

## The Western library of Matteo Ricci and its aftermath: some critical observations<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

During the many conferences presented on Matteo Ricci in 2010, as far as I know, no particular attention was paid to his 'library' in Peking. Here will be presented a critical overview of the evidence on this library, the problems of interpretation, lingering between the opinions of 'believers' and 'disbelievers' (who refer to Ricci's memory as a main source of his quotations), with a proposal of final conclusion. Even when – due to the fragmentary and ambiguous state of the evidence – its extension, in terms of volumes and precise titles – cannot be defined in all the expected details, there was a double (Chinese-Western) 'Ricci library' in Peking: 'libri santi', 'repertorios', maps and books on mathematics, and some Humanistic reading. In addition, it appears that Longobardo's 'library policy' (implemented by Trigault-Terrentius) continued Ricci's 'library strategy', which concerned not only the establishment of one 'central' library in Peking, but also that of many 'reference' libraries in all the other residences spread over China.

### 要旨

1972年9月24日、マカオのイエズス会図書館が売却された際、1746年の記録（J. Alvares）にある4千冊以上の書籍が分散され紛失した。これは、中国における教義の場であり、イエズス会への改宗の場であったコレジオの役割の観点から見て、極めて劇的なことであった。本稿では、マカオの果たした中核的役割および、イエズス会の機関として2世紀にわたるヨーロッパ・中国間の書籍移転においてマカオが「ブックセンター」として機能していたことにつき、記述を試みる。マカオで、需要のある書籍や個人の中国人居住者からの希望リストが作成されヨーロッパへ伝えられた。書籍の到着後、特定の行き先に割り当てられ、中国じゅうに発送された。書籍は地元の「書籍商」で装丁され、そこで代金精算が行われた。しかしながら、イエズス会自体も、彼らの建物内に、印刷本、手書きの本、文書の実質的なコレクションを所蔵した。「コレジオ」図書館、数箇所の特別な「支部」そして多数の下部コレクション（中国の副省と日本の地方に所在する「会計責任者」の書庫、「ぼていか」薬局、他の「個人」所有コレクション）が存在した。複数の書籍一

<sup>1</sup> This is the slightly revised paper I presented on the *Coloquio Internacional 'Os alicerces da Missão da China no tempo de Matteo Ricci'*, Lisbon, CHAM 10-11 December 2010. A parallel presentation at the *Institut Ricci de Paris* (UNESCO, 27-28 May 2010) has been published in the mean time in: Landry-Deron, Isabelle (ed.), *La Chine des Ming et de Matteo Ricci (1552-1610)*. Paris: Institut Ricci, 2013, pp. 133-145.

覧に基づく彼らの所蔵書項目 (D. Valente, a. o.)、中国からの宣教師資料 (F. Brancati; F.-X. Filippucci; A. Gaubil) および約12の現存物項目を提示する。

**Keywords** キーワード

Matteo Ricci - Jesuit libraries - Jesuit libraries in China - Western books in China - Ricci scientist

マテオ・リッチー イエズス会図書館 - 中国のイエズス会図書館 - 中国の西洋図書 - 科学者リッチ

Although my work-in-progress on the Jesuit (Western) libraries in China, their formation process and the policy behind it focuses on the period ca. 1645-1800, I was attracted by the question of the 'origins' and first stage; this brought me of course to the Trigault - Terrentius layer - on which I will return at the end of this contribution - and to Matteo Ricci. Quickly I was confronted here with some contradictions: although everyone agreed that Ricci had been the overall 'model' for the later mission and the 'Apostolate through the press', including the spread of Western books through China, the evidence on his own library apparently was ambivalent and the assessment on its real 'existence' rather contradictory (lingering between an almost categorical denial on the one hand, and a positive acceptance on the other). Recently, the question has been re-opened by Jonathan Spence - to a certain respect a 'disbeliever' - and some other scholars (Margherita Redaelli;<sup>2</sup> Rui Loureiro;<sup>3</sup> Chiara Piccinini<sup>4</sup>), who look in their contributions to Ricci's famous 'memory' as a reliable 'substitute' for the presence of the real books. Therefore I think this Ricci-celebration is the appropriate context to reflect in a critical way on the entire question; at the same time, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this contribution, I will focus on the book policy in the immediate aftermath of Ricci, and the probable continuity between the Ricci-*initia* and the arrival, in 1623, of the Trigault library in Peking, as the implementation of Nicola Longobardo's library policy.

2 Redaelli, Margherita, *Il mappamondo con la Cina al centro. Fonti antiche e mediazione culturale nell'opera di Matteo Ricci*, S.J.. Pisa: Ed. ETS, 2007.

3 Loureiro, Rui, "Como seria a biblioteca de Matteo Ricci," in *Metahistory. History Questioning History. Festschrift in Honour of Professor Teotonio R. De Souza*. Lisbon: Nova Vega, 2007.

4 Among other contributions by Piccinini, see *Matteo Ricci, S. J. Il castello della memoria. La mnemotecnica occidentale e la sua applicazione allo studio dei caratteri cinesi*. Edited by Chiara Piccinini. Preface by Alessandra C. Lavagnino. Milan: Guerini e Associati, 2010.

### Matteo Ricci's library

A reconsideration of the problematic profile and contents of Ricci's library is fully legitimate, in view of his role in the history of the mission, and as an explanation ground of his Chinese writings. Here I should make a first remark: because of the itinerary of Ricci in China, there are in fact several successive Ricci-libraries, especially those of Zhaoqing fu – where he stayed from 1583 to 1595 – that of Nanking (from 1595-1600) and finally that of Peking (from Jan. 1601-1610). The most important stage in this itinerary certainly is the last one, viz. his stay in Peking, at the same time the only one for which the library (or book) evidence is the most chimerical.

