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Letters of a Peking Jesuit: The Correspondence of Ferdinand Verbiest, SJ (1623–1688), Revised and Expanded. Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2017. Pp. 962, €82.

From its very beginning, the Society of Jesus encouraged and organized regular correspondence for the sake of its own governance. Selected letters were printed and widely diffused in Europe to promote the work of the order and to attract vocations. In the case of the Jesuit mission in China, selected letters were printed from the beginning of the seventeenth century. However, most of the letters still extant in different archives remained unpublished. It was not until the twentieth century that scholars attempted to retrieve systematically letters of individual Jesuits and to publish them according to modern scientific criteria: *P. Antoine Gaubil, correspondence de Pékin (1722–1759)*, edited by Renée Simon (Geneva: Droz, 1970), and more recently, *Matteo Ricci, Lettere*, edited by Piero Corradini (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2001). Those correspondences constitute an important source of information for understanding the biography of the missionaries and their interactions with Chinese culture and society.

Concerning Ferdinand Verbiest's correspondence, the Belgian Jesuit Henri Bosmans had collected and edited letters in the early twentieth century. After his death in 1928 two other Belgian Jesuits, Henri Josson and Léon Willaert, completed the *Correspondence de Ferdinand Verbiest* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1938). That edition contained only eighty letters; this edition has one-hundred and thirty-four that include forty-three letters from the collection *Jesuitas na Ásia* at the Ajuda Library in Lisbon. Ninety-four letters were written by Verbiest (forty-eight autographs and forty-six copies), and forty were addressed to him. Verbiest's correspondents were mostly Jesuits, e.g. the Jesuit visitors who were based in Macao; superiors in Canton who facilitated the communication with Europe; and fellow Jesuits in Europe with whom Verbiest had scientific exchanges. Because of his privileged position at the imperial court, Verbiest corresponded with the pope, European kings, and nobility.

The letters are arranged chronologically from his request to be sent to China in 1645 to his death in 1688, but they are unequally spread. Many letters have been lost. For example, between 1657 and 1659, 1663 and 1665, and 1672 to 1675, there are no extant letters. There are seventy-five letters for the last five years of his life (1683–88).

Being a polyglot, Verbiest's correspondence is in six European languages: Latin, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and French. There are, however, no extant letters in Chinese. The letters in this volume are left untranslated, but

Golvers provides bibliographical information in English before each letter (archival reference, variants, previous publications, and translations), as well as a summary of content. He also provides annotations in English, helpful for those who do not read the original language.

The correspondence covers roughly four main topics: Verbiest's scientific and engineering work for the court, his dealings with the Kangxi emperor and imperial officers, the organization of the Jesuit mission, and his dealings with the Jesuit authorities in Macao and in Rome. Golvers's thorough introduction runs to eighty-four pages.

This edition sheds new light on many subjects. Here, I cite only one: cartography. In 1678, Verbiest sent a number of documents and books to Macao, and in the accompanying Portuguese letter—dated August 24, 1678, and addressed to Filippo de Marini in Macao—he drew a list of documents and books, some to be kept in Macao, others to be sent to Europe.

I sent a large map and a small one of the world, as well as two books, the first explaining the main parts of the sublunary world and the second explaining the various kingdoms of the entire world. I sent also maps of the stars, as well as a yellow book with the name of Father Johann Adam Schall on it and which was given to him by the emperor (my translation, 296).

Verbiest refers here to two maps: (1) the *Kunyu quantu* (Full map of the world), and the same map in a smaller size, drawn in 1674; (2) the *Stellar Map of the North and South of the Equator* (*Chidao nanbei xingtu*), drawn in 1672. The two books accompanying the *World map* (*Kunyu quantu*) refer to the *Illustrated account of the world* (*Kunyu tushuo*, 1674) in two *juan* (volumes). In this letter, Verbiest does not mention to whom the maps are addressed, telling Marini to keep these documents until he decides to whom they should be sent (296). Further research could uncover where these maps were sent and whether they are still extant. The original autograph is kept in the National Archives in Madrid (Jes., Leg. 270, n. 87), and there is a copy in the Ajuda Library in Lisbon (49-V-17, n. 110, f. 503^r–4^r), but this important letter was not included in the 1938 edition of Verbiest's letters, and its insertion in Golver's edition provides us valuable information about the making and diffusion of the *Kunyu quantu*.

Golvers has already published several works on Verbiest, and he has here carefully transcribed letters from the originals, respecting the original text as much as possible, by such means as keeping the original transliteration of the Chinese names. This edition of Verbiest's letters will surely be an indispensable

reference work for the studies of the Jesuit missions and for the scientific, cultural, and religious exchanges with the West under the Kangxi reign.

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