



Nel maggio del 2017 il nostro socio prof. Stefano Benedetti partecipò, in rappresentanza della Fondazione Prospero Intorcetta Cultura aperta, ad una conferenza internazionale tenutasi a Lisbona dal titolo:

**“The Jesuit Mission of China in the
Ajuda Library Collection”.**

Siamo, ora, lieti di pubblicare la relazione presentata dal prof. Benedetti apparsa recentemente anche sul sito www.academia.edu.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'of name' with a long, sweeping underline.

Ottobre 2019

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

A missão jesuíta da China nas coleções da Biblioteca da Ajuda
The Jesuit Mission of China in the Ajuda Library collections

15 de Maio 2017 | 16h00 | Biblioteca da Ajuda

STEFANO BENEDETTI

Prospero Intorcetta's *Compendiosa narratione* (1672) and the Jesuit correspondence from China*

The experience of Prospero Intorcetta, SJ (1625-96), in the biennium 1671-72, after having been appointed in Canton as *Sinicae missionis procurator* in 1666, then sent for a crucial mission to Rome, stands in the middle of his biography, just divided into a first decade in Asia, from 1659 to 1669, and the second part of his apostolate in China covering over twenty years, from his return in 1674 until his death in Hangzhou.¹ The specific case I am focusing on here can be of interest with regard to sources of the Jesuit correspondence from China, involving both the Jesuits engaged in Peking or Canton and the European readers variously interested in learning about the Chinese world and grasping at recent news on the progress of evangelization in China.²

I. In the first place, I would like to shortly regist here the items concerning Prospero Intorcetta in the Ajuda's collection *Jesuitas na Ásia*,³ mainly included in the two parts codex 49-IV-63, plus some in the codex 49-IV-65: an amount of 71 letters, whose most relevant nucleus consists of 60 letters between Intorcetta and the visitors of Chinese Vice-province, exchanged in about 4 years, from April 1686 to October 1690: mostly with Francesco Saverio Filippucci, SJ (1632-92),⁴ addressed by Intorcetta from Hangzhou in 49 letters,⁵

* This contribution has been kindly patronized by the "Fondazione Prospero Intorcetta" of Piazza Armerina, Sicily (<http://www.fondazioneintorcetta.info/>).

¹ On Intorcetta's biography see C. CAPIZZI, "Per una biografia scientifica di Prospero Intorcetta." In: *Scienziati gesuiti in Cina nel secolo XVII*. Atti del Convegno (Palermo, Piazza Armerina, Caltagirone, Mineo, 26-29 ottobre 1983), ed. by A. Luini. Roma: Istituto Italo Cinese, 1985, pp. 197-217; E. CORSI, "Intorcetta, Prospero (Yin Duoze, Juesi [Il Saggio])." In: *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. 62, 2004, pp. 526-529; on the second period, less documented, see D. E. MUNGELLO, *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994, pp. 42-66.

² The most detailed profile of Intorcetta's mission to Europe is now provided by N. GOLVERS, "Il ruolo dei periodici 'procuratores missionum' nella comunicazione tra Cina e Europa: il caso di Prospero Intorcetta (1670-72)." Conference held in Piazza Armerina 18 July 2016 (forthcoming).

³ Starting point of any research is F. da CUNHA LEÃO, *Jesuitas na Ásia: Catálogo e guia*. Macao-Lisbon: Instituto Cultural de Macau-Biblioteca da Ajuda, 1998, *ad ind.*

⁴ On him F. MASINI, "Filippucci, Alessandro [...]." In: *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. 47, 1997, pp. 789-791.

⁵ JA, cod. 49-IV-63, [1st part]: ff. 70v-71r (3 Apr. 1686), 75r (1 Jul. '86), 91r-v (18 Oct. '87), 146r-147r (21 Feb. '88), 152r-153r (17 Mar. '88), 153r-154v (20 Mar. '88), 156r-157v (27 Mar. '88), 160v-162r (8 Apr. '88), 164r-165v (13 Apr. '88), 171r-175r (10 May '88), 187r-v (26 Jun. '88), 191v-193v (1 Jul. '88), 194v-197v (3 Jul. '88), 203v-205v (28 Jul. '88), 223r-v (14 Sep. '88), 228r-231r (23 Sep. '88), 241v-243r (4 Nov. '88), 249r-250v (16

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while 11 letters were sent to Intorcetta by Filippucci from Canton;⁶ in other 5 letters (fall and winter 1687-88) Intorcetta wrote to Simão Martins, visitor at that time, right before Filippucci assumed the office in the following three years.⁷ Other few letters are sent to Intorcetta by various correspondents, such as Joseph Suarez from Peking (18 Apr. 1689), Tomás Pereira (25 Oct. '89), Jean de Fontaney from Nanking (24 Mar. '90), Jean-Dominique Gabiani (16 Aug. '90).⁸ In all the cases items from an official correspondence where Intorcetta was reporting to the visitors in his role as Vice-Provincial of China, as well as a rector of the Jesuit college and superior of the Jesuit residence in Hangzhou.⁹ Such epistolar *corpus*, bearing a special relevance because only witnessed by the Ajuda's transcriptions, translated in Portuguese, must be taken into account by those who aim at reconstructing more in detail terms and events of these late years in the life of Intorcetta.¹⁰

Belonging to a previous phase, related to his mission as procurator in the years 1670-72, some more items refer to proceedings of the "Canton conference", held after that 30 fathers had been detained there, as a result of the 1664-65 anti-Christian persecutions. These transcriptions from Latin seem textually less relevant as mostly being just copies of documents still preserved in the Propaganda Fide and Jesuit Roman Archives (ARSI).¹¹

Nov. '88), 255v-256r (21 Nov. '88), 261r-262v (2 Dec. '88), 263r-265r (28 Dec. '88), 265r-267r (31 Dec. '88); [2nd part]: 403r-v (16 Dec. '88), 430v-431v (8 Jan. '89), 435r-436v (16 Jan. '89), 450r-451v (14 Feb. '89), 460r-461v (2 Mar. '89), 463r-464v (9 Mar. '89), 485v-486v (30 Mar. '89), 493r-494v (12 Apr. '89), 509v-510v (20 May '89), 514v-515v (30 May '89), 524v-525v (29 Jun. '89), 531v (18 Aug. '89), 532r-534r (25 Aug. '89), 539v-540r (5 Oct. '89), 542v-543r (10 Oct. '89), 561r-v (17 Oct. '89), 563v-564r (19 Dec. '89). Cod. 49-IV-65: 290r (2 Jan. '90), 292v-294r (28 Jan. '90), 298v-299r (28 Mar. '90), 301r-302r (7 Apr. '90), 304v-305v (15 May '90), 308r-309r (20 Jun. '90), 312v-313r (14 Jul. '90), 319r-v (28 Aug. '90), 329v-330r (8 Oct. '90). Cod. 49-V-20: 562r-v (26 Jan. '90).