Right from the outset, we are confronted with a negative assessment of Ricci himself on the availability of Western books, more precisely in his letter of 12 May 1605 to Orazio Ricci:

Here I do not have enough books.<sup>5</sup>

To this, we can add some other extracts, all more or less dramatic and speaking of a great shortage of books; see the next paragraph of a letter to his friend Girolamo Costa, of 6 March 1608, sent from Peking, which I quote in the French translation of Henri Bernard:

I have such a shortage of books that most of the things I print now are things that I have been impregnated into my memory.<sup>6</sup>

For a correct understanding of these passages, however, one should compare this testimony to another one, taken from his letter to João Alvares, written one year later, in February 1609. In this letter, Ricci speaks of *libri santi* in his property, which are filling an entire room cabinet (*scrinii*, i.e. *scrinium* or *armarium*):

These (books) are the best adornment of my room, where the most important officials of this court and consequently of the whole Kingdom come to see us, being on the one hand the bookshelves with Chinese books, and on the other of our books, which through gold and the splendor of covers well declare the difference that exists between them.<sup>7</sup>

5 D'Arelli, Francesco, *Matteo Ricci. Lettere (1580-1609)*. Macerata: Quodlibet, 2001, p. 116.

6 "J'ai une telle carence de livres que la plupart des choses que j'imprime maintenant sont des choses que j'ai impregnées dans ma mémoire": see Tacchi Venturi, Pietro, S.J., *Opere storiche del P. Matteo Ricci, S.J.*, 2 vols. Macerata: 1911-13, vol. 2, p. 336.

7 "Questi (libri) sono il migliore ornamento della mia camera, dove vengono a vederci i principali di questa corte e conseguentemente di tutto il regno, stando da una parte gli *scrinii* de' libri cinesi, e dall'altra de' nostri, che dall'oro e splendore esterno ben dichiarano la differentia che vi è tra gli uni e gli altri," *Lettere*, p. 522. Some of these Chinese books are known. They left Peking, probably after Ricci's death and arrived in the collection of the Dutch naturalist Georg Everhard Rumphius in Amboina; from him, they came in the hands of Christian Mentzel in Germany, who offered them to

Among the *libri santi* mentioned here, one could imagine the eight volumes of the *Biblia Polyglotta*, printed by the *Officina Plantiniana* in Antwerp between 1568 and 1573, and arrived in China as a present of Cardinal Santa Severina; this five-languages Bible was introduced – after some fantastic avatars – in Peking rather as a ‘book of spectacle’ and a ‘book of prestige’, than as a ‘book of instruction’, the ‘spectacular’ being an aspect, which from now on will always remain an element in the formation, the management and the presentation of the Jesuit libraries in China. Not present among these *libri santi* were the works of St. Augustin, arrived in Nanking one year before, as we learn from a letter of 22 August 1608, as Ricci preferred to keep them in Nanking.<sup>8</sup> This is a first sign of an intentional policy of spreading Western books over all the Jesuit residences of China, which announces already the ‘master plan’ of Longobardo, to be discussed anon. As the aforementioned *Opere* of St. Augustin are concerned: it certainly concerns a sample of the *Opera Omnia*, in 10 volumes in folio, in all probability those printed in Antwerp (1576-1577) or in Paris and Lyon (1586); I have some preference for the former hypothesis, because the volumes with St. Augustine’s works arrived in China at the same time and together with the *Theatrum orbis terrarum* of Abraham Ortelius, another product of the same Antwerp printing house. But let me return to the testimony itself.

In addition to the ‘twofold room library’ described here – one European and one Chinese, which will return later in the description of other Jesuit libraries, including some room libraries in China, such as those of Jean-François Foucquet; Ignaz Kögler, etc. – and in addition to the reference to Chinese books, for a large part certainly mathematical books<sup>9</sup> – there is the apparent contradiction between this aforementioned fragment – which speaks of a room full of books – and the other demands sent to Europe, which refer to an almost complete absence of relevant books.

I found the same contradiction in other similar situations, when Jesuits like Jacques Lefaire or Francesco Saverio Filippucci complaining about a dramatic shortage of books, even the most basic ones, such as the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, whereas their own autograph manuscripts contain a large amount of precise and literal quotations, titles and text fragments. One of the possible solutions for this contradiction, probably also valid in the case of Ricci could be found in a kind of trivial but universally applied ‘strategy’, which I try to summarize as follows: ‘in order to receive positive answer on my demand, I should keep continuously complaining, if not, the response would be minimal’. There are, however, other hypotheses possible, as we will see anon.

the Roman Emperor Leopold I. From the *Hofburg* they arrived in the *Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek* (shelf number: OeNB, Sin.290). See Kraft, Eva “Christian Mentzels chinesische Geschenke für Kaiser Leopold I,“ in: *Schloß Charlottenburg*. Berlin, Preußen, Festschr. f. Margarethe Kühn. München, Berlin 1975, pp. 191-202.

8 *Lettere*, p. 481: «Quest’anno...arrivorno qua le opere di Sant’ Agostino».

9 On these Chinese books on mathematics, which he brought with him when he arrived from Nanking in Peking, see Bernard, Henri, *Le Père Matthieu Ricci et la Société Chinoise de son temps (1552-1610)*. Tientsin: Institut des Hautes Etudes, 1937, vol. 2, pp. 6-7.

