite everything in those 37 books being pure fantasy. This did not prevent Pliny from being fascinating to so many readers, and his *Naturalis Historia* among the favourite texts in Jesuit teaching.

It is also worth noting regarding the contact of the Romans with other peoples and civilizations, often recorded in reports of a political-ideological nature, that commercial relations with the territory, or part of the territory, of China

dated back at least to the end of the Republic.⁵ From there came silk, one of the most coveted luxury products to which only the rich could aspire. Silk was quickly associated with Rome's refinement, manifestations of grandeur and opulence, but inevitably also with lust and the corrosion of traditional values. It was no coincidence that wearing silk garments was associated with the effeminate, to the point that the emperor Tiberius promulgated a *senatusconsultum in luxum ciuitatis*, against luxury, which forbade men from wearing silk garments (Tac. *Ann.* 2.33.1: *uestis serica*). The Romans were aware of silks coming from other places, such as the island of Kos, but Chinese silk (traded through the Parthians, one of the peoples with whom Rome had the most belligerent relations) was the most coveted for its whiteness, brightness, delicacy, and its excellent capacity to absorb a wide variety of shades. Although they appreciated it, they also had no idea about how it was produced. It is humorous to read the explanations and conjectures of authors such as Vergil (*G.* 2.121) and Pliny (*HN* 6.24.3).⁶ They called silk *sericum*, because it came from a distant people which they called the Seres (identified with the Chinese, not without some controversy). But it was not just silk that the Romans valued. They also brought spices, which they used in cooking, pharmaceuticals, and ointments and perfumes. In the 2nd century, the historian Florus (whose epitome was present in the mission to China) speaks of a delegation coming from India and the country of the Seres that travelled for four years and brought precious stones, pearls, and elephants as gifts (2.34). Florus dates it to the time of Augustus, but it is not possible to know for sure whether it was an embassy or merchants. On the other hand, we owe to a Chinese chronicle of the 5th century, the *Heou Han Chou*, the record of an embassy sent by the Romans to China in the year 166, the era of Emperor Marcus Aurelius: Western travellers brought gifts which barely impressed the Chinese, namely ivory, rhinoceros' horns, and tortoise shells, all quite poor. The Roman empire is referred to as Ta-t'sin, the Roman emperor as An-toun (*Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*), and the Chinese was called Huan, for the Han dynasty. Historical vicissitudes interrupted this emerging contact. Much later, in the 13th century, Marco Polo travelled along these ancient routes. The Orient then gained the status of a literary object, just as also happened in Portugal in the 16th century with the *Peregrinação* of Fernão Mendes Pinto, and with other authors who wrote about the Orient, such as Diogo do Couto, Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, João de Barros, Gaspar Correia, and even Camões.

⁵ Cf. Robert (2004).

⁶ Suffice it to say that only Pausanias, in the time of Marcus Aurelius, asserts (6.26.6–9) that silk comes from a small animal and not from tree bark.

This literary tradition, which reveals the unknown and places it before the eyes of the reader, must follow rules if it aims to achieve its three purposes, notably to inform, but also to leave an impression on the reader, and to delight him with the required embellishments so that the imagination can make one see what has not been seen, and what is narrated as if one were present.

This was achieved by Father Manuel Dias Júnior in an annual letter that he sent from Macau on December 30, 1616 to the Superior General of the Society.⁷ Father Manuel Dias Júnior was born in 1574, in Castelo Branco, in the diocese of Guarda. A novice in 1593 at the College of Coimbra, he left for Goa in 1601, where he was ordained in 1604. He was in Macau from 1604 to 1610, where he taught theology. He then was in Beijing in 1613, and in 1614–1615 he was Visitor of the missions, and in 1616, the date of our letter, he was exiled in Macau due to persecution resulting from the Nanking Religious Process. There he professes the four vows. He became Vice-Provincial of China twice (1623–1635; 1650–1654). He was an astronomer and translated the Gospels of Sundays and Feasts into Chinese. A man of culture, he died on March 4, 1659, at the very advanced age of 85.⁸

The letter⁹ is quite extensive and covers the usual topics of this type of document. From the outset it refers to the obligation to record the most relevant facts pertaining to the situation in the Kingdom of China (*rerum memorabilium ad politicum pertinentium statum*). The classic tradition of the *memorabilia* is here conveyed, introduced by a note *De Statu Regni huius politico*, in which it is assured that *nil aliud novi* is to be registered, since *pace, et tranquillitate frui* are still possible. It then focuses on the figure of the emperor, recognising his *magna prudentia* and *experientia diuturna* as someone who has ruled for forty-four years.¹⁰ Following this favourable depiction, however, the Jesuit mentions, euphemistically, a delicate matter: the emperor did not like to leave the Palace (*se intra Regiam praeclusum esse delectat*), spending his days *cum solis Eunuchis et feminarum grege*. He continues by saying that no one even thought to conspire against him, due to the high *reverentia* and *metus* they had for him. We cannot here expand on the reasons why Wanli kept himself away from active governance during the last twenty years of his reign, watching the irrevocable decline of the Ming dynasty without reaction. Let us only

7 ARSI, *Japonica Sinica*, 113, 429–460. There are 2nd and 3rd copies of the letter, in Portuguese. See the transcription in de Assunção (2021).

8 Cf. Murta Pina/de Assunção (2021).

9 I am grateful for the suggestion of reading this text to João Teles e Cunha, who also provided me with a copy of the document. I also thank Arnaldo do Espírito Santo who read this text and helped me with pertinent suggestions.

10 Wanli was born on September 4, 1563. He reigned from 1572 until his death on August 18, 1620. His was the longest reign of the Ming dynasty.

note the care with which the Jesuit, opening the letter, alludes to the political situation about which he must speak. I stress: opening the letter. Because, towards the end of the letter he ends up giving a prolific account of the difficulties being experienced in China (due to drought and food shortages, as well as riots and even plots against the emperor) and of the actions that the Jesuits were forced to take. In the letter's *exordium*, however, there is strategic mention of a peace and tranquillity that is only later denied. Also, perhaps, to give prominence to the story that immediately follows, and whose theme it announces: *veteris Reginae interitus, ipsius Regis matris . . .* The relevance of what he is about to tell is justified by highlighting *Ex rebus notatu dignioribus quae usu in Regia curia evenerunt*, but also because all the ceremonies resulting from that death are events *nondum apud Europaeos nec fama nec literis cognita atque adeo apud ipsos etiam indigenas peregrina*, as they are infrequent. According to the rules of Rhetoric, this completes the first phase of the discourse, the *inventio*. Cicero and Quintilian, both exhaustively studied, knew how to guide the writing hand of our Jesuit. Before we continue, it seems useful to clarify briefly the second protagonist of this episode: Xiaoding, the old queen, who died on March 18, 1614, aged 69. She was buried in the Zhaoling Mausoleum, one of the Ming Tombs on the outskirts of Beijing, obviously with her husband, of whom she, of course, had not been the only wife (nor even the first). Nevertheless, on the moment of death, it is the emperor's mother that adds pomp and solemnity to the ceremonies and rituals. And it is the actual magnitude of the event that justifies, demands even, a *relatio paulo fusius distinctiusque [. . .] quam forte literarum breuitas postulabat*. In fact, and before moving on to the *De Communi Societatis Statu* chapter (with its details, numbers, and recurrent "edification cases" that should integrate the annual letters in their final parts), the narrative of the funeral ceremonies of the old queen extends over no less than ten folios, in a narratological process of perfect fit.

In a manner of *dispositio*, the plan of the narrative is then presented. This indication also refers to the *auctoritas* of a source: the three printed books that the *caeremoniarum magistri, seu tribunal* of China had ordered to be printed about the event, with a structure that Father Manuel Dias Júnior claims to follow. Therefore, there are three parts he considers: first, the *de caeremoniis a morte Reginae ad funeris usque celebrationem seruatis*; second, *de ritibus exequiarum*; and finally, the third, which refers to all the benefactions and pardons the emperor granted on that occasion (*communem veniam ab Rege hac occasione per universam iurisdictionem concessam*).

Before we go on, a brief note to underline the concern of Father Manuel Dias Júnior with all the facts that, in his view, needed to be explained for the benefit of those not familiar with them, sometimes adding periphrases or synonyms, other times looking for equivalents known to Europeans that might clarify the realities

or circumstances of which he speaks. He does so regarding the Chinese *caeremoniarum magistri, seu tribunal*, as well as throughout the entire letter – for example, when he explains about the *magistratus: Mandarininos vocant*, or when he proceeds with equivalences, such as *per spatium ducentorum passuum, quod li vocant*. This concern regarding what is specific to the Chinese reality, made pressing by the *docere*, also translates into certain features of precision, of which I give the following examples:

1. Conversion of a Chinese way of counting time into a date format of European understanding (in this case, the text being in Latin, taken from the Roman calendar): the queen's death *in nono die fuit secundae lunae pridie videlicet Calendas Aprilis*, that is, two weeks before March 31st, the day before the Calends of April – thus, the 18th of March. Or the use of *papyrus* when referring to paper, as well as using the term *epicedia* when referring to the compositions that the greats of China created to mourn the death of the queen (*carmen, seu epicedium*).
2. Use of technical terms such as Chinese coins or the measurement system, in addition to the strict lexical distinction between the various types of temples (*templum, delubrum, phanum . . .*), or priests (such as the *Bonzii*, called *Idolorum Sacerdotes* and *secta et vana religio*; or the *sacrificulus*).
3. Use of modality that seems to ameliorate the strangeness of a Chinese custom or practice, but which achieves the opposite effect, i.e., that of underlining its peculiarity. For example, explaining that white is the colour of mourning *apud Sinas*, that saffron yellow is the colour specific to kings (*crocea terra [. . .] color est apud Sinas Regius*), or that it is the custom in China to burn the bed, clothes, and all valuables that were with the person at the time of death, shortly after death (these ashes would then be deposited in a proper place outside the Palace), as well as *ut apud eos mos est* – in times of mourning the seal colour of the mandarins was not red, but sky blue (*signo rubro [. . .] caeruleo*).
4. Reference to the materials from which objects and utensils are made, as well as their specific characteristics, such as the rough hemp garments worn at a specific moment of the ceremony; or the type of wood used to make the coffin, the *arca*, in which the corpse was placed, sourced from the roots of a tree resistant to humidity, and thus guaranteed to remain incorrupt; or the way in which the pavement of the path that the funeral procession took between the Palace and the Mausoleum was repaired and prepared.

Let us return, however, to the letter and the narrative sequence, noting the exact words of Father Manuel Dias Júnior: *Aggredior igitur iam ad huius mortis peculiaritatem . . .* And in fact, the entire story stands out for its attention to detail, combined

and integrated in successive close-ups, which alternate the focus of the narrative. Just like a video camera registering the moment, the narrative focuses on several specific moments: individual characters (the King or the Prince), restricted groups (like the many wives of Wanli and his many children and grandchildren), or the priests and magistrates (even though “restricted”, when referring to the Chinese court, is a reductive hyperbole), as well as large crowds of people in streets and squares, thousands of soldiers (some guarding the Forbidden City’s nine gates – one thousand per gate, five hundred on the outside and five hundred on the inside – others, either on foot or horseback, accompanying the *arca* and regularly taking turns, three hundred at a time out of three-thousand in total, and others standing still on both sides of the path where the parade was taking place, and a further forty thousand guarding the burial site).

We proffer this description based on the idea that the effect achieved by the narrative is equivalent to a film, a spectacle that we can see distinctly using the imagination, *oculis mentis ostendi* (Quint., *Inst.* 8.3.62): essentially, what was referred to as the *ante oculos ponere*, for its use of rhetorical figures which the Latins, such as Cicero or Quintilian, called *evidentia* or *illustratio*, whereas the Greeks called it *enargeia*. Father Manuel Dias Júnior must have been perfectly aware of the effectiveness of the image he was creating and the success of his art in capturing the reader, since he writes at the end of the letter that he reported on the most important event that happened that year in order to make it *modo aliquo uno conspectu . . . ante oculos V.[estrae] P.[aternitatis]*.

As a matter of fact, we follow the many months of ceremonies chronologically – let us evoke here the Japanese Akira Kurosawa – as if we were watching a marvellous epic film (*Primo die . . . Secundo . . . Die tertio . . . Quarto die . . . Quinto demum, ac postremo die . . .*), and on each day the succession of rites (*deinde . . . post . . .* and the anaphoric structure of verbs and polysyndeta); we contemplate the hierarchical and defined parade of those who come, and when they come, to pay homage (*Primo loco, ibat Rex, deinde coniuges, tum filii, quos sequebantur nepotes, postremo tandem nonnuli Eunuchi ex aulicis praecipui*); we follow the changes in location, from the Palace of the King to that of the Queen Mother, from the interior of the Palace to the courtyard, from the squares within the walls of the Forbidden City to the embellished path along which the coffin passes; we distinguish day from night, as when describing the places where the procession stays overnight, in large tents with mats and, in the middle, the tent where the coffin was placed, and the awnings under which the sacrifices were made; we even see the break of day, *illucescente die*, at which moment the emperor leaves the Palace, *funerali amictu inductu[s]*, together with his son and heir and other individuals from the court, moving towards a temple, *intra muros*, where he would perform sacrifices in honour of his mother.

Yes, the text reads like a film. All five senses are called upon by the imagination. The movement; the colour of the clothes, shoes, and caps; the differences in dress between men and women; the zoomed-in detail of the white ribbons that obligatorily should hang from the caps, with the right measure to make them fall down to the shoulders (*candidas [. . .] vittas ex ipsis pileis ad humeros pendentes*); the tables with the animals, a pig and a ram, the fruits and the cakes that will be consecrated in sacrifice; the unfurled banners and the silk-covered floats; the paper figures of men, lions, elephants, and horses; the prostrations, describing in detail how many times they should be done and by which gestures they should be accompanied (the “head banging” performed dozens of times, *genibus ante cadauer flexis capite leniter humum attingens*) – everything appeals to the eye. Copious weeping, woes and sighs reach our ears, also normatively determined – fifteen, no more and no less – that must be performed during reverent homages; the sound of drums and cymbals, and that of bells, along with the music-less silence of all temples; the trotting of horses; the voices of those who ask the deceased to agree to spend the night in that chosen place and, the following day, to leave again to continue to the burial place; and the sense of smell, the incense and the aromatic tablets (*thymiamata*) that burn, but also the smoke from incinerated objects and sacrificed animals; the sense of touch, suggesting rough fabrics and shoes, and the ropes replacing belts, the rough wood of the coffin, and the soft silk of flags and banners, or the softness of the silky cushions of various sizes which the King placed inside, for the comfort of his mother’s defunct body, with his own hands (*puluinaria multa, et magna, et parua [. . .] ut cadauer sit melius compositum*); the sense of taste, especially the fasting which forbade the population of consuming meat and fermented drinks, and the fasting of the King who, in the first three days after his mother’s death, ate nothing but a little boiled rice dissolved in water, after which he then ate rice with only a few greens (*sola [. . .] oryza cocta admodum exigua, aquaque diluta, reliquis vero diebus oryza [. . .] adiunctis oleribus*), thus respecting the Chinese fasting rite during profound mourning.

Hence, we propose to introduce to scholarship texts that have been considered marginal and which have only been appreciated seldomly for their historical or ethnographic value and interest.¹¹ As we can see from what has been said, this text is thus anthological, in addition to raising other questions that are not discussed here, e.g., the way in which the Jesuits associated themselves with mourning and funerals that lasted for many months. But what we wish to highlight is

11 Among the few that have merited attention from a literary point of view is the Diary where the Jesuit Tomás Pereira (1646–1708) tells the story of a voyage by an embassy from China to

this text's literary value, its richness of construction and style, aspects that are overlooked in so many other texts of Jesuit missionaries. Historical and literary analysis are complementary here. Consider that the detailed description of the funeral rites represents, in good classical fashion, the insertion of an *exemplum* which, in this particular case – and Father Manuel Dias Júnior mentions it – depicts the love and respect for parents expressed by their offspring, so often recognised by the Jesuits as another Chinese quality, especially because it coincides with the fourth Christian commandment. Father Manuel Dias Júnior concludes his account by stating the purpose which guided such a detailed and extensive narrative: *ut intelligatur, quanti sint apud Sinas de mortuis honores*.

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Anna Di Toro and Luisa M. Paternicò

From Martini to Prémare: Early analytic Descriptions of Mandarin Chinese in Latin

Abstract: Some of the earliest works to describe Mandarin Chinese from the 17th century onward were written in Latin, which was the standard language of the learned people of the time in Europe. For this reason, Latin was immediately associated with the language spoken by the Mandarins: *guanhua* 官话, or Mandarin Chinese. Not only was Latin used as the metalanguage in these texts, but the grammatical categories of the Graeco-Latin tradition were borrowed as well in order to analyse, explain, teach, and learn a language that was actually very different from any of those spoken in Europe. This paper, after a brief introduction to the oldest Mandarin grammars written in Latin – namely the *Grammatica Linguae Sinensis* of Martino Martini (compiled around 1653–1656 and published in 1696), and the *Notitia Linguae Sinicae* of Joseph Henri de Prémare (compiled in 1720 and published in 1831) – will analyse how the description of Chinese evolved in the 70 years in between, how Chinese lexical and grammatical categories were rendered in Latin and how or how much the Latin categories were kept, stretched or adapted in order to define or explain linguistic phenomena that were not present in any of the native languages of the European missionary learners (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, etc.) while using terminology that would be familiar to them.

Keywords: Mandarin grammar, Martino Martini, Joseph Henri de Prémare, China mission

Introduction

Some of the earliest works to describe Mandarin Chinese from the 17th century onward were written in Latin, which was the standard language of the learned people of the time in Europe.

For this reason, Latin was, already by the founder of the China mission, Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606), immediately associated with the language spoken by the

Note: Luisa M. Paternicò is the author of the Introduction, Par. 1 and 2; Anna Di Toro wrote Par. 3, 4 and 5. The authors would like to express their gratitude to Dr. David Walthall for the revision of the text. Anna Di Toro wishes to thank Luigi Spagnolo, Daniele Corsi and Davide Francolino for their suggestions and help and the Eurasia Foundation (from Asia) for the financial support received while working on the present article.

Mandarins (the scholar officials who held the reins of power in China): *guanhua* 官话, or Mandarin Chinese.¹

Not only was Latin used as the metalanguage in these texts, but the grammatical categories of the Graeco-Latin tradition were borrowed as well in order to analyse, explain, teach and learn a language that was actually very different from any of those spoken in Europe. This was due to the fact that the first Westerners engaging in the study of Chinese in China, namely Catholic missionaries coming mostly from Italy, Spain, Portugal and France, could not find systematic works describing it in the manner to which they were accustomed. As a matter of fact, although Chinese scholars already from the 2nd century B.C. had started compiling detailed lexicographical materials, the first descriptive grammar of Chinese composed by a Chinese person would be published only between 1898 and 1900. Its author was Ma Jianzhong 马建忠 (1845–1900), a scholar and official of the Qing dynasty, who had studied in a French school in Shanghai and then in France. His work *Mashi wentong* 马氏文通 (*General Rules of the Language by Mr. Ma*) marked the beginning of systematic studies on Chinese in Chinese.²

Before then, probably due to the peculiarity of Chinese morphology, Chinese intellectuals had never felt the need to compile descriptive grammars. This, however, does not mean that they had never carried on any observations on their language. The first traces of language studies can be found in the commentaries to the Classics, in the form of philological analyses of the texts. During the Han dynasty, the distinction between names and particles with no semantic content but only “grammatical” function first appeared. These particles were referred to in different ways in the following centuries, often as *yuzhu* 语助 (“language helpers”) or *zhuzi* 助字 (“helping characters”). During the Yuan dynasty the traditional distinction between *shizi* 实字 (“full words”) and *xuzi* 虚字 (“empty words”) was made. The “full words” included nouns, verbs, and adjectives; the “empty words” included adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and particles. This distinction would stay in use for many years. Another classification of the time was that distinguishing *huozi* 活字 (“living words”) and *sizi* 死字 (“dead words”): the former being those words that can change meaning and the latter being those that cannot.³

It is hard to determine if and how much the Jesuit missionaries to China in the 17th century were wise to these grammatical considerations. It is imaginable that they spent a certain period of time looking for language materials before realizing

1 Valignano (1584) 541–542: «[. . .] la lengua mandarín, que es entre los chinas como latín entre nosotros, y tienen necesidad de mucho y largo estudio para aprenderlas».

2 An accurate study on the *Mashi wentong* and the grammatical studies before and after it has been conducted by Gong (1987); see also Mair (1997) 5–26.

3 Paternicò (2013) 30–33.

that, even though good monolingual dictionaries were available, there were no grammatical works describing the Chinese language systematically or, at any rate, there was nothing like the grammar texts to which these European scholars were accustomed. Some early considerations on Chinese language, its peculiarities and difficulty are present in a few missionary writings of the late 16th and early 17th centuries,⁴ but the first grammar of Mandarin Chinese ever written and printed was Martino Martini (1614–1661)’s *Grammatica Linguae Sinensis*. It was compiled around 1651–1653 and revised at least until 1656. The language described by Martini, in Latin with Chinese characters and transcriptions, is the Mandarin of the time (a Nanjing based *koine*). The work was printed and published as an appendix to the 1696 edition of Melchisédec Thévenot’s collection of travel reports, *Relations de divers voyages curieux*.⁵ In this work Martini does not seem aware of previous local linguistic studies, and describes Chinese using as a clear model Emmanuel Alvarez’s (1526–1582) *De Institutione Grammatica libri tres*,⁶ which was the textbook he had very likely used during his studies at the Jesuit College. As a matter of fact, with the introduction of the *Ratio studiorum* (*Study Plan*) between 1586 and 1591, great importance was attached to the study of Latin grammar in the Jesuit’s education.⁷ As will be described below, Martini, though making some adjustments, departs very little from the description of the parts of speech typical of Latin grammars.

The missionaries of the following centuries proved to be more aware of texts from the Chinese linguistic tradition and wrote about them in their works. This is the case of Joseph Henri de Prémare (1666–1736), who, in his *Notitia Linguae Sinicae* – published in 1831, more than a century after its composition around 1728 – wrote indeed of the differentiation made by the Chinese grammarians between *xuzi* and *shizi* and between *huozi* and *sizi*.⁸ Prémare was aware of the fact that the Latinate model would be a hindrance to the correct understanding of Chinese and made an effort to emancipate Chinese from Latin categories. His work could be described as an initial negotiation between the Latin grammatical tradition and new concepts deriving from the Chinese one.

This paper, after a brief introduction on the oldest Mandarin grammars written in Latin, namely the *Grammatica Linguae Sinensis* of Martini and the *Notitia Linguae Sinicae* of Prémare, will analyse how the description of Chinese evolved in the 70 years in between, how Chinese lexical and grammatical categories were

4 Raini (2010) 12–21.

5 See: Masini/Paternicò/Antonucci (2013) 337–398; Paternicò (2013) 87–226.

6 Alvarez (1572).

7 Villoslada (1954) 96–98.

8 Prémare (1847) 27.

rendered in Latin and how or how much the Latin categories were kept, stretched or adapted in order to define or explain linguistic phenomena, which were not present in any of the native languages of the European missionary learners (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, etc.), using a familiar terminology.

1 Martini's Grammar of Chinese: Structure and Content

Martino Martini was an Italian Jesuit missionary and is considered one of the fathers of Sinological studies. His main contribution was to make Chinese history, geography, and language known to the West thanks to the widespread circulation of his works.⁹ Born in Trento in 1614, Martini joined the Society of Jesus in Rome, starting his novitiate when he was eighteen years old at the famous “Collegio Romano”. In 1634, Martini addressed a letter to the Father General Muzio Vitelleschi (1563–1645) asking to be sent to the “Indies”, and he obtained the permission in 1638. Due to several tribulations at sea, Martini reached Macau only in August 1642. From his annual relation of 1644 we learn that he entered China in 1643 and arrived by river in his final residence of Hangzhou. During the Manchu conquest of Southern China, he often had to move to different locations and had the opportunity to travel extensively with different tasks to accomplish. In 1651 he was sent to Rome as Procurator of the China mission in order to negotiate again with the Holy See the prohibition of the Chinese Rites, which had been decreed by Pope Innocent X in 1645 and which the Jesuits had not respected. During the long journey, he was able to complete the compilation of his many works to be printed and published in Europe: *De Bello Tartarico Historia* (Antwerp 1654), *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (Amsterdam 1655), *Sinicae Historiae Decas Prima* (Munich 1658) and *Grammatica linguae Sinensis* (Paris 1696), all of which would obtain great success on the Old Continent.¹⁰

A few manuscript copies of his grammar of Mandarin in Latin were found around the end of the 20th century by Giuliano Bertuccioli.¹¹ More manuscript copies and a printed and published version were found in the first decade of the 21st century by Luisa M. Paternicò, who also reconstructed the *iter* of its compilation, revision, augmentation, circulation, and printing from 1653 to 1696.¹² The most complete version of Martini's grammar is the manuscript currently pre-

⁹ Paternicò (2023) 4–5.