⁶ JA, cod. 49-IV-63 [2nd part]: 278v-280v (2 Feb. '88), 294r-295v (24 Apr. '88), 308v-311r (25 May '88), 312r-313r (6 Jun. '88), 317r-319r (11 Jun. '88), 335v-337v (22 Jun. '88), 343r-347r (9 Jul. '88), 358r-359r (4 Aug. '88), 362v-365v (4 Sep. '88), 377v-379v (23 Sep. '88), 387v-389v (22 Nov. '88).

⁷ JA, cod. 49-IV-63 [1st part]: 91v-92v (29 Dec. '87, from Nanking), 92v-93r (31 Oct. '87), 93r-94v (18 Oct. '87), 94v-96r (15 Dec. '87), 144r-146r (28 Jan. '88).

⁸ Respectively, cod. 49-IV-65: 58r-59r; cod. 49-IV-63: 275v-277v; cod. 49-IV-65: 186v-187r; 235r-v (it was a directive towards more fathers: «Ordem do P. V. Provinciae Gabiani aos nossos de Vice Provinciae P. P. Intorcetta [...] de defectione 5 P. P. Gallorum a Visitatore» [16 Aug. 1690], which was about the affair of the five French missionaries just arrived to China and about to be expelled; on the same issue a letter to Intorcetta was sent already by the "Superior" Father Le Royer on 10 May 1689, *ibid.*, f. 70r).

⁹ In addition to the reference as Vice-Provincial in some letters Intorcetta was entitled as "P. Reitor" (by de Fontaney) and "P. Superior" (by Pereira).

¹⁰ Compared to CAPIZZI, "Per una biografia scientifica" cit., no other sources are considered by the most recent biographical profile in L. M. PATERNICÒ, "Translating the Master. The Contribution of Prospero Intorcetta to the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*." In: *Monumenta Serica*, 65, 2017, pp. 87-121: 89-95.

¹¹ See at least a large sequence of items in JA, cod. 49-IV-62, starting with «Praxes quaedam discussae in pleno coetu 23. Patrum quorum nomina in fine describuntur, statutae et directae ad servandam inter nos in Sinica missione uniformitate» (dated 10 Dec. 1668, f. 239r and followings, likely transcription of ARSI, *Jap.-Sin.* 162, ff. 258r-263v); then various *quaestiones* on how applying fasting rules to Chinese converts, discussed

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But what I intend to focus on later is another letter, whose copy is also included in the Ajuda collection (JA, cod. 49-IV-62, ff. 526r-533v), which is not written, rather translated and edited by Intorcetta and can provide a significant example of epistolar circulation in its strict interrelation with chronicles and historical reports, belonging to historiography as a genre of writing never separated from a “militant” perspective on current times, typical of the Jesuits ‘who govern for the future, considering the past’ («governano per l’avenire, advertendo al passato»), to quote emblematic, seminal words of Juan de Polanco, recently recalled in Adriano Prosperi’s essay on Jesuits vocation in their own testimonies.¹²

II. Intorcetta’s *Compendiosa narratione dello stato della missione cinese, cominciando dall’anno 1581 fino al 1669*, is one among a vast range of Jesuit sources from China, chronicles and accounts related to a very particular phase, the late Sixties decade of the 17th-century, written right after the sudden persecution of Christian missionaries broken out in 1664, when any circulation of letters became more limited than before, but indispensable at the same time to update and communicate strategies for the Chinese mission at that dramatic turning point. As said, in October 1666 Intorcetta was appointed as a procurator of the Chinese Vice-Province Mission, so he left for Europe in summer ‘68 as envoy to the Roman Church, in order to present to the cardinals of Propaganda Fide inquiries and resolutions discussed in Canton, where most of the Christian fathers were in detention. As it is well known, only three of them were held prisoner in Peking, after that

in the Canton conference (262r-285r; see also the documents preserved in ARSI, e.g. *Jap.-Sin.* 150, ff. 70-79); followed by a long articulated «Responsio ad quesitum et obiectiones Patris Prosperi Intorcettae» on the same subjects subscribed by Jacques Le Favre (285v-331v). At ff. 331v-335v it follows: «Eminentissimis Dominis Cardinalibus Congregationis Sanctae, et Universalis Inquisitionis Romanae. Informationes quas offert Prosper Intorcetta Societatis Iesu Sacerdos, ac Procurator Missionis Sinensis. [...]», plus other records, ending with a «Transcriptum Litterarum, quas ex Sinis misit R. P. Dominicus Maria Sarpetrus ordin. Praed. ad S. Congregationem de Propaganda Fide» (a letter originally written by the Dominican Father Domenico Maria Sarpetri in Canton, 4 Aug. 1668, copied and translated on 21 Apr. 1672 by Intorcetta who attached it to the dossier presented to Propaganda Fide Congregation; cfr. Roma, Prop. Fide Archive, SOCG [1672], v. 432, ff. 457r-458r, autographic copy by Intorcetta himself): but all this section is a transcript of the *Informationes* preserved in Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, ms. 87 (A 76), ff. 128r-166r (see *infra*, note 30). Also the «Copia memorialis» in JA, cod. 49-V-16, ff. 415v-416r, is a partial copy of Intorcetta’s supplication to pope Clement X of 10 Dec. 1671, whose autograph is in the same Prop. Fide Archive, SOCG (1672), v. 432, ff. 19r-20r). All the mentioned items would require to be collated with the originals in ARSI and Propaganda Fide to confirm they have been copied from them.

¹² A. PROSPERI, *La vocazione. Storie di gesuiti tra Cinque e Seicento*. Torino: Einaudi, 2016, part I, cap. VI. On Jesuit historiography resources online can be consulted at the Brill website: *Jesuit Historiography Online* (JHO), <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/jesuit-historiography-online>. Especially on China, see there P. RULE, *The Historiography of the Jesuits in China* (last modified December 2016).

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Adam von Schall had died (15 August 1666): Gabriel de Magalhães, Ludovico Buglio and Ferdinand Verbiest, whose reports from Peking, with the intermediation of those in Canton, became primary sources to spread in Europe about the evolving situation at the imperial court after the succession to the throne of Kangxi emperor, and the following steps in his policy of new tolerance and rehabilitation of the Christians.¹³ Along those five years of the persecution (officially closed in March 1671, when the decree of releasing arrived in Canton) rumours and news from China were already circulating, so narrative records should have promptly been issued, as the anonymous *Innocentia victrix* published in Canton and authorized by the Vice-provincial Antonio de Gouvea in December 1670, whose writing is to be ascribed to Rougemont.¹⁴ An explicit purpose of this publication was indeed to report more reliable and clearer news about the events, as stated in the *Facultas* signed by Gouvea:

Opusculum Sinico-Latinum cui titulus est *Innocentia Victrix*, quod exaratum fuit ut constaret liquidius ac magis autentice veritas eorum quae de Sinica persecutione vulgata sunt per Europam variorum litteris atque sermonibus [...].¹⁵

Also Intorcetta's *Compendiosa narratione* aimed at making quickly better known such news, so in its final page he adduced a short reference to more detailed reports, updated to the latest circumstances occurred:

Ho già finito il mio brieve Compendio: chi però desidera le notizie più copiose e chiare, procuri, o dal torchio di Vienna l'opera in latino del Padre Gio: Domenico Gabiani, o dalla Francia quella

¹³ For a survey on the events see at least N. GOLVERS, *The Astronomia Europaea of Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J. (Dillingen, 1687). Text, Translation, Notes and Commentaries*. Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1993, pp. 19-21.

