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"Jesuita non cantat"

The antecedents of the musical activity of the Jesuits in China are probably connected with Matteo Ricci’s meeting, two years after his admission to the Roman College in 1575, with St. Philip Neri, then director of the Oratory of St. Mary’s Church in Vallicella. The devotional services of the Congregation of the Oratory, where Matteo Ricci might have been involved at that time, consisted of a set of paraliturgical actions that included sermons, prayers, music and chants. They constituted the prototype of the more mature musical form of oratory for soloists, chorus, orchestra and continuo, which alternated instrumental and vocal pieces with the assistance of a text. Perhaps it was precisely the outstanding role that the text had in the oratory that might have persuaded Ricci of the importance that this musical genre could have for evangelisation¹, despite the Ignation

¹ In the 17th century the notion of “oratory as a musical genre is not totally defined. Rosa Cañero and Marina Marino write about this: “It has been well established, on one hand, the derivation of the word describing the place of prayer homonym of the musical composition where it was often performed; it is also true, however, that the place did not always determine the nature of the musical composition.” Rosa Cañero and Marina Marino, “Materiali per una definizione di “Oratorio“ a Napoli nel Seicento: primi accertamenti”, in Domenico Antonio D’Alessandro and Agostino Ziino (eds.), La musica a Napoli durante il Seicento, Proceedings of the International Conference (Naples, 11-14 of April 1985), Rome, Edizioni Torre D’Orfeo, 1987, pp. 464-510. On the Oratorio of St. Philip Neri and the devotional practices associated with it, see Carlo Gasparri, L’oratorio romano dal Cinquecento al Novecento, Rome, 1963; Arnaldo Morelli, “L’Oratorio dei Filippini: rapporti tra Roma e Napoli”, La Musica a Napoli durante il Seicento, cit., pp.455-463. Margherita Redaelli makes a brief reference to a meeting between St. Philip Neri and Matteo Ricci in Il mappamondo con la Cina al centro. Fonti antiche e mediazione culturale nell’opera di Matteo Ricci S.J., Pisa, Editions ETS, 2008, p.18. Nevertheless the author seems to present it as a fact, but without citing any document to prove it. In any case, as the eminent musicologist Giancarlo Rostirolla has said, the oratory activity is fundamental in order to understand the development of the musical practices of the Jesuits, above all, those connected with catechism. See, in reference to Giancarlo Rostirolla, “Laudi e canti religiosi per l’esercizio spirituale della Doctrina cristiana al tempo di Roberto Bellarmino”, in A. Torromeo, ed. et al.,
dictates against music and the sober Tridentine pronouncements on the use of music in liturgy\textsuperscript{2}.

As we know the devil is dual, because the Latin word “diabolus” stems from the Greek “diaboloo”, which means “to throw in the middle”, and in the prefix “dia” it evokes the meaning of being separated as in the Latin “dis”, “separation”, homophonous with “dis”, “twice”. Ignatius himself in the \textit{Spiritual Exercises} had spoken of Lucifer’s many temptations, thereby sketching an ideal of mission that postulated the license to take over his seductions to “enter through their door and then leave through ours”.

Thus, during the century that separates the encounter between Ricci and St. Philip Neri and the arrival of Tomás Pereira in China, the veto to singing during the liturgy of the Hours and other liturgical uses of music, imposed by Ignacio to ensure mobility, implicit concept in the missionary charisma of the Society, had not hindered the development of a rich tradition of teaching musical drama and dance, in Jesuit colleges\textsuperscript{3}.

Probably through the good auspices of Alessandro Valignano, Matteo Ricci donated a harpsichord to the Wan Li Emperor and, perhaps shortly after, composed the verses (曲意) of \textit{Eight Songs for manicordio}, \textit{Guqin quyi bazhang} so that the music of the instrument would resound in court delighting the ears of the sovereign and his retinue.

\textit{“Gli eunuchi sonatori imparavano più che una sonata, e gli doi più giovani già sapevano quanto gli bastava, ma era necessario che aspettassero gli altri più vecchi, de’ quali uno aveva settanta anni. E così spesero più di un mese senza finire quel negotio. Chiesero con molta istantia le canzoni…”}


\textsuperscript{2} Ignacio only admitted singing in \textit{falso bordone}. On this subject see Frank Kennedy, “Jesuit and Music: Reconsidering the Early Years”, \textit{Studi Musicali}, \textit{XVII}, 1988, 1, pp. 78-79. The \textit{falso bordone} is a pseudo polyphony which consists of the recitation of verses, basically from Psalms, using tune, marked in the middle and the end of the verse by an accent (rhythmic stress).