¹⁰ Paternicò (2013) 49–62.

¹¹ Bertuccioli (1998) 349–481; Bertuccioli (2003) 629–640.

¹² Paternicò (2013) 87–144.

served in the Diocesan Archive of Vigevano, which includes more explanations and annotations than other versions and which will be the object of attention in the next pages.

Martini's work is, to our knowledge, the first grammar of Mandarin ever written, preceded only by a grammar of Hokkien, *Arte de la lengua chio chiu*, written in Manila around 1620–1621.¹³ It is also the first Chinese grammar in Latin, considering that the latter was written in Spanish, probably by a Domini-can missionary in the Philippines.

As already stated in the premises, the structure of Martini's *Grammatica Linguae Sinensis* remains quite attached to the model of Alvarez's grammar of Latin, with few discrepancies, as an analysis of the contents will easily reveal. The grammar of Alvarez is divided into three books. The *Liber Primus* is the most extensive and is subdivided into two parts. The first part deals with the declension of nouns, adjectives and pronouns followed by a long section on the conjugation of verbs in all their categories: actives, passives, irregulars, deponents, etc. A section entitled *Rudimenta: sive de octo partibus orationis* follows, analysing the traditional parts of speech.

The division of speech into eight parts was first introduced by the Greek grammarian Dionysius Thrax (2nd B.C.) in his *Τέχνη Γραμματική*. According to Dionysius Thrax, the eight parts of speech were: noun, verb, participle, article and relative pronoun, pronoun, preposition, adverb, and conjunction.¹⁴ This division was inherited by the Latin grammatical tradition. As a matter of fact, it was adapted and used by Aelius Donatus (4th century A.D.) in his *Ars Grammatica minor* – a smaller edition of his *Ars Grammatica Maior* – which focused on *De Partibus Orationis*, namely: noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, participle, conjunction, preposition, interjection. Donatus' grammar was the main school text used to learn Latin in the Middle Ages, it set the model of language teaching and learning for centuries and, when books eventually came to be printed in the 15th century, it was among the first to be printed.¹⁵

The portion of Alvarez's grammar dedicated to the eight parts of speech is an emanation of this long tradition of Graeco-Latin grammatical studies. If we compare it with the contents of Martini's grammar, similarities and differences immediately appear, as Tab. 1 below shows:

The first major difference is that Martini felt the need to add an introductory section (Chapter I) on phonology, on syllables, their (limited) number, their pronunci-

¹³ Klöter (2010).

¹⁴ Kemp (1986); Di Benedetto (1958–1959).

¹⁵ Chase (1926).

Tab. 1: Index of contents of Alvarez’s Latin grammar and Martini’s Chinese grammar.

Alvarez, <i>De Institutione Grammatica</i>	Martini, <i>Grammatica Linguae Sinensis</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– De Nomine– De Nominibus positivis, comparativis et superlativis– De Pronomine– De Verbo– De Participio– De Praepositione– De Adverbio– De Interjectione– De Coniunctione	<p>Caput I: De vocibus Sinensibus</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Vocum Sinensium numerus.2. Harum vocum prima iuxta latinas explicatio3. De tonis seu diversa earumdem vocum apud Sinas pronuntiatione.4. Qualiter quinque hi toni pronuntiarentur. <p>Caput II</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. De Nominibus et eorum declinatione2. De Pronominibus.3. De Verborum coniugationibus. <p>Caput III: De praepositionibus, adverbys, interiectionibus et coniunctionibus</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. De Praepositionibus.2. De Adverbys.3. De Interjectionibus.4. De Coniunctione.5. De Numeris eorumque particulis quas numericas vocabo.6. De Nominibus positivis, comparativis et superlativis.7. De Pronominibus appendix.

ation (*latinas explicatio*) and, in particular, on tones. Only from Chapter II do the grammatical explanations concretely begin.

The section on nouns is split into two paragraphs in both works, according to the Latin tradition, which would distinguish nouns between *nomen substantivum* and *nomen adiectivum*. Martini, however, decided to place the paragraph on *De nominibus positivis, comparativis et superlativis*, which is a section on the adjectives and their degree, at the end of Chapter III. The sections on pronouns and verbs run parallel in both works, with the exception that pronouns also have a dedicated appendix at the end of Martini’s work.

With the exception of the section on participles, which is not included in Martini’s work, the rest of the contents run parallel from prepositions to conjunctions, which in Martini’s grammar are in Chapter III, 1–4.

Alvarez’s description of the parts of speech ends here, whereas Martini dedicates a long section to the numbers and their *particulae*. Alvarez’s grammar does have a section on numerals in the paragraph on the nouns, but of course has

nothing about *numerical particles*, which is what Martini calls classifiers. The Jesuit clearly understood the importance of this peculiar class of words that lacks a direct correlate in the European languages; thus, he dealt with it profusely and with an abundance of examples in this dedicated section.

Martini's grammar structure has so far enjoyed a legacy of four hundred years. Even nowadays, all grammars of Chinese, written either in Chinese or in any other foreign language, include, with little variation, the same distinction in parts of speech.

2 Martini's Grammar of Chinese: Metalanguage

Martino Martini's publication output was almost entirely in Latin. With the exception of a treatise on friendship, *Qiuyou pian* 求友篇,¹⁶ and one on the immortality of the soul, *Zhenzhu lingxing lizheng* 真主灵性理证 (*Rational Proves of the existence of the real God and of the intellectual soul*),¹⁷ which had Chinese scholars and potential converts as target readers, Martini wrote his works on Chinese history, geography, and language in Latin, for the benefit of European learned men more generally and for his missionary confreres in particular. The choice of Latin was therefore strictly linked with his intended readership.

Martini's *Grammatica Linguae Sinensis* is no exception. It aimed at simplifying the acquisition of such a distant and different language, accommodating it to Latin's grammatical categories in order to make the matter more familiar and accessible for the European learner.

How did Martini render Chinese lexical and grammatical categories? To what extent were the Graeco-Latin categories or notions kept, stretched or adapted? An answer to these questions will be provided by taking as examples some key concepts:

- *voces*
- tones
- diacritic for aspiration
- noun declension and verb conjugation
- particles of various kinds
- other matters

¹⁶ Bertuccioli (1998) 173–348.

¹⁷ Bertuccioli (1998) 483–506.

As already stated, at the very beginning Martini felt the need to list the relatively few syllables of the Chinese language. However, he decided to do this from a phonological perspective. For this reason, the list is not referred to as *Syllables* but as *Voces* (meaning: “voices”, “sounds”). This immediately reveals the didactic nature of this section: it aims not to simply count the syllables, showing how few they are, but to teach the real pronunciation of Chinese sounds by finding correspondences in European languages. To attain this, Martini used a phonetic transcription, adopting Latin letters and a set of diacritics to mark the aspiration and the tones.¹⁸ He then explains the differences between certain sounds and whether they should follow the Italian or Spanish pronunciation. For example, after the list of syllables, he writes:

*Ex his aliqua voces nulla indigent explicatione, omnino enim pronunciantur ut iacent, ac si latinæ essent syllabæ, quare illas solum explicabimus in quibus difficultas esse potest. Quæ per ç Hispanicum cum aricula scribuntur, eodem modo pronunciantur ut Hispani solent, cum aliqua differentia à Z Itolorum: c vero ante e et i, non Itolorum more, sed Hispanorum est pronunciantum, uti nimirum plera(ue) nationes primam syllabam nominum cibi, et cetus. [. . .] Illa quæ scribo per g ante e et i omnino Itolorum more enunciantur, nimirum uti Itali primas syllabas, exempli gratia, Genus, et gigas [. . .].*¹⁹

As for the tones, Latin and other European languages did possess intonation, stress, and vowel quantity, but definitely not lexical tones. The word that we use nowadays comes from the Latin *tonus/toni*, which either referred to a musical sound or, in metrics, to the accent of a syllable. The early missionaries to China had mainly used the Latin words *accenti*, *soni*, *voces* and *pronunciationes* to refer to these suprasegmental events which distinguish otherwise homophonous syllables in Chinese.²⁰ They had also devised a system to describe the tones of Mandarin and a set of diacritics to mark them on the Romanised syllable.²¹ Martini's grammar used the same Romanization, diacritics and explanations of his Jesuit

¹⁸ For a detailed explanation on Martini's Romanisation system and its evolution see Raini (2010) 130–141.

¹⁹ Translation: «Besides this, the sounds do not need any further explanation; as a matter of fact, they are pronounced as they are, as if they were Latin syllables, and hence we will explain only those that might present some confusion. Those starting with the Spanish ç written with the cedilla are pronounced in the Spanish way, with some difference from the Italian Z: actually the letter *c* before *e* and *i* should not be pronounced according to Italian usage but according to Spanish, just as most nations pronounce the first syllable of the nouns *cibi* and *cetus*. [. . .] Those that I write with *g* in front of *e* and *i* are to be pronounced according to the Italian usage, exactly like the first Italian syllables, for example, *Genus*, and *gigas* [. . .].»

²⁰ It is interesting to note that in the *Arte de la lengua chio chiu* (1620), a grammar of Hokkien in Spanish, the word used is *tonadas*. See Klöter (2010) 156.

²¹ Raini (2010) *passim*.

predecessors, like Matteo Ricci, Nicholas Trigault, etc., but defined them as *toni*. Thanks to the grammar's wide circulation in both China and Europe, it established long-lasting norms of nomenclature not only for Martini's successors on mission in China, but also among European scholars up to today.

To mark aspiration, which is another peculiar trait of Chinese phonology that was not present in Latin, Martini recurred to the usage of the Greek spiritus asper mark.

Concerning the concepts of noun declension and verb conjugation, Martini, probably for practical reasons, did not opt to avoid them completely. The Jesuit instead preferred to keep them in the titles of paragraphs (*De nominibus et eorum declinatione*, *De Verborum coniugationibus*), but explained their lack in the text. Here, for example, is the incipit of Ch. II.1:

*Cum omnis vox apud Sinas monosyllaba sit et indeclinabilis, nulla datur in nominibus declinationum varietas, sed nec in casibus ulla vocis mutatio, nec varia eorum genera. Nomina tamen substantiva et adiectiva sunt, et sæpe nomen à verbo non differt, eademque(ue) vox pro varia positione interloquendum, nomen substantivum, adiectivum et verbum esse potest.*²²

In Ch. II.3 Martini clearly explains, and also shows with examples, the actual lack of verbal conjugation in Chinese:

*Coniugationum varietatem verba Sinica non habent, sed nec ulla tempora quæ fiant ex vocis mutatione, sed solis additis particulis, vel ex ipso locutionis sensu tempora percipiuntur et explicant(ur) et solum habent proprie præsens, præteritum, et futurum: passiva, vero significatio addita particula pí exprimit(ur). Quando verbo nulla particula additur sed sola pronomina [. . .] tum præsens est tempus: pro præterito servit particula leão quæ proprie præteritum significat, remque(ue) iam perfectam. Pro futuro servit particula ciām, quæ futurum significat [. . .].*²³

Interestingly, Martini also tries to show how the verb *amo* (*ngai* 愛, “to love”) would appear if one were to conjugate it (see *infra*, § 4).

22 Translation: «Since among the Chinese every voice is monosyllabic and indeclinable, there is no variation of declension in the nouns, and not even changes of voices in the cases, neither of gender. The nouns are both nouns and adjectives, and the noun is often not different from the verb, and using the same word in a different position, it can be a noun, adjective and verb». See Paternicò (2013) 176–177.

23 Translation: «Chinese verbs do not have a variety of conjugations, and not even tenses to render with voice changes, but only adding particles; in other words, the tenses are perceived by the meaning of the sentence, and they express and have only the present, the past and the future tense; the passive form is expressed adding the particle *pí*. When no particle is added to the verb, but only the pronouns [. . .], then the tense is present. For the past the particle *leão* is needed; it indicates the past and an action already completed. For the future the particle *ciām* is needed, which indicates the future». See Paternicò (2013) 179–180.

Another fascinating matter concerns the conceptualisation and use of the word *particles* in Martini's grammar. In the Latin grammatical tradition, the term *particle* could indicate uninflected function words in general, not content words.²⁴ In a narrower sense, it was used to refer to some negative particles like *non* (*n-*) or *haud* placed before a word to express negation. Also, some conjunctions or adverbs were referred to as *discourse particles*. For example: *ergo* ("therefore"), *nempe* ("indeed"), *autem* ("whereas"), etc.²⁵ The different vernaculars spoken in Europe adopted the term *particula* to refer to one or more peculiar class of function words in their language. Martini used *particula/particulae* every time he had to define a (mainly grammatical) morpheme for which he could not find a corresponding word class in Latin. In particular, he uses the word "particle" in the case of *verbal particles* and *numerical particles* but also for what we would define suffixes or adverbs. For example, in Ch. II.1 he writes about the particle *zi* 子, which is added to some nouns such as *fangzi* 房子 ("house"); the particle *men* 们, which is used to make the plural of nouns like *renmen* 人们 ("people"); the particle *de*, which is used to mark possession, as in *renmen de hao* 人们的好 ("the goodness of people").²⁶ As for *verbal particles*, Martini included in this category the aspect particle *le* 了, the future particle *jiang* 将, as well as the passive marker *bei* 被, and even a particle to express what the author sees as a resemblance of the subjunctive mood, *ji* 既, as in *ji wo zuo* 既我做 ("since I make").²⁷ In Ch. III.6 he calls *particles* words such as *geng* 更 ("more") before an adjective, or *duo* 多 ("a lot") after an adjective. As already stated, Martini defines *particulae numericae* as those noun classifiers that are measure words of Chinese.²⁸

Finally, Martini at times appears to be looking for Chinese correlates for some familiar Latin concepts. For example, though clearly stating in Ch. II.1 that «*Casus etiam in nominibus nulli sunt*», later on, when dealing with particle *de* 的, he claims that it could be used to render the genitive case: «*saepe genetivum facit, tam in singulari, quam in plurali nominibus postposita*». This is also the case in Ch. II.3, where Martini states that the particle *ji* 既 can render the *conjunctive mood*. In the same chapter, he explains that a circumlocution to render the optative is *ba bu de* 巴不得 ("if only").²⁹

24 Kroon (2011) 1–2.

25 Kroon (2011) 8–17.

26 Paternicò (2013) 177–178.

27 Paternicò (2013) 179–182.

28 Paternicò (2013) 185–190.

29 Paternicò (2013) 176–182.

All in all, just as Donatus' *Ars minor* created the nomenclature for most European vernacular grammars,³⁰ Martini's grammatical terminology paved the way for the adoption of this kind of lexicon in China.³¹

3 Joseph Henri Marie de Prémare and his *Notitia Linguae Sinicae*

Joseph Henri Marie de Prémare, born in 1666 in Cherbourg, a seaport in Normandy, entered the Society of Jesus in 1683 and completed his studies at the Collège de la Flèche. Together with a group of French Jesuits from France, he arrived in China in 1698. According to Pfister (1833–1891), he had two main tasks: the conversion of Chinese commoners and the study of Chinese language and literature.³² He adhered to the so-called “China Figurists”, a group of Jesuits who found signs of Christian revelation in ancient Chinese texts, especially those that seemed more obscure to Europeans at the time, like the *Yijing* 易经 (*Book of Changes*).³³ He lived mostly in Jiangxi; in 1714 he was called to Beijing by Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730), but two years later Prémare left the capital in misery, probably in consequence of the bitter rows he had with Bouvet himself.³⁴ He had to leave Jiangxi for good in 1724, when Christian religion was proscribed by the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723–1735), and was exiled first to Canton and later to Macau, where he died in 1736. Prémare was reported many times to the Propaganda in Rome, accused of having written texts supporting the Chinese Rites and Figurist ideas.³⁵

He wrote many works in Chinese, Latin and French (most of which were never published), mostly concerning Christian faith, Figurist ideas, Chinese language and literature and translations of literary works.³⁶ He was the author of two short novels in Chinese, the *Meng mei tu ji* 夢美土記 (*A Dream about the Beautiful Land*, 1709), in literary language, and *Rujiao xin* 儒交信 (*A Confucian Be-*

30 Chase (1926) 24–25. More on Latin grammatical lexicon in Schad (2007).

31 For a later history of Chinese grammatical lexicon see Pellin (2009).

32 Pfister (1932).

33 The term “Figurists” was first used in a derogatory way by Nicolas Fréret (1688–1749, member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres) in 1730 (see Lundbaek 1991, 109). In the opinion of Knud Lundbaek (1912–1995), his Figurist ideas influenced his approach to Chinese language (Lundbaek 1991, 101).

34 Lundbaek (1991) 114–116.

35 Pfister (1932) 521.

36 For a list, see Li (2012).

friending the Faith, 1729), in the vernacular, probably the first novels written in Chinese by a European, inaugurating the tradition of the ‘missionary novel’ in China.³⁷

The first promoter of *Notitia Linguae Sinicae* (*A Knowledge of Chinese Language*) in Europe was Prémare himself. Knud Lundbaek has given an account of his epistolary exchanges with Étienne Fourmont (1683–1745), whom Prémare came to know when, in Canton, he was able to read academic journals from Europe.³⁸ Fourmont, a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres and a scholar of Hebrew and Arabic, had devoted himself to the study of Chinese and had published a dissertation on Chinese literature in the July 1722 edition of *Mémoires de Trevoux*, which Prémare could read in Canton.³⁹ In his dissertation, Fourmont spoke of his main task: to publish a Chinese dictionary in Europe. To this purpose, thanks to the generous support of the court of France, he had already engraved around 25,000 Chinese characters, an impressive undertaking in early-18th-century Europe.⁴⁰ From the letters sent by Prémare to Fourmont between 1725 and 1733, we know that in 1728 the Jesuit sent a manuscript copy of the *Notitia* to the French Academician, hoping that he could support and realize its publication:

I am sending you a rather long work about understanding the Chinese language. I have written it in Latin to make it possible for all missionaries and all interested persons, of whatever nation they may be, to benefit from it. So, I have also worked for you, and this thought makes me love my labours. In particular, I hope that the second part of it will help you to come to appreciate the beauties of the Chinese style. [. . .] I trust that what I am asking you to do will not put you into trouble. You have the characters at hand, and I feel sure the publisher will sell more copies than needed to cover his expenses.⁴¹

Prémare’s trust in Étienne Fourmont was doomed to be bitterly disappointed. The *académicien* himself was working on his two main works on Chinese language, the *Mediationes Sinicae* (which was to be published in 1737) and the *Linguae Sinarum Mandarinicae Hieroglyphicae Grammatica Duplex* (1742). Fourmont had in

³⁷ The *Meng mei tu ji* is mentioned as an *opusculum* (“little book”) by Prémare himself in the *Notitia* (Prémare 1831, 218), where he quotes a descriptive passage of the novel, written when his “pen” was still “young” (*calamo juvenili*). The attribution of the novel had nonetheless remained uncertain, until the study by Li Sher-Shiueh (Li 2011), who has demonstrated Prémare’s authorship by comparing the *Meng mei tu ji* with other works by the French Jesuit. Recently, Li Sher-Shiueh has devoted a monograph to Prémare’s Chinese novels and other works (Li 2022).

³⁸ Lundbaek (1991).

³⁹ On Fourmont, see Leung (2002).

⁴⁰ See Bussotti/Landry-Deron (2020).

⁴¹ Letter of October 20th, 1728, translated in Lundbaek (1991) 37.

fact the ambition of being the first scholar to publish a Chinese grammar in Europe, and very probably was aware of the fact that Prémare's book was far superior to his own.⁴²

The manuscript that Prémare sent to Fourmont has not been found so far, but at least two other original manuscripts reached Europe.⁴³ Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (1788–1832) discovered one of them in the Royal Library in Paris and was the first to recognize the value of the book and the novelty of Prémare's approach, but also its limits:

Quittant la rue battue des grammairiens latins que tous ses devanciers [. . .] avaient pris pour modèles, l'auteur s'est créé une méthode toute nouvelle, ou plutôt il a cherché à rendre toute méthode superflue, en substituant aux règles les phrases mêmes d'après lesquelles on peut les recomposer.⁴⁴

Abel-Rémusat played a crucial role in the diffusion of the *Notitia* by making manuscript copies (by himself and by his student Stanislas Julien, 1797–1873), thus promoting, in the end, its publication by the Collegium Anglo-Sinicum in Malacca in 1831.⁴⁵

4 Prémare's *Notitia Linguae Sinicae* and Previous Chinese Grammars by Europeans

What was the «méthode toute nouvelle» of Prémare's book? Was the *Notitia* really so revolutionary? Prémare himself proudly stressed the originality of his approach in this well-known passage:

*Absit ut ad nostras linguas sinicam revocare velim; nihil e contra cupio magis quam efficere ut missionarii mature assuescant suas ideas resolvere, easque a proprio uniuscujusque idiomate abstractas et nudas sinicis vestibus induant. Valeant itaque Despauterus et Alvarus, dum sinicas particulas in decem et octo distinctis articulis minutatim discutere et explicare conabor.*⁴⁶

⁴² The relationship between Prémare and Fourmont is thoroughly described in Lundbaek (1991); see also Abel-Rémusat (1829) 271–272. We should moreover remind the reader that the *Linguae Sinarum Mandarinicae Hieroglyphicae Grammatica Duplex* was in fact an edition of Varo's grammar, to which Fourmont added Chinese characters; see Abel-Rémusat (1829).

⁴³ Kua (2020) 194–195.

⁴⁴ Abel-Rémusat (1829) 270.

⁴⁵ On the original manuscripts, handwritten and printed copies and the “journey” to Europe and back to China of the *Notitia*, see Kua (2020 and 2021). In the present article, I refer to the 1831 printed edition of the *Notitia*.

⁴⁶ Translation: «Far be it from me the desire to reduce Chinese to our languages. On the contrary, my greatest desire is that the missionaries immediately grew accustomed to unfasten their

This passage introduces Chapter 2 (*Caput Secundum*) of the Second Part (*Pars Secunda*) of the book (for the detailed Contents of the *Notitia*, see Appendix). Interestingly, this passage is not the only feature that marks the importance of this section of the book. The Chapter is entitled *De Sinicae orationis particulis Tractatus* (*Treatise on the particles in the Chinese language*) and represents in fact a lengthy introduction to the Chinese particles. For the first time in a European grammar of Chinese, in Prémare particles are sorted by categories, some of which are new to Latin categories (for an analysis of this section, see *infra*, § 5).

Prémare was aware of the fact that he was doing something new, and laid claim to his new ideas. In order to describe a language that was, in Matteo Ricci's terms, «something completely different from Greek or German»,⁴⁷ it was necessary to emancipate oneself from the Latin grammatical tradition.

In order to appreciate the originality of the *Notitia*, we propose a Table (Tab. 2) in which we compare (limiting ourselves only to the titles of the chapters and summarizing the main subjects of each section) the contents of Prémare's book to the two main previous works on the Chinese language, by Martino Martini and by the Spanish Dominican Francisco Varo (1627–1687).

Luisa M. Paternicò introduced us to Martini's grammar above. As far as Varo's *Arte de la lengua Mandarina* is concerned, the book, completed in 1682 and published in Canton in 1703, «played a pivotal role in the development of Chinese grammatical studies».⁴⁸ As underlined by Sandra Breitenbach, the structure of the book and the Latinate model followed by Varo in describing Chinese influenced many subsequent scholars that compiled Chinese grammars. Although this approach represented a hindrance to the correct understanding of the peculiar structure of Chinese language, it was probably an unavoidable choice, being the Latin model familiar to them and to the students who had spent many years of their formation studying Greek and Latin.⁴⁹ Another feature of Varo's *Arte* was the practical aim of the book, compiled to teach the missionaries the *lingua franca* (in this case, Nanjing-based Mandarin), used in oral communication by officials and travelling merchants in Southern China, so that they would be able to preach the Gospel. Coherent with this practical aim, one of the most original features of Varo's grammar is the complete eschewal of the writ-

ideas, to abstract them from each of their native languages and to dress these naked ideas in a Chinese costume. Farewell, therefore, to Despauterus and Alvarus [our Latin grammars]! I shall thereby illustrate the Chinese particles, one by one, in eighteen subsections» (Prémare 1831, 153). I have modified some passages of Lundbaek's translation (Lundbaek 1991, 81).