¹⁴ *Innocentia victrix sive Sententia Comitiorum Imperij Sinici pro innocentia christianae religionis lata juridice per Annum 1669 et Iussu R. P. Antonij de Gouvea Soc. is Iesu, ibidem V. Provincialis Sinico-Latine exposita*, Canton, 1671. The copy in Ajuda, JA, 49-V-16, f. 468r and followings, reproduces the editorial features but is lacking of all the texts in Chinese characters, unknown by the copyist. A modern anastatic edition: *Innocentia Victrix. Vitória da inocência ou Sentença das Assembleias do Império Chinês em prol da inocência da religião cristã*, introdução H. P. Araújo; leitura, fixação de texto e tradução do Latim A. A. Nascimento. Lisboa: Instituto Português do Oriente, Biblioteca Nacional, 1999. On the attribution to Rougemont, see N. GOLVERS, *Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J., (1623-1688) and the Chinese Heaven. The Composition of the Astronomical Corpus, its Diffusion and Reception in the European Republic of Letters*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, 2003, p. 28 note 39. On de Gouvea's works during this period see also ID., *Portuguese Books and Their Readers in the Jesuit Mission of China (17th-18th century)*. Lisboa: Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau, 2011, pp. 80-82.

¹⁵ *Innocentia Victrix* cit., c. 1v: 'This little Chinese-Latin book entitled "Victorious Innocence", that has been composed to let know more clearly and trustfully the truth about what on the Chinese persecution has been spread in Europe by letters and rumours of various people [...]'.

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scritta in Francese del P. Adriano Grelon, stampata forse in Parigi; o dalla Fiandra la *Relatione* stampata in lingua latina del P. Francesco Rougemont, e da questa conoscerà non solamente lo stato della persecuzione, ma anche i progressi della guerra de' Tartari.¹⁶

All these manuscript writings were brought to Europe in 1671 by Intorcetta, which let possible to have them published in the different contexts he himself mentioned here. Jean-Dominique Gabiani's *Incrementa Sinicae Ecclesiae*, composed in Canton (Feliciano Pacheco's *approbatio* is dated Canton, 8 December 1667) then published in Vienna 1673,¹⁷ claimed itself as an 'accurated and proved narrative', which lastly aimed at offering also a report of the current situation in the final chapter, closed by reporting the death of Michel Trigault on 1st October 1667. Adrien Greslon's *Histoire de la Chine sous la domination des Tartares* [...] *depuis l'année 1651, qu'ils ont achevé de le conquerir, jusqu'en 1669*, had been actually published sooner in Paris, 1671, and it also covered the years after the *Historia* by Martino Martini, like Gabiani's *Narratio*, but extended until December 1668, and closed by a short account of the four-days experiments of Verbiest (26-29 December, pp. 344-349) which raised hopes for an official revocation of the anti-Christian banishment:

Voilà des choses qui donnent de grandes esperances à tous les Religieux, qui ont estably des Eglises si florissantes dans la Chine, de se voir rappelez de l'exil: mais il faut prier Dieu qu'il acheve, ce qu'il a commencé par sa Providence, lors qu'il a fait connoistre à l'Empereur de la Chine, que les Predicateurs de l'Evangile ne luy doivent point estre suspects.¹⁸

Intorcetta was not precisely informed, when writing his *Compendiosa narratione*, about the Parisian edition of Greslon («stampata forse in Parigi»), while it might be noteworthy that his name appeared in the paratext of François de Rougemont's *Historia Tartaro-Sinica nova*,

¹⁶ *Compendiosa narratione dello stato della Missione Cinese, cominciando dall'anno 1581 fino al 1669*. Offerta in Roma. Alli Eminentissimi Signori Cardinali della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide. Dal P. PROSPERO INTORCETTA [...]. In Roma: per Francesco Tizzoni, 1672, p. 75: 'I have just finished my short digest, but those who want to learn more copious and clearer news should provide themselves either with the Latin work of Father Gio. Domenico Gabiani printed in Vienna, or the work from France written in French by Father Adrien Grelon, printed in Paris perhaps, or the *Relatio* from the Flanders written in Latin by Father François de Rougemont, through which they will learn not only the circumstances of persecution, but also the improvements in the Tartarian war'.

¹⁷ *Incrementa Sinicae Ecclesiae, a Tartaris oppugnatae, accurata et contestata narratione exhibita Patri Nostro in Christo P. Joanni Paulo Oliva* [...] per P. JOANNEM DOMINICUM GABIANI [...] e Sinarum Imperio Anno Salutis M.DC.LXVII. Viennae Austriae: typis Leopoldi Voigt, Universitatis Typographi, 1673.

¹⁸ *Histoire de la Chine sous la domination des Tartares. Ou' l'on verra les choses les plus remaquables qui sont arrivées dans ce grand Empire, depuis l'annéee [!] 1651 qu'ils ont achevé de le conquerir, jusqu'en 1669* par le Père ADRIEN GRESLON [...]. Paris: chez Jean Henault, 1671, p. 349.

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as stated in the dedicatory letter *Ad lectorem benevolum*, certainly written by the editor (as a following reference to the final *Errata corrigere* proves), which may deserve to quote here:

Amice lector, ut de Historiae huius veritate tanto sis securior, quo pluribus apud te testimoniis firmabitur, haec etiam te latere non volui, literas a P. Thoma van der Elst Bruxellensi, datas fuisse Ulyssipone 12 Februarii 1673 ex instructione P. Prosperi Intorcetta Siculi e Provincia Quantoniensi Sinarum anno 1669 missi Romam Procuratoris, cui se adiunxit P. Thomas, ut cum illo ad Sinas tendat, rem Christianam illic curaturus. Istita itaque literis et alio scripto manu ipsius P. Prosperi Procuratoris Sinensis Missionis iis incluso hoc denuo affirmatur, nimirum omnia in hac Historia contenta, de novo confirmata fuisse aliis testimoniis literarum scriptarum in Sinis mense Novembri 1670, a P. Adriano Grelon Gallo qui et Gallico idiomate iustum volumen edidit de hac eadem Historia et fidei Christianae inter Sinas adversitatibus ac aerumnis, et a P. Emanuele Georgio Lusitano, istius fidei illic propagatoribus, quas literas P. Prosper non ita diu ante acceperat, et quibus similiter suam Relationem compendiariam de statu rerum in Sina Eminentissimis Cardinalibus Sacrae Congregationis de propugnanda fide dedicatam, et anno superiori typis editam communierat. Edidit et P. Joannes Gabiani Pedemontanus easdem res Sinicas maiori volumine et Latino sermone.¹⁹

