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Passage to India: Jesuit Spiritual Economy between Martyrdom and Profit in the Seventeenth Century¹

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Abstract

Historians today seem to agree that passions for spices and for acquisition of objects and territories from the late fifteenth century fuelled the “mercantile revolution” on a global scale. This article will argue that spirituality and commercial enterprise worked together to produce material objects, some of exceptional artistry. These artifacts, books, sculptures, paintings and the attractive narratives written about or around them, sparked spiritual enthusiasm wherever they reached their audience and became fundraising tools for further spiritual conquest and for creation of new material objects. In this case, I will trace the career of one particular Jesuit missionary, Marcello Mastrilli, who invented his own life and future martyrdom with a series of printed books and works of art, all marked by Mastrilli’s spiritual energy and his ability to fill the Jesuit purse.

Keywords

Jesuits, missions, India, martyrdom

Introduction

“What profits a man who acquired the whole world only to lose his soul? (Mt. 16, 26),” wrote Francis Xavier from Kochi to his Jesuit friend Simão Rodrigues in Lisbon, suggesting that in order to save his soul Dom João III,

¹ An earlier version of this essay was published in Portuguese translation as “A História do Futuro: Profecias móveis de jesuítas entre Néapoles, Índia e Brasil (século XVII),” *Cultura. Revista de História e Teoria das Ideias*, 2 série, vol. 24, no. 1 (2007): 123-161. Many people have read and commented on this paper, which was first presented at the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin (2003) where it benefited from insightful comments by Stephen Greenblatt, Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, Kenneth Mills, and Pal Nýiri. I also thank Ângela Barreto Xavier, who translated and improved the first version in Portuguese, as well as Avinoam Shalem’s and Serena Autiero’s comments at a conference in Florence (2011). My special thanks go to the editors and the two anonymous readers at the *JEMH*.

the king of Portugal, should contemplate on this particular passage in his prayers.² As Xavier saw it, and there was a chorus of voices that agreed with him, the Portuguese in Asia were in mortal danger, not only from the elements and enemies, but from their own passions: passions for acquiring riches and territories at the loss of eternal salvation.

The king of Portugal must have taken Xavier's advice seriously—in fact, the whole institution of *Mesa da consciência e ordens* (1532) was built around the intent of protecting and insuring the salvation of the king's soul.³ However, the pursuit of riches, conquests, and acquisitions continued while the priests and missionaries, following in Xavier's footsteps, were called on to safeguard the spiritual topography of the new Catholic world order in the making.

In spite of appearances and the voices protesting against material acquisition, mercantile and spiritual objectives were tightly woven throughout the fabric of the Portuguese early modern global empire. Historians today seem to agree that passions for spices and for acquisition of objects and territories from the late fifteenth century fuelled the “mercantile revolution” on a global scale.⁴ Whether an additional ethical asceticism was the final drop needed to engender capitalism is beyond the point of our main argument, which is that the spirituality and commercial enterprise worked together to produce material objects, some of exceptional artistry. These artifacts, books, sculptures, paintings and the attractive narratives written about or around them, sparked spiritual enthusiasm wherever they reached their audience and became fundraising tools for further spiritual conquest and for creation of new material objects. As if they were two strands of an upward spiral, the spiritual legitimated and endowed the material with otherworldly meaning, and the material rooted the spiritual in multiple concrete sites where it could be accessed by the senses and awaken passions.

In this essay, I follow only one of many electrifying lives of those early modern imperial actors who combined the spiritual and material in a professional way (in multiple senses of the word). These were missionaries and in this case, I will trace the career of one particular Jesuit missionary,

² *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta*, vol. 1 (1535-1548), ed. G. Schurhammer, S. J. and J. Wicki, S. J. (Rome, 1944, 1996), 421.

³ *Mesa da consciência e ordens*, ed. M. do Carmo Jasmins Dias Farinha and A. Azevedo Jara (Lisbon, 1997).

⁴ H. Cook, *Matters of exchange: commerce, medicine, and science in the Dutch Golden Age* (New Haven, 2007).

Marcello Mastrilli, who invented his own life of future martyrdom and went to great lengths to fulfill his “prophecy.” However, as we follow his trail half way around the globe during his lifetime, and girding the globe after death, a series of printed books and works of art were created, marked by Mastrilli’s spiritual energy and his ability to fill the Jesuit purse.