\textsuperscript{3} On these initial stages of the Jesuit tradition, see T. Frank Kennedy, “Jesuit and Music: Reconsidering, The Early Years”, cit., pp. 71-100; on the development of the Liturgy of the Hours in the Society, see Joseph Weiss, \textit{Jesuits and the Liturgy of the Hours: the Tradition, its roots, Classical Exponents, and Criticism in the Perspective of Today}, PhD. Diss., University of Notre Dame, 1993, pp. 143-205.

che si cantavano nelle sonate del manicordio, acciochè, se il Re gli domandasse questo, gli potessero rispondere. Con questa occasione fece il P. Matteo otto compositioni brevi in lettera cinese sopre otto materie morali, piene di molto belle sententie cavate da’ nostri autori, che essortavano alla virtù et al viver bene, con titolo di Canzone di manicordio di Europa voltate in lettera cinese (Xiqin quyiquyi bazhang 西琴曲意八章).”

“The eunuchs were learning more than a sonata, and the youngest ones already knew as much as they needed to know, but they had to wait for the older ones, one of them being seventy years old. This way it took more than one month for them to finish their work. They asked with much insistence for songs to be sang in the sonatas for harpsichord, so that, if the King should request it, they would be able to respond. Given this opportunity, P. Matteo wrote eight small compositions with Chinese text on eight moral subjects, full of beautiful sentences taken from our authors, which exhorted good living and virtue, with the title Canzone di manicordio di Europa voltate in lettera Chinese, European songs for manicordio rendered in Chinese (Xiqinquyi bazhang).”

The story continues emphasizing the many praises the songs received in court, due to the moral virtues laid down in the texts, and that were printed with other writings by Ricci for presentation on special occasions. The work may have had some diffusion since it was included in the imperial collection Siku qanshu 四庫全書. In fact, the Siku quanshu zong mu, General catalogue of all books of the "four storages", provides a much later date for the composition of the work and its offering to the Emperor: 1610⁵. The edition reviewed in the catalogue appears at the end of another work by Ricci, the Jiren shipian 畸人十篇, The ten paradoxes, in fact composed in 1608. This text contains moral teachings based on the classical rhetorical tradition which, as mentioned by the reviewer, were included in the Eight Songs precisely because of the similarity of the theme. Indeed, the term quyi indicates explicitly the text of the songs, so it is uncertain that Ricci had also composed the musical score of the pieces. Moreover, it is important to note that nothing remained of the text of the songs already when Siku quanshu zongmu was compiled, as explicitly mentioned in the catalogue. This reference seemed to allude to the existence of a musical score that had accompanied them⁶. Margherita Redaelli, who assumes that the Eight songs

⁵ According to Fonti Ricciane, the harpsichord was donated by Ricci to the Wan Li Emperor on the 27th of January 1601. The sources of Jiren shipian have been identified by Margherita Redaelli in, Il mappamondo con La Cina al centro...cit., pp.113-127. The author also identifies some sources of The Eight Songs on p. 127.

⁶ 四庫全書總目, Siku quanshu zongmu, vol. 1, cap. 125, Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, p. 1080. The catalogue of all the books of the imperial collection was compiled as the books were gathered to integrate them in the collection, i.e., after 1772 and during the following decade.
were composed in the year 1601, or contemporaneously with the gift of the clavichord, notes that this date is too distant from Ricci’s other moral writings, *The ten paradoxes*, *Ershëiwu yan* 二十五言, *The twenty five propositions* and the catechism, *Tianszhu Shìyi* 天主實義, *The true meaning of the Lord of Heaven*.

Whatever the date of the composition, it is important to emphasize the presence and circulation of European musical arias in China from early times and their inclusion in the prestigious imperial library, *Siku quanshu*, compiled under the auspices of Emperor Quianlong more than a century after their first appearance. It is likely that the arias were accompanied by simple harmonies, perhaps of profane origin, according to the practice of *contrafactio*, which involved precisely the use of well known secular arias for paraliturgical purposes or for teaching Christian doctrine.

The *Fonti Ricciane* allows us to partially reconstruct the development of the practice of music in a missionary environment before the arrival of Tomás Pereira, for it contains references to the study of music by Diego de Pantoja under the direction of Lazaro Cattaneo and seemingly also of Ricci, as well as Adam Schall Von Bell, improvised harpsichord restorer, who had the task of replacing broken strings and probably also the pegs of the adjusters of the revered instrument.