47 «La lingua cina [. . .] è altra cosa che né la greca, né la todesca . . .» (Matteo Ricci, letter to Martino de' Fornari, 13 Febr. 1583, in Ricci 2001, 45–46).

48 See the Introduction by Sandra Breitenbach, in Varo (2000) xxi.

49 Breitenbach in Varo (2000) xxi.

ten language: not a single character appears in the book. If we think about the importance of script in Chinese culture, this approach is remarkably new.

Tab. 2: Summary of contents of the Chinese grammars by Martini, Varo and Prémare.⁵⁰

Martini (compiled in 1656 ca.)	Varo (compiled in 1682)	Prémare (compiled in 1728 ca.)
Ch. 1. The Chinese sounds: list of the sounds and their Latin pronunciation; the tones.	Prologue Ch.1. A Few Monitions. Some features of the spoken language; diastratic variations; importance of a correct pronunciation and a correct syntax; Ch. 2. On the Tones of this Language;	Introduction: Ch. 1. Chinese literary tradition and on the one should follow in studying it; Chinese dictionaries; Ch. 2. Characters. Sounds and tones; the Chinese initial, intermediate and final sounds; Appendix: the Chinese sounds;
Ch. 2. Names and their declension; pronouns; verbs and their conjugation.	Ch. 3. On the Declension of the Noun and Pronoun; Ch. 4. On the Substantive, Adjectival, Comparative and Superlative Nominals; Ch. 5. On the Abstract Verbal Nouns, Diminutives, Frequentatives, Occupations, and Genders; Ch. 6. On the Pronoun; Ch. 7. On the Interjection, Conjunction, Negation, Interrogative, and Conditional; Ch. 8. On the Verb and its Conjugations; Ch. 9. On the Passive Verb and Passive Constructions; Ch. 10. On the Prepositions and Adverbs; Ch. 11. On the Way of Forming Sentences;	Part 1. On ‘Vernacular Language and Familiar Style’: Ch. 1. Grammar and syntax of vernacular (brief explanation of <i>xuzi</i> 虛字, <i>shizi</i> 實字, <i>huozì</i> 活字 and <i>sizi</i> 死字); nouns and adjectives; pronouns; verbs; adverbs; prepositions; syntax; Ch. 2. On the peculiar genius of the Chinese language; on the use of certain characters (as得, 把, 打, 一, 來, 去, 道, 見, etc.); on the use of several particles divided in categories; On the ‘figures’: repetition, antithesis, interrogation, etc; list of proverbs.
Ch. 3. Prepositions, adverbs, Interjections and Conjunctions; Numerals and ‘numericals’; positive, comparative and superlative nouns; pronouns appendix.		Part 2. On the ‘Language of Noble Literary Works’: Ch. 1. Grammar and syntax; on the variability of the parts of speech in Chinese;

⁵⁰ For Martini, I follow the English translation by Luisa M. Paternicò (2013); for Varo, I refer, with slight modifications, to the translation by W. South Coblin and Joseph A. Levi, in Varo (2000), and for Prémare to Knud Lundbaek (1991) and to the translation by James G. Bridgman (1847), with some modifications.

Tab. 2 (continued)

Martini (compiled in 1656 ca.)	Varo (compiled in 1682)	Prémare (compiled in 1728 ca.)
	Ch. 12. On the Numbers and Numerals; Ch. 13. On Peculiar Particles; Ch. 14. On the Courteous Words of the Mandarin Language; Ch. 15. On How to Name the Mandarins, their Relatives, and Other People; and How to Refer to Oneself Orally and in Writing; Ch. 16. On Courteous Words <i>inter loquendam</i> and Courtesies when Visiting and Inviting; [<i>Confessionarium</i> by Basilio da Gemonà, added in the printed ed. of 1703]	Ch. 2. Treatise on the particles of Chinese language; on various particles; on particles denoting time; intensive, interrogative and final particles; Various literary styles, with examples drawn from the Classics and other ancient texts. Ch. 3. On ‘various styles in Chinese and the best way of writing it’, with literary examples from texts of the classical tradition; Ch. 4. On the ‘figures’: antithesis, repetition, climax, metaphor, etc.

The first impression one gets in comparing the three grammars is the growing length and complexity of the texts. While Martini’s grammar is about 12 pages (*recto* and *verso*) long,⁵¹ Varo’s printed text, excluding the *Confessionarium*, counts 99 pages and Prémare’s book 260 pages.

By comparing the structure of Martini and Varo, we observe a similar approach. Both books offer a first section about the phonological system of Chinese and then organize Chinese grammar following the traditional Graeco-Latin division into parts of speech. However, while Martini does not offer systematic examples of noun declension (see *supra*, § 2), Varo chooses to display them (see Fig. 1).

As far as verbs are concerned, both Martini and Varo propose a table of verbal conjugation (see in Figs. 2 and 3).

These choices lead us to reflect on the fact that the same Latinate approach to Chinese had different possible gradations: while Martini takes some little liberties, Varo seems closer to the handbooks to which the students of classical languages were accustomed. When he deviates from the models, he alerts the reader, as he does in the first lines of Ch. 7, where we can read:

51 We refer to the manuscript reproduced in Luisa M. Paternicò (2013) 146–167.

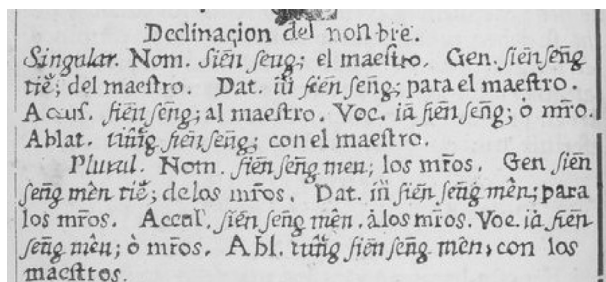


Fig. 1: Varo, *Arte de la lengua Mandarina*: Noun declension.⁵²

Even though we are dealing with the parts of speech according to the order I have drawn from the grammar of Nebrixa, this is not the proper place for the interjection and conjunction, since these two are the last ones in [that] order. However, it seems to me that to put these two parts first [. . .] will be less troublesome⁵³

Varo has also some important innovations: the first chapter, entitled *De algunas advertencias* (*A Few Monitions*), introduces the reader to some features of the spoken language, warning the student of the importance of a correct pronunciation and sentence structure in order to be intelligible when speaking Chinese. The chapter contains also some interesting reflections on diastatic varieties, and on what variety the missionaries should learn:

There are three modes of speaking this language. The first is high and elegant [. . .] and it is spoken in the way that it is written. This first mode can only be used with educated men [. . .]. And it is certain that, if the minister could learn this way of speaking, that would be a very good thing, for on hearing him the educated Chinese would look upon the Priest as a learned man. However, this way of talking is in practice extremely difficult for us [. . .]. The second mode is a medium which is understood by the great majority [. . .]. It is very necessary for us to learn this way of speaking, in preparation for when we are preaching the word of God to the Christian as well as to the Gentiles, since, by not tiring them with coarse speech, they will listen to it with pleasure [. . .]. The third mode is coarse and vulgar and is used to preach to women and peasants [. . .]; it is the one which is learned with the least difficulty.⁵⁴

The most striking differences between Varo and Martini appear in the last part of the book. Here we can find separate sections on syntax (Ch. 11: 'On the Way of

⁵² Varo (1703) 20 (copy preserved in University of Iowa Main Library, digitized by Google, url: it/3z_8v).

⁵³ Varo (2000) 99. Varo refers to Antonio de Nebrija (1444–1522), author of *La Gramática de la Lengua Castellana*; on Nebrija's influence on Varo, see Breitenbach, in Varo (2000) xxxv–xxxvii.

⁵⁴ Varo (2000) 19.

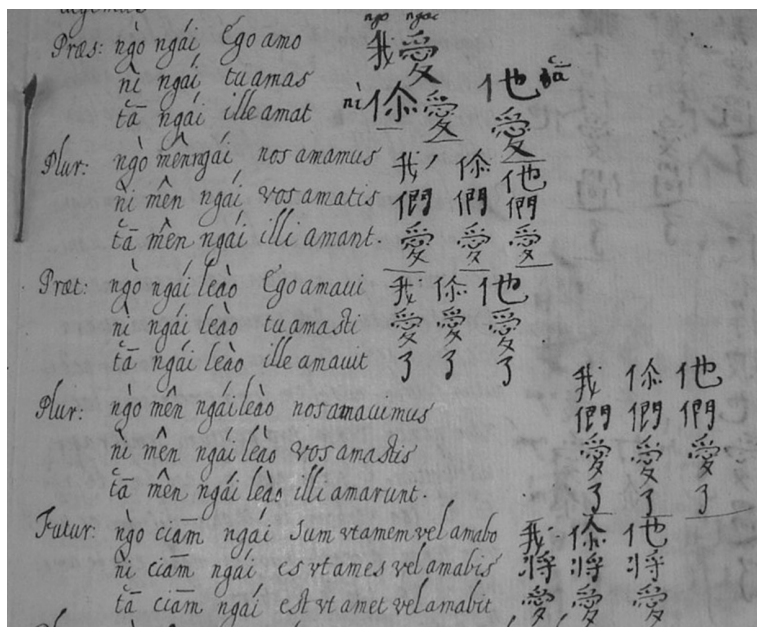


Fig. 2: Martini, *Grammatica Linguae Sinensis*, Conjugation of *amo*.⁵⁵

Forming Sentences'), on particles (Ch. 13: 'On Peculiar Particles')⁵⁶ and on pragmatics (Ch. 15: 'On How to Name the Mandarins, their Relatives . . .', and 16: 'On Courteous Words *inter loquendam*') and even on social etiquette (second part of Ch. 16: 'On Courtesies when Visiting and Inviting'). From Varo on, the sections on etiquette and pragmatics would be introduced in most of the Chinese grammars written by Europeans. Interestingly enough, some versions of Prémare's grammar (but not the one printed in 1831) contain a section on Chinese courtesy.⁵⁷

When we compare the first two grammars with Prémare's work, the first impression is a sudden rise in complexity and length. The book, 260 pages long in the Latin printed edition, is divided into three sections: a lengthy Introduction, Part One ('On Vernacular Language and Familiar Style') and Part Two ('On the Language of Noble Literary Works'). A general discussion of the structure can be

55 M. Martini, *Grammatica Linguae Sinensis*, copy preserved in Diocesan Historical Archive of Vigevano, Fondo Caramuel, env. 41, fasc. 31; reproduced in Paternicò (2013) 157. I express my gratitude to Luisa M. Paternicò for providing the image.

56 We shall discuss the section devoted to the 'Various particles' in the next paragraph.

57 See Kua (2020) 164–165.

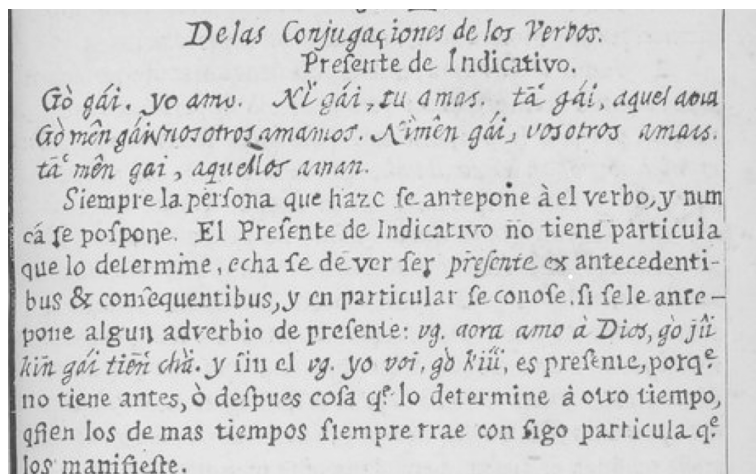


Fig. 3: Varo, *Arte de la lengua Mandarina*, Conjugation of *amar*.⁵⁸

found in the book by Knud Lundbaek and especially in the monograph wholly devoted to the *Notitia* by Li Zhen.⁵⁹ Here I shall just pinpoint some features that distinguish Prémare's grammar from the previous ones.

The Introduction (pages 3–14, plus an Index of Chinese sounds) includes a chapter on the Chinese literary tradition and a chapter on phonology. While previous grammars also inserted an initial chapter on the sounds of Chinese, the section on Chinese literature, and on the order that the student should follow in reading the suggested books, is very original. Not only is the subject new in a grammar book, but also the selection of texts and their order have many remarkable peculiarities.⁶⁰ Prémare divides the texts into nine groups (*gradi*), starting from the «ancient monuments called the 經»,⁶¹ followed by the Four Books of the Confucian tradition and (in the third class) the main Daoist texts (*Dao De jing* 道德經 and *Zhuangzi* 莊子) together with the *Li* 禮 (*Rites*).⁶² There follow other groups, sorted according to hierarchical criteria and choices that seem quite personal. Li Zhen has underlined the absence of Tang and Song classical poetry and Knud Lundbaek has defined the presence of the Daoist books in the

⁵⁸ Varo (1703) 51.

⁵⁹ See Lundbaek (1991) and Li (2014).

⁶⁰ For a thorough analysis of this section, see Lundbaek (1991) 65–68.

⁶¹ *Yijing* 易經 (*Classic of Changes*), *Shijing* 詩經 (*Classic of Odes*), *Shujing* 書經 (*Classic of Documents*).

⁶² Prémare (1831) 3. For an analytical list, see Li (2014) 140.

third group and of the ancient dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 by Xu Shen 許慎 (58–148 ca.) in the fifth as oddities in the missionary context.⁶³ Prémare gave high consideration to these last texts, which, together with the *Yijing*, the Figurists considered central to their approach to the Chinese past.⁶⁴

The other remarkable novelty in the structure of the *Notitia* is its division into two Parts, devoted respectively to the vernacular and to literary language. The awareness of different varieties of Chinese was already consolidated in missionary circles, as we have seen with Varo. However, as far as we know, Prémare was the first to structure his grammar based on a clear division of the two varieties of Chinese.⁶⁵ As he writes in a note introducing Part One:

Prima pars missionaris adjuvabit: 1° ut Sinae eos loquentes facilius intelligent. 2° ut Sinas vicissim melius ipsimet audiant. 3° ut libros humili stylo compositos cum gustu legant, et sic magis expedite loquantur [. . .].

*Secunda pars eisdem missionariis plurimum proderit. 1° ut veterum librorum sensum recto capiant. 2° ut libros in aliud idioma sine errore vertant. 3° ut sinice non ineleganter scribant, si velint.*⁶⁶

The aim of the book is clearly to give the students a solid instruction in the spoken language (defined as *lingua mandarina*) in Part One and in the written language in Part Two. Allusions to “pleasure” in studying and to the beauty of Chinese are repeated in many passages of the book. On the same page we read about the *amaenitates* (“beauties”) possessed by both the classical and the vernacular language and to which the missionaries should develop a sensibility.

Chapter 1 of Part One enunciates briefly some traditional Chinese categories: *xuzi* 虛字, *shizi* 實字, *huozì* 活字, and *sizi* 死字 (see *supra*, Introduction, and *infra*, § 5). Prémare, however, does not develop this section and immediately resorts

⁶³ See Li (2014) 139 and Lundbaek (1991) 66–67.

⁶⁴ See Lundbaek (1991) 33–34 and Li (2014).

⁶⁵ Some of the authors of later European grammars of Chinese were inspired by Prémare; for example, Abel-Rémusat (1822) and Nikita Bičurin, who, in a section of his *Kitajskaja grammatika* (1835), made a line-by-line comparison of the different varieties of Chinese while explicating the grammatical rules.

⁶⁶ Translation: «Part One shall help the Missionaries: 1st, to be better understood when they speak with the Chinese; 2nd, to understand better when the Chinese speak to them; 3rd, to be able to read with pleasure the books in a simple style and thus to speak more fluently [. . .]. Part Two shall give the Missionaries manifold assistance: 1st, to understand correctly the meaning of the ancient books; 2nd, to translate the books correctly in other languages; 3rd, if they wish to write in Chinese, to write with a certain elegance» (Prémare 1831, 38).

again to the “reassuring heads”⁶⁷ of the Latin parts of speech (nouns and adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, etc.), to which the French Jesuit devotes only 8 pages, where he explains their peculiarities.⁶⁸ Nouns, adjectives and verbs have no gender, no number, no declension or conjugation, but number, cases or tenses are rendered by the use of *particulae*. The following Chapter 2 (pp. 49–120) introduces the reader to the *Peculiar genius of the Chinese language* (*De Proprio Linguae Sinicae Genio*), introduced by the following lines:

*Linguae hujus ubertas, amoenitas ac vis, ex frequenti certarum litterarum usu, ex variis particulis, denique ex figuris, mirum in modum elucet.*⁶⁹

This chapter contains a section devoted to *The Use of Certain Characters* (*De Usu Aliquot Litterarum*), presenting characters which, in different contexts, may have peculiar meaning or functions, as *de* 得 (“to obtain”), often used to form some complements, or *ba* 把 (“to take”, “to seize with the hand”), often used to introduce the pre-verbal object of a sentence. The following section presents various kinds of Chinese particles (*particulae*), divided into five categories (see *infra*, § 5). There follow many pages devoted to particles that do not correspond to the categories analysed, organized without an apparent order. In my opinion, in this chapter we can tangibly sense Prémare’s struggles in describing the peculiarity (*genius*) of Chinese: after having resorted to traditional Greek and Latin categories, he immediately tries a new path, but seems to advance without a compass: «il a cherché à rendre toute méthode superflue», as Abel-Rémusat said (see *supra*, § 3).

Chapter 2 of Part One is concluded by the section devoted to ‘Figures’, divided into repetition, antithesis, and interrogation. Here the discussion is enriched by a series of considerations dealing with aesthetics, but also with the Chinese way of thinking:

Toto hoc paragrapho vox illa antithesis valde late sumitur; interdum est vera antithesis, interdum est mera correspondentia seu correlatio; nescio quo alio nomine possim appellare hanc figuram, quae tam saepe occurrit, cum in sermone, tum in libris, ut ex mille modis loquendi, quos in hoc opusculo legere est, vix duas tresve reperiri putem, in quibus non sit oppositio aliqua, vel in sententia vel saltem in verbis. Hoc scilicet linguae Sinicae proprium est. Sensus

⁶⁷ Lundbaek (1991) 75.

⁶⁸ See also Li (2014) 151–162.

⁶⁹ Prémare (1831) 49; transl. in Lundbaek (1991) 77: «The richness, beauty and force of this language are shown admirably in the frequent use of certain characters, in its various particles and in its numerous figures of speech».

*quidem una et altera littera posset absolvi, sed ad oppositionem vel repetitionem recurrere necesse est, ne cadat oratio et ore hiante spiritus per vim abrumpatur [. . .]*⁷⁰

The structure of Part Two ('On the Language of Noble Literary Works') is similar to the one of Part One. It is, however, important to stress the fact that Prémare underlines that he is introducing a special section, by giving the title of *Tractatus* to Chapter 2 (pp. 153–180), the section devoted to particles. In the introductory note to this 'Treatise', he remarks that he shall not adopt the categories usually adopted by (Latin) grammarians. In the following pages, he first illustrates various particles of the literary language and then proposes a classification in four categories (see *infra*, § 5).

Chapter 3, 'On Figures', is much longer and more detailed than its corresponding chapter in Part One. The incipit of the chapter reads: «*Quod stellae coelo et pratis flores, hoc orationis sunt figurae*», and then:

*Non me fugit quod his articulis non comprehenduntur omnes figurae, quas nostri rhetores explicant [. . .]. Despauterus longe inferiorem esse me facile patiar.*⁷¹

Here Prémare claims the richness and dignity of the Chinese rhetorical tradition, offering a trenchant picture of Chinese aesthetics, connected with philosophical concepts. Returning to 'antithesis', he writes:

*Haec tamen figura sinice non astringitur ejusmodi contrariorum antithesi: oppositio de qua praesertim hic agitur, non semper inimica est quin magis correspondentiam et necessitudinem mutuum saepius indicat [. . .]. Itaque sinae litteras cum litteris, cum accentibus accentus, phrases cum phrasibus ita maritant, ut in hoc solo puncto tota fere elegantia sinicae orationis posita esse videatur. Istud autem, ut caetera omnia, ex symbolicis figuris libri y-king desumpserunt.*⁷²

⁷⁰ Prémare (1831) 128; transl. by Lundbaek (1991) 79, with some modifications: «In the whole paragraph the term antithesis is taken in a very broad sense. While at times it is a real antithesis, at times it is a mere correspondence or correlation; I do not know how could I name otherwise this figure that occurs so often, both in speech or in books. I doubt that there are more than two or three instances among the thousands of sentences contained in this small work of mine that do not contain some kind of opposition, either in concept or at least in words. This is certainly a peculiarity of the Chinese language. It is possible to state a proposition with a few simple words, but one must work with oppositions and repetitions, to avoid that the speech turned downward and that the speaker remained breathless».

⁷¹ Prémare (1831) 204; transl. by Lundbaek (1991) 91, with slight modifications: «I know that these subsections do not list all the figures that our masters of rhetoric illustrate [. . .]. If somebody should say to me that I am far below Despauterus, I shall take it easy».

⁷² Prémare (1831) 204; transl. by Bridgman (1847) 246, with slight modifications: «This figure in Chinese, however, is not limited to an antithetical exhibition of things that are diametrically op-

The French Jesuit refers here obviously to *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽, the ever-interacting and interdependent dynamic principles of light and darkness, activity and rest, heat and cold, masculine and feminine, etc., that produce the movement of all things and harmony in human relations, society and also in art.

As far as Chinese sources of the *Notitia* are concerned, as we have seen, the ‘Introduction’ on Chinese books of the *Notitia* offers a remarkably rich list. To this list we should add the numerous literary works (Yuan dramas, novels and novellas of Ming and Qing period, etc.) that are used as sources of the numerous examples in Part One.⁷³ Li Zhen identifies an important source also in Chen Kui 陳騭 (1128–1203), whose *Guwen gouxuan* 古學鉤玄 (*Deep Meaning of Ancient Learning*) is quoted by Prémare in the conclusion of his book.⁷⁴ Li Zhen has conducted a thorough comparative study of the model phrases in Chen Kui and Prémare, demonstrating that Chen Kui was the main source of the examples contained in the section devoted to rhetoric in Part Two of the *Notitia*. In her opinion, Chen Kui’s works have also influenced the structure of this section.

5 From Martini to Prémare: Some Concluding Remarks

As we have seen in discussing the structure of the *Notitia* and comparing it with the grammars by Martini and Varo, Prémare’s book presents many innovative features. Here we shall deal only with some examples drawn from his grammatical metalanguage, comparing it with the terms chosen by Martini and Varo (Tab. 3).

As we have seen above, Prémare’s *Notitia* introduces some Chinese grammatical terminology, as for example the terms *xuzi* and *shizi*, which are described as follows:

posed to each other. The contrast here treated is not always one of contraries; it is indeed in many cases used rather to exhibit some mutual necessity and correspondence [. . .]. So great indeed is the care with which the Chinese match character with character, tone with tone, and phrase with phrase, that almost all the matter of elegance in Chinese composition would seem to rest upon this one point. But this, as everything else, they have taken from the symbolic figures of the Yijing».

⁷³ Li (2014) 138–141.

⁷⁴ Li (2014) 276–278. The *Guwen gouxuan* 古學鉤玄 was a book containing models of elegant phrases and a rich anthology of classical prose. It included the *Wenze* 文則 (*Rules for Written [composition]*), also by Chen Kui.

Tab. 3: Examples of grammatical metalanguage in Martini, Varo and Prémare.