By analyzing the biography of Marcelo Mastrilli as it was fashioned in Jesuit hagiographical literature in the seventeenth century, I will argue that the prophetic visions and narratives of his future martyrdom were relatively common *loci* for the Jesuit construction of an ideal missionary figure. They were strategic institutional tools by which young novices expressed their “vocation” for the missionary profession, and each made a personal vow to go wherever he was sent by the superiors.⁵ Thousands of *Indipetae* (petitions to go to the Indies) addressed to the General of the Society of Jesus in Rome from 1580 to 1773 manifested the same motivation to die for the salvation of others anywhere in the world, in the east or the west Indies or among the Protestants and Muslims.⁶ In the Jesuit vocabulary, “the desire of the Indies” was interchangeable with “the desire of martyrdom.” Individual *indipeta* constituted a spiritual signature and a spontaneous, unofficial supplement to the famous “Fourth Vow” by which the professed Jesuits pledged their “special obedience to the sovereign pontiff regarding missions.”⁷

⁵ A. Prosperi, “Il missionario,” in *L'uomo barocco*, ed. Rosario Villari (Bari, 1991), reprinted in English translation as *Baroque personae* (Chicago, 1995). My two major sources are: *Relacam [Relaçam] de hum prodigioso milagre que o Glorioso S. Francisco Xauier Apostolo do Oriente obrou na Cidade de Napoles no anno de 1634*, College of Rachol, Goa, 1636, facsimile edition (Lisbon, 1989) and Leonardo Cinami’s (or Cinnami) S. J., *Vita, e Morte del Padre Marcello Francesco Mastrilli della Compagnia Di Giesù* (Viterbo, 1695). *Relaçam* is a text that Marcello Mastrilli authorized, but did not write. The *Vita* was written less than ten years after Mastrilli’s death by Cinami, his friend in the college in Naples.

⁶ See A. R. Capoccia, “Le destin des *indipetae* au-delà du XVI^e siècle,” in *Missions religieuses moderne: “Notre lieu est le Monde,”* ed. P. A. Fabre and B. Vincent (Rome, 2007), 91. There are 14,067 *indipetae* letters in the ARSI series. G. C. Roscioni, *Il desiderio delle Indie: Storie, sogni e fughe di giovani gesuiti italiani* (Torino, 2001); P. R. de Andrada Pacheco and M. Massimi, “O conhecimento de si nas Litterae Indipetae,” *Estudos de Psicologia* 10, no. 3 (2005): 345-354. See also C. Russell, “Imagining the ‘Indies’: Italian Jesuit petitions for the overseas missions at the turn of the seventeenth century,” in *L'Europa divisa e i due mondi: per Adriano Prosperi vol. II*, ed. M. Donattini, G. Marccoli, and S. Pastore eds. (Pisa, 2011), 179-89.

⁷ J. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 298.

Depending on the vicissitudes of geo-politics in Europe and overseas, Jesuit missionary “election” for a particular mission was far from being a personal matter. It was a question of a complicated chess game played between the Pope, the Iberian monarchies, and the Jesuit administrators. From the late sixteenth century onwards, the Portuguese *padroado* regularly blocked Jesuit missionaries from Italian or Spanish colleges, especially those seeking Asian missions. It was against these and other types of institutional and political hurdles that the Jesuits developed efficient forms of active spirituality that had a substantial purchase in the early modern Catholic world. As has been lately shown by historians, Jesuit transnational success was based on the ability of building and maintaining horizontal information networks with the support of a hierarchically organized chain of command.⁸ The only way for the Jesuits to mobilize their own network in the face of competition with other religious, mercantile, and state networks, was to invest it with providential expectations and prophetic readings. In a word, they were able to dynamize the present by connecting it to the future. They were working on the “history of the future,” to freely paraphrase António Vieira.⁹

Prophetic drive was neither a Jesuit invention nor monopoly; given its universal reach, it may well be inscribed in the human DNA. But it is much more than the stuff of dreams. The Jesuits made it into another strategy of accommodation between individual agency and institutional instrumentality, between individual spirituality and public profit. The prophetic stream in the Christian tradition has always been closely linked to ethics and aesthetics¹⁰ In this essay, it is our goal to also discuss its “economic” side, that is, its propensity to create wealth (spiritual, political and material) and stimulate demand and consumption. Prophetic drive is not a passion, certainly not considered as such by early modern Europeans, but

⁸ L. Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge, 2008), 17. M. Friedrich, “Government and information-management in early-modern Europe: the case of the Society of Jesus,” *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12, no. 6 (2008): 539-563 and now the same author’s monograph study: *Der lang Arm Roms? Globale Verwaltung und Kommunikation im Jesuitenorden 1540-1773* (Frankfurt, 2011).