In a letter addressed to Francesco Sambiasi in Canton dated Beijing May 17, 1640, Francisco Furtado recounts that Ricci’s harpsichord was sent by Emperor Yongzheng to Adam Schall von Bell for repair. The sovereign also requested that the Jesuit translate the two verses from the psalms, engraved in gilded letters, which adorned the instrument: 1. *Laudate Dominum in cymbalis benesonatibus* (Psalm CL, 5), *Laudate nomen eius, in timpano e choro psallant ei* (Psalm CXLIX, 3). On the left margin of the sheet of record 14v, is the translation of literary Chinese, written in beautiful, minute characters. The same episode

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9 *Ibidem*, volume II, p. 132, n. 2-3; II, p. 33, n. 2; p. 132, n. 4; II, p. 3. The edition of *Guqin guyi bazhang* that I have consulted, can be found in the Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele II, FG, f. 34r and followings.
10 ARSI, *Jap. Sin 142, IV f. 14vo (14rv-15r).*
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is recounted by Adam Schall von Bell in the preface to the work *Jincheng shuxiang* (Preface to the engravings offered to His Majesty)\(^{11}\).

Ricci seems therefore to pave the way to the belief in the evangelizing virtues of music, even if this attitude contravened the Ignatian dictates against the use of music both in pastoral as well as liturgical services. Music played an increasingly important role in the Jesuit missionary agenda, as it is evident in the case of Paraguay where the valuable work of musicians such as Domenico Zipoli had contributed to construct a legend of the enticing virtues of the Society in far-off mission lands. Nonetheless, as Frank Kennedy noted, there was no development of a meaningful musical production, in either the liturgy or the profane area, without resistance from some more conservative members of the Society\(^{12}\).

It is known that the Jesuits in Europe recruited chapel musicians for the production of several musical projects. It is perhaps less noticeable that they used this same practice for the Chinese mission and specifically in the case of the painter and musician Giovanni Gherardini (Gherardino, Ghirardini, 1655?-1729). In previous research, I could ascertain that the famed countertenor Rinaldo Gherardini was Giovanni’s brother and that they had been educated in the Este court in Modena. Rinaldo since 1699 had been appointed a master cantor at the Cathedral in Parma and had later become a “virtuoso” in the local ducal court. In a letter dated November 1701, Giovanni writes from Beijing to inform him that he is painting a portrait of the Emperor Kangxi and that it is his intention to bring it back to Europe\(^{13}\).

In the course of my research on this artist, described by missionary sources also as a musician at the Manchu court\(^{14}\), I suggested to attribute to Gherardini’s workshop another portrait of the Kangxi Emperor. This painting is what we might call a visual counterpart

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12 T. Frank Kennedy, “Jesuit and Music: Reconsidering the Early Years”, cit., *passim*.


of the *contrafactio* because it makes use of a Chinese pictorial technique while placing the personage in an unquestionably European space rendered in linear perspective.\(^\text{15}\)

When properly tamed, music, as it was the case with visual arts, could be converted into an encouragement of religious piety. As a matter of point, this art of the “spiritual guise” was called *contrafactio* because it consisted of transposing songs and madrigals from the profane to the spiritual context. Cardinal Bellarmino had advantageously dedicated himself to this endeavour.\(^\text{16}\)

The practice of *cantasi come* (sing as) was very common in Ricci’s time and it involved singing a spiritual composition to a well known pre existing melody. Matteo Ricci himself had probably seen how popular melodies were reused by exchanging a profane for a sacred text in the Oratorio directed by St. Philip Neri.

This practice may be a valuable means to understanding the musical activities of missionaries in China, where a rich tradition of adapting popular songs for didactic purposes dated back to the *Shijing* and the elegy *ci* of the Song period. This similarity in the practice of “disciplining” popular profane arias for ethical-moral purposes could have encouraged the European missionaries to transcribe popular Chinese melodies in order to adjust them to the register of spiritual lauds. Indeed, this practice may have been preferred by missionaries in China to the more erudite and sophisticated theatrical forms adopted in Jesuit colleges in Europe.

Religious sentiments were embodied primarily in the form of sacred oratory and spiritual lauds, in which the *recitar cantando* (reciting singing) distanced itself from the secular themes characteristic of the Renaissance melodrama and adopted modes that were more consonant to the Counter Reformation’s emphasis on piety. In the catechism schools run by Jesuits in the Lazio region and even in the Roman College in the late sixteenth century, the teaching of Christian Doctrine accompanied by the singing of spiritual lauds began to spread. This method is due to the initiative of the Spanish theologian Diego de Ledesma, SJ (1519-1575)\(^\text{17}\), professor of Theology at Louvain and later

\(^{15}\) For a discussion on this work, allow me to refer to my own book: *La fabrica de las ilusiones, Los jesuitas y la difusion de la perspectiva lineal en China*, 1698-1766, Mexico, El Colegio de México, 2004, p. 11.