Martini	Varo	Prémare
voces [sounds]	voz	voces
tonus/toni [tono]	tonada/tonadas	accentus/accenti
particula	particula	particula/littera
particulae numericae	numerales	notae in enumerationibus
–	–	litterae vacuae (虛字)
–	–	litterae plenae seu solidae (實字)
–	–	litterae vivae (活字)
–	–	litterae mortuae (死字)

*Sinica oratio, sive ore prolata, sive in libris contenta, suis partibus componitur. Quaelibet sententia seu phrasis, ut integra sit, requirit verbum, sine quo nullus subesset sensus, et nomen [. . .]; accedunt adverbia, praepositiones, particulae [. . .], quae ad oratoris claritatem et ornatum, magis quam ad ejus essentiam pertinent. Grammatici Sinae litteris quibus oratio componitur dividunt in 字虛 hiū tsée, litteras vacuas, et 字實 chē tsée, plenas seu solidas. Vacuas appellant quaecumque orationi non sunt essentiales. Nulla enim littera proprie vacua est, sed in se semper aliquid significat. Adeoque cum litterae supponunt pro meris particulis et dicuntur vacuae, id fit per 借假 kià tsié, seu metaphoram, hoc est a proprio sensu ad alienum transferuntur.*⁷⁵

Prémare then explains that *shizi* are divided into *huozi* 活字 (“*litterae vivae*”) and *sizi* 死字 (“*litterae mortuae*”), adding concisely that *litterae vivae* indicate verbs and *litterae mortuae* indicate nouns.

⁷⁵ Prémare (1831) 39: «The Chinese language, whether spoken or written, is composed of certain parts. Each sentence or phrase, to be entire, requires a verb, without which it has no meaning, and a noun [. . .]; there are also adverbs, prepositions and particles [. . .], which are used rather for splendour and embellishment of the style, than because they are absolutely essential to sense. The Chinese grammarians divide the characters that constitute the speech into two classes, called 虛字 *hiū tsée*, empty characters, and 實字 *chē tsée*, full or solid characters. Those that are not essential in composition are called empty, though no character can strictly be called so since it necessarily has some signification. Therefore, when characters are used as mere particles, and are called *hiū tsée*, it must be understood to be by 借假 *kià tsié*, or metaphor, i.e. they are changed from their natural to an alien sense». N.B. this version follows Abel-Rémusat in writing from right to left the Chinese characters in disyllabic words. The passage follows James G. Bridgman’s translation, with slight modifications; see Prémare (1847) 27. For further reflections on the complexity of the categories of *xuci* and *shizi*, which are not to be considered as absolute and rigid categories, see Li (2014) 165.

In relation to the aesthetic function of *particulae*, described by Prémare, we may quote here Chen Kui, who in his *Wenze* 文則 (*Rules for Written [composition]*) wrote: «文無助詞不順» (translation: “without auxiliary words, the written language has no smoothness”).⁷⁶

As far as we know, this is the first appearance of these categories in a European grammar of Chinese. Although Prémare’s description of the de-lexicalization process of the function words (*xuzi*), in which he follows the Chinese tradition, is precise and shall be influential in European linguistics, he does not develop his analysis of these categories.⁷⁷

On Particles

Both Martini (see *supra*, § 2) and Varo introduce the concept (and the term) of *particulae* (*particulas* in Varo) when presenting certain features of Chinese, such as the expression of verbal tenses or of number and declension for nouns. Varo, however, uses the term more extensively. *Particulas* in Varo designate also the elements that he calls “diminutives” (for ex., *xie* 些, “some”, “a small amount”, or *shao* 少, “a little”, terms that can function as nouns, verbs or adverbs, Ch. 5. II), the “frequentatives” (for ex., *chang* 常, “often”, an adverb, Ch. 5. III), negative adverbs (like *bu* 不, “no”, Ch. 7. II), or interjections (Ch. 7. I). As we have seen, Varo devotes to “particles” an entire chapter (Ch. 13: *De diversas particulas*, ‘On peculiar particles’), but the 11 *particulas* introduced here represent peculiar uses of some terms, as for example the use of *yi* 一 (“one”), used between two reduplicated verbs, and *de* 得 (“to obtain”) when used to form some complements.⁷⁸ Some of the *particulas* analysed by Varo in this section correspond those analysed by Prémare in the section *De Usu Aliquot Litterarum* in Part One, Chapter 2. As we have already commented above (§ 4), the French Jesuit does not call these characters *particulae*.

As far as the taxonomy of particles is concerned, in the pages devoted to *particulae* both in Part One (vernacular language) and in Part Two (literary language), Prémare proposes some categories but does not seem to be aware of the Chinese traditional categorization of empty words (*xuzi*), although, as he has seen, he knew the *Wenze* 文則 (*Rules for Written [composition]*), whereas Chen

⁷⁶ Quoted in Casacchia/Gianninoto (2012) 216.

⁷⁷ See Li (2014) 151.

⁷⁸ For this reason, I adopt the translation “peculiar” for *diversas*.

Kui discusses the “function words” (*zhuci* 助詞).⁷⁹ Beginning in the 12th century, “studies of particles” (*xuci de yanjiu* 虛詞的研究), developed constantly in China, and later produced a classification of *xuzi* into 7 categories: initial particles (*qi yu ci* 起語辭), connective (*jie yu ci* 接語辭), explicative (*zhuan yu ci* 轉語辭), complementary (*chen yu ci* 襯語辭), collective (*shu yu ci* 束語辭), exclamative (*tan yu ci* 歎語辭), and final (*xie yu ci* 歇語辭).⁸⁰

In the introductory note to this ‘Treatise’ on particles (Part Two, Chapter 2), Prémare remarks that he shall not follow Latin grammarians, who divide the particles in copulatives, disjunctives, augmentatives, diminutives, etc. The new categories proposed by Prémare are:

- Part One (on vernacular language), Chapter 2: negative particles, augmentative, diminutive, initials, and finals;⁸¹
- Part Two (on literary language), Chapter 2: particles denoting time, intensive particles, interrogative, and final.⁸²

Observing these categories, it seems that, like Martini, Prémare also used *particula/particulae* to define morphemes for which he could not find a corresponding word class. We may find some correspondences with the Latin particle categories, like augmentative,⁸³ negative and interrogative.⁸⁴ Other categories, like initials and finals, are more suitable to describe peculiar features of Chinese.

As in Martini and Varo, also in Prémare the category of particles seems elusive.⁸⁵ Most of the particles described by the French Jesuit are not classified into

79 In a letter addressed to Fourmont dated August 30, 1731, Joseph de Prémare writes that in China he could not find books dealing with grammar and syntax: «It was by accident that I found a few remarks about terms for certain groups of words» (Lundbaek 1991, 56). Although the repertoires of particles cannot be considered grammar books, they were however used to learn the correct use of the written language. On the Chinese traditional categorization of particles, and on the repertoires devoted to *xuzi*, see Casacchia/Gianninoto (2012); Pellin (2009) and Di Toro (2019). Chen Guohua gives to one of these repertoires, the *Bianzi jue* 辨字訣 (*A Refined Method for a Categorization of the Words*, 1694), by Wang Mingchang 王鳴昌, the status of a complete grammar treatise; see Chen (2015).

80 See for ex. *Bianzi jue* 辨字訣, by Wang Mingchang 王鳴昌.

81 *De particulis negativis; de particulis augmentativis; de particulis diminutivis; de particulis initialibus; de particulis finalibus* (Prémare 1831, 77–89).

82 *De particulis quae tempus designant; de particulis quae augment sensum; de particulis quae interrogant; de particulis finalibus* (Prémare 1831, 181–186).

83 See for ex. Littleton (1735): entry *Atque*.

84 See examples in Rosén (2009).

85 On the subject, see Breitenbach’s Introduction in Varo (2000) xlii–xliii.

his categories, and the logic underlying their order is unclear.⁸⁶ at this point the work of systematising Chinese grammar is still in an embryonic stage.

On Classifiers

Unlike Martini and Varo, who devote a separate section to classifiers in the chapters devoted to numerals, Prémare does not distinguish a category for “classifiers”: in his *Notitia* the classifiers are briefly illustrated under the section on nouns and are called *notae in enumerationibus* (for ex., *san wei laoye* 三位老爺, “tres viri”; *yi kou zhu* 一口豬, “*unus porcus*”). We can also find some classifiers (like *ge* 個) presented under the category of the pronoun; Li Zhen has explained that in fact some characters that in contemporary Chinese are classifiers had different functions in the past, and often acted as pronouns. Prémare, however, offers examples in which *ge* 個 is indeed used as a classifier.⁸⁷ We may conclude that the category of classifiers is not yet mature in Prémare’s analysis.

In conclusion, we may observe that while Martini was the first scholar to introduce Mandarin Chinese to Europeans and to lay the foundation of the terminology of Chinese grammar in Latin, Prémare was the first to try to emancipate Chinese from the Latinate model. As we have seen, he is to be credited with providing the impulse to follow new paths, urging the Graeco-Latin model to face new challenges. As remarked by Bernard Colombat, this occurs when Latin begins to “die” as a spoken language:

Or c’est précisément à cette époque où le latine commence à «mourir» que sa grammaire va être utilisée pour décrire la plupart des langues du monde, non seulement les langues européennes, mais aussi beaucoup d’idiomes exotiques [. . .]. La grammaire latine, instrument vieux de plurielles siècles, va donc servir de modèle pour «grammatiser», c’est-à-dire «outiller» par ces instruments que sont les grammaires et les dictionnaires les langues alors parlées dans le monde, et ce pendant longtemps.⁸⁸

However, Prémare’s main contribution to the didactics of Chinese may be his effort to offer to the student a method both rigorous and agreeable by showing the ‘beauties and the force’ of the language. As Prémare wrote in dismay in one of his last letters to Fourmont in October 1733, after having read the works that the *académicien* sent him in Canton:

⁸⁶ See Li (2014) 174.

⁸⁷ Li (2014) 155.

⁸⁸ Colombat (1999) 10.

You and I have aimed at very different goals. I have done what I could to make the study of Chinese easy and agreeable. You seem to have aimed at discouraging people and making them afraid. If I were in Paris with my *Notitia*, I should need only three or four years to make people speak Chinese, read Chinese books, and write popular as well as classical Chinese.⁸⁹

Appendix

Joseph de Prémare (1666–1736), *Notitia linguæ sinicæ* (Malacca, 1831)

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⁸⁹ Transl. in Lundbaek (1991) 60.

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Jaewon Ahn

A Brief Report on *Hagiographica Coreana* Focusing on *Congr. Riti. Processus 5279–5282*

Abstract: This paper provides some observations on Korean hagiography. The most noteworthy thing is that it is rare to find miracles, while they appear frequently in the hagiography of Medieval Europe. Stories of mystical phenomena are not noticeable in the document, while it contains testimonies, short biographies of the martyrs, translations of bodies and moral lessons. It is remarkable that the document offers here and there theological and philosophical arguments on Catholic doctrine justifying the newly introduced beliefs and the worldview of Western civilization. The martyrs used the power of universal logic skillfully and were also able to overcome the fear of death with the strength of faith. This is a matter of historical evaluation on Korean early modern history that awaits close analysis, because it is also directly connected to “Koreanity”, i.e., the identity of modern Koreans.

Keywords: Hagiography, Korean Catholic Church, Korean Catholic Saints, Modernization of Korea, I Deug-Su

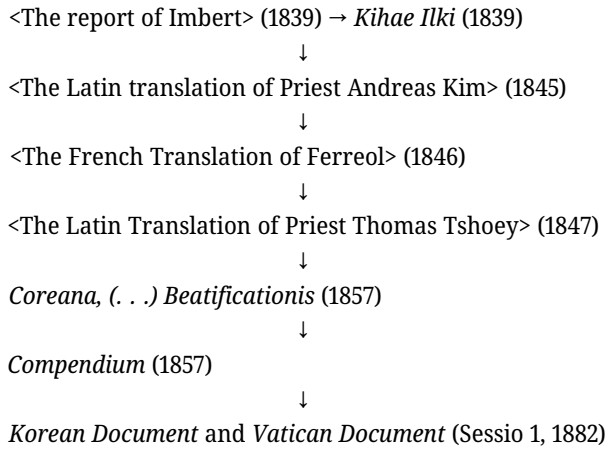
In this paper, I provide some observations on the basis of the research project that has been underway with the I Deug-Su Institute of the University of Siena since 2007. This project aims to publish a series of *Hagiographica Coreana*¹ and was originally suggested by Prof. I Deug-Su (1938–2004). It has been taken up by his successor, Prof. Francesco Stella. Together with me, Prof. Stella has already published three volumes (*Hagiographica Coreana I–III*) of the series at Pacini Editore. Now we are preparing for the publication of a fourth volume. This volume contains testimonies and evidence of the martyrs executed in the persecution of the years 1839–1846. It is called in Korean the Kihae-Byeongo (己亥-丙午) persecution. During the publication of these volumes, we have confirmed three things.

One is that *Hagiographica Coreana* began with a little *compendium*. The *compendium* was an accumulated text by many hands. It is manifest in the *stemma documentorum* in the below.²

1 Stella *et al.* (2007) 5–19.

2 Ahn (2017) 17–28.

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This *stemma* suggests that the *compendium* summarizing the *Hagiographica Coreana* was made contemporaneously with the Kihae Persecution. This means that the sequence of the *Hagiographica Coreana* is not a result of a recent research.

The second thing we have confirmed is that the original Korean document³ that was translated into Latin and French is preserved in the Korean Catholic Church Museum. Thus, we have been able to compile a collation between the Korean original and the Latin and French translations and then produce a trilingual edition based on the principle and methods of what we may call “German philology”.⁴ In this way we have produced a complete text of the documents that were used as evidence for the beatification and canonization of the Korean martyrs of the Kihae persecution of Korean Catholic Church (1839–1846).

The last thing we have confirmed we established in January 2019, when we discovered a document concerning the martyrs of the Byeongin (丙寅) persecution (1866–1872). Prof. I Deug-Su mentioned these once in a brief article that reported generally on a document relating to the Korean martyrs. In this article he demonstrated the significance and characteristics of the documents of the Kihae-Byeongin persecution. It may have been due to lack of time that this document about Byeongin was overlooked by him. I had supposed that these documents were no longer extant, but fortunately, in 2019, I had an opportunity to guide an

³ *Korean Document* (2011).

⁴ It is a metaphor for a strict academic methodology led by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1848–1931).

academic excursion to Rome where, together with my students, I visited the Archivio Segreto and was able to see the document with my own eyes. For me, it was an awesome experience. Having returned to Seoul, I wrote an email to Prof. Stella to get a copy of the document, which he later sent to me.

To provide a better understanding, I provide a brief overview of the document, now available in folders 5280, 5281, and 5282. These comprise testimonies of and evidence about the martyrs of the Byeongin persecution. During this persecution, according to Catholic Church studies, about 8,000 Christians were persecuted, including nine French missionaries. Unfortunately, however, the document contains the testimonies and evidence of only 29 martyrs out of the 8,000 executed, due to lack of witnesses and evidence. In this regard, Ep. Mutel, who took charge as judge in the *Processus Informativus*, remarks:

*Quum autem pace aliquomodo ecclesiae reddita, testes interrogare et investigationes facere locus datus est, nova mora inducta fuit a multitudine ipsa martyrum. Primo enim 877 nomina collecta sunt eorum qui a christianis tanquam veri Martyres reputabantur, sed deficientibus plerumque testibus ad probationem martyrii et causae martyrii inducendam necessariis, de 29 tantum processum instituimus pro quibus et testimoniorum copia et causae eminentia maiorem spem nobis praebebant ad felicem exitum perveniendi.*⁵

(However, peace somehow returned to the Church. And so a place was prepared for questioning and investigating witnesses. But a new obstacle emerged from the number of martyrs itself, for at first were collected the names of 877 victims who were considered by Christians to be true martyrs, but in most cases, due to lack of necessary witnesses for proof of martyrdom and the cause of it, we have decided to conduct a process on only 29 martyrs, for whom sufficient numbers of witnesses and the eminence of cause offered us a greater hope of reaching a fruitful result.)⁶

As seen above, the number of names collected at first was 877. But only 29 martyrs were selected through the rigor of 43 *interrogatoria*.⁷ For this, 136 *sessiones* took place throughout Korea and 129 *sessiones* of collation were held in Seoul. For a better perspective, I provide an overview of the document in general.

(1st Inquisition)

- *Congr. Riti. Processus 5280*

1. Pages 1–910: *Letter of Ep. Mutel* (pp. I– XVII), *Sessiones* 1–56.
2. Dates: 1899. 6. 19–1900. 1. 10.

⁵ *Congr. Riti. Processus 5280* (1899) VI.

⁶ English translation is mine.

⁷ Yun/Ahn (2023) 1–70.

3. Places:

- (1) Seoul: Sessiones 1–12 (pp. 1–258)
- (2) Incheon: Sessiones 13–26 (pp. 258–479)
- (3) Pyongyang: Sessiones 27–32 (pp. 480–570)
- (4) Seoul: Sessiones 33–42 (pp. 570–702)
- (5) Wonju: Sessiones 43–56 (pp. 703–910).

- *Congr. Riti. Processus 5281*

- 1. Pages 911–1910: Sessiones 57–114.
- 2. Dates: 1900. 1. 11–1900. 7. 20.
- 3. Places:
- (1) Wonju: Sessiones 57–60 (pp. 911–953)
- (2) Chungju: Sessiones 61–63 (pp. 953–1009)
- (3) Incheon: Sessio 64 (pp. 1010–1025)
- (4) Jeonju: Sessiones 65–77 (pp. 1026–1249)
- (5) Geumgu: Sessiones 78–82 (pp. 1249–1328)
- (6) Yeosan: Sessiones 83–87 (pp. 1329–1402)
- (7) Gongju: Sessiones 88–91 (pp. 1403–1463)
- (8) Deogsan: Sessiones 92–96 (pp. 1464–1538)
- (9) Asan: Sessio 97 (pp. 1539–1550)
- (10) Seoul: Sessiones 98–114 (pp. 1551–1910)

- *Congr. Riti. Processus 5282*

- 1. Pages 1911–2805: Sessiones 114–136, Sessiones collationis 1–118
- 2. Dates: 1900. 7. 20–1901. 4. 21.
- 3. Place: Seoul. Sessiones 114–136 (pp. 1911–2805)
- 4. Sessiones collationis
- (1) Place: Seoul. Sessiones 1–56 (pp. 1–116)
- (2) Dates: 1900. 11. 5–1901. 4. 25.

(2nd Inquisition)

Congr. Riti. Processus 5279

- 1. Pages 1–1035: Sessiones 1–129.
- 2. Dates: 1921.2.12. –1926. 5. 17.
- 3. Place: Seoul.

It is notable that the original Korean document that was translated into Latin and French is still extant. According to our studies, we have observed some slight meaning changes between the original and the translations. And, though slight,

these meaning changes are also significant for later comparative studies. Dr. Ha Sungrae, who is a leading figure in Korean hagiography, reported on this:⁸

- document of the 1st inquisition: 9 volumes (1st, 7th and 8th volumes are lost but the contents of the 7th and 8th volumes were certified in *The Document for the Canonization of 103 Martyrs*, published in 1983);
- document of the 2nd inquisition: 9 volumes (the 1st volume is lost).

Dr. Ha says that the first volume of both documents is lost. In fact, however, they are not lost, and they contain a general introduction about holding *processus informativus* and inquisition, which begins usually with names lists of martyrs and witnesses.⁹ In my view, the first volume may be considered the leading portion of both the original Korean document and the Latin and French translations.

To the point. The significance of the document is notable from four perspectives. First of all, from the historical perspective, the document is a primary source for research not only of the earliest history of the Korean Catholic Church but also of the history of encounters and conflicts between Western and Eastern civilizations. Taking a macroscopic view, the persecution itself is not to be estimated as an episode that took place as a simple and accidental reaction against the introduction of an alien religion, like an alien species in nature, because conflicts and disagreements between the two civilizations are scattered all over the background of the persecution. How to solve these conflicts and bring about a reconciliation between religions in Korea is still a significant issue. It is remarkable to see that this issue is directly connected to the identity of present-day Koreans, because it shows explicitly the dramatic change in the mental map of Korean people who are under the strong influence of Confucianism. Whatever position in terms of identifying of the mental mapping of modern Korean people one takes, it is undeniable that the Confucianism that dominated the Chosun kingdom at that time was cast into doubt and seriously challenged by Christianity. In this regard, I would emphasize that our document is a text that will provide many opportunities for reflection on and discussion of how to define the identity of modern Koreans and also how to shape a universal “Koreanity”. More generally, the document is already very helpful for anyone curious about how Korean mentality and spirituality changed during the 19th century.

If we take a microscopic view, to be sure, the document is important in itself for the study of the history of Korean Catholicism, because it shows just how far the church extended its reach, from Seoul out to the provinces. This is indicated

8 Ha (2008, unpublished) 1–22.

9 Ahn (2014) 35–94.

by the sites where inquisitions took place, which are located all across the country, as is evident from the outline above. It shows that Christians were forced into a diaspora from the capital and suburban areas to regional areas as they escaped persecution by the Chosun government. The places in which inquisitions were held were also those where many Christians survived and evangelised local people. The diaspora took place exactly 20 years after the Kihae-Byongo persecution, which happened in the years 1839–1846. It is a miracle, or an irony, that the persecution had the effect of spreading Christianity more widely, into the backwoods, remote villages and all over the countryside. An example of this is Geumgu, where the Suryu Catholic Church (Fig. 1), which was used as a court, still stands and functions as a church today. The church was built in 1889 in Geumgu but moved to the place seen here in 1895.

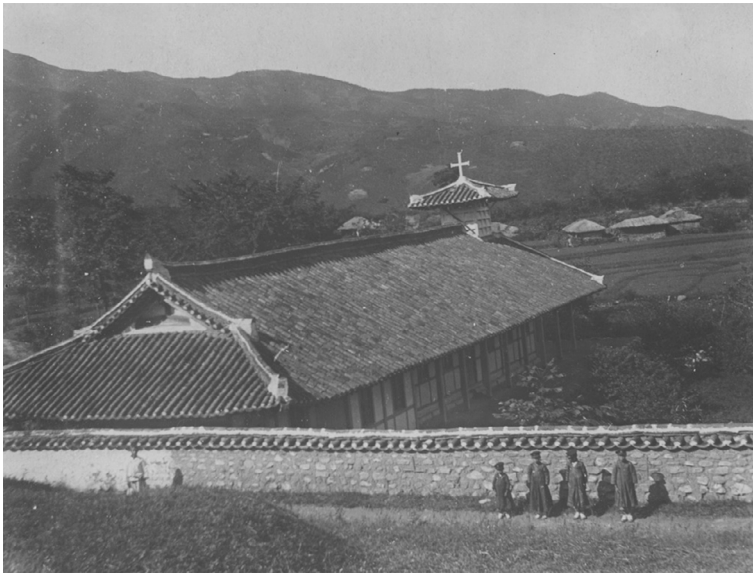


Fig. 1: Suryu Catholic Church.

From an architectural point of view, the style of the church will have been a new monument to people there at that time. To exaggerate a little, the church may be seen as representing an early scene from the modernisation of Korea. The document is thus evidence that can help explain how Christianity took root in the tradition and culture of Korea. In this regard, I would argue that the modern history of the Christianisation of local towns of Korea may be told in many ways, because the *modus vivendi* of Korean people has developed sometimes from conflict and

sometimes through conversation between Christianity and Confucianism, Buddhism, and even Shamanism. In addition, it is remarkable that the document itself is a medium through which Korean history became directly incorporated into world history, since it was not reported as a kind of footnote to Chinese history and did not use the Chinese language. It is necessary to point out that the ancient history of Korea had to accept and begin with a couple of passages documented by Chinese historians. Korean historians regard a chapter of *The History of the Three Kingdoms* (『三國志』 「魏志東夷傳」)¹⁰ as the starting point of the country's historical record. In my view, this present document deserves equal attention among scholars. What is important is that the document follows the rigor of the precepts of Vatican documentation and thus qualifies itself as an historical resource.

Secondly, the document is a historical monument in terms of law, since it shows vividly how inquisitions took place according to the judicial system and rules of Vatican law. The *informativi processus* and *sessiones collationis* were activated not according to the process and system of Chosun law, called *Kyungkuk Daejeon* (『經國大典』),¹¹ but to verify and certify truth, interrogations were tactfully and precisely formulated, systematically and cohesively organized, and cross validations were applied to witnesses. This was truly a new method of investigation in Korea, where usually at that time interrogation and torture were used. Here is a report of Ep. Mutel.