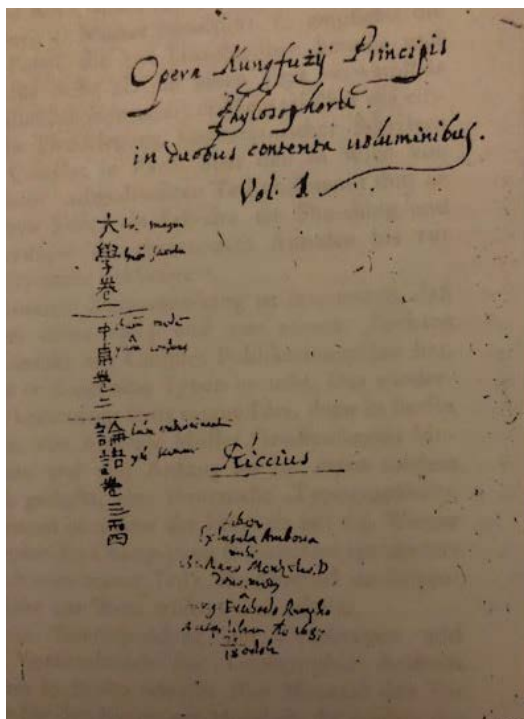


Fig. 1 – Matteo Ricci’s personal copy in two volumes of Chinese Confucian Classics, with an handwritten Latin title page (“Opera Kungfuzij Principis Philosphiam”). See the owner’s inscription “Riccius”. From: *Schloss Charlottenburg. Berlin – Preussen. Festschrift für Margarete Kühn*. (Berlin, 1975), p. 19 (with discussion on the other inscriptions)

At any rate, when trying to identify the books (titles), which one could attribute to Ricci when in Peking, we find, among the 4,100 items of the present Beitang collection (on the basis of its catalogue) – almost half of them with one or more inscriptions – only one sole volume, which can be attributed to him in person. It concerns more precisely a copy of the *Astrolabium* of Christophorus Clavius, published in Rome in 1593; the attribution is sure, thanks to the inscription:

*P(atri) Mathaeo Riccio donum auctoris – alla China* (To Father Matteo Ricci a present from the author – for China).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Verhaeren, Hubert, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque du Pé-t'ang*. Pékin: Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1949, no. 1291.

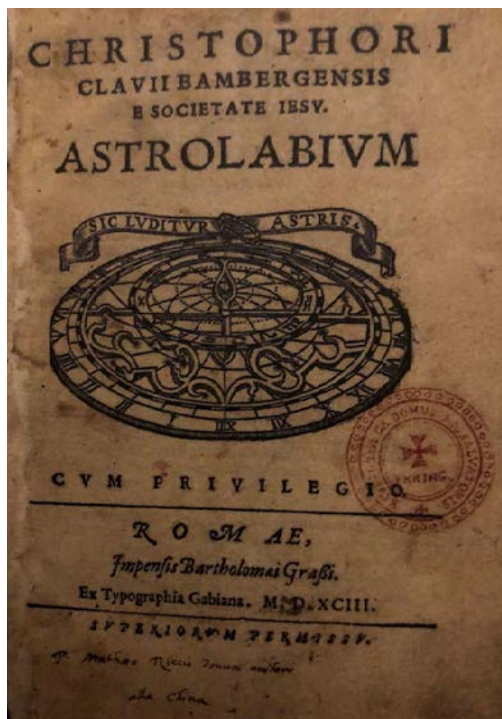


Fig. 2 - Autograph (?) Latin donation inscription by Christophorus Clavius to Matteo Ricci ("P(atri) Mathaeo Riccio donum auctoris"), of a copy of his *Astrolabium* (Rome, 1593). Probably one of a series of similar and simultaneous donations to Clavius's students in the *Academia Mathematica*, meant to give a wider distribution to this basic manual. The destination, probably written at another moment, is in Italian: "Alla China." Since in, or shortly after, 1593 Ricci had not yet a fixed residence in China, it was addressed in general terms "for China. After Ricci's death in 1610 and the persecutions of 1616, it was apparently recuperated for the library of the Jesuit college in Peking, initially called Xitang, later Nantang. From there it was recuperated in 1860 for the newly established Beitang library of the Lazarists (see the stamp: "Bibliotheca Domus S. Salvatoris Peking"). Together with most of the other books of this collection, confiscated in 1949, it arrived on the stacks of the National Library of China (Baishi Qiao), where it is still today. See the description in: H. Verhaeren, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque du Pé-t'ang*, Pékin, 1949, n° 1291.

The name "Riccio" is in Latin, in the dative case, which points to a donation formula; at least this first part of the inscription will thus be a personal, and probably autograph dedication of the author, Clavius. Personal dedications of 'free' or 'present' copies' by Jesuit authors to their colleagues in the Mission are not rare, and my material from China contains a whole series of other examples; on the other hand, we know that Clavius offered many other copies of this (and other) text book(s) to other former pupils and colleagues,

as the recent article of Antonella Romano & Luce Giard has demonstrated<sup>11</sup>; this could mean, it was considered a 'key text book'. At any rate, the second part of the inscription is in Italian, and probably added at a second consecutive moment, by someone else, for instance the *procurator Missionum Orientalium* or his *socius* at the moment of the shipment; this I cannot check as far as I have not seen the original, or a photograph of it.