The strictly connected web of historiographical records produced in those years is recalled here, as well as Intorcetta's influential example in adding some more witnesses basically consisting of newly received letters, as that mentioned here of November 1670, already included by himself in his «relatio compendiaria». An evident link between the edition of de Rougemont's *Historia* and Intorcetta's *Compendiosa narratio* can be found in the pages just preceding the *Historia*, that is the «NOMINA sacerdotum triginta, qui Sinicae persecutionis tempore stiterunt sese Iudicibus in Curia Pekinensi»: where the twenty-five Jesuits were listed,

¹⁹ *Historia Tartaro-Sinica nova* auctore P. FRANCISCO DE ROUGEMONT [...]. Lovanii: typis Martini Hullegaerde, 1673, p. *5r-v ('Dear reader, in order to make you surer about the truth of this history as you will find proved by more testimonies, I also want you to know that letters by Father P. Thomas van der Elst from Bruxelles have been given in Lisbon on 12 Febr. 1673 according to an instruction of the Sicilian Father Prospero Intorcetta, sent as procurator from the Cantonese province of China in 1669, joined by Thomas who is heading to China with him to look after the Christian mission over there. So in these letters and other writings handwritten by the Chinese mission procurator Father Intorcetta included there it is claimed that all the contents in this History have been newly confirmed with other evidences by a letter written in China in November 1670, by the French Father Adrien Greslon who issued a fair volume in French on the same history and on adversities and sufferings of Christian faith in China, and by the Portuguese Father Emanuel Jorge, both involved there in propagating [Christianism]. Those letters were received by Father Prospero not so long before, and together with them he had also provided his own compendious report on the Chinese situation addressing the very distinguished cardinals of the Sacred Propaganda Fide Congregation, published just last year. Also Father Jean Gabiani from Piedmont issued in his larger volume in Latin the same Chinese events.'). About circumstances of this edition see N. GOLVERS, "The earliest examples of Chinese characters printed in the Southern Low Countries (Leuven, 1672; Antwerp, 1683)." In: *De Gulden Passer*, 94, 2, 2016, pp. 319-333.

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ending with the name of Intorcetta «qui deinde a Sociis in exilio Quantoniensi detentis Procurator Romam missus est», then adding the four Dominicans and the one only Franciscan. This list of the thirty fathers persecuted at the Peking court was put in front here by the editor, who should have taken it and translated from the «Catalogo dei 30 Sacerdoti, che nella Corte di Pekino furono presentati a Giudici in questa Persecutione», as proved by the identical formulation, listing all the same fathers in a slightly different order but still closing the Jesuits' catalogue with the name of Intorcetta «dal luogo dell'esilio mandato procuratore a Roma».²⁰

Intorcetta's *Compendiosa narracione* was the first account indeed to be diffused in Europe informing about the latest events occurred after those 5 years of persecution and detention. The composition fully belongs to tradition of official *relationes* to the Roman Church "de statu et qualitate missionis Sinicae", as that presented almost two decades earlier, in December 1654, by Martino Martini, thereafter printed in Köln, 1655.²¹ Compared to it, Intorcetta, although reporting statistical information (names and nationalities of the fathers involved, number of Christian converts and main characters of their belief, etc.),²² appears rather narrative than merely informative in framing the whole account of the *Stato di Persecutione et Restauratione*, as the contents are epitomized by heading titles on odd pages. So it does not surprise that the most original section is related to that "restoration", epically anticipated by a series of omens and prodigious events, which are recounted in a larger section entitled «Catalogo de' Prodigii succeduti nella Cina sotto l'Imperio de' Tartari, così ne Preludii, come nel decorso di quest ultima Persecutione».²³

²⁰ INTORCETTA, *Compendiosa narracione* cit., pp. 35-36. His list became referential, see for example L. PFISTER, *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine, 1552-1773*, Tome I. XVIIe & XVIIIe siècles. Chang-Hai: Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique, 1932, pp. 175-176 note 2.

²¹ *Brevis relatio de numero, et qualitate Christianorum apud Sinas*, auctore P. MARTINO MARTINIO Tridentino Viceprovinciae Sinensis Procuratore e Societate Iesu. Coloniae: apud Ioannem Buseum, 1655 (modern edition in MARTINO MARTINI, *Opera omnia*. Vol. 2: *Opere minori*, dir. F. De Marchi, cur. G. Bertuccioli. Trento: Università degli studi di Trento, 1998, pp. 31-143).

²² Martini's first four parts (I. *Nomina ac nationes Patrum e Societate Iesu, qui Sinis divinam legem praedicatorunt*. II. *Christianorum in Sinis numerus*. III. *Qui qualesque Sinae fidem Christi susceperint, proponitur*. IV. *Christianorum Sinensium circa res divinas diligentia, ac in suscepta fide constantia explicatur*) correspond with the contents of Intorcetta's *Compendiosa narracione*, pp. 7-37.

²³ INTORCETTA, *Compendiosa narracione*, pp. 38-76 ('Catalogue of the Prodigies happened in China under the Tartarian Empire, from the beginning up to the ending of this latest Persecution'): the narrative here is sequenced in a series of 31 miraculous events, occurred within about a decade between 9 August 1658, increasingly by the persecution years up to the 'fatal and dreadful' year 1668 («L'anno 1668 che certamente fu fatale e spaventoso nella Cina», *ibid.*, p. 59), and 26 August 1668, the day when both a tower and the *Lugou* bridge near Peking's walls, already collapsed on 25 July, eventually ruined (*ibid.*, pp. 65-66, 72-73). About the "ominous" incscription on the stone found amid the ruins of the bridge see now the comparative investigation

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Intorcetta should have mainly worked on composing its text probably in the weeks when he was in Lisbon, after his arrival from China by the end of 1670, before setting out to Rome around the Easter days, right when his report was submitted to Propaganda Fide Congregation on 18 April 1671.²⁴ Less than one year later two editions of the *Compendiosa narratio* were issued: the Italian version in Rome, by the printing press of Francesco Tizzoni (post 30 January 1672);²⁵ the Latin text in Regensburg, as an appendix of the *Historica narratio de ortu et progressu fidei orthodoxae in regno Chinensi* by Adam Schall von Bell,²⁶ in its second edition (*editio altera*), enlarged with the addition from the more recent Intorcetta's account²⁷ and supposedly translated by the Jesuit Johann (Giovanni) Foresi (Lugano, 1624-Leuven, 1682), already curator of the first edition of Schall's history.²⁸

(between Intorcetta and Rougemont's *Historia*, pp. 322-323) of GOLVERS, "The earliest examples" cit., with special implications regarding the first movable types of Chinese characters used in Europe.

²⁴ The date 14 April which appears in the Latin version printed in Regensburg was seemingly caused by a wrong transcription from the manuscript source it was taken on, which is the official report preserved in Rome, Propaganda Fide Archive, SOCG (Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali), vol. 432 (1672), ff. 461r-468v (at f. 467v the number 8 is written in a typical reclined form, possibly misread as 4).

²⁵ Francesco Tizzoni's typographic workshop in Rome was rather active along two decades (1671-1688), producing a range of various titles, basically secular works (theatrical, musical, rethoric and academic writings) and mainly serving booksellers in Piazza Madama or at the Collegium Romanum.