\(^{17}\) Mistakenly the *Diccionario Historico de la Compañía de Jesus*, vol. 3 p. 2318, indicates 1524 as his birth date.
at the Roman College (1559). He is probably better known for his theological views on “libertas opinandi”, than for his musical activities. Ledesma authored a *Doctrina Christiana Breve* (1573) which was translated into several languages\(^\text{18}\) and, due to a soon-acquired popularity, may well represent the prototype of many catechetical texts written in Chinese in dialogical form\(^\text{19}\).

Immediately after the publication of the *Doctrina*, Ledesma composed a booklet entitled *Modo per insegnare la dottrina cristiana*\(^\text{20}\). This work saw the light in 1573, and therefore preceded by five years, and perhaps inspired, the publication of the famous Oratorian *Terzo Libro delle Laudi* (1577).
Diego de Ledesma, *Modo per insegnare la Doctrina Cristiana*, pgs. 1 and 2

The Jesuit musicologist Thomas Kennedy pointed out that:

This first publication of Ledesma is significant not only because it would be translated again and again and used throughout the Society but also because it indicates a confluence of apostolic methods and ideas used by the Dominicans, Oratorians, and the Jesuits.\(^{21}\)

It is regrettable that, in spite of the book’s relevance in the religious milieu, Kennedy provides no bibliographic indication about the translations to which he refers. Indeed, the *Modo* is a manual of instructions on catechetical ministry, and at the same time, a text that raises the need to establish an intimate connection between the teaching of *Doctrina Cristiana* and the singing of spiritual lauds.

In the chapter 4: *Che si ha da fare nel principio dell’ incominciare ad insegnare la dottrina*, paragraph 3, Ledesma recommends that:

“Se non vi sarà Collegio de’ nostri, si suole con una campanella andar con un putto, ò due, ò quattro, ò sei putti in processione, per quel vicinato, cantando il proemio de la Dottrina Christiana; ò con alcun altro suo compagno, per invitare quelli, c’hanno da sentire; et così discorrerà per le parti più principali della Città, ò Terra: & alla gente, che si farà alla fenestra, ò in altra parte per vederli; dicà di passaggio, che mandino i suoi figlioli.” (p. 7v)

“If there is not any of our colleges, you will walk with a child, [or maybe] two, or four or six children in procession with a bell, in a neighborhood, singing the preamble to the Christian Doctrine; or with any other companion, in order to invite the children [to join us]. Everybody should be able to hear, so that they will talk about us in the main areas of the city, or in the countryside, and to the people who will come to their windows, or in other parts to see them, will tell them while passing to send their children.” (p. 7 v)

Regarding the strategy to be adopted to solicit the assistance of youth, Ledesma advises that once the group of participants is formed,

“…potrà menarlo ad alcuna Chiesa, et in quel luogo medesimo cominciare a far qualche essortazione dell’utilità, et necessità di quella; et invitarti ad altro luogo commodo, se quello non sarà tale, per un’altra volta: et se non haverà altro, che la canti, potrà cantare il medesimo, col suo compagno, se così paresse conveniente…” (p. 7v)

“you will be able to take them to a church, and in that very place start making some exhortation of the usefulness, and necessity of that [doctrine], and to invite them to another comfortable place, if that one is not so, for another time. If there will be no other people to sing with, you will sing just the same, with your companion, if thus seems convenient…” (p. 7v)

In chapter 5, Ledesma evokes the Tridentine\(^\text{22}\) dictate against profane singing, not only in religious institutions but also in secular society, yet recognizing the importance of singing to facilitate learning of the catechism.

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\(^{22}\) The “Prescriptions on music and sacred rites” [“Canon sobre la música en los ritos sacros”] (September 1562) required the exclusion of any profane or impure element in the writing of a clear explanation of the text. See Owen Rees, “Risposte musicali alla Riforma e alla Controriforma”, in Jean-Jacques Naltiez, *Enciclopedia della musica*, vol. IV Storia della musica europea, Torino, Einaudi, 2004, pp. 341-357.
“Le cause perché si fa, & perché in questo modo; & particularmente le cause perché si canta; principalmente ne i luoghi, dove è cosa nuova il cantare così; cioè perché i putti imparino più facilmente, & ancora quelli, che non sanno ben parlare, & quelli che non sanno leggere, & i rozi d’ingegno, rustici, & le done; si perché più si conferma la memoria col canto, & si fa più soave l’imparare; et acciò in luogo di canzoni brute, che si sogliono cantare, si cantino cose sante e buone; si anco perché n’habbiamo l’esempio nella primitiva Chiesa, che cantavano inni la mattina, & la sera in lode di Dio. Onde per queste, et altre simili cause hoggidi canta la Chiesa le cose sacre.” (p. 9v)