⁹ António Vieira, *História do Futuro*, ed. M. L. Carvalhão Buescu (Lisbon, 1992).

¹⁰ Most of the ideas in this article have been developed from two seminal books connecting and analyzing in their own different ways the effects of prophetism, ethics, and aesthetics in the construction of modernity: Michel de Certeau, *La fable mystique, XVI^e-XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1982) and Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the middle age to the seventeenth century* (Princeton, 1986).

just like passion it is a cause of motion, capable of producing change. Just as passions brought to a standstill may become “facts,” prophetic movement (in the soul and within a given community) may turn into “artifacts.”¹¹ It is on the pages of hagiographies written about Mastrilli and about his model Francis Xavier, and in the images that proliferated along his trail from Naples to Japan, that facts and artifacts, words and objects, traveled fast and far within Portuguese empire and into the Catholic world. At least until the end of the century, Mastrilli’s story inspired, in different ways, other Jesuits to dream about mission, travel, martyrdom and of becoming “another Francis Xavier.”

A Narrative of Desire: Between the Hammer and the Vow

Ignatius of Loyola and his companions, the founders of the Society of Jesus, employed their bodies as if they were prophetic astrolabes: surveying, triangulating, and predicting the coordinates of the Divine Will. In *Spiritual Exercises*, Loyola instituted a method called “the discernment of the spirits” in order to tame and frame the excesses of enthusiasm or passions that may insinuate themselves in the decision-making process the method safeguarded. However, with the increase and amplification of hagiographical literature, especially in the seventeenth century, around the years of the canonization of the first two Jesuit saints (in 1622), another venue was open wide for accessing prophetic space in a more immediate manner. By imitation of and visionary communication with the saintly Jesuit figures, new generations of ambitious Jesuits were able to speed up their terrestrial movement and spiritual promotion. Marcello Mastrilli’s story started with a vision of Francis Xavier and it continued to fashion its progress in a series of imitations of his saintly *curriculum vitae*. The benefits of grafting one’s own life onto another famous Jesuit life and afterlife were

¹¹ The history of the Society of Jesus is perhaps the best example of reification of “desires” and passions of one particular man (Ignatius of Loyola) and his small company of friends that built a transnational missionary institution, riding on the crest of prophetic energy. It is necessary to mention that between the “passion” and the object, the mediating and constructive role of the image is crucial. On Ignatius of Loyola’s conception of “composition of place” see Pierre-Antoine Fabre, *Ignace de Loyola: Le lieu de l’image—Le problème de la composition de lieu dans les pratiques spirituelles et artistiques jésuites de la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1992). See also Nicholas Standaert, “The Composition of Place, Creating Space for an Encounter,” *Way* 41, no. 1 (2007): 7-20.

double. By confirming the effective powers of the saint, one acquired a saintly lineage and an immediately helpful (religious) family network. In this way, Mastrilli's life came to be inscribed into Francis Xavier's hagiographies and vice versa.

The external cause of Mastrilli's spiritual vision was no more than an unceremonious object, a hammer. Mastrilli received the critical and, as it turned out to be, providential blow on the head during the final days of the celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception in Naples in 1633. At the time he was thirty years old, a professed father and had already spent half of his life in the Society of Jesus. An aristocrat from Nola, his decision to join the Jesuit novitiate was opposed by his family. Like most of the noble Jesuits, Mastrilli had to stage his escape from the family, abandoning his blood ties for the spiritual ones. In spite of the Jesuit insistence on complete renunciation of kinship connections, it was quite difficult to persuade powerful, aristocratic families to relinquish all authority over their Jesuit sons.¹²

One of the important sociological intentions of the Council of Trent, in particular, and the Counter-Reformation, in general, was to break-up kinship and community solidarities in order to produce individuals responsible directly to the higher authority of the church and subsequently of the state.¹³ The Society of Jesus was one of the key institutions orchestrating this disciplining process and it made special efforts at providing the example within its own house.¹⁴ The disobedience to the earthly, blood father