Another intriguing aspect, which escapes from our control for the same reason is the presence of "numerous corrections", of an unspecified character, mentioned as such by H. Bernard, who has personally seen the volume, and which may be attributed to Ricci himself.<sup>12</sup> All in all, this volume is one of the very rare remaining *physical* testimonies of Ricci's personal books; that it is a book on mathematics is immediately revealing for the 'scientific', more precisely 'mathematical' character the China Mission got under Ricci. In addition of this one item, there are only some other mathematical books, which Ricci himself reclaims to have at his disposal, or which are attributed to him by one of his Jesuit colleagues. Amongst them was a copy of Clavius' *In Sphaeram Johannis de Sacro Bosco* (first edition 1585),<sup>13</sup> and the *Gnomonices Libri VIII* (Rome, 1581) of the same author.<sup>14</sup> The copy of the former – a very largely diffused commentary of the Jesuit mathematician, also mentioned in Ricci's *Della entrata della Compagnia di Giesù e Christianità nella Cina* (On the entrance of the Society of Jesus and Christianity into China)<sup>15</sup> – was recognized by J.S. Cummins on the occasion of his visit to the Peking Municipal Library in 1967.<sup>16</sup> This work was the source that Ricci used for the draft of his *Qian kun ti yu* (Structure and meanings of heaven and earth) published in 1607 with a preface by Li Zhizao, called by Jean-Claude Martzloff "a small geographical and astronomical catechism."<sup>17</sup> The other

11 See the splendid volume edited by Antonella Romano, *Rome et la Science moderne entre Renaissance et Lumières*. Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 2008, pp. 116-117. Also in the Ricci case, the sending is part of a larger communication and *correspondance suivie* between both the donator and the addressee, of which many examples are preserved.

12 His remark is to be found in his *Matteo Ricci's Scientific Contribution to China*. Transl. E. Chalmers Werner. Peiping, 1935, p. 52. Here is also the date of the arrival, between October and December 1596; the same 'corrections' are not mentioned in Verhaeren's note, despite his common attitude towards these features.

13 Probably the extant copy Verhaeren, *Catalogue*, no. 1308 (ed. of 1585); The copy no. 1309 (ed. 1602) was entered in 1607 in the library of the SJ college of Louvain, and no. 1310 (ed. 1606) has an obsolete (Italian?) owner's mark.

14 Not Verhaeren, *Catalogue*, no. 1301, as this has – according to Verhaeren – the physical characteristics of the Trigault-books, and arrived thus in Peking only around ca. 1623.

15 See D'Elia, Pasquale M., *Fonti Ricciane: documenti originali concernenti Matteo Ricci e la storia delle prime relazioni tra l'Europa e la Cina (1579-1615)*, vol. 2, p. 114, n. 4.

16 Cummins, J.S., *Monumenta Nipponica*, 22 (1967), p. 484; Ricci added some extracts from this Clavius treatise to the reprint of his world map (see Bernard, Henri, *Matteo Ricci's Scientific Contribution to China*. Peiping, 1933, reprint Weisport: 1973, pp. 62-63). Cummins mentions also to have seen a Chinese catechism with notes in Latin, coll. V BX 1960 R 49,2.

17 Martzloff, Jean-Claude, "Clavius traduit en Chinois," in Giard, Luce (ed.), *Les jésuites à la Renaissance. Système éducatif et production du savoir*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1995, pp. 309-322, more precisely p. 319.

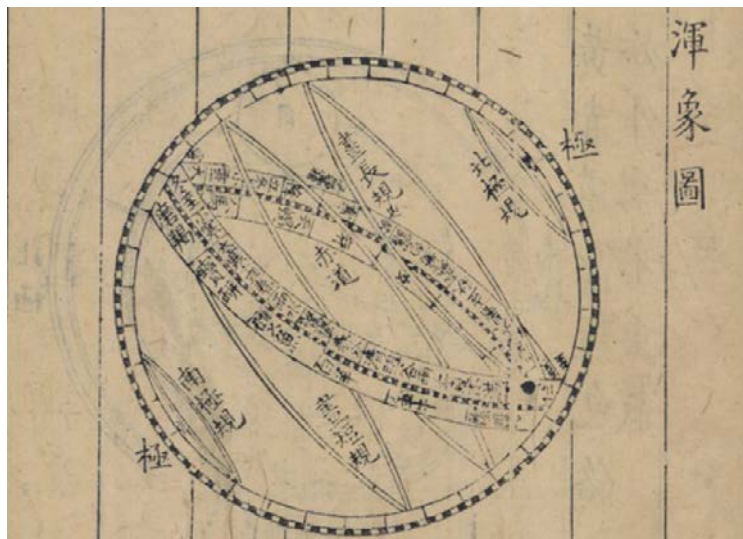


Fig. 3 – The celestial sphere in Chinese engraved in the *Hun gai tong xian tu shuo* (Illustrated explanation of the sphere and the astrolabe) composed in 1605 by Li Zhizao (1565-1630) based on the lectures given by Ricci on Christophorus Clavius' *Astrolabium*. The Digital Library, <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/15571/>

volume, the eight books on gnomonics is mentioned by Sabatino de Ursis, S.J., in his letter of 2 September 1610.<sup>18</sup> If the copy of Clavius is the same as the one he had already at hand in 1585, he had probably also taken with him the copy of Alessandro Piccolomini, *De Sphaera Libri Quatuor* (Basel, 1586), or 'Sfera del mundo'.<sup>19</sup>

For the preparation of the Chinese calendar (or calendars) in the European way, Ricci certainly disposed of Portuguese *Repertorios* or *ephemerides*, which still in 1605 were the only available instruments.<sup>20</sup> Portuguese *Repertorios* – such as those of Andreas de Avelar (1546-1622; first edition Lisbon: Manuel de Lira, 1590<sup>21</sup>) – circulated freely in the mission as well as in Europe, despite the manifest astrological aspects and their 'condemnations' by the Inquisition. Half a century later, Adam Schall von Bell and Ferdinand Verbiest will express their stupefaction, even indignation, when they saw these texts freely circulating,

18 D'Elia, Pasquale M., *Galileo in Cina: relazioni attraverso il Collegio Romano tra Galileo e i gesuiti scienziati missionari in Cina (1610-1640)*. Roma : Universitas Gregoriana, 1947, pp. 30-31.