“The reasons why you do this and in this manner, and, particularly, the reason why one sings, mainly in places where it is unusual to sing like that, it is because the children learn more easily, and also those who cannot speak well, and those who cannot read, the illiterates, the common people, and women; because memory gets reinforced with singing, and learning becomes easier, and thus instead of the ugly songs they are accustomed to singing, let them sing holy and good things; and also because we have the example of the primitive Church where hymns were sung in the morning and the evening in praise of God. For this and other reasons, nowadays the Church sings sacred things.” (p.9v)

In catechetical instruction, singing therefore assumes the same importance as images, for they are both the most adequate vehicles to convey concepts to uneducated people.

“E’ d’avvertire che ‘l ridire più volte la lettione, et il cantare come s’è detto, più conviene quando la gente è più rustica, et ignorante, più putti; ma se fussero scholari nostri [o sea alumnos en colegios jesuiticos], come è detto, o altri più intelligenti, et che sapessero il testo della dottrina Christiana, deve farsi manco di questo per non li fastidire…”

“And it is to be advised that to repeat the lesson many times, and to sing, as it has been said, is more appropriate when people are more common, and ignorant, and when they are very young; but if they are students of ours [students of Jesuit schools], as it has been said, or others more intelligent, and who know the text of the Christian doctrine, we should do without this as to not to bore them.”

With regard to the characteristics of the songs elected for learning, in Chapter 8 it is recommended:

“2. Il canto deve essere facile, devoto, et simplice, si che i putti lo possano agevolmente imparare. 3. Dapoi che saranno instrutti mediocremente, cioè sapendo il testo della dottrina, com’è il Credo, con gli altri, etc. et anco il tuono del canto, si piglieranno due putti di quelli, che pareranno meglio
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Instrutti et di buona voce, i quali diranno, et gli altri risponderanno, come prima facevano col Maestro, rispondendo le medesime parole”

“2. Songs should be easy, devout and simple, so that children can learn them easily. 3. After being reasonably taught, that is, once they know the text of the doctrine, like the Credo, and the other prayers, and also the tune of the song, two children are chosen from those that seem well taught and with a good voice, who will recite; then the others will respond as they did with the Maestro, answering with the same words.”

The remaining Chapters can be divided into two groups: the first includes those which emphasize the singing of lauds, of the melodies and spiritual poems to make learning the doctrine more pleasant and to facilitate the memorization of the concepts, and the second which sets out the contents of the catechism, structured in the form of dialogue characteristic of the pedagogy of the time.

In conclusion, chapter 31: Alcuni versetti che si cantano per la strada, invitando a venire a sentire la dottrina christiana. (p. 52r), offers an example of simple verses through which parents are invited to let their children come to doctrine classes.

“Deh, per amor de Dio, Et ancho i signori, Udite il parlar mio, I grandi et i minori, Voi che siete padri, Perché vi vo insegnare, Insieme con le madri; E da vero avisare;…”

“Come along, for the love of God, And also you gentlemen, Listen to my words, Adults and children; You who are fathers Because I want to teach you, Together with the mothers; An truly warn you;…”

By the same token, chapter 32: Il modo, che comunemente s’ha d’osservare nel canto della Dottrina Christiana (p. 53r-v), shows how to sing in one, two or four voices according to the complexity of the arias. This chapter is followed by some simple scores with the traditional subdivisions in Cantus, Altus, Tenor, and Bassus, which can be adapted to various devotional songs, as shown in the images below.
Il modo per insegnar la Dottrina Christianais therefore a catechetical text that situates itself within the context of post-Tridentine trends of renovation of spiritual life. Given its simple format, it might have been a very useful manual, employed both in the inner, as well as in overseas missions. As we saw, its main characteristic is the use of music although it is a “disciplined” music, in the sense that it is cleansed of its secular character.
to suit the renewed spiritual needs. Music seems on a par with the images in the *Biblia Idiotarum* (Bible of the illiterate) in vogue in Europe since the Middle Ages, as both are considered the most effective ways to infuse Christian doctrine in the common person. Nonetheless, as noted, care must be taken with them because both act on the deepest feelings of the human being, stimulating passions.