¹² Jesuit hagiographies and hagiographic histories tend to perhaps exaggerate family opposition. For Roberto Nobili's escape from his aristocratic family, see Augustine Saulière S. J., *His Star in the East*, revised and re-edited by S. Rajamanickam, S. J., (Madras, 1995), 15. See also Aliocha Maldivsky, "Société urbaine et désir de mission: les ressorts de la mobilité missionnaire jésuite à Milan au début du XVII^e siècle," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* (juillet-septembre 2009): 7-32, and Charlotte de Castelneau-l'Estoile, "Élection et vocation: Le choix de la mission dans la province jésuite du Portugal à la fin du XVI^e siècle," in Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Bernard Vincent, *Mission religieuse moderne: "Notre lieue est le monde"* (Rome, 2007), 22-43.

¹³ J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985). Simon Ditchfield, ed., *Christianity and Community in the West: essays for John Bossy* (Aldershot/Burlington, VT, 2001). This central thrust of John Bossy's oeuvre may be seen from the title of his collected essays published in Italian at the initiative of Adriano Prosperi as: *Dalla comunità all'individuo: Per una storia sociale dei sacramenti nell'Europa moderna* (Turin, 1998).

¹⁴ On "disciplinamento" see Paolo Prodi, ed., *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna, 1994). See also Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Torino, 1996). Ute

was repeatedly staged and contrasted to the obedience to the celestial Father and his earthly representative, the Church.

Just like Mastrilli, most of the Jesuit novices from Italian aristocratic families followed a three-step scenario in order to dissociate themselves effectively from the dense web of parental relations.¹⁵ In the first dramatic act, they ran away from the paternal household in order to start their novitiate training. A second step consisted of a series of prescribed spiritual experiences, the “fruit” of which were supposed to lead the novice to pledge his adherence to the Society of Jesus. During the four-week retreat in *spiritual exercises*, the novices not only were required to give up their desire to become Jesuits, they were also encouraged to imagine and project in time and space their own career goals. The *indipetae* letters were often written at this point, because of the maturation of the desire and the will to offer their bodies and lives for the missionary cause. This is the third and usually final step in a deliberate severance from stifling parental ties, but also, surreptitiously so, in their denunciation of a much broader spectrum of ties, including those of the Society of Jesus.

The anatomy of the Jesuit missionary articulated as enthusiasm to travel overseas and to die by shedding blood for Christ, schematically and repeatedly expressed in the *indipetae*, revealed itself through key words such as “vocation,” “desire,” “ardor,” “dream,” “vision,” and through descriptions of providential signs and events. *Indipetae* told of the most extraordinary theater of individual Jesuit expectations, constraints, hopes, and fears. A Jesuit had to continuously cultivate, as one of the actors laconically stated, a certain “desire of the desire.”¹⁶ Similarly, all through his childhood, according to the hagiographical “evidence,” Mastrilli had premonitions of his future martyrdom and of the steps leading to it. When he was still a novice a silver cross crashed onto his head, which left him happy and content, maintained Cinami, because it was “an anagram, which in this case announced the news of his most happy voyage to the Indies.”¹⁷ During his novitiate in the College of Naples, as his desires and impatience

Lotz-Heuman, “Imposing church and social discipline,” in *Cambridge History of Christianity: Reform and Expansion 1500-1660*, vol. VI, ed. R. Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge, 2007), 244-260.

¹⁵ For lower class recruits, family resistance was often weak since joining the Jesuit order meant improving one’s social status.

¹⁶ Roscioni, *Il desiderio delle Indie*, 198.