19 *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. I, p. 186, n. 3; See there also the annotations NN 1133: "Non ho libri, se non la Sfera del P. Clavio e il P. Piccolomini"; Cf. Tacchi-Venturi, *Opere Storiche*, p. 72; D'Arelli, *Lettere*, p. 116.

20 Mentioned in D'Arelli, *Lettere*, p. 408: "e se bene non ho qua nessun libro di astrologia [= astronomia], con certe efemeridi e repertorii portughesi alle volte pre-dico le eclissi assai più puntuali che loro [i Cinesi]" (1605).

21 Golvers, Noël, *Portuguese books and their readers in the Jesuit Mission of China (17th-18th centuries)*. Lisbon: CCCM, 2011, pp. 71-73.



whereas Schall was attacked in Europe for his involvement in the production of the official Chinese calendar. Once, in a letter of 12 May 1605, Matteo Ricci confirms – in a very laconical way – also the presence of some unspecified specialized collection of books, of a *technological* character:

With regard to geometry, watches and astrolabes, I have so many books that it may be sufficient.<sup>22</sup>

There is no space for any doubt here, and the three fields in which Ricci was unfolding his ‘scientific’ and ‘technological’ activities are mentioned, for being well represented among the books he had at hand. Raised curious by this affirmation, I tried to identify at least some of these titles among the extant books of Beitang collection, without great success. There is only one title we can identify, as it is mentioned in Ricci’s own papers: the *Fabrica et usus instrumenti ad horologiorum descriptionem peropportuni*, always of Clavius, published in 1586, and now apparently absent from the Beitang collection.<sup>23</sup> Ricci had it in his hands between 1596 and 1608, when the Chinese translation had been made.<sup>24</sup>

In the field of *cartography*, we know that in 1608 at least one copy of Ortelius’ *Theatrum orbis terrarum* arrived in Nanchang (*sic*). Whereas Ricci preferred to keep the *Opera Omnia* of St. Augustine<sup>25</sup> – which had arrived at the same time – in Nanchang, as I already mentioned, he preferred Ortelius’ work to be sent to Peking, and this because of the potentialities there to give it a far larger resonance, because of the great number of Chinese people visiting him.<sup>26</sup> This shows again very clearly that the ‘representative’ and ‘demonstrative’ purpose, as well as effect, of this type of books in China has been at least as important as their primary ‘instructive’ and ‘scientific’ value.

That ‘impressing’ the Chinese was indeed an important aspect of the Jesuit strategy about the acquisition of books, already since the time of Ricci, is again emphasized when in 1596 Ricci was ‘lobbying’ in Europe for a book, which could represent Rome, ‘modern’ as well as ‘ancient’.<sup>27</sup> In the attempt of identifying this book, among the most plausible candidates, P. M. D’Elia proposed some contemporary *piante* (topographical maps) of the late-sixteenth century, or the *Topographia Urbis Romae* of Giacomo Boissard, published

22 Cf. *Lettere*, p. 407 (a° 1605): «E dico astrologo, perche di queste altre cose di geometria, horiuoli e astrolabi ne so io tanto – e ne ho tanti libri che basta». On the watches Ricci built, see D. Ensloh, ‘Pater Ricci’s Uhren’, in: *Katholische Missionen*, 65, 1937, pp. 190-194.

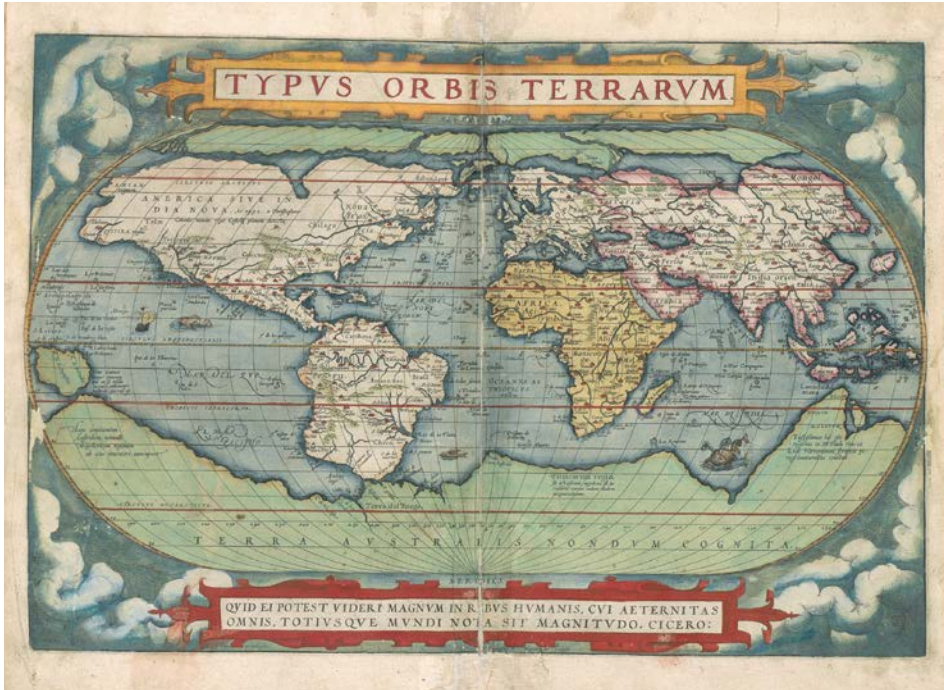
23 H. Bernard, *Scientific Contribution*, p. 47; *Fonti Ricciane*, II, p. 217.