²⁶ On the manuscript tradition of Schall's history see a survey by GOLVERS, *The Astronomia Europaea of Ferdinand Verbiest* cit., p. 160. A copy of the earliest 1658 version, brought to Europe by Martino Martini, is preserved in Ajuda, JA, 49-V-14, ff. 376-436. Among other late reports preserved in Ajuda, JA, see also the *Breve Relação em que se dá huma compendiosa noticia de como foy perseguida a Ley de Deos na China e seos Pregadores desterrados nestes proximos anos de 1664 e 1665, feita por ordem do R. p. Luis da Gama [...]. Em Cantam, Provincia da China e lugar do desterro de 1667 (cod. 49-V-15, f. 96r and ff.)*.

²⁷ Shortly announced in the main frontispiece as enlarged (*aucta*) by adding *Compendiosa Narratio de Statu Missionis Chinensis* and *Prodigiis, quæ in ultima Persecutione contigerunt*, it does not mention Intorcetta's name. An internal frontispiece (p. 351) reproduces in Latin the exact title of the Italian edition: *Compendiosa narratio de statu Missionis Chinensis. Ab anno 1581 usque ad annum 1669, oblata Eminentissimi DD. Cardinalibus Sacrae Congregationis de propaganda Fide a R.P. PROSPERO INTORCETTA [...]. Anno 1671. 14 Aprilis Romae* (the texts of *Narratio* and *Prodigia* cover respectively pp. 353-369 and 370-393).

²⁸ Both the *princeps* (*Historica Narratio, de initio et progressu Missionis Societatis Jesu apud Chineses, ac praesertim in Regia Pequinensi*, ex litteris R.P. JOANNI ADAMI SCHALL [...] collecta, Viennae Austriae: Typis Matthaei Cosmerovii, 1665) and the *editio altera et aucta* (*Historica relatio de ortu et progressu fidei orthodoxae in Regno Chinensi per Missionarios Societatis Jesu ab Anno 1581 usque ad Annum 1669*, novissime collecta ex Literis eorundem Patrum Societatis Jesu praecipue R.P. JOANNIS ADAMI SCHALL [...]. Ratisbonae: Typis Augusti Hanckwitz, 1672) are attributed to Foresi as a curator, whose name does not appear though (the dedicatory to emperor Leopold in the '65 edition is collectively subscribed by *Missio Chinensis Soc. Jesu*, p. 4v of the preface): cfr. J. N. STÖGER, *Scriptores Provinciae Austriacae Societatis Jesu*. Viennae: Typis Congregationis Mechitharisticae, 1855, tome I, p. 84 (only for the '65 edition); C. SOMMERVOGEL, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus [...]. Louvain: Éditions de la bibliothèque S. J., Collège philosophique et théologique, 1960, tome III, col. 877, nr. 3; H. BOSMANS, "La correspondance inédite du P. Jean de Haynin d'Ath." In: *Analectes pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique de la Belgique*, s. XIII, t. IV, 1908, pp. 197-224: footnotes at pp. 202-203. Born in Lugano,*

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For the main part of his *Narratione*, the very report supposed to be delivered in Rome, Italian and Latin versions are closely similar, even though a detailed textual comparison can prove that the Latin version was made following the manuscript text in Propaganda Fide Archive, slightly different from the text published in Rome.²⁹ Intorcetta used to address the cardinals in Italian indeed, as in the subsequent supplication to pope Clement X (10 December 1671) and in a late *Informazione* presented to Propaganda Fide Congregation on 24 March 1672.³⁰

So we can assume that the first composition of his *Compendiosa narratione* was in Italian, whereas the Latin translation was to some extent independent from the text printed in Rome. Among other slight discrepancies, in the Latin text the number of the baptized Chinese amounts to 308,780, while in the printed edition 263,780 baptized are mentioned, although a marginal note specifies that the latest amount was considerably increased according to most recent updates.³¹

Foresi should have native mastery of Italian, as he translated other works, such as Paolo Segneri's *Il divoto di Maria Vergine*; but a supplementary investigation is required here on the primary source of the attribution.

²⁹ Most of the textual variants between the Propaganda Fide manuscript [=P] and the printed Italian edition [=T] concern graphic-phonetic or morphologic forms, clearly depending on the Italian textual revision by Tizzoni's workshop in order to adjust the language from some Sicilian vernacular forms to the standard Tuscan rules (e.g.: *insiementemente* [P, f. 462r] > *insieme* [T, p. 5]; *accio li tenghiamo* [P, *ibid.*] > *affine di tenerli* [T, p. 6]; *se ci paresse* [P, 463v] > *se gli paresse* [T, p. 11]; etc.). I intend to present more in detail the results of such collation in a further contribution.

³⁰ On the supplication see *supra*, note 11. The *Informazione* is documented by the original autograph in Prop. Fide Archive, *Acta. Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Indie Orientali Cina*, 1623-1684, ff. 573r-583v, and by a copy preserved in Roma, Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele II", Ges. 1257 (3386), int. 14, ff. 103r-113v. Another related document is written in Latin instead, that is the *Informationes* presented to the *Eminentissimis Dominis Cardinalibus Congregationis Sanctae et Universalis Inquisitionis Romanae*, in a manuscript preserved in Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, ms. 87 (A 76), ff. 128r-166r (actually consisting of 21 folios): by this "information" to the Holy Office of Inquisition Congregation, dated 21 April 1672, Intorcetta reported the *Praxes* approved in Canton, 26 January 1668 (*ibid.*, ff. 150r-159v), plus the *Testimonium in favorem Patrum Societatis Iesu in Sinis degentium* by the Dominican father Domenico Maria Sarpetri commending Intorcetta, who had already transcribed and alleged that to Propaganda Fide (Roma, Prop. Fide Arch., SOCG, 432 [1672], ff. 450r-459r). On the official records of Intorcetta's mission see F. BONTINCK, *La lutte autour de la liturgie chinoise aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*. Louvain-Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1962, pp. 127-144.

³¹ Cf. *Compendiosa narratio* cit. [=L], p. 355 and *Compendiosa narratione* cit. [=T], p. 8. Both the quantities seem overestimated (cf. *Handbook of Christianity in China*. I, 635-1800, ed. by N. Standaert. Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2001, p. 381 ff.), and the identical figure in the hundreds amount makes suspect a wrong transcription in the diverging thousands. Or in the printed edition maybe Intorcetta intended to be more cautious about actual numbers, lowering the general amount but opening to a possible increasing, as to give the readers a sense of 'instant' information, like in the marginal printed note: «l'ultime nuove avisano che il numero de' Christiani sii notabilmente cresciuto» ('the latest news inform that the number of Christians is considerably increased').