The relationship between music and the nature of the human soul has been theorized by Giovanni Zarlino in *Istituzioni harmoniche* (1558), recognizing the need to elicit an emotional response in the listener through musical performance. In practice, the involvement of the emotional field in the enjoyment of music determines a real revolution in Renaissance music not only in terms of an increase in the production of secular music, but also because it implies a new attitude towards listening in which the role of the performer and the musician in the cultural life of the time is given further consideration. The new relationship established between musician, performer and audience is closely linked with the issue of the relationship between music and poetry, harmony and text, which created great controversy in late Renaissance and generated a cautious attitude towards the use of music in liturgy.

In fact the observations made by Ledesma in Chapter 5 of *Modo per insegnare*, reminds us of a series of later music treatises that constitute the counterpart of the treatises on the principle of *decoro* to be applied in visual arts according to the spirit of the Catholic Reformation, such as the *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* written in 1582 by Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, Bishop of Bologna. I should like to mention, for example, the work of Pietro della Valle, *Della musica dell’età nostra che non è punto inferiore, anzi è migliore di quella dell’età passata* (1640), where, speaking about contrapunto, he affirms:

“*Il contrapunto, parte della musica necessarissima per potere ogni’altra parte di essa bene adoperare, ha per fine non solo i fondamenti della musica, ma forse anche più l’artifizio e le più fine sottigliezze di quest’arte, quali sono le fughe a diritto e a rovescio, semplici o raddoppiate, le imitazioni, i canoni le perfidie ed altre galanterie così fatte…” che però, pur adornando meravigliosamente la musica, sono da usarsi con parsimonia.” (149, ed. 1903)

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“The counterpoint, a very necessary part of music in order for any other part of the same to work well, has for its objective not only the foundation of the music, but also more for the artifice and the finer subtleties of this art, which are the fugue onward or backward, simple or circular, the imitations, the canons, the perfidies and other gallantries thus made… which, although adorning the music marvelously, must be used with parsimony.” (149, ed. 1903)

The counterpoint is also unsuitable for coral music which must be “only with good harmony and graceful accompaniment, which second the voices with elegance” (p. 160)

“…Quella famosa messa del Palestrina, …che fu cagione che il concilio di Trento non bandisse la musica dalle chiese, però queste cose si hanno ora in pregio, non per servirsiene, ma per conservarle e tenerle riposte in un museo come bellissime anticaglie.” (p. 173) “… so che si trovano alcuni, a’ quali non piace che nelle chiese si scherzi tanto con la musica.” (p. 174) 26

“…That famous Mass by Palestrina, …was the reason why the Council of Trent did not banish music from churches. Nevertheless these things are now taken favourably, not in order to use them, but to keep them in a museum and have them displayed as beautiful antiques.” (p. 173) “… I know that there are people who do not like to amuse themselves with music in church” (p. 174)

We are indebted to Giancarlo Rostirolla for the reconstruction of an important episode in the history of modern musical culture, a culture that is not only intimately connected with the history of pedagogy and devotion during the period that immediately followed the Council of Trent, but also has a bearing on the dissemination of printed texts for popular consumption 27.

Tomás Pereira himself recognizes the importance of music as a tool to promote spiritual feelings. In the Carta Annua da Missão Sinica da Companhia de Jesus do anno de 1685 ate o de 1690 (ff. 229-253V) he writes:

“(…) o Emperador desta grande Monarquia. He este Príncipe dotado de grandes prendas, e singulares partes não só para governar (…), mas também de excellente engenho para arm as sciencias assim


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“The emperor of this great monarchy, this Prince is endowed with great talents and singular qualities not just to govern (...) but also of great ingenuity in science, Chinese as well as European, in which he is very advanced. He knows some principles of Philosophy and has made great progress in Mathematics to which our Masters of great skill have contributed during these years. Father Tomás Pereira has taught music, which is part of Mathematics; the Father is well versed in the speculative area of this art, as well as in the practical (...). The honors he bestowed and the familiarity with which he behaved while he was learning is worth of no short story. I will refer to a single case where one can see the priest’s ingenuity (...). It happened on July 11 1686 when after he was called to the palace, the Father spent three hours giving a lesson to his Majesty, whose Chinese concept of the activity was reduced to this verse: “From creation, the sovereign King of Kings, made Heaven from nothing and first man from clay, and thus, continued trying to show him in soft harmonies of Music, the truth of first cause”.

Now let us go back to Modo di insegnare la Dottrina Christiana. This short treatise has been defined as:

“A bibliographic rarity, maybe an unicum... whose musical content represents a reference point for the practice of lauds in the sixteenth century and for the repertoire shown in successful printed collections of lauds, used by the Society of Jesus”.

