Vincenzo Lavenia and Sabina Pavone, eds.*Missioni, saperi e adattamento tra Europa e imperi non cristiani: Atti del seminario.*

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This excellent book collects the papers presented at a conference in Macerata marking the publication of the Italian translation of *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City* (New York: Oxford, 2010), Ronnie Po-chia Hsia's biography of the great Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552–1610). Ricci, who was born and raised in Macerata, was one of the pioneers of the China mission and the first Jesuit to gain admission to the imperial court in Beijing. His accommodation of Chinese traditions—especially elements of the Confucian tradition that he believed were compatible with Catholicism—influenced the development of Jesuit pastoral ideals and practices throughout the early modern period and has received sustained attention from scholars in recent decades.

The contributors focus on the theory and practice of accommodation—*adattamento*, or, less frequently, *accomodamento*—by the Jesuits and their collaborators in China before the suppression. Although the point of departure is Ricci, the contributors analyze many other participants in the China missions. Lavenia and Pavone's introduction provides an invaluable survey of recent scholarship on Ricci and on the Jesuit enterprise in Asia in general. Accommodation, they argue, consisted not only of “an intellectual dialogue based on written texts (although these were fundamental), but also of continuous dialogue between real people” (12).

In “Apostolato attraverso i libri,” Ronnie Po-chia Hsia analyzes Ricci's dedication to writing and publication in its Chinese context. He underscores the low cost of printing Jesuit books and the low cost to the Ming elite of creating substantial personal libraries. Some members of this elite seamlessly incorporated Ricci's texts into the existing canon. “[Ricci's] four principal religious works [in Chinese] were published in editions that included prefaces by famous *literati* and mandarins. In a brief time Ricci had completely assimilated as an author into the editorial world and into late-Ming book culture” (23). Ricci wrote that his publications were vital to the success of his ministries in China, drawing the interest and eventual admiration of even his most skeptical interlocutors. At the end of his life he affirmed that “I do everything possible to ensure that all our [Jesuit] fathers study well the books of China and learn to write [in Chinese]; because—and it is something that is not easy to believe—more is accomplished in China with books than with words” (32).

Girolamo Imbruglia, in “Matteo Ricci e la strategia di evangelizzazione gesuita,” provides a wide-ranging and exceptionally perceptive survey of accommodation and of other issues that Jesuits addressed throughout their global

network of missions. Imbruglia devotes particular attention to the conflict between Fr. Alonso Sánchez and his Jesuit colleagues (especially Fr. José de Acosta) concerning Sánchez's proposal that Philip II invade China for the purpose of evangelization. Acosta, who produced two memorials in response to Sánchez's proposal, argued, according to Imbruglia, that "*war in odium fidei* may be waged against the Muslims, against the Lutherans, and against 'other infidels,' but this did not constitute a 'just' reason for conflict with the Chinese [...]. In China it was necessary to renew the original model of evangelization [i.e., that of the primitive church] because the politics, culture and religion of that society were at the same level as those of Mediterranean societies" (46). Alessandro Valignano, visitor of the missions in Asia, agreed, and warned Father General Claudio Acquaviva about Sánchez's "dangerous and new spirit," a spirit that was at odds with that of the Society. At the same time, Ricci underscored the monotheistic foundations of Chinese religion. "In both Ricci and Acosta," Imbruglia concludes, "there was emerging a new understanding of the religious phenomenon, based on the encounter between diverse religions and gods [...] in the missions there was affirmed a different way of understanding non-European societies, even if religious conquest remained the objective" (51).

Like Imbruglia, Ana Carolina Hosne, in "Gateways to China: Jesuit 'Geostrategy' in East Asia in the Late Sixteenth Century," underscores the importance of Sánchez's proposal to invade China. Her analysis of accommodation, however, calls attention to the Society's commitment to mastering Asian languages and to the increasingly damaging divisions that international rivalries—especially rivalries between Italians and Spaniards—were generating within the Society.

The essays by Elisabetta Corsi and Xie Mingguang both underscore the contributions of Chinese collaborators to the Jesuits' publications in China. In "Percezioni sensoriali e conoscenza secondo il *Xingxue cushu* (Introduzione generale allo studio della fisica, 1623) di Giulio Aleni, S.I.," Corsi argues that these publications occupied a distinctive place within the Society's global editorial production. Again the emphasis is on accommodation. "What distinguishes the textual production of the Catholic missionaries in China [...] is the fact that the works that they composed there were written in a complex and sophisticated language [...]. Years of intensive study did not necessarily guarantee to the missionaries the certainty of mastering that language [...]. This explains their recourse to a network of Chinese converts" (78). Corsi draws effectively on inventories of the Society's libraries in China, and on the Jesuits' extensive correspondence, to provide an illuminating view of book production and circulation in pre-suppression China.

Xie provides the book's most sustained portrait of the Jesuits' Chinese collaborators. Wang Zheng, who became a Christian but never completely abandoned his Confucian beliefs, was the most important of a group of Chinese literati who made possible the composition and publication of Fr. Nicolas Trigault's *Xi Ru Er Mu Zi* (Shaanxi, 1626), a handbook for the study of the Chinese language. Xie underscores the contribution to Jesuit ministries of converts in the provincial missions, far from the metropolitan centers where Ricci worked. Chinese *literati* made it possible for the Jesuits to minister to poor and uneducated people in the provinces and to preach "in an indirect manner" (i.e., through auxiliaries) in local dialects that they had not mastered (127). Xie concludes that Ricci's strategy of accommodation in the cities laid the foundation for his successors' work in the provinces.

The book's last two chapters are the only contributions that do not focus on the Jesuits in China before the suppression. In "Ricostruire la Compagnia partendo da Oriente? La comunità gesuita franco-cinese dopo la soppressione," Pavone argues that the Jesuit community in Peking survived because it was composed of French Jesuits and their Chinese companions. Drawing on previously unexplored documents in the archive of the Holy Office in Rome, Pavone provides a superb account of the origins and growth of the French mission and its survival under the leadership of François Bourgeois, who was appointed superior of the Franco-Chinese community in 1775. Bourgeois led a faction of former Jesuits who "felt bound primarily to their country of birth and defended the interests of France in China. In contrast, the others [i.e., former Jesuits who opposed the Bourgeois faction] [...] chose to remain loyal to Rome, that is, to the Propaganda Fide" (143). Pavone concludes that in post-suppression China, unlike in Russia, "one can speak of the emergence of a proto-national consciousness, nourished, albeit at a distance, by the French government" (162).

In "I libri, le armi e le missioni: Conversione e guerra antiottomana in un testo di Lazzaro Soranzo," Lavenia analyzes *L'Ottomanno* (Ferrara, 1598), which Soranzo dedicated to Pope Clement VIII, in whose court he served. The book was banned by the Venetian authorities upon publication because it addressed "matters of State that it is prohibited to reveal" (165). Soranzo, however, "affirmed that he sought to contribute to the papal project with a treatise about the State of the Turks that would explain 'the true way of defeating them'" (172). Lavenia provides a richly layered analysis of *L'Ottomanno*, in which Soranzo enlisted millenarian prophecies in support of his call for a naval war against the Ottomans. Lavenia's contribution effectively addresses the larger themes of this book by linking Soranzo's text to those of contemporary anti-Muslim polemicists, including the Italian Jesuit Antonio Possevino.

This is an indispensable book for readers interested in the overseas missions of the early modern Society in general and in the pre-suppression missions in China in particular.

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