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More obviously, a further paragraph in the Latin final part, where the speaker greets and addresses the cardinals, is absent from the Italian printed version, which probably cut it in order to adjust the text for readers rather than auditors:

Atque his est, Eminentissimi Domini, ab integro prope seculo Chinensis Ecclesiae status, descriptus a me hoc brevi Compendio, quod hodie Eminentiarum Vestrarum pedibus humilissime substerno, nec aliud laboribus meis praemium expeto, quam ut ab Eisdem clementissime acceptetur, id quod pro lucro simul et solatio reputabo.³²

The following *Catalogus 30 Sacerdotum qui in hac persecutione traditi sunt Iudicibus in Aula Pequini* [L, pp. 368-369] does not match in its order with the list of Jesuit fathers of the Italian edition [T, pp. 35-37], while is perfectly overlapping with the manuscript list [P, ff. 467v-468v], which is another detail can furtherly prove that the Latin translator based on the official record of Propaganda Fide. Nevertheless he included also, after *Narratio* and *Catalogus* of the fathers, the consistent section on the prodigies (*Catalogus Prodigiorum apud Sinas, regnantibus Tartaris*, [L, pp. 370-393]), separated from the official report, although an abridged version, under the heading *Prodigii successi nella Gran China dall'anno 1658 sino all'anno 1668*, was included in the same Propaganda Fide volume [P, ff. 441r-442v, 447r-448v]; but the translator here is closely following the respective part in the Roman edition [T, pp. 38-76], probably looking at Intorcetta's published text (or any other manuscript, no longer extant, bearing that text) as more reliable and effectual in terms of narrative.³³

More generally, the Italian edition was seemingly intended for a larger audience of readers, even not so acquainted with Latin but eager to know latest events from the Chinese world in those years. At any rate the text Intorcetta worked on and regarded as his definitive report was the published one, available for a wider circulation. Thus we can read some references to the Italian *libellus* in two later letters (1674-75) by Athanasius Kircher to Lucas Schröckius. Besides, returning to China Intorcetta brought with himself some copies of the Italian edition to be offered to his fellow brothers in Peking (copies with

³² L, p. 367; absent from the printed edition [T, p. 34], the Italian passage can be read in the Prop. Fide manuscript [P, f. 467v]: «Quest'è, Emin(entissimi)mi Sig(no)ri, della Chiesa Chinese il stato quasi d'un secolo, delineato in questo breve compendio, ch'io hoggi humilmente offerisco a' piedi dell'E(ccellenzie) V(ostre) e priego ad accettarlo, né altro premio richiedo a' miei travagli che la sola benignissima loro accetatione, quale servirà a me di pregio e di ristoro» ('Most distinguished men, the situation of the Chinese Church across a century, described in this short survey, that today I am humbly offering to the feet of Your Excellence, begging to accept it, since I am not asking for my sufferings more than your only most benevolent acceptance, which will bring me honour and consolation').

³³ For example, from this section of the *Compendiosa narratione* pages has been selected in the anthology *Viaggiatori del Seicento*, ed. by M. GUGLIELMINETTI. Torino: UTET, pp. 557-563.

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his dedication notes, one destined to Ferdinand Verbiest, are still preserved in the Peitang Library of Beijing).³⁴

III. But what makes more conspicuous the difference between the Latin and the Italian version may be of some interest here, because it consists of the addition to the Italian printed text of “letters arrived from Beijing imperial court bringing very happy news”, as they were announced in the frontispiece («con l’aggiunta [...] delle Lettere venute dalla Corte di Pekino con felicissime nuove»). Two letters were alleged here: the first one, more famous, was also mentioned along the *Narratio*,³⁵ nevertheless it did not appear as an enclosed document there, what, if available, would be quite strange, considering that the Regensburg edition was intended to update Shall’s *Historica relatio* maximizing the positive conclusion of the long persecution suffered by the German father till his death in 1666. Such evidence is conclusively proving that the Latin text taken into the German edition could not be drawn from the text of *Compendiosa narratione* as printed, rather from a previous text not including yet the letters, which Intorcetta should have seen later in Rome, then translated from Portuguese into Italian.³⁶

The first, longer letter is the well-known account («breve relatione», as properly defined here by Intorcetta) written by Gabriel de Magalhães, and jointly subscribed by Ferdinand Verbiest and Ludovico Buglio, on January the 2nd, 1669. But a further document was added then, a letter sent to Intorcetta by the Austrian Father Christian Herdtrich,

³⁴ *Fasciculus epistolarum* Adm. R.P. ATHANASII KIRCHERI Soc. Jesu [...]. Augusta Vindelicorum: Typis Utschneiderianis, 1684, p. 54 (letter of 29 Dec. 1674: «[...] intelliges ex libello, quem P. Prosper Intorcetta, Chinae Procurator, hic Romae edidit, de ultimo Statu Sinarum», ‘you will understand from the small book that father Prosper Intorcetta, procurator of China, published here in Rome, on the latest situation in China’) and p. 63 (7 Dec. 1675: «Haurei ancor gionta la *Relatione della China* vulgata dal P. Intorcetta [...]», ‘I would add also the *Report on China* divulged by father Intorcetta’). For the copies brought to Peking see: MISSION CATHOLIQUE DES LAZARISTES À PÉKIN, *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Pé-t’ang*. Pékin: Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1949, col. 969, nnr. 3315-3319.

³⁵ «Post meum e China discessum Tres Societatis Patres, Gabriel Magaglianes, Ludovicus Buglio et Ferdinandus Verbiest, qui iam primo in Aula substiterant, miserunt Relationem scriptam Pequini, sub die 2 Januarii 1669, qua certiores nos reddunt se pariter omnes restitutos in gratiam Tartari Imperatoris *Cám-hì* [...]» [L, p. 365], as drawn from the Italian text: «Doppo la mia partenza dalla China, i tre Padri della Compagnia Gabriele di Magaglianes, Ludovico Buglio, e Ferdinando Verbist, che erano già prima rimasti nella Corte, mandarono una relatione scritta in Pekino alli 2 di Gennaro 1669, con la quale ci danno nuova d’essere stati tutti tre restituiti alla gratia dell’Imperatore *Càm-hì* Tartaro [...]» [P, f. 466v]; here the Latin text is evidently drawn from the manuscript, since the printed text here adds a reference to the following part («[...] mandarono una breve Relatione [...] **che l’aggiungo nel fine, tradotta dal Portoghese nel nostro Italiano**, con la quale ci danno avviso, come già furono tutti tre restituite alla gratia dell’Imperatore *Cam-hi* Tartaro [...]» [T, p. 31, emphasis is mine]).

³⁶ At least before 30 January 1672 of General Gian Paolo Oliva’s *placet* for the *imprimatur*.