Die tandem 18 Iunii 1899 manum admove licuit praedictae causae per decretum in quo instantibus precibus a Christianis nostris hac de re mihi porrectis annuens, statim processum informativum instituire super vita, martyrio, causa martyrii, non cultu, siquis seu miraculis nec non et inquisitione scriptorum viginti novem servorum Dei scilicet. 1. Simeonis Berneux Ep. tit. Capsen. Vic. Ap., (. . .), 29. Petri Ryou Tjyeng-ryoul. Processum illum cum summa diligentia confectum et post duos annos absolutum iam S. Congregationi mittere licet. Ut videre est in epistola iudicis subdelegati omnes testes examinati sunt probatae vitae et omni fide digni. Iudex subdelegatus pro suo munere omisit ad investigationem exactissimam faciendam circa omnia et singula adiuncta huius causae laborem et defatigationem haud minimam, ultro amplexus est longinquis perigrinationibus in toto vicariatu susceptis ad testes interrogandos. Si qui autem defectus in constructione processus forsitan irrepserint, tribuendi sunt potius ignorantiae quam malitiae aut negligentiae et difficillimis locorum circumstantiis. (Epist. Mutel. 1901. 05. 02)¹²

(Finally on 18 June 1899 the inquisition mentioned previously according to the resolution to which I nodded assent regarding the prayers of Christians who were reaching out their

¹⁰ Chun (1980) 39–64.

¹¹ Chung (2008) 286–327.

¹² *Congr. Riti. Processus 5280* (1899) VI–VIII.

hands to me. The *processus informativus* was set up immediately for the purpose of investigating the life, martyrdom, and cause of martyrdom, whether to be worshipped or not, or also some miracles and writings of 29 servants of God: 1. Simeon Berneux Ep. tit. Capsen. Vic., (. .), 29. Peter Ryou Tjyeng-ryoul. The Processus was performed with the utmost diligence. After two years it was completed and allowed then to be sent to S. Congregatio. As is evident in the letter of the subdelegate judge, all witnesses examined are verified in their life and belief in all perspectives. The subdelegate judge went to great pains, even to the point of exhaustion, to carry out his duty to make the investigation as precise as possible on each and every point related to the inquisition. Furthermore, he was willing to undertake journeys to all vicariates for the purpose of questioning witnesses. If there are some things lacking in the construction of the *processus*, these result from ignorance rather than from malice, or from negligence in the hard circumstances of the regions.)¹³

As seen here, the document makes it evident that inquisitions were performed and completed according to the legal system of the Vatican. From this it may be assumed that the systems and ways of the Vatican inquisition had left some traces in the early stages of the modernization of Korean law.¹⁴ It is certain that there were some Koreans who had a new experience of courts of judicial system of Europe and the law in the inquisitions carried out in 240 *sessiones* that continued for about 20 years (1883. 5. 18–1901. 4. 21). The reformation of the Korean legal system took place in 1894, and torture was prohibited for the first time in Korean history by this reformation. As a matter of fact, Ep. Mutel was a good friend and adviser of King Kojong (高宗, 1852–1919) at that time.

Thirdly, in terms of language, the document draws attention to scholarship. As mentioned, the document was written in Korean and then translated into Latin and French. It is interesting to see that there are many names of persons and places which have been transcribed into Latin and French. The transcriptions are very important in figuring out how these were pronounced at that time. Unfortunately, however, there is no lexicon of 19th-century Korean. Because of this, it is very difficult even for Korean linguists to read texts written at that time. They read them through the lens of their own modern linguistic assumptions. But the document provides a comparison that helps greatly in comprehending the real sounds of the Korean language at that time. I should provide an example of this.

The transcribed names, like Ouen, Ni, and Seyung, are names of persons, and Yong Me Ri and Koyang are names of places (Tab. 1). Among these, the sound “Ni” is now pronounced widely as “I”. Some people still use “Lee” for it in passports. This is a trace of how 19th-century Korean sounded. From the citation

¹³ English translation is mine.

¹⁴ Shin (2008) 256–285.

Tab. 1: Congr. Riti. Processus 5280 (1899) 124–125.

[Sessio 3] (CRP. 5280, pp. 124–125)

Ad 2um Int. respondit:

*Nominor Ouen Susanna, oriunda sum ex Yong Me Ri, in praefectura Ko Yang. Pater meus est Petrus Ouen et mater Lucia Ni, amboque mortui sunt. Nata sum annis quinquaginta sex. Annis nata quindecim matrimonium inivi cum Petro Syeng, annis nata quadraginta tribus, effecta sum vidua, maneoque in viduitate. De processione autem mea, curam habeo hospitii senum et ideo non sum anxia de victu, quamvis mihi nullae sint divitiae propriae.*¹⁵

[2권-003] (병인박해 1차 재판록)

Ad 2um Int. respondit: 성명은 원 수산나요, 티칭은 고양 용머리, 부 원 베드루, 모 니 누시아 둘이 다 죽고 나히 오십륙이오. 십오세에 성 베드루에게 식집가고 스 십삼세에브터 과슈로 잇고, 칭명은 양노원 웃듬으로 잇스 니 먹을 걱정 업스 나 본 지물이 업스 이다.

above, we may note that there are many new coinages or modern technical terms. An example is “양노원” (*Yangnowon*), which is translated “*hospitii senum*”. This institute was introduced by the Church into Korean history. Another interesting case is “웃듬” (*Euddum*) translated as “*cura*”. “웃듬” means “chief”, “leader” or “director”. Unfortunately, we Koreans no longer use this word as an official term. But it deserves to be used, because it is easier and closer to intuition than other terms. This is the tip of an iceberg. To make a long story short, the document is full not only of neologisms but also of pure Korean words. Undoubtedly it is a raw *thesaurus* of the Korean language and provides a great deal of linguistic evidence that helps to demonstrate the transition from Medieval to Modern Korean. In my view, the document *per se* is a reference for proving that Latin was alive and has functioned as a medium of science and civilization. Regarding this, we should add that *Parvum Vocabularium Latino-Coreanum ad Usum Studiosae Juventutis Coreanae* was published in 1891 at Hongkong.¹⁶ It contains 9,310 lemmas. As is well known, Latin has been substituted or replaced by modern national languages like English, French and German. This is a recent story. Yet even since the rise of these languages, Latin has also continued to serve as a medium of history and civilization. Our document is a significant indication of this. In this regard, I would point out that there are many lexicons that have been produced in bilingual form, for example, *Latino-Sino*, *Latino-Japanico*, *Latino-Sanscrito*, *Latino-Annamico*, *Latino-Manchuriano*, etc., for future comparative research. Also, grammars in a number of Asian languages have been produced on the basis of these lexicons and on the basis of Latin

¹⁵ Congr. Riti. Processus 5280 (1899) 12–125.

¹⁶ Ahn/Kim (2006) 7–33.

grammar. This means that *Lingua Latina* played a vital role in establishing the modern system and structure of (some) Asian languages, just as it did with the modern European languages.

In addition to this, I would point out some significances of Korean hagiography. It showcases the rarity of finding miracles in Korean hagiography, while they appear frequently in the hagiography of Medieval Europe. Stories of mystical phenomena are not present in our document, though it contains testimonies, short biographies of the martyrs, stories of the translations of their bodies and of moral lessons. It might be called a miracle that these “martyrs” have been beatified and canonized as “*sancti*” even without miracles. In this regard, it is remarkable that this document (*Congr. Riti. Processus 5279–5282*) offers here and there theological and philosophical arguments on Catholic doctrine, justifying the newly introduced beliefs and worldview of Western civilization. In the narrative, the martyrs used the power of universal logic skillfully and were also able to overcome the fear of death with the strength of faith. This feature of the accounts contained in this document deserves closer analysis, because it is directly related to “Koreanity”, i.e., the identity of modern Koreans. In the document, there are many testimonies of martyrs being imprisoned, tortured and executed. *De facto*, there was no savior present and there was no *deus ex machina*, but nevertheless they did overcome death and accept it willingly and happily. Just reading the document can be awesome and inspiring. So far, I have argued that the document constitutes a new departure in hagiography. In particular, it is certain that it is itself a text that aids in identifying the uniqueness and universality of Korean saints, because it is a miracle that Korean church was founded without any help from outside 53 years after 1784,¹⁷ just as Father Legregeois (1801–1866) said in the film on Sanctus Kim Andreas, entitled *Birth* (directed by Heungsik Park, 2022), in this quote:

*Pater Imbert servavit in provincia Sichuana. Ille est designatus ad Episcopum Secundum Ecclesiae Coreanae. Ille nunc it ad regionem Sivanzeanam. Emissarii duo, qui vos huc adduxerunt, statim discedent ad Sivanzeanam et iterum conati erunt abducere Patrem Imbert ad fines Coreanas. Post Patrem Maubant et Patrem Chastan, si Pater Imbert adveniet in Coream in fine anni huius, Vicariatus Apostolicus Coreanus erit conditurus solidissime, post annos sex instaurationis Diocesis. Coreani condiderunt Ecclesiam per se sine nullo auxilio post quinquagenarios tertios annos ab anno millesimo septingenario octogesimo quarto. Id est miraculum Dei.*¹⁸

¹⁷ In this year, a Korean literati named Lee Seun-hoon (李承熏) was baptized from Father Joan Joseph de Grammant (1736–1812) at the Beidang (北堂) Church at Beijing for the first time in Korean history. His baptismal name was Peter.

¹⁸ Latin translation is mine.

(Father Imbert took charge of the church of Sichuan province. He was designated as the second bishop of the Korean church. He is now going to the region of Sivang. Two missionaries, who have brought you here, departed immediately to Sivang and tried again to lead Father Imbert to the Korean border. After father Maubant and Father Chastan, if he will arrive at Korea at the end of this year, the Korean Vicariate Apostolic will be founded very firmly, after six years of the restoration of diocese. Koreans have founded the Church for themselves without any help after 53 years since 1784. It is a miracle of God.)¹⁹

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19 English translation is mine.

Kukjin Kim

Medical Knowledge in the Latin Language in 18th-Century Korea

Abstract: Chosŏn (1329–1910), unlike China and Japan, where Jesuit missionaries came beginning in the 16th century with Western knowledge inscribed in Latin, was completely isolated from direct contact with Latin texts. This is because the government did not allow them to be admitted into its territory. Therefore, China constituted the only path for encountering Latin documents for Chosŏn, since the government regularly dispatched envoys and scholars to the Ming and Qing Dynasties for the purpose of cultural exchange from its beginning. In China, numerous Jesuit missionaries, including Matteo Ricci, translated various texts in Latin on Catholic doctrines, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine into Classical Chinese, or even wrote texts directly in Classical Chinese. These texts were transmitted into Chosŏn under the name of *Sŏhak* (西學), or “Western knowledge”, by a group of Neo-Confucian scholars of practical learning (實學) known as *Sirakcha* (實學者). The texts introduced into Chosŏn and diffused by *Sirak* scholars were as follows: *De Deo Verax Disputatio* (『天主實義』) of Matteo Ricci; *Zhuzhi Qunzheng* (『主制羣徵』) of Adam Schall; a partial translation into Classical Chinese of *De Providentia numinis* of Leonardo Lessio; *De Anima* (『靈言蠡勺』) of Francesco Sambiasi, transcribed by Xú Guāngqǐ (徐光启); *Taixi Shuifa* (『泰西水法』) of Sabatino de Ursis. Chosŏn scholars, especially those who wanted to overcome the limitations of Korean medicine, tried to trace and understand the medical knowledge contained in those texts, thereby eventually contributing to a sort of Western medical discourse in Chosŏn society. This passage of knowledge exemplifies the role of Latin and, by extension, Classical Chinese as cultural vectors, transmitting European ideas across significant linguistic barriers.

Keywords: Jesuit, Latin language, medical knowledge, Chosŏn, translation, *Sirhak* (實學), cultural exchange

1 Introduction

The Jesuit missionaries dispatched to China played a pivotal role in promoting cultural exchange between Europe and East Asia. One of the key concepts that aided them in this mission was the notion of “accommodation”, advocated by several missionaries, including Alessandro Valignano (cf. Lee 2013; Prieto 2017). This

approach paved the way for the “cultural translation” of Catholicism, which was carried out by Matteo Ricci and Michele Ruggieri, among other Jesuits. In addition to Christian doctrines, they introduced a variety of European ideas to the Chinese court, which allowed them to be assigned to important offices in the Imperial government. Simultaneously, the Jesuits in China regularly sent to Europe detailed information about China and East Asia, facilitating knowledge exchange between the two regions. Through their efforts, European texts in Latin were translated into Classical Chinese, which served as a common intellectual language in East Asia, much as Latin did in Early Modern Europe. Therefore, it is undeniable that Jesuit missionaries made a significant contribution to the cultural exchange between Europe and East Asia.

During the Chosŏn period (1392–1910),¹ the Korean peninsula was nearly disconnected from the cultural encounters taking place between Europe and its neighboring countries. This was due to the Chosŏn government’s hostile foreign policy toward Western countries and their representatives, which prevented European missionaries and merchants from establishing official relations with Korea. As a result, Chosŏn was almost completely isolated from direct contact with Latin texts and other cultural products originating from Europe, unlike China and Japan, which experienced a wide range of cultural exchanges with the Western world.

Before the later-19th century, when French missionaries from the Paris Foreign Mission Society began entering Korea, there were only two channels for contact with the European world, especially for intellectual purposes. The first involved gaining information from Westerners who had drifted to Chosŏn. For instance, Jan Jansz Weltevree (1595–?), a Dutch sailor who landed by accident on the Korean peninsula in 1627, adopted a Korean name (朴延, 朴燕) and settled there, eventually being appointed to various offices, including military ones, where he shared new information and technology on warfare in particular (cf. Yi 2001, 82). In 1653, a bookkeeper of the Dutch East India Company named Hendrik Hamel (1630–1692) drifted onto Cheju Island while sailing to Nagasaki, Japan. Unlike his fellow countryman, he did not wish to remain in Korea and managed to escape from Chosŏn in 1666. His manuscripts on adventures in the Korean peninsula, published in 1668, provided detailed and vivid, but mostly negative, information about Chosŏn to the Westerners of the 17th century (cf. Ledyard 1971).

The second channel for cultural and intellectual contact between Chosŏn and Europe was through the Jesuit missionaries in China. Chosŏn envoys, who were

¹ In this article, the primary system used to Romanize Korean-Language names and terms is the McCune-Reischauer system.

regularly dispatched to the Qing dynasty, had the opportunity to meet with these missionaries, who were based at the Chinese imperial court. A group of Korean diplomats, who were basically literati, were academically interested in the Western cultures and technologies introduced to Qing. As a result, some Chosŏn envoys brought back to the Korean peninsula several Latin texts translated into classical Chinese, including those on Catholicism, known in Korea as *sŏhak*, meaning “Western studies or learning”, as a field of study.

The representatives of this intellectual trend were the so-called *Sirhak* (實學) scholars, a group of intellectuals of the realist school who emphasized the practical sphere of Confucianism and led a series of social reform movements from the later-17th century to the earlier-19th century. The term *Sirak* is a combination of two Chinese characters, specifically *sil* (實), which denotes “practicality” or “actuality”, and *hak* (學), which refers to “studies” or “learning”. Therefore, *sirak* can be understood as “practical learning” or “practical studies”. In fact, the emergence of *sirak* was aimed at challenging the dogmatic adherence to Confucianism and the rigid emphasis on formalism and ritualism upheld by the neo-Confucians of Chosŏn. Proponents of *sirak* advocated a form of Confucianism that emphasized empirical observation and was focused on practical applications within society (cf. Setton 1989).

Therefore, it is not surprising that *Sirak* scholars showed a great interest in European medical knowledge. Upon encountering new medical concepts from Europe, they actively sought to comprehend and introduce them. Various texts brought by Catholic priests played a crucial role in this process of knowledge dissemination. However, due to the Chosŏn scholars’ inability to understand Latin, they relied heavily on texts that had been translated into classical Chinese by Jesuit missionaries and Chinese scholars. In other words, the only way for Chosŏn to have “intellectual contact” with Europe was through the Jesuit missionaries residing in Qing.

This study aims to examine the reception of Latin texts by 18th-century *Sirhak* scholars in Chosŏn, particularly focusing on their adaptation of Western medical knowledge within their intellectual framework. It will explore how key medical concepts from these texts were translated and assimilated by the scholars, reflecting on their impact on contemporary and subsequent Korean medical theories. Previous studies on the reception of Western medical knowledge among Korean scholars in the 18th century have focused primarily on analyzing references to Western medicine in their writings. Baker has pointed out that interest in European medical information in Chosŏn since the 18th century was closely linked to *sirak* scholars’ critiques of the contemporary medical system and their quest for medical progress through effective Western treatments, which in turn contributed to 19th-century theories of Korean medicine (Baker 1990). Some stud-

ies have examined the transmission of Western medical knowledge into the Korean peninsula beginning in the 17th century, focusing on the process of translation from Latin into Chinese (Yeo 2012; Kim 2020). The reception of Western medical knowledge by *Sirhak* scholars has also been discussed in terms of ideology. It has been noted that Western medical knowledge, including physiological theories, contributed to the development of philosophical arguments in the later Chosŏn Period, along with other new knowledge from the Qing dynasty (Ahn 2004; Kim 2008). Therefore, this study aims to explain the specific contexts in which Korean scholars adopted Western medical knowledge and the broader implications of this adoption.

2 *Sirhak* (實學) and *Sŏhak* (西學): Changes in the Intellectual Climate of the Later Chosŏn Dynasty

From the beginning of the 17th century, theological texts, particularly on Catholicism, alongside other scholarly works from various European disciplines, began to enter Chosŏn under the name of *sŏhak*, which literally means “Western studies”, as mentioned above. The channel through which Western learning was introduced was the Korean emissaries sent to the Qing dynasty; this was the exclusive connection Chosŏn had with the European world. The adaptive approach of the Jesuit missionaries in China paved the way for comparing and studying Eastern learning, culture, and religion with their Western counterparts, as part of their effort to introduce and establish their religion. Matteo Ricci’s (利瑪竇, 1552–1610) *De Deo Verax Disputatio* (『天主實義』, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*) exemplifies this approach of accommodation, as evidenced by his translation of the Christian God as the “Lord of Heaven” (天主) or the “Jade Emperor” (上帝). The strategies employed by the Jesuit missionaries played a significant role in shaping the perception of Catholicism among Korean scholars, who consequently treated texts discussing Catholic doctrine as scholarly works.

Matteo Ricci’s *De Deo Verax Disputatio*, after its publication in Beijing in 1603, quickly circulated throughout the Chinese language world, including the intellectual society of Chosŏn. For example, Yu Mongin (柳夢寅, 1559–1623) mentioned Ricci’s work in his *Ōu Yadam* (『於于野譚』, *Ōu’s Unofficial Histories*) in the early 17th century. The pioneering *sirak* scholar Yi Sukwang (李睟光, 1563–1629) partially included the contents of *De Deo Verax Disputatio* in his *Chibong Yusŏl* (『芝峰類說』, *Topical Discourses of Chibong*), published in 1614. It should be

noted that Korean scholars perceived Ricci's work as an introduction to a discipline from another world, comparable to Confucianism in terms of its intellectual and scientific nature (cf. Kim 2010).

The language that mediated cultural exchange between Korean scholars and Jesuit missionaries was classical Chinese. Despite the former's lack of knowledge in Latin, they could rely on classical Chinese as a diplomatic and academic language. The Jesuit missionaries, on the other hand, were proficient in Chinese, enabling them to engage in an exchange of knowledge. Chinese scholars and officials, especially those with knowledge of Latin, played a crucial role in assisting the missionaries in publishing their work in Chinese. Thus, the Qing court functioned as a hub for the exchange of knowledge between different cultures, allowing Chosŏn scholars to introduce Western disciplines, systems, and technologies, such as astronomy and the calendar, and Catholicism, under the banner of "Western studies". For reform-minded scholars and officials of Chosŏn, Western culture held great appeal. In search of new intellectual horizons and technologies, they traveled to the Qing Dynasty and actively brought back new knowledge to Chosŏn. Notable examples are the adoption of Matteo Ricci's *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu* (『坤輿萬國全圖』, *A Map of the Myriad Countries of the World*) and Adam Schall von Bell's (湯若望, 1592–1666) *Xin Li Xiao Huo* (『新曆曉式』, *Enlightening the Bewildered about the New Calendar*), with which Qing adopted the Western calendar (cf. Sim 2012).

An interesting case of the transmission of Western learning to Korea through the Qing dynasty comes from the friendship between Adam Schall von Bell (湯若望, 1592–1666), a Jesuit missionary who played a significant role in spreading Western knowledge in the Qing court, and Crown Prince Sohyŏn (昭顯世子, 1612–1645), who resided in the Qing court from 1637 to 1645. Adam Schall, having been in China since 1622, dedicated himself to missionary work and the introduction of Western culture there. Crown Prince Sohyŏn, the son of King Injo, the 16th king of Chosŏn, was held as a hostage following the Qing invasion of Korea in 1636. *Historica relatio de ortu et progressu fidei orthodoxae in regno Chinensi per missionarios Societatis Jesu ab anno 1581 usque ad annum 1669*, written by Adam Shall and Prospero Intorcetta (1626–1696), recounts an anecdote about Adam Schall's encounter with the Crown Prince Sohyŏn, which also includes a Latin translation of a handwritten letter from the prince to the missionary (cf. Ahn 2012, 166–169):

Per idem tempus Coreanorum Rex, quem Tartari antea in CEÃO TÛM novam curiam suam captivum abduxerant, promissa libertate [. . .]. Hic astronomum Europaeorum alioquoties humanissime invisit, et eadem humanitate hospitem in Palatio suo accepit. [. . .] Lubens obsecutus Pater adeo sibi Principem et homines istos devinxit. [. . .] Regi vero, quoniam literis delectari notum erat, ut Coreani plerumque omnes solent, exemplar librorum quorumvis, quod ad manum fuit, non tantum mathematicorum sed eorum etiam, qui de lege tractant, una

cum sphaera caelesti et imagine Salvatoris dono data sunt. Quae munera accidisce perquam grata sequens docebit epistola, quam e suo palatio Sinicis characteribus et propria manu ad P. Adamum Rex Coreanus exaravit.

“Heri,” inquit, “cum insperatum munus imaginis Salvatoris DEI, Sphaeram, libros astronomicos, aliasque Europaei orbis scientias complexos, et a te mihi praesentatos inspicerem, vix credes quantopere gavisus sim, et quantum ab hoc me debere tibi agnoscam. [. . .] Quando in regnum reversus fuero, eos non solum in regiam nostrum inferam, sed et praelo datos et excusos communicabo literarum studiosis. Habebunt unde posthac mirentur sortem suam, qua tamquam ex deserto in Palatium eruditionis translati sunt, scientique Coreani, se hoc Europaeis literis totum debere. [. . .]” (Schall 1672, 139–140, cit. from Ahn 2012, 166–167)

It seems that Crown Prince Sohyŏn, when he came back to Chosŏn in 1645, returned the holy statue and brought books among the gifts that he received from Adam Schall, as he wrote in the letter: «*Proinde judico imaginem venia tuta ad te remittendam, ne culpam neglectae reverentiae, quae eidem debetur, una cum illa asportem*» (Schall 1672, 141, cit. from Ahn 2012, 167). Given that the prince died only two months after his arrival, it is difficult to determine the specific texts on Western learning that he brought back and their impact on the intellectual circles of the time. However, considering that “Western studies” were known as early as in the 17th century, it is plausible that the texts brought by the prince gradually circulated among interested intellectuals (cf. Ahn 2017, 4–17; Kim 2020).

As seen in the case of Crown Prince Sohyŏn, the ongoing interaction between Chosŏn and Jesuit missionaries at the Qing court played a significant role in the continued introduction of Western learning into Chosŏn. By the 18th century, Chosŏn envoys to China also started showing interest in the Western medical knowledge brought by Jesuit missionaries. This interest was driven by concerns about the state of medicine in Chosŏn at the time (cf. Baker 1990, 136–138; Suh 2010). As a result, *sirak* scholars began analyzing Western texts imported from the Qing Dynasty to gather information on medicine, which eventually led to the development of a Western medical discourse among them (cf. Shin 2009, 182–184). The texts utilized in this process encompassed both doctrinal and practical books.