29 Giancarlo Rostirolla,“Laudi e canti religiosi per l’esercizio della Dottrina Cristiana al tempo de Roberto Bellarmino”, in A. Forromeo (ed. et al.), Bellarmino e la Controriforma, cit, p. 678. Rostirolla also postulated a derivation of Ledesma’s work from the Dottrina cristiana que se canta by Juan de Avila.
In order to complete his study of this work, Giancarlo Rostirolla used the only copy he could find in Italy which was kept in the library of a private collector, Mr. Giorgio Fanan of Turin. The copy which has been studied here, and of which some pages are reproduced in this paper, can be found in the Fondo Antico of the Casanatense Library in Rome; it was acquired by the library in 1995 and comes from the Pregliasco antique bookstore of Turin.\(^\text{30}\)

Despite the rarity of the text, it can be found in the catalogue of the Library of the Jesuits in Bei Tang, compiled by Hubert Verhaeren in 1949. Page 972 of the bibliographic record shows:

\begin{quote}
*modo per insegnar la dottrina christiana. Composto per il Dottore Ledesma, della Compagnia di Giesv. In Roma, Per gli Haeredi d’Antonio Blado, 1573.*

62 (i.e. 63) numb. 1., 3 1. Incl.. musics. 14 x 7½cm.


f. 4\(^a\), 26 lines, 104 x 47 mm.

1\(^{st}\) ed.


Sommervogel IV 1651 n° 6. 2526\(^\text{31}\)
\end{quote}

\(^{30}\) Anna Alberati, *Musica e teatro. Estratto da: Emptus anno... Acquisti in antiquariato 1990-1996,* IV, m. 166, p. 98, Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, s.a.. I thank Anna Alberati for making this text available to me and also for providing information on the acquisition of the work by Ledesma.

\(^{31}\) Indeed, the citation contained in Sommervogel is very laconic: “De la maniere de catechiser (en italien), Rome, appresso gli Heridi di Antonio Bladio, 1573”, because it does not offer any additional bibliographic reference. The edition is ignored by G. Fumagalli, G. Belli and E. Vaccaro Sofia, *Catalogo delle edizioni romane di A. Bladio asolano ed eredi* (1516-1593), Rome, 1891, 1942, 1963, 3 voll., cit. in G. Rostirolla, “*Laudi e canti religiosi al tempo di Bellarmino*”. cit., p. 678.
Since the Library kept a copy of the first edition, it is possible to postulate the hypothesis that the treatise was brought to China at an early stage of the Jesuit mission and was not a late acquisition. Moreover, it is significant that it was bound together with a copy of the Christian Doctrine of St. Roberto Bellarmino which might have been utilized by missionaries to be put into music and serve as catechism for converts and children.

The Bei Tang Library also held treatises of musica teorica, mostly included in mathematical dissertations according to the medieval classification of knowledge that considered music as part of the mathematical disciplines as well as other works that are linked with the new musical aesthetics of affection (musica degli affetti). Some of them are:

Caramuel Lobkowitz, Juan (1606-1682), *Mathesis biceps*

Charles, Claude F. Milliet de, (1621-1678), *Cursus seu Mundus Mathematicus*

Girolamo Mei *Discorso sopra la musica antica e moderna*, 1602.

and could have inspired Tomás Pereira in the drafting of the essay *Lülü zuanyao* which has been studied by Wang Bing.

As this paper’s main focus is on the practice of music and not on the teorica, I would like to cite a document which, although not containing a direct reference to Tomás Pereira, can help us achieve a better understanding of his musical experience at the Chinese court, by placing it in the context of the pastoral activities of the Portuguese Jesuits in this period. The National Library of Portugal, in Lisbon, holds a document attributed to José Soares, SJ (1657-1736) which narrates the conversion of several members of the royal family Su Nu, *Compilation of the history of how several people of the Tartaro-Chinese imperial family embraced the Christian religion, their progress in it, and how they were banished by Emperor*.