24 Compare D’Arelli, *Lettere*, p. 326 (1596) and 491 (1608).

25 D’Arelli, *Lettere*, p. 481 and 522.

26 “Il *Theatrum Orbis* che io voglio per tenere in questo capo del mondo Sinico, dove è maggiore il concorso” (The *Theatrum orbis* that I want to keep (with me) in the capital of China, where more people can see it): D’Arelli, *Lettere*, p. 522.

27 D’Arelli, *Lettere*, p. 326: «alcun libro di architettura e una Roma Vecchia o antica».



**Fig. 4 – Abraham Ortelius (engraver: Frans Hogenberg), *Typus orbis terrarum* (Map of the Whole World) in *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, Antwerp: Apud Aegid. Copenium Diesth, 1570**

in Frankfurt / Main in 1597.<sup>28</sup> Although I am not convinced of this identification,<sup>29</sup> it is sure that since that time the topic of ‘*Roma caput Mundi / Orbis*’ remained a recurrent propagandistic theme of the Jesuits towards the Chinese, among others in Aleni’s *Zhifang waiji* (Record of Foreign Lands, 1623)<sup>30</sup> and Ferdinand Verbiest’s *Kun yu tu shuo* (Illustrated explanation of the world, *abbr.* KYTS, 1672).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> D’Elia, Pasquale M., “Roma presentata ai letterati cinesi da Matteo Ricci, S.I.,” in: *T’oung Pao* 41 (1952), pp. 149-191, more precisely pp. 171-172. A copy of this volume is still preserved in the Beitang collection (Verhaeren, no. 1076), which – according to an inscription – belonged in the eighteenth century to the Nantang library, the successor of Ricci’s Xitang.

<sup>29</sup> More probable – and more matching with Ricci’s description – seems the identification with Flavio Biondo’s translation of Lucio Fauno, entitled: *Roma ristaurata* (Venice, 1543, in-8°), of which the last part is preceded by “una fervida esaltazione della Roma antica e moderna” (a fervent exaltation of ancient and modern Rome).

<sup>30</sup> See the recent edition and commentaries by Paolo de Troia: *Giulio Aleni, Geografia dei paesi stranieri alla Cina*. Introduzione, traduzione e note di Paolo De Troia. Brescia: Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, 2009.

<sup>31</sup> On Verbiest’s KYTS: Walravens, Hartmut, “Die Sieben Weltwunder in chinesischer Darstellung” *Oriens Extremus* 17 (1970), pp. 101-124.

The presence of *various other titles* is only indirectly warranted, as a '*conditio sine qua non*' of some of Ricci's Chinese productions (translations; paraphrases, etc.). The most striking and convincing example certainly is the *Elementa* of Euclid, reasonably speaking the basis of his Chinese translation of the same book (*Jihe yuanben*, 1607).<sup>32</sup> In the same sense, the production of some other Chinese treatises, announced in 1608, necessarily relies on authentic locally available copies – afterwards lost. In this way, we can trace back a copy of Clavius' *Epitome arithmeticae practicae* (Rome, 1683) on the basis of the *Tong wen suan zhi* (Treatise on arithmetic),<sup>33</sup> a treatise on watches, in all probability the already mentioned *Fabrica et usus instrumenti ad horologiorum descriptionem peropportuni*,<sup>34</sup> and *De figuris isoperimetris*, again of Clavius, translated as *Huan ring jiao yi* (1607).

Finally, also the *Epitoma Joannis de Monte Regio in Almagestum Ptolemaei*, published in 1496 and still extant in the Beitang should be mentioned here, especially for some hand drawn mathematical or geometrical diagrams in *Propositio XII*, which H. Bernard attributes to Matteo Ricci, although I don't know on which base;<sup>35</sup> if this attribution would be correct, it is one of the very few 'physical' traces of Ricci (together with the aforementioned corrections) and of autograph diagrams made by Jesuit mathematicians in China anyway.<sup>36</sup> Yet, the title page has a manuscript annotation, almost illegible on the photograph, which refers to '1564', of which the relation with Ricci remains wholly unclear; therefore, probably also the attribution of these diagrams to Ricci must remain '*adhuc sub iudice*'.