3 Translated Latin Texts on Western Medical Knowledge in 18th-Century Chosŏn

The earliest reference to Western medicine by a *sirak* scholar is *Sŏgugŭi* (「西國醫」), written by Yi Ik (李穡, 1681–1763). Yi Ik, a prominent *sirak* Confucian scholar, played a pivotal role in initiating the discourse on “Western studies” by writing a postscript to *De Deo Verax Disputatio* in the 1720s. This text aroused great interest

in Western learning among the intellectual society of Chosŏn. Other *sirak* scholars such as Yi Ŭihyŏn (李宜顯, 1669–1745), Shin Hudam (愼後聘, 1701–1762), An Chŏng-bok (安鼎福, 1712–1791), Pak Chiwon (朴趾源, 1737–1805), and Pak Chega (朴齊家, 1737–1805) also briefly expressed their opinions on Western medicine. These discussions revolved mainly around knowledge of anatomy and physiology, along with some exploration of Western medicinal products and therapies (cf. Shin 2009, 182–185).

One of the key texts that *Sirhak* scholars relied on extensively in understanding and analyzing Western medical knowledge was *Zhuzhi Qunzheng* (『主制羣徵』, *Evidences of the Creator*), a catechism of the Catholic Church written by Adam Schall in 1692 in classical Chinese, based on *De providentia numinis et animi immortalitate* by Leonardo Lessio (1554–1623). The author's stated purpose for writing was to present evidence for the existence of God as the Creator, based on the observable order found in the natural world, including the human body. Therefore, as part of his argument, he emphasized the intricate complexity of the human body and its remarkable internal mechanisms, as perceived by Europeans (cf. Dudink 1998, 817–819). Despite being a doctrinal text, the detailed and novel anatomical and physiological explanations in the *Zhuzhi Qunzheng* not only provided Chosŏn scholars with their initial exposure to Western medical ideas but also established an important foundation for the reception of Western medicine in 18th-century Korea.

In addition to *Zhuzhi Qunzheng*, several Latin texts were translated into classical Chinese and served as important references in the construction of Western medical discourse in 18th-century Chosŏn. First, *Lingyan Lishao* (『靈言蠡酌』, *Short Treatise on Matters Pertaining to the Soul*) served as an additional source of Western medical knowledge for Chosŏn scholars. Published in 1642, this catechism of the Catholic Church was a collaborative work between the Jesuit missionary Francesco Sambiasi (畢方濟, 1582–1649) and the Chinese official Xú Guāngqǐ (徐光启, 1562–1633). Sambiasi delivered oral discourses on the subject, while Xú Guāngqǐ diligently transcribed them, resulting in the creation of the text (cf. Meynard 2015). One of the practical books written or introduced by Catholic missionaries that garnered the interest of *sirak* scholars was *Taixi Shuifa* (『靈言蠡酌』, *Hydromethods of the Great West*). This manual was written by the Jesuit Sabatino de Ursis (熊三拔, 1575–1620) with the help of Xú Guāngqǐ to introduce European agricultural techniques, with a special focus on hydraulic pumps for agriculture (cf. Kink 2020).

Chosŏn scholars primarily focused their attention on practical aspects of Western medical knowledge, particularly concerning medicinal ingredients and novel treatments for various diseases. The earliest documentation of Western medicine can be traced back to the writings of Yi Ŭihyŏn. In his diary chronicling

his trip to Beijing, Yi provides a detailed description of the two types of medicinal products that were given to him by a Catholic missionary, including their appearance, instructions for use, and timing (cf. Baker 1990, 147). Yi Ik, in his article entitled *Joannes Ureman* (鄔若望, 1583–1621), where he discussed studies on Chinese herbal medicine by a westerner, expressed a favorable perspective on this research. In addition, he remarked that such research likely encompassed countless prescriptions and distinctive herbal remedies, providing significant benefits to people.²

Certain *sirak* scholars, driven by a strong desire to introduce the advanced culture and ideas of Qing China (北學派), showed a heightened sense of anticipation toward Western prescriptions and medical products. For example, Pak Chega, a member of the embassy to Qing in 1778, recognized the medical studies and treatment methods of Japan and Europe. He commended Japan for their meticulous screening of herbal medicine in foreign trade and regarded Western medical teachings as highly sophisticated and requiring skilled doctors. He also traced some information about Western medical remedies from the *Taixi Shuifa*. Despite his attempts, he was unable to obtain Western prescription records. Pak Chiwon, a renowned scholar and official of the time, documented his efforts to obtain Western prescriptions during his trip to China in 1780. In particular, he sought a Japanese translation of a Dutch medical text known for its effectiveness (『小兒經驗方』). In addition, he wanted to acquire a Western medical text translated into classical Chinese (『西洋收露方』) that contained insights into the process of drug distillation in Western medicine (cf. Shin 2014, 750–753, 765–766).

In brief, despite the strong interest of practical scholars in Western medicine and therapeutic techniques, lack of access to relevant texts prevented the widespread introduction of this knowledge into Chosŏn. However, they were engaged actively in discussions regarding the depiction of the human body and its physiology as presented and translated in the texts of Jesuit missionaries. The following chapter examines the reception of Western medical knowledge among 18th-century *sirak* scholars, with a particular focus on the fields of physiology and anatomy.

2 『星湖僊說』, 第十卷 人事門, 鄔若望: «鄔若望者西洋人天啓間至中國善醫究中國本草八千餘種惜未翻譯此必有奇方異材大益人生不能傳後而泯焉可異».

4 Western Anatomy and Physiology in Chosŏn Texts

When Korean scholars encountered Western medical theories in the 18th century, they quickly recognized the stark differences between these theories and their existing understanding of the human body, which was based on a combination of physiological concepts of oriental medicine and Neo-Confucian perspectives on the human body (cf. Baker 1990, 146–151). The descriptions of anatomy and physiology, especially in Adam Schall's *Zhuzhi Qunzheng*, attracted the attention of Korean scholars. They considered Adam Schall's work a valuable source of information, offering a fresh and alternative perspective that differed from the established teachings of traditional Korean and Chinese medicine.

One noteworthy aspect of the Chosŏn scholars' reception of Western medical knowledge is their selective focus on certain areas and their ignoring of others. A prime example of this is their lack of interest in or attention paid to information on bones and muscles, despite the abundance of Western medical knowledge on these subjects in the texts. For instance, Yi Ik, at the beginning of his discourse on medicine in Western countries, quoted Adam Schall's words, which were in fact a translation of Lessio's words:

Non fatis erat corpus humanum ossibus constare & musculis, sed calore opus erat ut posset vivere, & sanguine quo posset ali, & spiritu quo posset moveri ac sentire. (Lessio 1617, 68)

有骨有肉, 身形備矣, 然必須本熱爲生, 血爲養, 氣爲動覺, 缺一不可. (Tang 1627)

西洋醫人湯若望, 天路間至中國, 其主制群微云, 有骨有肉形備矣, 然必須本熱爲生, 血爲養, 氣爲食動覺, 缺一不可. (Yi 1760)

In his text, Adam Schall concludes the description of the human body's composition with these words, moving from anatomy to physiology. His focus on anatomy primarily centers on a detailed explanation of bones and muscles, including discussions of their functional aspects,³ with only minor variations in specific terminology (cf. Lessio 1617, 65–68). However, when examining Yi Ik's discourse on Western medical knowledge, it becomes apparent that he intentionally excludes or overlooks the in-depth exploration of bones and muscles. Instead, he briefly

3 『主制群微』, 五 以人身向微: «首骨自額連於腦, 其數八. 上額之骨, 十有二. 下則渾骨一焉. 齒三十有二. 齊三十有四. 胸之上, 有刀骨焉, 分爲三. 肋之骨二十有四, 起於齊, 上十四環至胸, 直接刀骨, 所以護存心肺也; 下十較短, 不合其前, 所以寬脾胃之居也, 指之骨, 大指二, 餘各三. 手與足各二十有奇. 諸骨安排, 各有本向, 所向異, 故其數與勢, 亦不得不異. 或縱入如釘, 或斜迎如鋸, 或合筍如櫟, 或環抱如攢, 種種不一, 總期體固, 動之順而已».

summarizes that bones and flesh are the fundamental elements constituting the human body.

The complete omission of the bone section can be attributed to the characteristics of Korean medicine and its perception of the human body. From this point of view, the form, or anatomy, and the mechanism, or physiology, of each part of the living organism were not treated and described separately. Even when bones were individualized, as seen in *Tongŭi Pogam* (『東醫寶鑑』, *A Precious Mirror of Eastern Medicine*), a Korean medical book published in 1613, they were understood primarily as repositories of bone marrow. This perception, deeply rooted in Oriental medicine, may explain the lack of interest among *sirak* scholars in delving into detailed discussions of specific bone groups, as seen in Yi Ik's text (cf. Yeo 2012, 257–258).

Regarding the muscles, Adam Schall relies heavily on the description in *De providentia numinis*. He faithfully translates Lessio's detailed information on the number, shape, and use of muscles. In his discussion, Schall emphasizes that muscles, along with bones, play a crucial role in shaping the human body (cf. Lessio 1617, 67).⁴ In this case, the author's choice of «肉» (“flesh”) as the translation for muscles is indeed noteworthy (cf. Yeo 2012), probably influenced by Lessio's statement at the beginning of his description of muscles: «*varias carnis particulas, quas musculos vocamus*» (Lessio 1617, 67). This choice reflects the fact that traditional Eastern medicine did not distinguish between muscles and other soft tissues, lumping them all under the term “flesh” (cf. Kuriyama 1999).

Therefore, it can be assumed that Yi Ik, who shared the same understanding of the human body, regarded muscle as a type of flesh and, despite his interest in anatomy (cf. Kim 2008, 328–342), did not pay much attention to the movement of the body associated with bones and muscles. Considering that Yi Ik quotes Adam Schall's detailed description of the major organs of the human body and their functional mechanisms, it can be inferred that Yi Ik was more interested in the new explanations of the body's movement and reflexes rather than in its composition. In essence, Yi Ik may have considered the discourse on the anatomy of *Zhuzhi Qunzheng* to be an overly simplistic exposition and may for that reason have decided not to include it in his own writing.

Yi Ik begins his physiological discourse of the Western medical tradition with a description of the three major organs, namely the heart, the liver, and the brain. In terms of physiology, what interested Chosŏn scholars most was Western medicine's answer to the question of which organs governed the human body.

4 『主制群微』, 五 以人身向微: «論肉, 其數六百界有奇, 其形長短寬狹厚薄圓扁角渾異, 其勢各上下相并, 或順或斜, 或橫異, 此皆各有本用. 而以順本, 身多異之動».

While the East Asian medical tradition regarded the heart as the central organ of the human body (cf. Baker 1990, 149), Adam Schall suggested the brain as the center of thought and sensation. Yi Ik seemed both amazed and perplexed by the intricate description of physiology. He recognized that Adam Schall's explanations provided far more detail than what Chinese doctors could offer, making it impossible to ignore his insights. However, Yi Ik also acknowledged that the language and framework used by Europeans was unfamiliar and somewhat confusing. He admitted that there were certain aspects that he did not fully understand.⁵

Despite the inherent challenges and difficulties in understanding, Yi Ik seeks to have harmonized his existing knowledge with the principles of Western medicine. In particular, he recognizes and embraces the importance of the brain as the critical organ responsible for coordinating bodily movements and sensory functions.

To use the word perception in talking about the brain is not the way we Confucians talk about it. Flesh is moved by muscles. Those muscles are just dense cluster of tissue. When some external object touches the flesh, the flesh immediately moves. If a muscle is not making it move, what is? But those muscles have no self-awareness. The brain receives the sensory impressions and, without stopping for a moment to think about what it is doing, immediately orders the muscles to respond. That is the way the brain operates. But it is the heart, not the brain, which knows that there has been sensory stimulation. So if we say that sensation is based in the brain, we had better add that knowledge is centered in the heart (cit. from Baker 1990, 150).⁶

However, as seen above, Yi Ik did not fully accept Adam Shall's perspective that the brain controls all body movements. While he acknowledged the role of the brain in controlling body movements through the "nerves" (「筋」), he limited the concept of "perception" (「覺」)-driven movements to reflex actions only. The basis of this understanding can be attributed to Adam Schall's choice of «心» ("heart", "mind") as the translation for both *cor* ("heart") and *anima* ("soul"). Consequently, Yi Ik regarded the heart not only as a physical organ but also as the center of mental activity. This interpretation led him to conclude that the heart, rather than the brain, controls both the physical and mental activities that arise from human thought (cf. Kim 2020, 388–390). In this way, Yi Ik sought to reconcile the Western physiological concepts presented in *Zhuzhi Qunzheng* with the principles of Korean medicine and thought.

5 『星湖僊說類選』, 冊5, 西國醫: «全當壬辰倭亂, 行道間三屠死屍, 然後其術亦精通」.

6 『星湖僊說類選』, 冊5, 西國醫: «但添一覺字, 與儒家說不同. 然肉運於筋, 筋爲肉繫. 外物觸肉. 肉便煬動者, 非筋而何. 筋非自覺. 有腦故物觸之時, 不待思量, 便即煬動者. 腦之爲也, 知其有物觸而然者, 心也. 然則覺在腦而知在心, 其理亦宜矣».

In contrast to his teacher Yi Ik, Shin Hudam expressed strong criticisms of Western medicine. His focus was primarily on the theory that the brain is responsible for consciousness and memory, a concept derived from Sambiasi's *Lingyan lishao*. While Shin Hudam agreed with his teacher that the brain was the central organ for perception, he disagreed on the specific location of memory-related psychological activities, arguing that it resided in the heart rather than the "brain ventricle" (「腦室」). He further contended that the concept of the brain ventricle had already been proposed by Chinese Daoist thinkers (cf. Shin 2009, 186–187).

Regarding Western medical knowledge, especially in the fields of anatomy and physiology, which came to Korea in the 18th century, it is important to note its roots in the Galenic tradition practiced in Medieval Europe. The fact that Adam Schall relied heavily on the writings of Galen (130–201), rather than the novel contributions of the European medicine of his time, is clearly stated in the reference text of *Zhuzhi Qunzheng*, Lessio's *De providentia numinis*. Adam Schall described Galen as «a renowned Western doctor»:

Scribit Galenus esse in corpore humano ossa supra ducenta; & singula ossa habere scopos supra 40. Itaque ut sola ossa corporis humani apte formentur plusquam octies mille scopos esse spectandos (Lessio 1617, 67).

西有名醫，察各骨之向，約有四十，各肉約有十，詳考人身各肢 各分之間，可得數萬 (Tang 1629).

In other words, in Chosŏn, the Western texts that presented arguments for the greatness of God based on Medieval medical knowledge that deviated from the prevailing trends in Europe at the time were considered new and innovative (cf. Yeo 2012, 264–265; Kim 2020, 382–383). Chosŏn *Sirhak* scholars were able to take a brief glimpse of a Western theory of anatomy and physiology thanks to the Jesuit texts brought in from the Qing dynasty. Despite being considered outdated in Europe at that time, the medical information in these religious texts differed markedly from established ideas in Chosŏn, thereby fostering a new kind of medical discourse.

5 Conclusion

The adoption of Western studies by Chosŏn scholars revealed their limited knowledge of the Latin language, which led to their reliance on translated texts. Unlike China and Japan, which had been in direct contact with Jesuit missionaries and had access to Western knowledge written in Latin, Chosŏn was isolated from such exposure. In an effort to broaden their understanding, a group of practical scholars in 18th-century Chosŏn aimed to overcome the limitations of Korean

medicine by introducing “new” medical knowledge from Europe, brought by Jesuit missionaries, thereby establishing a kind of discourse on Western medicine. This included the influence of Western physiology, which emphasized the brain and had an impact on the Chosŏn view of the human body that emphasized the heart. The circulation of knowledge in this manner highlights the characteristic of Latin as a cultural vector that facilitated the transmission of specific concepts representing European ideas, despite the linguistic barrier that limited direct engagement with the practical aspects of Western medicine sought by Korean scholars of the time.

The lack of linguistic competence in Latin posed challenges for the practical application of medical knowledge by *Sirhak* scholars. They had to rely on classical Chinese translations of medical texts instead of accessing the “original” Latin texts. As a result, the Western medical knowledge contained in Jesuit texts had limited influence on Korean medicine in the 18th century. This was mainly due to the fact that these texts were not comprehensive medical books and the Western medicine they introduced was merely a brief description of basic anatomy and physiology, which was also outdated. In the practice-oriented medical climate of the late Chosŏn dynasty, the Western medical knowledge circulating in Chosŏn, which lacked therapeutic approaches and focused solely on anatomical and physiological descriptions of the human body, seems to have had difficulty exerting practical influence.

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Aldo Tollini

Il ruolo del latino nelle missioni cristiane in Giappone del XVI e del XVII secolo

Abstract: In this essay I will discuss the teaching of Latin in Japanese seminaries and the importance of Latin in the training of the local clergy. Among the teaching texts I will discuss *Christiani pueri Institutio*, which has come down to us and is kept in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice. Another teaching text on scientific and theological subjects originally written in Latin, and rediscovered in recent years, is *Compendium*. Finally, I will discuss the compilation of the two Latin-Japanese dictionaries and the problems of translating Christian terminology that can be found there, providing a few examples.

Keywords: Latin, Japan, Christianity, evangelization, teaching

1 Il “Secolo Cristiano” in Giappone

In questo saggio tratterò dell'educazione che veniva impartita nei Seminari e Collegi fondati dai missionari gesuiti europei in Giappone durante il cosiddetto “Secolo Cristiano”, cioè tra la seconda metà del XVI secolo e i primi decenni del successivo, in particolare dell'insegnamento della lingua latina. In questo periodo, l'Europa, in gran parte grazie della neo-fondata Compagnia di Gesù, si impegnò in un enorme sforzo di evangelizzazione dell'Asia, allora da poco tempo solcata dalle navi mercantili portoghesi.

L'impresa prese inizio dopo il fortuito naufragio di un vascello portoghese nell'isola meridionale giapponese di Tanegashima nel 1542 (o forse l'anno seguente), e più concretamente dall'agosto 1549 quando Francesco Saverio (1506–1552)¹ mise piede nella città di Kagoshima nell'estrema punta meridionale dell'isola di Kyūshū accompagnato da un esule giapponese di nome Anjirō (Angelo),² con l'intenzione e la forte determinazione di convertire i giapponesi.

Nella strategia missionaria degli europei, l'educazione dei giovani giapponesi svolse un ruolo fondamentale e fu uno dei pilastri della strategia di evangelizzazione poiché la creazione di un clero locale era considerata una condizione indispensabile

¹ Francisco de Jasso Azpilcueta Atondo y Aznares de Javier, noto in italiano come Francesco Saverio, fu santificato nel 1622.

² Su Anjirō, si veda nota n. 21.

per fondare una solida e stabile conversione del Giappone. Solo attraverso la mediazione di un clero indigeno il Cristianesimo poteva smettere di essere considerato una religione straniera avulsa dal contesto culturale autoctono, e permeare il tessuto sociale profondo di quel paese. Infatti, Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606)³ scrive: «allevandoli bene nella virtù e nelle lettere, e se hanno una buona vocazione non vi è motivo per escluderli (i giovani giapponesi) da poter essere ricevuti nella Compagnia».⁴ (Alvarez-Taladriz 1954, 181).

E tra le varie ragioni vi è quella per cui

è tanta la differenza e opposizione tra i costumi e il modo di fare in tutto dei nostri e dei giapponesi che noi non potremo mai raggiungere l'unione degli animi, la familiarità e l'autorevolezza che hanno raggiunto i bonzi se non per mezzo dei giovani giapponesi. [. . .]

E perché per le stesse ragioni, la Compagnia non metterà mai radici profonde in Giappone né raggiungerà lì la sua rendita né un modo conveniente di sostentamento, se non per mezzo dei fratelli giapponesi, perché essi non possono avere tanto amore per la gente straniera e tanto differente da essi in tutto nei costumi. (Alvarez-Taladriz 1954, 183–184).

Per questo molti sforzi furono profusi nella creazione di scuole di vario livello volte alla formazione non solo puramente religiosa, ma anche della cultura occidentale, tra cui le lingue, soprattutto classiche, la filosofia e le materie che normalmente venivano insegnate ai giovani in Occidente. In questo modo, i giovani giapponesi avrebbero acquisito una solida base culturale occidentale che avrebbe permesso loro di operare da intermediari tra le due culture, e non solo di predicare la fede cristiana. I missionari gesuiti che diffondevano la fede cristiana in Giappone, e soprattutto lo stratega di questa vasta operazione, il Valignano era convinto che il messaggio cristiano avulso dalla cultura occidentale sarebbe rimasto sempre in superficie e che solo attraverso un'operazione prima di tutto culturale il Cristianesimo sarebbe potuto essere davvero compreso e mettere radici profonde in quel paese.

Lo scopo era quello di formare dei giovani che avessero competenze nelle due culture e che quindi potessero adeguatamente presentare la cultura occidentale – e ovviamente soprattutto il Vangelo – ai propri conterranei.

Il principale realizzatore di questa strategia, Alessandro Valignano, il Visitatore, quindi, colui che dettava la politica della missione, aprì una nuova era nelle relazioni culturali tra Europa e Giappone non solo fondando scuole, collegi, semi-

³ Originario di Chieti, nel 1556 entrò nella Compagnia di Gesù e nel 1572 fu nominato Visitatore Generale delle missioni delle Indie Orientali, diventando così la massima autorità della Compagnia in Asia. L'anno seguente partì da Roma per recarsi in Oriente, per il suo primo viaggio.

⁴ Le citazioni da questo testo, qui e avanti, sono tradotte in italiano dall'originale spagnolo dall'autore.

nari e noviziati per i giovani giapponesi, ma ponendo a base della sua politica educativa la formazione di soggetti con una competenza sia nelle scienze umane orientali sia europee.

Nel capitolo *De la importancia de los seminarios de los naturales y del modo que se ha de tener en ellos* del suo *Sumario de las Cosas de Japón*, Valignano così si esprime al riguardo dell'educazione dei giovani giapponesi:

Da quanto detto si può ben intendere quanto sia necessario per il bene dei nostri e del Giappone fare dei seminari per la popolazione locale, e fare molta attenzione alla loro buona educazione, e questo viene motivato dalle seguenti ragioni:

La prima è che come vediamo per esperienza da ogni parte, uno dei migliori rimedi che la Compagnia ha trovato [. . .] è stata la buona educazione dei giovani, sia perché essi sono adatti a essere guidati dove si voglia, sia perché bevendo da questa tetta (come si suol dire) la virtù, i buoni costumi e le lettere, restano abituati a essi anche dopo che sono cresciuti. [. . .]

La seconda ragione è che dobbiamo molto sforzarci per introdurre le vere scienze in Giappone, sia per toglierli da cotanta ignoranza, sia per renderli adatti a essere dei religiosi e sacerdoti, e perché la lingua latina e le altre scienze, a causa della diversità della lingua e di tutto il resto, sono talmente nuovi e diversi in Giappone, che non potranno mai essere appresi se non cominciando da un'età molto giovane. [. . .]

Di questi seminari, come si è detto, se ne hanno da fare almeno tre: due per i ragazzi e il terzo per i grandi, i quali dopo essere giunti ai diciotto anni lasceranno questi seminari, e in ciascuno di essi si deve fare in modo che vi siano cento allievi, onorati e nobili, e a tutti costoro, a seconda delle capacità di ciascuno, si deve insegnare a leggere e scrivere in giapponese e in latino, con le scienze umanistiche (*humanidad*) e le altre scienze, e oltre a questo, e alla virtù e alle buone maniere, che è la cosa principale, si devono anche insegnare le convenzioni sociali (*cortesias*), i costumi e le cerimonie proprie del Giappone. (Alvarez-Taladriz 1954, 171).

Nell'anno 1580, cruciale per lo sviluppo della politica educativa, Valignano scrisse il *Regimento para os Seminários* una guida dettagliata per la conduzione delle varie scuole.⁵ Vediamone uno stralcio:

Ogni Seminario avrà i suoi maestri che insegneranno ai giovani a leggere e scrivere in latino e in giapponese; e dopo aver appreso bene a leggere e scrivere insegneranno loro il latino facendo loro leggere la sintassi e tutto il resto in modo progressivo. Nel frattempo gli cambieranno gli orari di lezione in modo tale che tutte le ore che impiegavano ad apprendere a leggere e scrivere le useranno completamente o in parte per la composizione e per studiare il latino.