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Yumchim for that reason. (Facts which occurred during the first half of the eighteenth century,”
Donation of Dr. A. Ribeiro dos Santos—1724, 1 vol., of 4, 18 ff.) The document proves to
be particularly important because,

“Muitas vezes falando como Pay, da religião, christam, explicava ao velho os mistérios della,
que mais o podião mover. Fallava lhe do premio dos bons, do castigo dos maos; da eternidade da
outra vida; da immortalidade da alma da mizericordia Divina; da paixão e morte de Christo para
remedio dos homens do Mundo todo etc. E porque por aquele tempo concorreo a Semana Sancta, em
que este Príncipe assistio a todas as sagradas funçöens daquelles dias; as foi pintar ao Pay com tam
vivas cores, e palavras, que ainda que o não venceo por então, o deixou quasi rendido.
Tambem assistio a algumas missas celebradas com mais solemnidade da ordinaria, e a outras
funçöens de Responsorios pro defunctis com Ecce levantada no meyo da igreja, adornada de muitas
luzes, flores, e pinturas, emblematicas acommodadas à função. Tudo isto notou, e meridamente
advirtio; mas muito principalmente atendeo a gravidade das acçoens e ceremonias sacras a modéstia
dos christão; a pauza das rezas cantadas pelos mesmos. Finalmente de tudo se soube aproveitar,
para com sua natural eloquência o propor ao Pay de maneira que o moveo a vir muitas vezes à igreja a
fazer a sua adoração, ao Salvador, e a virgem Santissima.”

“Several times while explaining the Christian religion to the father, he [a prince] told the
Old One about the mysteries that could affect him most. Therefore he would tell him about
the reward of the righteous, the punishment of evil, eternity in the afterlife, the immortality
of the soul, of Divine mercy and of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ to save all human
beings of the world. For that reason, during Holy Week, the Prince attended all the sacred
functions (that were held in those days). The Prince told (those mysteries) to him in such
vivid colours and words that, although resisting, he almost surrendered (to them).

He also participated in Masses celebrated with more solemnity than usual, as well as in
the Responsorio for the dead and was present when the Ecce (simulated sepulcher) was placed
in the middle of the church and was adorned with many candles, flowers and emblematic
images prepared for service. He immediately noticed this, his attention focused mainly on
the solemnity of the (liturgical) actions and the sacred ceremonies as well as the simplicity
of the Christians and the cadence of the prayers that they sung. Eventually he managed,
through natural eloquence, to move the father to go to church and to render cult to the
Savior and to the Holy Virgin.”

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35 Compendio da historia de como varias pessoas da familia imperial Tartaro-Sinica abraçarão a religião
christam, progressos que n’ella fizerão, e como forão desterradas por esta causa pelo imperador Yumchim. (Factos
ocorridos na primeira metade do seculo XVIII. –Doação do Dr. A. Ribeiro dos Santos—1724, 1 vol. en 4.° de 18
ff.). Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Secção de Reservados, A. 2–32.
36 Ibid., (f-5v).
This text highlights two important factors. The first is that, contrary to what is frequently asserted by scholars of the China Jesuit mission, the basic tenets of the Catholic faith are enumerated without omitting the Paschal mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. The second is that, despite its oblique tone, the text deems to be a description of some of those paraliturgical functions, such as the Forty Hours Devotion, that were much encouraged by the Society in Europe during Lenten, and in which ephemeral architecture in linear perspective blended with emblematic images, sermons, music and exuberant decorations. This is so far the only known written testimony of the fact that such functions were not only promoted by the Society in Europe but also in the China mission.

Conclusions

From what we have outlined, Tomás Pereira’s activity as a musician can be situated in two different contexts: the first refers to the fields of theoretical music, mathematics and mechanical arts in which his work as theoretician as well as organ and watchmaker should be placed. The second refers to the musical practice which developed together with new forms of devotion, in educational institutions, associations (會hui) and lay confraternities that were established in Europe as well as in mission stations, under the auspices of the Society. There is a strong dichotomy between these two theoretical and practical realms; the complexity of the discourse about music contrasts with the frequent appeal to simplicity in the application of harmonic forms suitable to the catechetical and pastoral needs of the converts. In this as in other aspects of the scholarship on the Jesuit mission in China, it seems to me that too much emphasis has been placed on the “discourse”, at the expenses of the “practice”. In so doing, scholars have often emphasized the role of missionaries as “mathematicians”, “scientists” or “musicians”, as if everyone had achieved a formal curriculum in any of these professions, without much consideration for the fact that, even if these areas of specific expertise were acquiring a clearer definition in early modern Europe, they could not be directly associated with the missionary training.

I will not elaborate on these themes as I have addressed them in previous research available to the reader who is interested in going more deeply into the subject. See Elisabetta Corsi, “Constructores de la fe. Imagenes y arquitectura sagrada de los jesuitas en el Pekin imperial tardío”. Historia y grafía, monographic volume on Espacio, imagines y retorica de las devociones, 26, 2006, pp. 141-17
or cohabit peacefully with it. I do not mean to say that the Jesuits in China did not theorize; however, I believe that improvisation, the case, the experiment, are irreplaceable ingredients of “practice”, and that they played a much more determinant role than the theoretical concepts, in molding the daily activities of the missionaries.