To sum up: in addition to the Polyglot Bible and many *libri santi*, there was Euclid, many of Clavius' works, Ortelius' *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, Portuguese *reperorios*, other unidentified works on geometry, watches and astrolabes, all together not an unexpected profile for the library of an 'active' scholar, who tried to introduce Western sciences in China, either by text books, maps, eclipse predictions or instruments. At maximum, one could add here *some more titles*, of which the availability has at least some degree of 'probability', in view of their central place in contemporary science, although there are no proofs or indications for it. It concerns a possible copy of Ptolemaeus's *Almagest*, the *Cosmographicus Liber* of Petrus Apianus, the *Opera Mathematica* of Johannes Schöner and *De Principiis Astronomiae & Cosmographiae* of

32 On these translations, see especially Martzloff, Jean-Claude, "Clavius traduit en Chinois" p. 309 ff.; Engelfriet, Peter, *Euclid in China: the genesis of the first Chinese translation of Euclid's Elements, Books I – VI (Jihe yuanben, Beijing, 1607) and its reception up to 1723*. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

33 Criveller, Gianni, *Portrait of a Jesuit. Matteo Ricci*. Macao: Macao Ricci Institute, 2010, p. 70, n. 27 (publ. only in 1613).

34 D'Arelli, *Lettere*, p. 491 (1608).

35 Verhaeren, n. 2553.

36 In addition to, for instance, the diagrams of Ferdinand Verbiest sent by Antoine Thomas to Alexandre de Bonmont.



Fig. 5 – Geometrical drawings attributed to Matteo Ricci, on unclear grounds, by H. Bernard (*L’apport scientifique du Père Matthieu Ricci à la Chine*, 1935; Engl. translation by E. Chalmers Werner, p. 26). The drawings are found in the *Epytoma Joan(n)is de Monte Regio in Almagestum Ptolemei*, (?), 1564, originally held in the Xitang (Nantang) Library, currently (through the Beitang library, 1860) in the National Library of Peking (Baishi qiao). See the description in H. Verhaeren, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque du Pé-t’ang*, 1949, n° 2553.

Gemma Frisius, all books which Hubert Verhaeren “avec les réserves voulues” added to the virtual *Bibliotheca Ricciana* in Peking.<sup>37</sup>

A separate problem are the implicit or explicit, but very general references to ‘classical’ Western works of a humanistic stamp, which Matteo Ricci scattered over his writings, in Chinese as well as in other European languages. Here we could cite the names of Aesop,

37 Verhaeren, Hubert, “L’ancienne bibliothèque du Pé’ang’,” in *Bulletin Catholique de Pékin*, 1940, pp. 82-96, and *Catalogue*, Introd., p. VII; Loureiro, *Como seria a biblioteca de Matteo Ricci*. Yet, the copy of Gemma Frisius’s *De Principiis* (Verhaeren, no. 1672) has an inscription referring to the Zhenjiang mission in the 1720s, and the copy of Schöner, *Opera Mathematica* (no. 2710) was – according to its book inscriptions – until 1616 in the Jesuit library of Ingolstadt (*Missioni Slnensi Collegium Ingolstadiense a. 1616*) and arrived almost certainly with Terrentius in Peking in 1623 or shortly later, i.e. after Ricci’s death.

Aristotle, St. Augustin, Cicero, Democrit, Epictet,<sup>38</sup> Horace, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca – all authors of the Jesuit canon, albeit mostly read in ‘purged’ editions. With this repertory, Ricci presents himself as a man of the “European Republic of Letters’ and an ‘alumnus’ of the Jesuit college education, expressed in the *Ratio Studiorum* (printed in 1599, but widely circulated in previous decades). On the other hand, it is especially here that the problem of their real, physical presence is most critical: to what extent similar quotations or references, even by name could be used as firm indication for the reconstruction of the holdings of his real library, i.e. in physical sense?

Recently, Margherita Redaelli in her book *Il Mappamondo con la Cina al centro* (The world map with China in the middle, 2007) has searched for the probable sources that Ricci could have used in his last three moral and philosophical treatises, and the way in which he has ‘assimilated’ them.<sup>39</sup> After a careful comparison, she demonstrated that also in Ricci’s case the intertextuality is rather *composite*, which reveals an attentive reader, with a large reading patrimony: nothing unexpected, in view of Ricci’s pedagogical background. A first series of references would have been taken from a collection of the type *Book of sentences and examples*, already identified before as the collection that Andreas de Resende, alias *Eborensis*, had composed; his *Sententiae et Exempla* (first edition Paris, 1575; fifth edition 1590) are in fact a small-size volume, perfectly adapted to serve ‘in via’.<sup>40</sup> For the not (yet) identified references she thinks – perhaps in the footsteps of Jonathan Spence’s *Memory Palace* – of the effect of an extra-ordinary memory. I would not contradict this explanation, and would only add – as a complementary source of explanation – the hypothetical use of *adversaria*, i.e. a collection of private reading notes, an ‘instrument’ well defined and described, and prolifically applied by both Jesuit students and readers. In the case of *adversaria*, it concerns personal lists of *excerpta*, selected during personal reading, and classified or ordered in accordance to variable criteria, which accompanied the readers wherever they went, in Europe or in the missions. The wide success of such *adversaria* among the Jesuits should be understood as a result of the instructions and prescriptions published – albeit after the death of Matteo Ricci – by didactical Jesuit authors such as Francesco Sacchini (*De ratione libros cum profectu legendi*, Rome, 1613, etc.) and Hieronymus Drexel (*Aurifodina artium et scientiarum omnium*, Munich, 1638), etc.<sup>41</sup> In this type of annotations, especially theological and moral themes were ‘en vogue’. As the result of

38 On the presence of Epictet in Ricci, see Spalatin, Christopher A., “Matteo Ricci’s Use of Epictetus’ Encheiridion,” in *Gregorianum* 56 (1975), pp. 551-557.