¹⁷ Cinami, *Vita*, 17.

with the future grew, Mastrilli's hagiographers claimed that he wrote thousands of *indipetae* to the General and to his superiors.¹⁸

Mastrilli's restlessness had something to do with his family ties, since even as a Jesuit he had to abide by the rules imposed by his paternal uncles, also Jesuits. He was required to provide non-religious services to other important ecclesiastical figures that were also his relatives. It seems that his special skills were in building and decorating *apparati di festa*, amply used in the seventeenth century especially by the Church and the Jesuit order. Sumptuous ephemeral structures were regularly built in churches and palaces to celebrate religious feasts such as *Quarantore*, canonizations, and *possessi* following the election of the new pope as well as the pomp associated with their funerals.¹⁹ Of course, profane ceremonies such as royal entries, anniversaries, births, marriages, embassies, and other occasions were celebrated with the use of ephemeral art, from food-table displays to costumes and fireworks. Especially after the canonization ceremony of Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier, the Jesuits had stepped up the theatrical display of their own saints, martyrs, and benefactors. Historians of art even talk about a new Jesuit code, which emphasized "spectacularity."²⁰

The aforementioned hammer hit Mastrilli precisely as he worked in the backstage of such a spectacular structure erected in the palace of the Viceroy of Naples. He was responsible for construction of one of the four altars for the celebration of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception. His close friend Carlo Brancaccio ordered Mastrilli to apply his skills for this important local display of Catholic piety.²¹ Being a behind-the-scene decorator of a baroque façade was not a preferred vocation for a pious and combative young aristocrat. In this respect, he was one of the many disgruntled Jesuits

¹⁸ Daniello Bartoli, *Dell'Istoria della compagnia di Gesù: Il Giappone, seconda parte, Dell'Asia, libro quinto* (Florence, 1852), 105; Cinami, *Vita*, 16, 20, 21.

¹⁹ M. Fagiolo dell'Arco and S. Carandini, *L'effimero Barocco: strutture della festa nella Roma del 600* (Roma, 1978); M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Corpus delle feste a Roma*, 2 vols. (Roma, 1997).

²⁰ P. Bjurström, "Baroque Theater and the Jesuits," in *Baroque Art: The Jesuit Contribution*, ed. R. Wittkower and I. B. Jaffe, (New York, 1972, 101).

²¹ Diego Ramirez, S. J., *Relación de un prodigioso milagro que San Francisco Javier, Apóstol de la India, ha hecho en la ciudad de Nápoles este año de 1643* (Madrid, 1643). Integral text published in María Gabriela Torres Olleta, *Relación de un prodigioso milagro que San Francisco Javier en Nápoles*, Pliegos volandero del GRISO 4 (Pamplona, 2003), 6. Ignacio Stafford, *Historia de la celestial vocation: Misiones apostolicas y gloriosa muerte del Padre Marcello Francisco Mastrilli* (Lisbon, 1639), 1.

who dreamt of bigger tasks as missionaries and as spiritual seekers.²² Talent or excellence in a particular domain, such as in decoration or medical skills, was often used as pretext not to let young Jesuits leave for the mission without returning. However, Mastrilli found a way to escape for the third time. He profited from the real head wound he suffered behind the scenes of a sumptuous ephemeral altar to create his own spectacle of desire, miracle, and prophecy.

As he lay hovering between life and death in the Jesuit residence of the professed fathers in Naples because of the “important lesions on the brain and on the internal nerves,” a high fever and severe headaches, and a swollen right eye “closed off to the natural light,” he extracted from his superior permission to go to the Indies in the case he survived his ordeal. An apparition of Saint Xavier appeared to Mastrilli via the agency of a painting of Xavier in pilgrim attire and with a staff in his right hand that used to hang in the infirmary without anybody giving it any attention. The saint, whose body remained in Goa, except for a piece of his right arm enshrined on the side altar in the church of Gesù in Rome, walked out of the frame of this painting in his celestial body straight to the bed of the ailing Marcello Mastrilli and engaged him in a sacred conversation.²³

All hagiographical narratives stage this scene as a theater within the theater, except that one of the actors, Xavier, is visible and audible only to Mastrilli. The spectators—that is, the Jesuits who surrounded him on what was considered his deathbed—heard only Mastrilli’s answers. Later however, some of them testified that as they moved through the space they felt the sweet presence of some external force. The conversation was both simple and formal. “And so, what’s happening,” asked the saint, “do you want to die or go to India?”²⁴ Mastrilli responded that he did not desire anything else but what his divine Majesty thought fit for him. With this particular formula of obedience, the rest of the conversation was nothing else but Mastrilli repeating Xavier’s words, probably so that his terrestrial audience could also hear. What he repeated was the simple public vow by which a Jesuit novice pledged to enter the Society of Jesus. This particular vow was a Jesuit invention and did not apply to any other religious order. Its

²² M. de Certeau, *Fable Mystique, XVI^e-XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1982) and “La réforme de l’intérieur au temps d’Aquaviva, 1581-1615,” in *Les jésuites: Spiritualité et activité, jalons d’une histoire* (Paris and Rome, 1974).