⁵ *Regimento que se ha de guardar nos semynários* in ARSI (Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu): *Iap.-Sin.*, 2, fols 35^r–39^v.

[. . .]

Dopo aver appreso il latino, coloro che mostrano abilità impareranno le altre scienze, e specialmente i “casi di coscienza” (*casos de consciencia*)⁶ e a seconda della situazione anche filosofia e teologia. Ma si eviti di insegnare, per quanto attiene alla nostra fede e all’immortalità dell’anima, le diverse diatribe che vi sono tra i dottori e le controversie e opinioni degli eretici, ma si insegnino loro solo la vera e solida dottrina . . .⁷

Il testo passa poi a fissare il numero di ore che devono essere svolte per ciascuna materia e risulta evidente che il numero di ore destinate alle lezioni di latino sono tra le più numerose. Ciò è motivato dal fatto che la conoscenza di questa lingua era propedeutica allo studio delle altre discipline.

Inoltre, nel *Sumario*, Valignano descrive dettagliatamente alcune regole per l’attività giornaliera da svolgere nei seminari, in cui, tra l’altro, si fissano gli orari di sveglia mattutina alle quattro e trenta, fino alle otto di sera, ora in cui si andava a letto, con le varie attività da svolgere (Alvarez-Taladriz 1954, 205).

Nel Collegio di Funai, nel 1583, si iniziò l’insegnamento del latino e poi della filosofia, e due anni dopo quello della teologia.

2 L’insegnamento del latino

Inizialmente l’insegnamento del latino consisteva nella memorizzazione di alcune preghiere fondamentali (Taida 2017, 567), ma col tempo l’impegno nell’insegnamento di questa lingua divenne maggiore e più strutturato.

I Seminari di Arima e Azuchi ebbero un ruolo fondamentale nella formazione del clero indigeno. I seminaristi dovevano seguire un programma rigido che avrebbe permesso loro di ottenere le capacità necessarie per diventare sacerdoti. In primo luogo, una delle condizioni essenziali poste dal Valignano era quella secondo cui i giapponesi non potevano fare a meno della conoscenza della lingua latina. Dunque, all’insegnamento della lingua giapponese veniva affiancato quello del latino. È rilevante sottolineare che l’insegnamento delle due lingue avveniva in concomitanza, a dimostrazione della volontà di equiparare le due culture, metterle sullo stesso piano e, in certo senso, metterle a confronto. In secondo luogo, la formazione che Valignano desiderava impartire agli studenti doveva essere di alto livello, perché spesso tra i seminaristi vi erano figli di nobili. (Boscaro 2008, 76–77).

⁶ I “Casi di coscienza” erano una disciplina largamente insegnata dai gesuiti nel periodo premoderno. Corrispondeva all’insegnamento dei principi di teologia morale e riguardava soprattutto i peccati.

⁷ Traduzione italiana dal portoghese dell’autore.

Abbiamo testimonianza che l'inizio dell'insegnamento del latino è del 1580 nel Collegio di Funai (oggi Ōita) (Schütte 1968, 694) e sappiamo che nel Seminario lo studio del latino era di cinque ore e mezza la settimana (Schütte 1980, 351–353). Inoltre, ci è noto che nel 1588 vi erano settanta studenti giapponesi impegnati nell'apprendimento del latino (Schütte 1975, 264–270).

Il primo testo adottato per l'insegnamento del latino di cui abbiamo certezza fu quello di Manuel Alvares, *De Institutione Grammatica Libri Tres* del 1572. Opera in tre libri scritta in latino, la lingua di comunicazione tra religiosi e umanisti occidentali, che serviva come libro di testo per l'insegnamento del latino nelle missioni dei gesuiti in tutto il mondo. È un testo molto completo e sistematico che descrive sia la grammatica sia la sintassi e la prosodia con esempi tratti dai classici.⁸ Sembra però che non risultasse soddisfacente per essere troppo complesso e dettagliato, risultando ostico per gli allievi giapponesi. Inoltre, le spiegazioni non erano in giapponese e gli esempi non riportavano le traduzioni e pertanto era un testo poco adatto.

La mancanza di un buon libro di testo rendeva l'apprendimento difficoltoso e poco produttivo. Pertanto, nel Secondo Concilio Generale dei missionari in Giappone del 1590 tenuto a Katsusa, fu deciso che era indispensabile provvedere alla compilazione di una grammatica latina in giapponese (Taida 2017, 570).

Nel viaggio di ritorno da Roma, Valignano, riportando in patria i giovani “ambasciatori” giapponesi che erano stati a Roma in visita dal Papa, nel 1590 portò con sé in Giappone anche una stampatrice – a caratteri mobili con la dichiarata intenzione di iniziare un'attività di stampa di libri di vario genere, mirati soprattutto alla diffusione della dottrina cristiana, alla conoscenza della cultura occidentale – e libri per lo studio della lingua giapponese (per i missionari europei) e della lingua latina per gli studenti giapponesi. Valignano era convinto che la produzione di libri sia nelle lingue europee sia in giapponese fosse indispensabile per il successo della missione di evangelizzazione. La stamperia inizialmente fu collocata a Katsusa, ma fu poi spostata a Amakusa, dove rimase sei anni, e infine definitivamente a Nagasaki dove rimase attiva fino al 1611.

Un altro testo utilizzato fu il *Christiani pueri institutio adolescentiaeque Perfu-gium*,⁹ Macao 1588 di João Bonifacio,¹⁰ in cui venivano presentati brani classici della letteratura latina, tra cui Cicerone, Virgilio, Ovidio, Catullo, e altri.

⁸ Il testo in originale è visibile al sito: https://books.google.it/books?id=lp8RBn6sfnsC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.

⁹ Questo testo è presente nella Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana di Venezia (144.D.244).

¹⁰ Vedasi originali nei seguenti siti: https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_JqXzylcOCx4C/page/n7/mode/2up e <https://dadospdf.com/download/os-primeiros-caracteres-europeus-impressos-na>

Un altro testo ancora utilizzato per l'insegnamento del latino era il *De missione legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam curiam, rebusque in Europa, ac toto itinere animadversis dialogus ex ephemeride ipsorum Legatorum collectus* che raccontava il viaggio dell'ambasceria Tenshō del 1585 a Roma e stampato nel 1590 a Macao (Di Russo 2016). Per molti anni gli storici sono stati convinti che l'autore del *De missione* fosse Eduarde de Sande S. J. (1531–1600) come era riportato nella copertina del libro, ma in realtà il vero autore fu Valignano che aveva scritto il testo in spagnolo chiedendo in seguito al gesuita de Sande di tradurlo in latino per poterlo utilizzare all'interno dei seminari. Il manoscritto originale, dal quale il de Sande effettuò la traduzione in latino, non è stato più ritrovato.

La strategia di Valignano relativa all'insegnamento del latino prevedeva oltre a dei buoni libri di testo, anche di affidare l'insegnamento a docenti scelti tra i missionari che avessero buona competenza sia della lingua latina sia giapponese, in modo tale da poter spiegare nella lingua materna degli studenti. Questa strategia sembra che producesse buoni frutti e il livello di competenza dei giovani seminaristi si elevasse parecchio.

Purtroppo con i bandi di proscrizione del Cristianesimo iniziati nel 1614 e rafforzatisi negli anni seguenti, assieme alla proibizione di predicare e diffondere il Cristianesimo, anche l'attività didattica dovette cessare.

Il livello di apprendimento della lingua latina da parte dei giovani giapponesi è una questione dibattuta: vi sono testimonianze contrastanti, e sembra di poter riassumere che la difficoltà incontrata nello studio era grande e a volte insormontabile, nonostante il grande sforzo dei missionari profuso nell'insegnamento.

Certamente, con la produzione di materiale didattico più adatto, si notò un netto miglioramento e alcuni studenti, pochi, per la verità, raggiunsero livelli di buona competenza. Per esempio, Cooper sostiene che alcuni giovani studenti ottennero una «considerevole competenza» nella lingua latina e che poi costoro si impegnarono a insegnare ai loro compagni più giovani (Cooper 1974, 226–227). D'altra parte lo stesso Cooper cita il vescovo Pedro Martins¹¹ che sostenne che i giapponesi provavano una *notavel repugnancia* nei confronti dello studio del latino (Cooper 1974, 180).

china-1588-portugal-china-500-anos-coordenaao-de-miguel-castelo-branco-e-paulo-j-s-barata-lisboa-biblioteca-nacional-de-portugal-2014-p-84-88_5a4d17a4b7d7bcab67319507_pdf.

¹¹ Pedro Martins (1541–1598), primo vescovo del Giappone. Ricevette dal Papa la nomina vescovile nel 1592, ma giunse in Giappone nel 1596.

3 *Ratio studiorum*

L'attività educativa fu considerata tra le principali della Compagnia fin dalla sua fondazione nel 1534, e di fatto se ne sottolinea l'importanza anche nell'atto costitutivo. La formazione di giovani secondo i principi cristiani era considerata strategica per radicare tali principi nelle varie società dove operavano. Per questo furono elaborate delle strategie educative che vennero codificate e applicate in tutte le scuole gesuitiche.

Il *curriculum* educativo di queste scuole si basava sulla *Ratio studiorum* (o per esteso *Ratio atque institutio studiorum Societatis Iesu*), il codice pedagogico della Compagnia di Gesù promulgato in tre versioni: quella del 1586, poi del 1591, e infine del 1599. Di fatto, tutte le scuole fondate dalla Compagnia in varie parti del mondo si dovevano attenere ai principi formulati in questo codice al fine di creare una *élite* culturale basata sui principi dell'Umanesimo. Esso prevedeva un percorso di formazione che intendeva combinare l'eloquenza (*eloquentia*) e la *pietas*,¹² la dottrina genuina (*bona doctrina*) e un modo di vita virtuoso (*virtus*), accanto alla sapienza (*sapientia*), cioè una solida formazione nelle scienze umanistiche e una severa disciplina.

La *Ratio* prevedeva un corso di cinque anni di indirizzo umanistico, in cui era centrale lo studio del latino e dei classici, in particolare dell'opera di Cicerone, seguiti poi tre anni di filosofia e quattro di teologia.

4 *Curriculum studiorum*

Nel capitolo dodicesimo intitolato *De la importancia de los seminarios de los naturales y del modo que se ha de tener en ellos* del *Sumario*, (Alvarez-Taladriz 1954, 170–175) il Valignano chiarisce che lo scopo dei Seminari era di fornire una educazione generale rispetto all'*humanitas* e alle altre scienze, ovvero insegnare la *virtud*, *las buenas costumbres y letras*.

L'educazione linguistica del latino era alla base dei curricoli dei corsi e veniva considerata la materia di base. Nel 1580 l'importanza dell'insegnamento del latino fu ampiamente discussa nel Primo Congresso della Provincia Giapponese della Compagnia di Gesù a Usuki e la stragrande maggioranza dei presenti fu d'accordo nel porre il latino alla base del percorso educativo, e prima di accedere alle altre materie nei corsi successivi. Il latino era considerato, da una parte, il veicolo

¹² Rispetto, devozione, rettitudine, benevolenza.

che univa la Chiesa Universale in tutto il mondo e, dall'altra, un'educazione linguistica fondamentale per gli studi di retorica e delle altre materie umanistiche.

Si passò subito alla fase operativa e nello stesso anno furono fondati il primo Seminario ad Arima, il secondo a Azuchi nel feudo di Oda Nobunaga, un Noviciado a Usuki e il Collegio di Funai.

Il sistema educativo dei Gesuiti era strutturato nel modo seguente (si veda anche Taida 2017, 569):

al primo livello i Seminari (*seminario*), istituzioni di primo livello che fornivano una istruzione di tipo elementare, i Noviziati (*noviciado*), scuole che avviavano al sacerdozio e infine i Collegi (*collegio*), che fornivano una educazione superiore, destinati solo agli studenti più dotati. Qui le materie oggetto di studio erano più numerose e varie: retorica, filosofia, astronomia, teologia, lingua giapponese e latina, eccetera.

Secondo le istruzioni del Valignano, i corsi dei Seminari erano suddivisi in tre livelli: al primo si studiava soprattutto il latino, ma anche un po' di greco, e lo stesso al livello intermedio. Normalmente il libro di testo era *De institutione grammatica libri tres*, dell'Alvarez, affiancato dal *Christiani Pueri Institutio* di João Bonifacio. Al livello superiore i giovani iniziavano lo studio della letteratura giapponese classica, compresi alcuni testi buddhisti. La necessità di testi per l'insegnamento e lo studio diede un forte impulso all'attività di pubblicazione di libri in Giappone: il Valignano si impegnò moltissimo a favorire la produzione dei cosiddetti *Kirishitanban*, i testi stampati dai gesuiti in Giappone.

L'ordinamento scolastico era differente a seconda del tipo di scuola, ma comunque seguiva la triplice suddivisione dettata dalla *Ratio* in lettere umanistiche, filosofia e teologia.

La filosofia si studiava soprattutto sui testi di Aristotele e la storia e la retorica venivano apprese attraverso lo studio di testi di autori latini e greci. Inoltre, anche scienze quali la matematica, la geometria e l'astronomia facevano parte del *curriculum* delle scuole di livello più elevato. In definitiva, si cercava di fornire un'educazione a forte impronta umanistica secondo i dettami della cultura rinascimentale europea, che partendo dalle scienze dell'uomo (lingua, filosofia, morale, storia) si allargasse all'ambiente in cui l'uomo vive (le scienze fisiche, matematiche e astronomiche), per giungere infine alla conoscenza del divino con la teologia.

Con le parole del Valignano:

E affinché questi ragazzi traggano profitto della buona dottrina non si deve insegnare loro il latino per mezzo di poeti pagani, e neppure con Cicerone, ma per mezzo di libri che trattano della buona materia della virtù e della religione cristiana e facciano detestare i vizi, scegliendo alcune opere in prosa e in verso di santi e di autori cristiani che trattano di questi argomenti, e componendone altri di nuovi, specificatamente per il Giappone, in cui si

condannino i suoi vizi e le sette false, in modo che i ragazzi imparino il latino assieme alla buona dottrina dei nostri santi misteri, e non le favole e i vizi che si apprendono da autori pagani che si leggono in Europa. (Alvarez-Taladriz 1954, 171–172).

5 Il *Compendium*

Tra gennaio e aprile del 1586, mentre era in Europa, Valignano, dopo aver acquisito una macchina da stampa a caratteri mobili, sollecitò i suoi confratelli a produrre un testo, da stampare e portare in Giappone, che fosse un compendio delle scienze umanistiche europee da usare come testo per l'insegnamento nel Collegio di Funai.¹³

Fu Pedro Gómez S.J. a rispondere all'appello del Visitatore producendo tre “compendi” intitolati rispettivamente: *De Sphaera*, *De Anima* e *De Theologia* e riuniti sotto il titolo di *Compendium Catholicae Veritatis in gratiam Iapponicorum Fratrum Societatis Iesu. Confectum per reverendum Patrem Gomezium, Vice-provincialem Societatis Iesu in Provincia Iapponica*.

Pedro Gómez (1535–1600), dopo il suo arrivo in Giappone nel 1582 fu nominato Superiore della Missione di Bungo e dal 1590 divenne Vice-provinciale. La trilogia che scrisse in latino negli anni del 1593–94 prese il nome di *Compendium Catholicae Veritatis*, poi Pedro Ramón (1550–1611), un suo confratello, la tradusse in giapponese con l'aiuto di convertiti nel 1595. Nello stesso anno, verso l'inizio dell'autunno, i tre testi di Gómez erano pronti per essere usati nel collegio di Funai, spiegati da Pedro Morejón, un missionario giunto in Giappone nel 1590, al seguito del Valignano.

Questi testi erano considerati perduti finché nel 1937 furono trovati nella Biblioteca Vaticana da Joseph Franz Shütte, S.J.; poi nel 1995 il prof. Antoni Üçerler, S.J. ne scoprì la versione giapponese anche nella biblioteca dell'Università di Oxford (Magdalen College Archives, MS. 228), sebbene priva del *De Sphaera*. Questi due manoscritti sono gli unici esistenti.

L'Università Sophia di Tokyo ne ha recentemente pubblicato una versione facsimile sia della versione in latino della Biblioteca Vaticana, sia quella in giapponese della biblioteca di Oxford.¹⁴

¹³ Tra l'ampia bibliografia sul *Compendium* disponibile, si veda il capitolo *Aristotle and Aquinas Come to Japan* in Üçerler (2022) 33–50, Üçerler (1997) 11–60, Obara (1965) 179–273.

¹⁴ Titolo latino: *Compendium catholicae veritatis: Compendia*, titolo giapponese: 「イエズス会日本コレジヨの講義要綱」, Kirishitan Bunko Library, Sophia University, 1997.

1. *De Sphaera*, un trattato astronomico basato sulle teorie di John Holywood (conosciuto con il nome latino di Joannes de Sacrobosco, 1195–1256, autore del *Tractatus de Sphaera*);
2. *De Anima* che si basava su un trattato di Aristotele
3. *De Theologia*, un compendio della fede cattolica basato sul Catechismo Romano emanato dal Concilio di Trento e adattato alle esigenze del pubblico giapponese.

Il *Compendium* era un vero e proprio “compendio” della cultura europea rinascimentale destinato ai giovani studenti giapponesi affinché potessero apprendere le basi culturali del pensiero e delle scienze europee. Fu il più importante tentativo di diffondere il Cristianesimo in Giappone presentando le dottrine religiose con il sostegno della grande cultura europea di quel tempo. Essa avrebbe dovuto impressionare i giovani studenti e convincerli della validità del Cristianesimo presentato in un contesto prestigioso e indiscutibilmente di elevato livello.

6 I due dizionari latino-giapponese

Tra le produzioni più rilevanti dell'attività editoriale dei missionari in Giappone vi fu quella delle grammatiche e dei dizionari, sia dal giapponese nelle lingue occidentali, sia dalle lingue occidentali (latino e portoghese) in giapponese.

Lo studio delle lingue in entrambi i sensi e i tentativi di avvicinare e confrontare le lingue occidentali con la giapponese, agli occhi degli uomini del Rinascimento, era uno dei modi più efficaci per attuare una trasmissione culturale, e per la diffusione del Cristianesimo.

Oggi, ci sono stati tramandati oltre alle grammatiche della lingua giapponese di João Rodrigues e di Diego Collado,¹⁵ alcuni importanti dizionari che riguardano il latino:

1. *Dictionarium Latinum Lusitanicum, ac Iaponicum*, in Amacusa in collegio Iaponico societatis Iesu, 1595. *Rōmaji*.¹⁶ (detto: *Ra-ho-nichi*).¹⁷ Si tratta di un dizionario Latino-portoghese- giapponese basato sul dizionario latino *Dictionarium latinum*

¹⁵ Rodriguez (1604–1608) e (1620), Collado (1632).

¹⁶ *Rōmaji* significa in lettere romane, cioè scritto con l'alfabeto latino.

¹⁷ Il testo originale è visibile al sito: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nncl.cu05758114&view=1up&seq=9>.

del 1502, compilato da Ambrogio Calepino e completata nel 1520. Contiene la traduzione di circa trentamila lemmi con brevi spiegazioni.¹⁸

2. *Dictionarium sive thesauri linguae japonicae compendium*¹⁹ di Diego Collado O.P. (1587–1641), (detto: *Ra-sei-nichì*), in *rōmaji*, pubblicato a Roma nel 1632.²⁰ È un dizionario piuttosto limitato nel numero dei lemmi presenti – solo circa duemilacinquecento – soprattutto se confrontato all’altro citato sopra. Ha, quindi, un carattere piuttosto essenziale e scarse spiegazioni.

Entrambi, oltre che per gli scopi didattici dell’apprendimento del latino da parte dei giovani giapponesi, sono anche una importante fonte di informazione, che ci offre incredibili spunti per la comprensione dei rapporti di scambio culturale tra europei e giapponesi, e gettano luce sulle difficoltà di comprensione reciproca e sugli sforzi per dare forma adeguata ai principali termini della cultura giapponese.

Di seguito, due esempi della difficoltà di rendere parole latine del Cristianesimo in giapponese: “Dio” e “Anima”.

1. Dio

In assoluto, il termine più importante, e anche uno dei più complessi da rendere in lingua giapponese: la parola “dio”.

È storia molto nota che Saverio, sbarcato nel Kyūshū nel 1549, aiutato da Anjirō²¹ che apparteneva alla scuola buddhista Shingon, usava il termine Dainichi (大日) cioè il nome del Buddha di quella scuola. Tuttavia, ben presto i missionari si resero conto che usare un termine buddhista comportava il rischio di far pensare ai giapponesi che il cristianesimo fosse una scuola buddhista, o una sua variante. Quando Saverio nell’aprile del 1551 si recò a predicare a Yamaguchi usando il termine Dainichi incontrò un grande favore tra i monaci Shingon, tale che lo rese sospetto. Dopo essersi reso conto del fraintendimento, preferì usare la parola latina *Deus* (Higashibaba 2001, 9–11).

¹⁸ Si veda anche Kishimoto (2005) e (2006).

¹⁹ Il testo originale è visibile al sito: <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb10522255?page=3>.

²⁰ Questo testo è presente nella Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana di Venezia (40.C.129.2, oppure 17902).

²¹ Anjirō o Yajirō battezzato come Paulo de Santa Fé, fu il primo cristiano giapponese. Incontrò san Francesco Saverio a Malacca dove era fuggito e tornò in Giappone con lui, facendogli da interprete.

Per primo, Balthasar Gago (1520–1583), un missionario portoghese, pose il problema della traduzione del lessico cristiano in giapponese.

In una sua lettera del 23 settembre 1555,²² scrive:

Hanno questi giapponesi alcune parole con le quali abbiamo predicato la verità per molto tempo, che essi usano nelle loro sette, nelle quali esse vengono mutate perché vogliono trattare la verità con parole di inganno e di menzogna dando di esse un significato ingannevole. Di modo che a tutte le parole che riconoscono come pregiudiziali per loro che gli insegniamo come nostre per indicare cose nuove per loro – poiché abbiamo necessità di parole nuove – danno un significato diverso rispetto a quello che intendiamo noi. Così per esempio, per dire Croce chiamano essi nella loro lingua Iumogi (*jumonji* 十文字)²³ che è la loro lettera in forma di croce che vuol dire “dieci”, e quindi alle persone poco attente pare che la Croce e la loro lettera sia la stessa cosa. Perciò a ogni piè sospinto, e a ogni parola bisogna dare spiegazioni, o si deve cambiare parola, ed esistono più di cinquanta di queste parole che possono far danno, ma specificando il significato delle loro parole e quello delle nostre, si vede la differenza che c'è, e si vede che le loro parole sono inadatte a spiegare le cose di Dio, e così si capisce meglio. Dico questo affinché chi sta tra i pagani ascolti bene le spiegazioni e soppesi bene le parole.

Il problema della resa del lessico cristiano in giapponese era fondamentale e impegnò a lungo i missionari in terra giapponese.²⁴ Si pensi, per esempio, seguendo quanto dice Gago, alla prossimità fonetica tra *Deus*, parola che fu anche usata, e *daiuso* (大嘘) giapponese che significa “grande bugia”!

Un'altra soluzione, piuttosto utilizzata, fu quella di usare il termine *aruji* (主),²⁵ o meglio la sua forma onorifica *on-aruji* che letteralmente significa “signore”, per indicare il Signore, sebbene nel *Nippō jisho* troviamo per *aruji* semplicemente: “Sehnor, ou sehnora, ou dono da cousa.”, (1.a., p.13) senza alcun riferimento a Signore Dio.

Analizzando i dizionari di quel tempo troviamo, invece, termini composti con *ten* 天, ovvero “cielo”, forse per evidenziare la differenza tra il Dio cristiano che si immagina in cielo, e gli dei o *kami* giapponesi che vivono invece nella natura, e soprattutto in quella incolta delle montagne, o i buddha, la cui locazione fisica non è mai specificata. D'altra parte, il cielo 天 aveva nella lingua cinese una lunga tradizione sia filosofica sia religiosa. Per dirla in modo estremamente sintetico, il pensiero confuciano individua nel cielo una entità regolatrice della vita umana e il modello di virtù cui fare riferimento. Questa concezione, assieme ai termini relativi, sono ovviamente passati anche in Giappone dove, quindi, il riferimento al

²² Carta do padre Baltazar Gago, Hirado, 23 settembre 1555, in *Cartas*, foglio 116 e 117.