39 More specifically for the ‘Twenty-five Sentences’, the ‘Ten Paradoxes» and the ‘Eight Canzoni for a Western Clavichord’. The text of *De Amicitia* was translated and published before Ricci entered Peking.

40 Redaelli, *Il Mappamondo*, p. 27; Cf. Verhaeren, *Catalogue*, no. 798.

41 Neumann, Florian, “Jeremias Drexels Aurifodina und die Ars Excerptendi bei den Jesuiten,” in Zedelmaier, Helmut; Mulsow, Martin (eds), *Die Praktiken der Gelehrsamkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Tübingen: De Gruyter, 2001, pp. 51-61; Nelles, Paul, “Libros de papel, libri bianchi, libri papyracei. Note taking techniques and the role of student notebooks in the early Jesuit colleges,” *AHSI* 151 (2007), pp. 75-112.

their strictly 'private' nature, they obviously left almost no traces in our sources, unless indirectly as the probable but hypothetic origin of a discontinuous series of references, paraphrases and literal quotations taken from 'popular' and authoritative authors, such as ancient philosophers, among others. To the same extent as we would assume the existence and influence (use) of such 'cahier' of private annotations and quotations as the *reservoir* of a series of textual quotations, to that same extent these quotations lose their relevance for the reconstruction of Ricci's library as a physical collection of books at hand, and reflects rather his 'internal' reference library.

The aftermath of Ricci's book collection and book policy: the library of the Portuguese College in Peking Xitang and in other centers

Because of the nature of our documentation, while our conclusion on the extension of Ricci's library in Peking and its precise holdings must remain 'uncertain', his access to Western books in several domains in which he was active in China seems unquestionable. This conclusion may to a certain degree be extended by the assumption that he had with him personal *adversaria*, especially in the non-scientific sphere of moral and philosophical writers. Equally certain is, to my opinion, that Ricci's convictions in the field of cultural transmission, in general, and in the role of Western books as the appropriate bearers of it, in particular, which would have inspired Nicola Longobardo to unfold in a letter to the General Claudio Acquaviva – written on 23 November 1610 already some months after Ricci's death – a master plan on the constitution of large scale book collections in every Jesuit missionary residence in China, and a 'central library' in Peking,<sup>42</sup> emphasizing at the same time the 'specificity' of the China mission in the field of book and reading culture:

It was good that they always sent others (books) to be able to provide all the residences with a fair library. And it does not matter that in other missions they do not request so much for books, because they do not have to deal with people so literate.<sup>43</sup>

Such library should not only be the basis of the cultural prestige of the Jesuits among the – book minded – Chinese *literati*; it should also provide the necessary backing for a policy of teaching, translating and writing in Chinese, again a prolongation of Ricci's convictions. This was only possible, if one would exceed the level of a more or less occasional arrival of some individual book titles, and could rely on a well-organized and planned 'book prospecting'. This was realized with Trigault's and Terrentius' tour through

<sup>42</sup> For all details on this and the next phase, see now Golvers, Noël, *Libraries of Western Learning for China. Vol. 1. Formation of Jesuit Libraries*. Leuven Chinese Studies 26. Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2013.

<sup>43</sup> "[...] era bene che sempre se ne mandassero altri (libri) per poter proveder tutte le residenze d'una honesta libreria. E non importa che in altri missioni non facciamo tanta istanza per haver libri, perche non hanno di trattare con gente tanto letterata," Tacchi Venturi, *Opere storiche*, II, p. 491. Other parallels between Longobardo's letters and Ricci are referred to by Lamalle, Edmond, "La propagande du P. Nicolas Trigault en faveur des missions de Chine (1616)," *AHSI* 9 (1940), p. 67, n. 72.

Europe.<sup>44</sup> I have not to deal here into more details with the modalities and the results of this prospecting tour. After these books (together with instruments and other *artificialia*) – arrived in China, they were for a while kept in Macao – due to persecutions and internal conflicts – and only transmitted after China was again accessible; at this occasion, the core of the books (especially the Papal collection) was transported to Peking, and the rest was distributed over the other Jesuit residences, this in accordance to Longobardo's intention. For this we only have to my knowledge one single explicit testimony, a random remark of Ferdinand Verbiest, made in 1680 (1 March) in the *Postulata* he transmitted to Philippe Couplet, S.J. before the latter left for Macao and Europe. The fragment is very clear in this respect:

This library is divided among the principal (Jesuit) residences and in the following years, little by little, many other books were added.<sup>45</sup>

At any rate, the books destined to the Peking residence, after their arrival probably in 1623 or shortly later, were put together with the small nucleus of the books collected already before by Ricci and some colleagues. I believe, indeed, contrary to the common opinion, that Ricci's books were not 'destroyed' during the so-called 'persecution', and were at maximum 'confiscated', and returned afterwards. I rely for this assumption on similar situations, later in the seventeenth century, for instance in 1665, when Jesuit properties were confiscated, wood blocks and Christian printings in Chinese were burnt, but the Western books were mostly returned to their owners, after the restoration of the Jesuits in 1669. Therefore, the Xitang (later Nantang) college library may well embody not only the Ricci heritage in its strategy, but to some – unfortunately unclear extent – also in its direct continuation. More considerations on its further development I reserved for another occasion.

<sup>44</sup> On this topic, see Golvers, Noël, *Johann Terrentius Schreck and his European scholarly network* (forthcoming).

<sup>45</sup> "Haec autem bibliotheca in praecipuas residentias divisa est, cui annis sequentibus paulatim plurimi alii libri adjuncti sunt," Rome, ARSI, Congr. Prov. 81.