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mailed from Canton on 23 November 1670, dealing with news from Peking about the renowned Chinese embassy of Manuel de Saldanha, who had visited the Emperor between 30 June and 21 August 1670, welcomed by the three Jesuits assisting him, fallen sick at the Court, and acting as interpreters: all facts reported to Herdtrich by another letter mentioned here, sent by Buglio on 11 August and arrived in Canton on 28 October.³⁷

The combination of the diplomatic report with these newly added letters links the *Compendiosa narratione* up with the earliest well established Jesuits' *Litterae Annuae* tradition, hence characterizing Intorcetta's compilation as that sort of "instant-book" bringing fresh news from China, where both historical account and epistolar reference to recent events serve to offer a more vivid presentation of the Chinese missionary adventure to an extended audience of readers, both "curious" and interested to those "edifying" narrative (to recall terms of the afterwards fortunate French editorial format), far beyond the official occasion of reporting to the cardinals. The very final page, after Herdtrich's letter, emphasizes the "open" conclusion raising up further 'best wishes' («*ottime speranze* »):

Fin qui la lettera del P. Christiano Herdtrich. Queste ottime speranze della restituzione de' Padri Missionari cinesi alle loro pristina Chiese vengono pure confermate dalle lettere del P. Filippo Couplet, e P. Francesco Rougemont che dimorano in Cantone, luogo assegnatoci per esilio, e dicono così: l'ultime lettere venuteci da Pekino danno avviso de' molti favori del Re verso i nostri Padri che stanno in Corte, li quali, doppo la partenza del Signor Ambasciatore da Pekino, sono risoluti di presentare al Re una, o più suppliche per la nostra libertà, e ritorno all'antiche Chiese.³⁸

³⁷ Here is the incipit: «Ci è arrivata dalla Corte di Pechino una Lettera del P. Ludovico Buglio, nella quale brevemente racconta tutte le cose succedute nel ricevimento ch'ebbe l'Ambasciatore del Serenissimo Re di Portugallo dall'Imperadore della Cina [...] lettera, che fu scritta nella Corte alli 11 d'Agosto, ed a noi capitò in questo luogo d'esilio alli 28 di Ottobre» (*Compendiosa narratione* cit., pp. 115-116: 'A letter from Father Ludovico Buglio at Peking Court has just arrived, shortly reporting all the happenings occurred when the Emperor of China welcomed the Ambassador of Most serene King of Portugal [...] a letter, written at the Court on 11 August then arrived here in our place of exile on 28 October'). On Saldanha's embassy see P. PELLIOT, "L'ambassade de Manoel de Saldanha à Pékin." In: *T'oung Pao*, XXVII, 1930, pp. 421-424; FU Lo-Shu, "The Two Portuguese Embassies to China during the K'ang-hsi Period." *ibid.*, XLIII, 1955, pp. 75-94; J. E. WILLS jr, *Embassies and Illusions: Dutch and Portuguese Envoys to K'ang-hsi, 1666-1687*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1984, *passim*; ID., "From Olivença to Peking: Manoel de Saldanha and the Vagaries of Restoration Fortune." In: *From Biography to History: Essays in the History of Portuguese Asian (1500-1800)*, ed. by K. McPherson, S. Subrahmanyam. New Dehli: Transbooks, 2005, pp. 113-117.

³⁸ *Compendiosa narratione* cit., pp. 125-126 ('Up to here Father Christian Herdtrich's letter. Such best wishes on the return of the fathers missionaries in China to their former churches are also corroborated by letters from Philippe Couplet and François de Rougemont dwelling in Canton, our place of banishment, reporting this: the latest letters from Beijing have brought news about the favour by the Emperor to the fathers living at the Court who, after ambassador Saldanha's departure, are about to petition for us to be freed and sent back to our former churches').

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The circulation of news that such particular circumstances of the “Cantonese banishment” had determined could also show how efficient and sophisticated the Jesuit system of correspondence was, sorting out information between Peking and Europe through Canton and Macao.³⁹ Opening his letters on Saldanha’s embassy, Herdricht could “intercept” the procurator on his way to Rome, predicting that at the moment of receiving it he should ‘probably’ be in Portugal, able to cheer up with fathers and noblemen in Lisbon for the report («e come è probabile che questa mia lettera ritrovi la R.V. in Portugallo, acciò possa V.R. havere con che possa ivi rallegrarsi insieme coi nostri Padri e Signori Portughesi»)⁴⁰. But Intorcetta’s journey should have taken longer time,⁴¹ so he probably could read these letters only when in Rome, thereafter deciding to enclose them at the end of his already composed *Narratione*.

Bringing back attention to the previous letter, that consisted in fact of a long report, a kind of *relatio* itself, whose actual writer Gabriel de Magalhães recounted all the happening of those spectacular tests held in the last days of December ‘69, which attracted sympathy from the Emperor and helped restore the primacy of the European calendar.⁴² A

³⁹ About Macao as a «crucial link» for communications between China and Europe, see N. GOLVERS, “Ferdinand Verbiest’s Letter of 1678 to King Afonso VI of Portugal and the Possible Role of Tomás Pereira in its Conception.” In: *In the Light and Shadow of an Emperor: Tomás Pereira, SJ (1645-1708), the Kangxi Emperor and the Jesuit Mission in China*, ed. by A. K. Wardega and A. Vasconcelos de Saldanha. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2012, pp. 404-421: 404, 412; ID., “The Canton-Macau Area as a ‘lieu de savoir’: the Western Missionaries’ Detention in the Canton Jesuit Residence (1665-1671) and their Written and Editorial Output.” In: *Macau, Past and Present*. Lisboa: Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau, 2015, pp. 215-234.

⁴⁰ *Compendiosa narratione* cit., pp. 115-116.

⁴¹ From a reference in his autobiographic survey, preserved in ARSI, ms. *Sic.* 189, f. 327r, we know that Intorcetta’s route from Goa (January 1669) to Lisbon (by the end of 1670) passed through Brasil: «[...] satis commode navigavit Romam usque, et hinc in Siciliam, et inde iterum Romam. Aliquid serici, et duos circiter libras odoris sinici ei dono datos a Patre Provinciali Sinarum, illud in Brasilia, hos Genuae reliquit, ut divenderentur» ([...] quite comfortably he sailed to Rome, then to Sicily and to Rome again. Some silk and about two pounds of Chinese spices received as a gift from the Father of Chinese Province, he left to sell the former in Brasil, the latter in Genua’). The note lies still unpublished in a single autograph folio which Intorcetta was probably requested to provide for internal information of the Jesuit Archive, before leaving Rome at the end of June 1672. So it was readily used by Nathaniel Southwell in updating the *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Societatis Iesu*, opus inchoatum a R.P. PETRO RIBADENEIRA [...], recognitum et productum ad annum Iubilaei M. DC. LXXV. a NATHANAELE SOTUELLO. Romae: ex Typographia Jacobi Antonij de Lazzaris Varesij, 1676, pp. 714-715, where this profile was literally assumed (no other events listing after 1672), later becoming the essential source of Intorcetta’s biographical tradition (see CAPIZZI, “Per una biografia scientifica” cit., p. 197; S. BENEDETTI, “Confucio latino dai manoscritti alla stampa. Appunti sulle carte autografe intorcettiane.” In: *Un gesuita siciliano nella Cina del XVII secolo: Prospero Intorcetta, missionario e letterato*. Proceedings of the memorial day held in Piazza Armerina, 23 March 2016 [forthcoming]).

⁴² Already published in *Correspondance de Ferdinand Verbiest de la Compagnie de Jésus (1623-1688)*, directeur de l’Observatoire de Pékin, par H. Jossons et L. Willaert. Bruxelles: Palais des académies, 1938, pp. 130-

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letter which may be taken as a fortunate example of how letters could become a vehicle of information addressing a collective recipient (*ad socios*),⁴³ reporting fresh news already conceived as a narrative, so available to be collected within larger and more structured historiographical compilations.⁴⁴ Once incorporated, the same letters were more able to reach a larger audience, thanks to the printed medium, at such an extent that they could even replace the original texts in a reception which eventually might serve their authors themselves.