²³ *Iūmonji*: “Letra que significa dez. Item, figura de cruz.” (1.a. p. 146).

²⁴ Su questo tema si veda Schurhammer (1929) e Tadao (1974).

²⁵ Che di fatto è sinonimo di *nushi* (主).

“cielo” rimandava a un modello ultraterreno di perfezione e a una sorta di “regolatore della vita dell’universo”, che poteva indurre a pensare a una “potenza superiore, sovrumana, forse generatrice della vita”, e quindi non lontana dalla concezione del Dio cristiano.

Nel *Ra-ho-nichi* del 1595 alla voce *Deus* troviamo le seguenti traduzioni: *tentō* (天道), *tenxu* (天主) *tenson* (天尊), *tentei* (天帝). Invece, incredibilmente, nel *Ra-sei-nichi* il lemma non è presente.

In “*kotoba no yawarage*”²⁶ del *Hidesu no dōshi* (ヒイデスの導師)²⁷ troviamo: *Tenmei* 天命、デウスのご内証。Letteralmente: “signore del cielo”, definizione segreta per dio.

Tentei 天帝。天の帝王。Letteralmente: “imperatore del cielo”. Re-imperatore del cielo.

Tentō 天道。デウスの心。Letteralmente: “Via del cielo”. Sta a significare dio.

E in *Sanctos* “*kotoba no yawarage*”,²⁸ gli stessi termini di cui sopra:

Ten.mei. Deos. Mandado de Dios.

Ten.tei. Deos.

Ten-tō. Idem.

2. Anima

Vediamo ora un’altra parola fondamentale del lessico cristiano: *anima*.

Nel *Ra-ho-nichi*. troviamo:

Anima, ae. Lus. Alma. Iap. *Vjō* (有情), *fijō* (非情) *no meicon* (命根) *to naru mono*. – Item, Spirito, vida: *inochi* (命), *xinmiō* (身命).

Quindi, “quello funge da base per la vita di *esseri animati* (*vjō*) e di *essere inanimati* (*fijō*). Vita (*inochi*), vita del corpo (*xinmiō*).”

Nel *Ra-sei-nichi*.: Anima sensitiva, alma sensitiva, y como espíritus vitales, *tamàxi*.

²⁶ Con *kotoba no yawarage* (言葉の和らげる) nei testi del Kirishitan, si intendeva un’appendice a un testo in cui si spiegavano le parole difficili.

²⁷ Obara (1995) 382–383.

²⁸ *Sanctos no gosagueo no uchi nuqigaqi* (Compendio degli Atti dei Santi), il primo libro stampato in caratteri latini a Katsusa nel 1591. Una copia è presente nella Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana di Venezia (144.D.245). Esiste anche una ristampa: *Sanctos no gosagueo no uchi nuqigaqi*. Tokyo: Yushodo Shuppan, 2006.

Tamashii secondo il *Muromachi Dictionary*²⁹ è “quello si ritiene che risieda nel corpo degli esseri viventi e dell’uomo e che governa la loro vita e il loro spirito”.³⁰

Mentre in *Ra-ho-nichi* si preferisce l’aspetto legato alle funzioni vitali e la definizione primaria viene data attraverso una parafrasi, in *Ra-sei-nichi* la traduzione, meno elaborata, si riferisce all’aspetto spirituale.

Quindi, con “anima” si intende ciò che sostiene la vita degli esseri, e anche il principio “spirituale” dell’uomo, secondo quanto era corrente nella contemporanea cultura europea. Non si trova nei dizionari la concezione cristiana secondo cui l’anima è creata direttamente da Dio, è immortale ed è responsabile della vita dopo la morte. Questa definizione si trova invece nel *Dochirina kirishitan*³¹ (Kojima 1966, 85–87) in due passaggi in cui si dice:

Domanda: “L’essere umano come può distinguere (il bene dal male)?”

Risposta: “L’essere umano non è solo composto del corpo fisico. Ha sempre anche una “anima”. Quest’ “anima” dà vita al corpo fisico, e per esempio sebbene il corpo fisico torna (dopo la morte) a essere terra e cenere, quest’ “anima” non ha fine. Seguendo il bene e il male pone le premesse per le sofferenze o la beatitudine della vita dopo la morte.” (Kojima 1966, 10–11).³²

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³⁰ In originale: 人など生きもののからだに宿って、その生命・精神をつかさどっていると考えられるもの。(vol. 3, p. 1083–1084).

³¹ Il *Dochirina* (o *Dochiriina*) *Kirishitan* è un catechismo scritto dapprima in giapponese nel 1591 e poi in *rōmaji* nel 1600.

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Akihiko Watanabe

Mercury and the Argonauts in Japan: Myths and Martyrs in Jesuit Neo-Latin

Abstract: In the early modern period, a number of Latin texts were produced that combined references to Japan, Catholicism and Greco-Roman antiquity, including pagan mythology. This article examines two such works: An oration published in Spain in 1628, in which Jason and the Argonauts are likened to Xavier and his followers in Japan, and a Polish dramatic presentation datable to 1701 in which Mercury, Xerxes and the priest of Dodona, among other characters, appear in a story centered on the miraculous discovery of a cross inside a tree near Nagasaki. These works are prime examples of the diversity of early modern European Latin literature, which could combine tales from the new and old worlds in highly imaginative and creative ways.

Keywords: Jesuits, Neo-Latin, Japan, Spain, Poland

1 Introduction: Japan and Neo-Latin Through the Ages

This chapter discusses two pieces of Neo-Latin literature in which Japan and pagan Greco-Roman elements appear side-by-side. Examination of these two works is part of a three-year project which is being supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (Kakanhi grant no. 22K00466), in which I explore the intersections between Japan and the Greco-Roman tradition in early modern European Latin literature.

Before I plunge into these two works, some background information concerning Japan and Neo-Latin may be in order. Neo-Latin literature concerning Japan or more generally East Asia is a topic that has been explored already in surveys by Ijsewijn, Golvers, von Martels and others.¹ A comprehensive treatment, however, that touches on all periods and genres is a *desideratum*. In the following preliminary survey, I divide the history of Japanese Neo-Latin into three periods.

Period 1, the ‘Christian Century’, covers the time roughly from Francis Xavier’s (1506–1552) arrival in Japan in 1549 (though knowledge about Japan in the West can

1 See Golvers (2015), von Martels (2014), Ijsewijn (1990) 319–321, and cf. Watanabe (2021).

arguably be pushed back a few centuries before this year, to the time of Marco Polo (1254–1324))² up to the final and definitive suppression of Catholicism and the severance of relationship with Portugal in the late 1630s. In this first period we can already distinguish between European- and Japanese-authored Latin texts, although the former naturally precedes the latter. For at this time not only did Europeans begin to write about the newly discovered archipelago, but notably the Jesuits sent to the East expended considerable resources on teaching Latin to the Japanese, as a grammar, dictionary, and other introductory school texts printed specifically for use in Japan from the late 1580s to early 1610s testify.³ There is also evidence from this time that a limited number of Japanese educated by the Jesuits acquired fair proficiency in Latin, to the point of being able to compose verse. Compared to contemporary European Latin material, to be sure, Japanese-authored Latin texts from this period are rare, but they do exist, the majority in manuscript form but a few also in print. If the archive of the short-lived Japanese Jesuit seminary were extant (by all indications it is not), then we would doubtlessly have more documents of this kind. The first text to be examined in this chapter is a European one from this period.

Period 2 covers the mid-17th century to mid-19th century, the time when Japan was mostly closed off to the West, except for an extremely narrow and strictly controlled route open to the Dutch East India company. But the memory of Period 1 lived on in Catholic Europe, and we have an abundance of high-quality literary texts dealing with Japan from this time from all across Europe, from the Southwest to the Northeast, from Portugal to Poland. This is the category from which the second text to be treated in this presentation comes, and this is also the kind of material that I am currently very much focused on, due to the wealth of underexplored primary sources available. At the same time, however, from this same period also come Latin texts with a distinctly different undertone, namely those from the Protestant northwest, such as the works of Bernhard Varen (1622–1650), Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716), and Carl Peter Thunberg (1743–1828).⁴ Non-Catholic European texts on Japan and East Asia around the time of the Enlightenment are key evidence within intellectual history of the emergence of the modern Western image of the Far East as an advanced, yet distinctly non-White, non-Christian and somehow inferior counterpart, a topic that has recently been explored by Keevak, Kowner and others.⁵ But fascinating as such

2 See e.g. Varen (1649) 9–10.

3 On these texts and Jesuit humanistic education for the early modern Japanese in general, see e.g. Watanabe (2020) 200–203.

4 See e.g. Watanabe (2020) 210–211.

5 See e.g. Keevak (2011) 28–29; Kowner (2014) 165–172.

texts are, I must postpone the examination of this particular kind of text to a different occasion.

In period 2, the kind of Latin fluency among the Japanese that once existed in period 1 seems to have gone basically extinct. There were a few attempts within the hermetically closed archipelago to translate Western, including Latin, texts into the learned literary Sino-Japanese, but both in scope and linguistic fluency they bear no comparison to the kind of facility that the Jesuit-educated Japanese achieved in period 1.⁶ There are also indications that self-identified Japanese Catholic emigre families that survived in Western-controlled regions such as the Philippines until the 18th century sent their children to local academies where they were taught Latin, but they remained to all indications completely severed from Japan and eventually merged with the local population, leaving virtually no traces observable today.⁷

Finally, from the mid-19th century, when Japan again opened up to the rest of the world, until today, a variety of other Latin texts in and on Japan have emerged. Among them are Horatian verses written by Japanese Latinists and even Latin haikus composed by Europeans.⁸ I have also personally seen and heard about Latin archival documents kept in various Catholic institutions within Japan including the Tokyo Catholic Archdiocese and Sophia University. But again, more detailed examination of this kind of material must await another occasion.

2 *Iaponiae Argovictoria* (1628)

Let us now begin to look at the first of the two pieces under discussion. This is the printed quarto pamphlet entitled *Iaponiae Argovictoria*, by the Jesuit rhetorician Juan Antonio Jarque (1600–1666), published in Zaragoza in 1628.⁹ It records an oration, which must have lasted for a good hour or so, delivered in the Jesuit college church in the same city on December 3 1627. It ostensibly describes an emblem, but is really an effusive laudation of Xavier as the spiritual conqueror of the East using all manners of rhetorical tools available at that time, pulling out all

⁶ See e.g. Harada (2001).

⁷ On the early modern Japanese diaspora in Southeast Asia, see Iwao (1966).

⁸ See Ijsewijn (1990) 319–321.

⁹ Jarque (1628). In what follows the citation to this text is by page number. I am grateful to the Kirishitan bunko Library of Sophia University, Tokyo for permission to inspect their copy of this rare pamphlet.

the stops from Latin to Spanish and pagan antiquity to baroque humanistic theology, as we shall see.

The oration starts with Herodotus' (c. 484–c. 425 BC) description of Pharaoh Amasis II (?–526 BC) (1, Hdt. 2.173) and is liberally sprinkled throughout with learned references ranging all the way from classical antiquity to contemporary humanism. Cicero (106–43 BC) (20, 24), Virgil (70–19 BC) (2, 24) and Horace (65–8 BC) (23) are mined for tags, as are the Church Fathers including Ambrose of Milan (c. 339–c. 397) (8, 21) and John Chrysostom (c. 347–407) (7, 11). The sources are regularly identified in the margin; the citations serve as visible signposts of the orator's extensive erudition. Contemporary humanists are also cited in the same way, including the Italian emblemist-poet Andrea Alciato (1492–1550) (18) and his French counterpart Claude Paradin (c. 1510–1573) (4). The learned Portuguese Jesuit author Francisco de Mendoça (1573–1626) (3, 18, 21) is mentioned repeatedly and appears to have had a major impact at least on this oration, although his work seems to have fallen off the radar of current Neo-Latin research.¹⁰

The pagan classics are not used only as ornaments, however, but also serve a more substantial, structural purpose. Jarque makes explicit claims that Catholic triumphs such as Xavier's expedition to the East were foretold by the Sibyl and the great *vates* Virgil. So, according to him, Virgil's *Eclogue* 4 is not only a prophecy of the birth of Christ, but the mention of the new Argo and its heroes in lines 34–35 actually refers to the adventures of Xavier and the Japanese martyrs who followed the saint's lead (3). In case anyone needs convincing, Jarque mentions the fact that Xavier's illustrious father bore the name *de Jasso* (3),¹¹ a crystal-clear proof that the Navarrese saint is the new Jason, *QED*. Other allegorical equivalents naturally follow. So Tiphys, Argo's helmsman, is said to be Xavier's motivational virtue (26), and the Dioscuri are a pair of Japanese Jesuits (namely John Soan de Goto, 1578–1597 and James Kisai, c. 1534–1597) among the so-called twenty-six martyrs who were executed in Nagasaki in 1597 and beatified in 1627 (24). This beatification was one of the major spurs behind the oration itself, which was delivered in the same year on the feast day of Xavier, who had been canonised a little earlier in 1622. Pallas Athena, furthermore, the patroness of the Argo, is of course but a distorted reflection of the Virgin Mary (25), while the mythical ship itself stands for Japan (5), the goal and stage for the heroic Jesuit world mission. Pagan mythology according to Jarque is on the one hand but a delirious dream of blind antiquity: *caeca delirabat antiquitas*, he says (2). It is a dream nonetheless that, if explicated correctly by a

¹⁰ For a biography of Mendoça, see Torres (2001). Especially noteworthy is Mendoça (1631) for its very baroque fusion of classical humanism and Catholic piety. Jarque (1628) 3 indicates that the author was aware of Mendoça's work being posthumously edited in Lyon.

¹¹ On Xavier's father and his family name, see e.g. Schurhammer (1955) 1, 3, 17–18.

properly trained person such as himself, points to glorious and real Catholic victories. In addition to being the new Jason, Xavier is another Alexander the Great (356–323 BC), Paul the Apostle (c. 5–c. 64/65), and Julius Caesar (100–44 BC) all rolled into one, and greater than all of them (10–11). At one point (11), he turns to the saint and says *venisti, vidisti, vicisti*. Both classical mythology and history provide the frame and pedestal in and on which Xavier and his Japanese followers stand.

The oration is prosimetric and interspersed with verses, both in classical metrical Latin and rhymed Spanish. Many of the Latin lines are direct quotes or pastiches/centos of authors like Catullus (c. 84–c. 54 BC) (4), Virgil, Seneca (c. 4 BC–65 AD) (3, 20), Juvenal (fl. 2nd century) (4) and even the aforementioned Alciato. Two extended Latin verse passages, however, are Jarque's original, in which he displays his own considerable compositional prowess. The first, which consists of 28 lines of elegiac couplets in which the author recounts the story of a miraculous harvest in a field sown by a deceased martyr (23), is remarkable also in that the source and inspiration is explicitly said to be an oral testimony delivered by Sebastião Vieira (1574–1634), the Portuguese Jesuit Procurator of Japan, who evidently stopped by in Zaragoza during his European sojourn in the 1620s.¹² Vieira was eventually to be martyred in Japan in 1634 after returning to the East. This set-piece within the oration is remarkable in that most literary Neo-Latin retellings of edifying tales from Japan are based on published European accounts and thus are further removed from their source in terms of narrative chain.¹³ The second original verse piece occurs at the end of the Latin section, and Jarque prefaces it by saying that he is raising Roman lyric to a more sacred level, *Romanam sanctius animans lyram* (25). The poem in 38 lines (26) is basically a recap of the Xavier-Argo allegory and is at the same time a rather laboured imitation of a Horatian ode in the scheme of the third asclepiad. The entire oration then ends with a 5-page, 160-line Spanish poem (27–31) in the so-called *ottava rima* stanza. It is a much longer retelling and summary of the entire oration, juxtaposing the myth of the Argonauts with the deeds of Xavier and the Japanese martyrs. The Spanish stanzas may have come as a very welcome respite to the Zaragoza dignitaries or *virī principes* (as the listeners are repeatedly addressed: 1, 9, 13, 15, 23) who had had to sit through this very long, mostly Latin oration after the mass commemorating the recently canonised saint.

¹² On Vieira, see e.g. Frison (2010) 20. Jarque (1628) 23 misidentifies him with Francis(cus) Vieira (on whom see e.g. Frison (2010) 25). I am grateful to Takayoshi Kasaki for confirming that Sebastião is most likely the Vieira meant by Jarque.

¹³ See e.g. Watanabe (2020) 209–210.

3 *Novus Mercurius* (1701)

Let us now move from Spain to Poland, from the seventeenth to the 18th century. I would like to look at a short drama, or perhaps more accurately a composite multimedia show, performed in the Jesuit academy of Sandomierz at the start of the 18th century. This is the *Novus Mercurius* by Andrzej Temberski (1662–1726), another Jesuit rhetorician, a work that is preserved in a manuscript currently housed in the Jagellonian University Library in Krakow.¹⁴

The show is centred on an event that reputedly took place in southern Japan near Nagasaki shortly before the Christmas of 1589. A local farmer and his son went to a forest in search of firewood, and after they felled a tree and split it open they discovered a cross lodged inside. The miraculous discovery was reported to the Catholic ruler of the realm, the famous Arima Harunobu or Don Protasio (1567–1612). The wood with the cross inside was subsequently declared a relic, put in a glass display case in a local church and became an object of pilgrimage as well as the source of miraculous cures. It is not entirely clear what happened to this object after the collapse of the Japanese mission, but there is evidence that at least a fragment thereof eventually made its way to Europe via Macao in the late 1680s. There is also a detailed drawing of the miraculous wood in ARSI, and the cross-in-the-tree story, interpreted as a divine presage of the subsequent wave of persecution in Japan, was widely disseminated in Europe up to the 19th century. Father Renzo De Luca, the current Jesuit Provincial of Japan, has called for renewed attention to this now forgotten story in a recent scholarly article, on which I have also relied for the above information.¹⁵

Examination of the content of Temberski's *Novus Mercurius* makes it clear that it is a rendition of this once famous story. This version is also quite remarkable in being suffused with ostensibly pagan classical elements. The piece begins (113r–115r) and ends (120v) with Mercury, the messenger god, who announces the discovery of his staff or *caduceus*, which is surprisingly identified with the Christian cross in the Japanese forest (115r, 118v). Mercury appears on stage to speak at the beginning (113r) and end (118v) of the dramatic section, as well as in the very conclusion of the piece (120v), and otherwise constantly hovers in the background

¹⁴ On the manuscript and its author see Miazek-Męczyńska (2021) 258–259. I am grateful to Monika Miazek-Męczyńska for providing me with digital images of the Krakow manuscript (Jagiellonian University Library codex no. 2348.113r–120v: the folio nos. of this codex were changed in early 2023, and here I follow the new numbering). The exact date of the play's production is unknown, but the manuscript states it was performed by the rhetoric class in Sandomierz in 1701 (113r). Citation of *Novus Mercurius* here and elsewhere in the chapter is by folio number.

¹⁵ De Luca (2016).

like some Euripidean god. Other classical references pile on thick throughout the piece. Those concerned with pagan tree-worship seem to be structurally significant. So the priest of Dodona (113v) and the famous tree-lover Persian King Xerxes the Great (c. 518–465 BC) (114v) both appear on stage to expatiate on their objects of admiration. The overall idea guiding this piece appears to be that pagan tree worship sets the stage for, but is to be completely superseded by, the discovery of the sacred cross in the Japanese forest (so especially 119r), though again Mercury the non-Christian god somehow never fades away.

Temberski's *Novus Mercurius* as well as other pieces preserved in the Krakow manuscript have been described as mediocre dramas in secondary literature,¹⁶ but this assessment may be in need of significant revision after proper philological examination of the texts. This piece, as well as adjacent works (112v, 122r–128r) that I have been able to discern from a digital copy, are no ordinary Jesuit plays, but combine several genres to make up what seem to be a unique kind of multimedia presentation. As for *Novus Mercurius* specifically, the dramatic section in iambic trimetre (113r–118v) is very short, just over 300 lines. The usual length for annual Jesuit spectacle dramas was about 10 times that, and some went on for much longer.¹⁷ The insertion of a 10-line Polish song or *cantus* into the play, in which the local ruler is told of the imminent discovery of the cross in a dream (115v),¹⁸ is in itself unremarkable, except that this is all supposedly taking place in Japan. The very short dramatic section is followed by what are probably visual aids in the form of large symbolic drawings and possibly 3D objects brought on stage and accompanied by prose declamations (118v–120r). In the manuscript, these sections are labelled *symbola*, *hieroglyphica* and *emblemata*, and the Latin prose declamations therein are called *elogia*. The presentations are all thematically related to the preceding dramatic section and expand on the idea of some precious and powerful, small and hidden element which transforms the entire world once it is brought out into the open. The epilogic material concludes with a 10-line elegiac poem entitled *affectus* (120r–120v), the last two lines of which are spoken by Mercury. Among other things, it praises the cross as a sure refuge from the rod or *virga*, presumably a very potent and real object of terror to the Jesuit schoolchildren who were made to act out this piece. From what I have been able to see in the adjacent portions of the manuscript, Temberski experimented with similar combinations of drama with other genres, such as declamation, on other occasions (see esp. 112v, 126r–127v). Temberski's pieces, including *Novus Mercurius*, are thus not the usual Jesuit or

¹⁶ See especially Miazek-Męczyńska (2021) 259.

¹⁷ For the typical lengths of Jesuit Latin plays see e.g. Watanabe (2022) 21.

¹⁸ I am most grateful to Monika Miazek-Męczyńska and Maria Maciejewska for transcribing and translating this song.

Neo-Latin drama, but seem to be innovative multi-genre shows combining several different visual, performative and literary media for maximum impact.

4 Conclusion: Jesuit Humanism and Orientalism

This chapter examined two early modern Catholic works in which pagan Greco-Roman elements feature prominently. For those who study the rich Christian literary tradition from its beginnings, this embrace of apparently pagan elements, ranging from classical metre to mythology, may be nothing new. Starting at least from the Church Father Gregory of Nazianzus (329–390), Homer (fl. 8th century BC?) has coexisted with Jesus Christ and Virgil with the saints, despite misgivings voiced from such figures as Augustine (354–430) and Jerome (c. 342–420).¹⁹ It is definitely a sign of and testimony to the diversity of European culture throughout the ages that the Greco-Roman heritage, together with its pagan aspects, has been received with open arms long since Christianisation began, and Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) himself is known to have countered criticism against the Jesuit embrace of the classics with the biblical example of Moses, who used the spoils of Egypt to honour the Jewish God.²⁰

I do find in my presentations and conversations with the public that, again and again, even among Europeans, and even among Catholics, this relaxed attitude toward pagan classics displayed by the early modern church is met with a sense of surprise. Those of us in the know, so to speak, who have seen Jupiter and Minerva depicted nonchalantly together with archangels and saints in Jesuit literature or in wall paintings in the palaces of cardinals, may take all of this as business as usual, nothing out of the ordinary. But to many, even those with some knowledge of European and Christian history, this seems abnormal. I believe that we must continue to be sensitive to and address this popular sense of wonder, even though this kind of juxtaposition is actually extremely common.

And what about Japan, or East Asia in general? First, we must recognize that East Asia, like the Americas, was the New World, *Orbis Novus*, for early modern Europeans. As the Neo-Latin lexicographer Johann Rammingner points out, tomatoes, potatoes, chocolate, the Aztecs, as well as Japan and Korea, are all at the very edge of Latinity, the liminal region that entered the European cognitive universe for the very first time in the early modern period.²¹ Latinity, with its firm

¹⁹ On pagan classics and the Church Fathers, see e.g. Markus (1974).

²⁰ See O'Malley (1993) 254–257.

²¹ Rammingner (2014) 35.

roots in the ancient Mediterranean, was stretched to the limit to accommodate this new world, and early modern European users of Latin were generally clear about its foreignness or barbarity in the classical sense. Thus Bartolomeu Pereira (1588–1650), the Portuguese Jesuit who authored the Virgilian hagiography *Paciecidos*, very appropriately calls Japanese terms which he had to use in his epic *voces egregie barbaras*.²² But, looked at in another way, these works are all wonderful proof of the extreme and very self-conscious universality of early modern Catholicism as exemplified by the Jesuits who in their humanistic endeavours brought Greco-Roman mythology, Christianity, and the Far East all within their wide (and wild) embrace.

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