²³ *Relaçam*, 8-9.; Cinami, *Vita*, 43.

²⁴ *Relaçam*, 18.

particularity was that while the novice pledged to become a Jesuit, the Society of Jesus eschewed any obligation to actually accept him. This vow was defined as a “contract” between the candidate and the God, not between the novice and the superior.²⁵

The sacred conversation and encounter between Xavier and Mastrilli did not end with the pronouncement of the religious vow that bound inextricably the living, the dead, and the divine. The rising tension of the scenario required miraculous healing as a closing act. This was the moment where Mastrilli’s final dissociation from the bonds of kinship and friendship took place. Again repeating after Xavier, Mastrilli pronounced in Latin:

I renounce . . . my parents, my friends, my own house and Italy and anything else that can prevent me from [going on] the Indian mission and I dedicate myself completely to the salvation of Indian souls, in the presence of the Saintly Father, Francis Xavier.²⁶

It is probably more than a coincidence that by the time he was injured with the hammer, most of the senior members of his family (his father, his Jesuit uncles and his older brother) were already dead. The frontiers of his personal freedom, choice, and desire were much wider, constrained only by his membership of the Jesuits. The apparition of Xavier and his miraculous healing settled that particular problem.

The *mis-en-abîme* of voices in the sacred conversation in Jesuit hagiographies signaled a particular psychological containment strategy. It was by speaking through the voices of saintly dead persons, especially dead Jesuits, that one could simultaneously enrich and profit from the collective hagiographic space. The self-effacement and dissolution of the self into the chosen life of a saint did not mean a lack of subjectivity. On the contrary, it enabled Mastrilli to assume a bold attitude and display personal qualities of heroism and recklessness usually associated with aristocratic birth. After the miraculous healing, Mastrilli did not need permission from the Jesuit General to go to India anymore. According to his biographer Cinami, the

²⁵ In the *Relaçam* published in Goa, Mastrilli’s vow is recorded in Latin and translated into Portuguese. On special Jesuit vows and a ritual called “the giving of simple public vows,” see Pierre-Antoine Fabre, “Prononcer ses vœux: Propositions pour une étude des rituels d’énunciation orale du vœu dans la tradition des Ordres religieux” *L’Inactuel* 4 (1995): 121-129.

²⁶ *Relaçam*, 27.

General responded to Mastrilli saying that “he should not expect [the permission] from him since he had obtained it from Saint Francis.”²⁷

Prophetic Wounds and Divine Healing

Prophetic visions, dreams, and apparitions were capable of disaggregating structures of authority and power. For this reason, early modern political and religious institutions multiplied strategies to uproot them altogether or to encase them into sanctioned and sanctified frames. Mastrilli’s “unframing” of Saint Francis Xavier was an act of rebellion both against his family and the Society of Jesus. His head wound, described in gory detail in the hagiographies, was a logical beginning for his staged *coup de force*. The culture of violence, especially present among the aristocratic members of the Society of Jesus, was manifest primarily in the way they treated their own bodies. Despite early internal legislation promoted by Ignatius of Loyola against excessive mortification of the flesh and that, in truth, even martyrdom was not fully encouraged, the Jesuits continued to practice at least milder forms of self-disciplining. Jesuit historians and hagiographers, on the other hand, exalted the practice disproportionately. Violent stories were integral part of the saints’ lives and turbulent history and wars in Europe in the later sixteenth and seventeenth century equipped contemporary readers with a certain degree of painful expectation.²⁸

Even prophecies were always connected with violence. In Mastrilli’s case, according to the story he dictated to Manoel da Lima in Goa in 1636, Xavier guided his hand to the truly sick place on his head.

[Xavier] put the staff that he carried in his right hand into the left hand and with the right hand he touched his own head, not on the side that corresponded to the Father’s wound but on the left side above his ear. This place had in fact always been infected and was killing the patient.²⁹

What is hinted at in this passage is that the hammer injury was not really mortal. It was a prophetic wound, a synecdoche of the future events leading

²⁷ Cinami, *Vita*, 61.

²⁸ Richard Verstegan, *Théâtre des cruautés des hérétiques de notre temps* (Paris, 1583), ed. F. Lestringant (Paris, 1995).