Noël Golvers has followed up the route of this letter, that was quoted by Ferdinand Verbiest, one of the three subscribers, in the incipit of his *Astronomia Europaea's* preface, introduced as a forerunning account of the *totius rei seriem* he intended to offer in the treatise:

Quamvis P. Gabriel de Magalianes olim scripserit initium nostrae apud Sinas restitutae Astronomiae, missa scilicet ad socios Cantone in exilio detentos epistola, quam postea P. Prosper Intorcetta Procurator Romam missus in idioma Italicum ex Lusitano vertit, et licet postea in aliis quoque epistolis in Europam missis ea de re mentio quaedam facta sit, cum tamen totius rei seriem, eo ordine quo contigit, nullus unquam ante oculos integram posuerit [...].⁴⁵

Verbiest hinted at that subsequent, correlated circulation, which is proved indeed by the extant documents. The autograph of de Magalhães' letter was received in Macao, where was copied on 8 March, as authenticated by father Luís da Gama, Visitor of the Province

153; as authored by de Magalhães, the letter has not been included in N. GOLVERS, *Letters of a Peking Jesuit. The Correspondence of Ferdinand Verbiest, SJ (1623-1688). Revised and Expanded*. Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Instituut KU Leuven, 2017.

⁴³ Here is the heading: «Aos P(adr)es Visitador, Provincial e V(ice) Provincial de Japão e China. Aos P(adr)es de Macão e de Cantão. A toda Comp(anhi)a de Jesus»; in Intorcetta's translation the addressees are reduced just to the fathers in Canton: «a' Padri della medesima Compagnia cacciati in esilio per la Santa Fede nella Provincia di Cantone la più rimota dalla Corte», perhaps in order to better fit the testimony with the main context of his *Narratione*.

⁴⁴ A similar formula had been adopted by the curator of Adam von Schall's *Historica narratio* (then, in the '72 edition, *Historica relatio*), who highlighted already in the frontespiece «ex Litteris R.P. Joannis Adami Schall [...] collecta» ('collected ... from the letters', that is to say 'based on').

⁴⁵ *Praefatio*, in GOLVERS, *Ferdinand Verbiest* cit., p. 344; translated at pp. 54-55: 'Although Father Gabriel de Magalhães once described the beginning of our astronomy's rehabilitation in China in a letter to our fellow fathers who were [detained] in banishment in Canton (a letter that was afterwards translated from Portuguese into Italian by Father Prospero Intorcetta, who was sent to Roma as procurator), and although subsequently other letters to Europe also mentioned this case in one way or another, no one has ever laid bare the developmental states of this affair in their totality and in the sequence in which they occurred'. All the sources I am recalling here had already been found out and discussed *ibid.*, pp. 152-154 notes 2-3.

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(«tirado fielmente da original», ‘drawn faithfully from the original’).⁴⁶ This copy, then forwarded to the Collegium Romanum, now preserved in ARSI,⁴⁷ is the closest to the autograph and was consulted by Intorcetta in Rome, maybe in the autumn-winter 1671, hence translated soon into Italian and incorporated into his *Compendiosa narratio*. From the original in the Jesuit College of Macao about a century later was drawn the transcript in Ajuda, while other handwritten translations of the letter have been found by Golvers in Paris and Brussels, proving the wide circulation of this text.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, when Verbiest quoted the letter he himself co-subscribed, opening the preface to his *Astronomia Europaea* from that text as the very starting point of the Astronomical Bureau restoration, he mentioned it by reading in Intorcetta’s translation from Portuguese, as stated in the above quoted passage. Neither de Magalhães’ autograph, soon sent from Peking to Macao, nor the faithful copy sent to Rome, were available on his table. On the contrary, he could read that text alleged in the *Compendiosa narratio*, as we still have one of the copies of the Italian edition brought from Europe to China in 1674 by Intorcetta himself bearing a dedication note to Verbiest. And even later accounts, as the well-known manuscript *Collectanea Historiae Sinensis*, compiled some decades later by Thomas Ignatius Dunyn-Szpot, SJ (1644-1713), still recounted that glorious adventure being based on Intorcetta, tracking it back again from Peking to Canton, from Portuguese to Italian: «Ad hanc partem conscribendam utemur Epistola nostrorum Patrum Pechinensium data ad Socios Exules Cantonem et Italico idiomate a P. Prospero Intorcetta in lucem edita».⁴⁹

ABSTRACT

The Sicilian Jesuit Prospero Intorcetta (1625-1696), missionary in China for over thirty years, is well present in the Ajuda collection *Jesuítas na Ásia* with about 90 items at least, whose consistency is

⁴⁶ According to GOLVERS, *Ferdinand Verbiest* cit., p. 152 note 2, the letter was sent first to Canton, where arrived on 5 February and was copied, while the original was sent from there to Macao, arriving on 5 March.

⁴⁷ ARSI, *Jap.-Sin.* 162, ff. 269r-273v; the note of Luís da Gama at the foot of f. 273v.

⁴⁸ Ajuda, JA, cod. 49-IV-62, ff. 526r-533v; for other copies see GOLVERS, *Ferdinand Verbiest* cit., p. 153.

⁴⁹ ARSI, *Jap.-Sin.* 104, *Collectanea Historiae Sinensis ab anno 1641 ad annum 1700*, ex varijs documentis in Archivo Societatis existentibus excerpta duobus Tomis distincta Auctore P. THOMA IGNATIO DUNIN SZPOT Polono (1710), 2nd tome, f. 202r (‘to write this part we make use of the letter from our fathers in Peking sent to the fellows exiled in Canton and published in Italian translation by Father Prospero Intorcetta’). Numerous other references in Dunyn-Szpot’s compilation concern Intorcetta’s *Compendiosa narratio*, especially from the *Catalogus de Prodigijs*, e.g. in tome 2, ch. IV, n. 3, or ch. VI, n. 4 (f. 199r).

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

A missão jesuíta da China nas coleções da Biblioteca da Ajuda
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here outlined, with particular attention to the 60 letters between Intorcetta and the visitor Francesco Saverio Filippucci in the years 1686-90, documented only by these Portuguese transcripts. Hence, the article focuses on the earlier period concerning Intorcetta's appointment as a procurator for the Chinese mission to the Roman Church (1671-72) and his edition of *Compendiosa narratione sullo stato della Missione Cinese [...] dall'anno 1581 fino al 1669* (Rome: Tizzoni, 1672), whose relation with its coeval Latin version is examined, as well as similarities with other contemporary historiographical compilations. Compared to them, Intorcetta's *Narratione* shows peculiar features in enclosing after the official report delivered in Rome (April 1671) more materials, plus two letters (the famous *relatio* from Peking by Gabriel de Magalhães of 2 January 1669, and another letter from Canton by Christian Herdricht of 23 November 1670), both able to update his *Narratione* with "very happy news" from the Peking court, while granting themselves a wider circulation thanks to the printing press.