²⁹ *Relaçam*, 25.

to martyrdom.³⁰ Prophetic wounds were an integral part of the Jesuit hagiographies from the beginning; Ignatius of Loyola was wounded “between his legs” and thus renounced a courtier-cum-soldier career, Francis Xavier bled from his nose after an attack by demons in his sleep.³¹

The physicians who tried to cure Mastrilli prefigured his future torturers. The *Relaçam* published in Goa was written, however, before Mastrilli’s agonizing death in Japan. Later hagiographers like Cinami, Neuberger, Bartoli, and Pagès, when writing of Mastrilli’s martyrdom underscored those elements that fitted the early account of physicians’ therapy. The curing and torturing effort was focused on the mouth. In Naples the surgeon “opened up a way” for administering medicine with iron, “with great pain to the mouth of the patient and ran three times a wax candle from the throat to the stomach to see if the obstacle is nearby and coming from the abundance of a humor.”³²

Five years later, in Japan, Mastrilli was submitted to the *anatsurushi* torture, the main feature of which was that the victim was suspended upside down in a pit full of either water, excrement, or sulfur fumes. The purpose was apostasy, not execution. The architects of this particular strategy of eradicating Christianity from Japan by showing the weakness of Christians in their faith rather than by organizing the spectacle of martyrdom were the apostate Christians themselves. Inoue Chikugo no Kami Masashige, the great Inquisitor, thereby managed to destroy some of the very promising Jesuit careers in Japan.³³ The most important and famous one was Cristóvão Ferreira, whose life would be ultimately braided into the life of Marcello Mastrilli.³⁴ The hagiographers would claim *a posteriori* that

³⁰ The Jesuit hagiographers were not the first to use prophetic wounds in order to explain coming events. The prophetic meaning of wounds is a standard *topos* in Christian literature.

³¹ For Loyola’s wound “between the legs,” see his autobiography as told to Father Luís Gonçalves da Câmara. Joseph N. Tylenda, *A Pilgrim’s Journey: The Autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola* (Wilmington, 1985). For Xavier’s fight with demons in his sleep, see Georg Schurhammer, S. J., *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times, volume 1: Europe (1506-1541)*, trans. M. Joseph Coteloe, S. J. (Rome, 1973), 434-435.

³² *Relaçam*, 10.

³³ George Elison, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA, 1973), 187.

³⁴ For a chilling Japanese literary reconstruction of Ferreira’s apostasy see, Shusaku Endo’s novel *Silence* (1966) and the latter’s haunting cinematic realization by Masahiro Shinoda (1971). Andrew Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742* (Maryknoll, NY, 1994), 101.

Mastrilli was miraculously hurt and healed at the same time (in 1633) as Ferreira endured a five-day torture in the pit that made him apostatize. Hence, the story goes, Mastrilli was sent by heaven to reconvert Ferreira, *alias* Sawano Chūan. Two Jesuit expeditions did in fact try just that in 1642.³⁵ The end result was that some ended as martyrs and others as apostates and the Jesuit mission in Japan came to its end.

The hagiographers depicted the torture and subsequent decapitation of Mastrilli on October 17, 1637, two months after his arrival in Japan as satiated with wonderful miracles. He appeared immune to pain, no blood flew from his wounds, and the angels came to wipe his brow and comfort him in the pit.³⁶ “He was absorbed in a marvelous ecstasy and was in a state of peace and tranquility during this most cruel torment, as if he were lying down on a bed [full] of roses.”³⁷ Since each time he opened his mouth, he said something like “leave me alone, I’m in my paradise” and other pious words, they silenced him by a piece of iron with sharp nails thrust inside his mouth.³⁸ Finally he was decapitated, but not before the executioner’s third attempt, when Mastrilli himself encouraged him to go on with his business.³⁹

Jesuit prophetic wounds were not only the first step in a rite of passage, that is, of dissociation from the dense social relations and preparation for the departure on a mission, they were self-conscious markers and instruments of the politics of identity. The body itself was the locus of all divine and demonic interventions and was thus constantly watched closely and examined. The future was often written on it one-step ahead, just as in Mastrilli’s case. As a rule, one survived wounds or illnesses that were prophetic signs of even greater divine suffering for the faith.⁴⁰ The dialectic between illness and healing was an important part of missionary life in particular and was developed into an epistolary *topos*.⁴¹

³⁵ Ross, *Vision Betrayed*, 108.

³⁶ Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, 198, 447.

³⁷ Cinami, *Vita*, 156.

³⁸ Cinami, *Vita*, 156.

³⁹ Cinami, *Vita*, 159.

⁴⁰ Mastrelli even attributed the survival of himself and his thirty-two fellow Jesuits on the journey from Lisbon to Goa to Divine Providence: “Il Signore mio Glorioso non ha permesso che falecisse ninguno de 33 che ci imbarcammo in Lisboa.” See his letter from Goa (March 6, 1636), *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, Jap/Sin 37, f. 386.

⁴¹ Most of the Jesuits arriving in India, for example, started their first letters home by describing their suffering and illness on board ship or due to the tropical climate. The

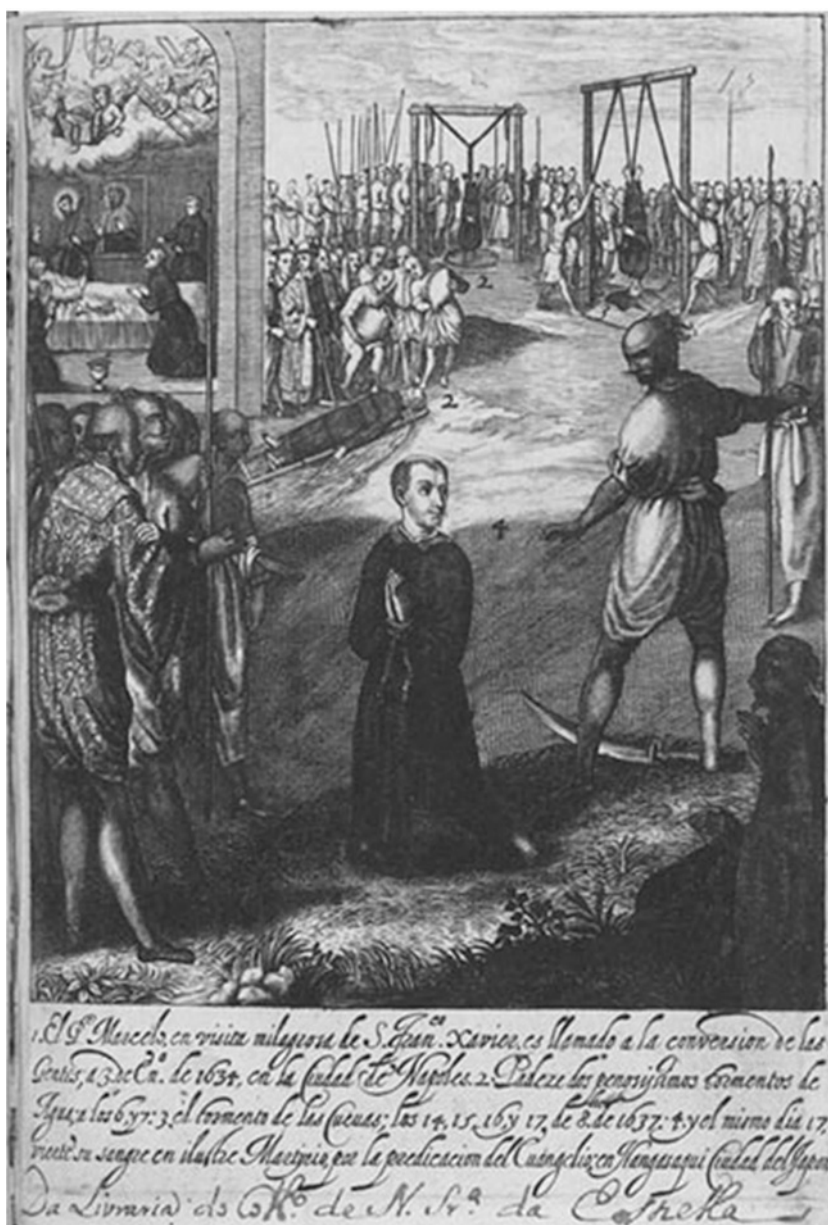


Fig. 1. The martyrdom of Marcello Mastrilli in Japan. From Ignace Stafford, S. J., *Historia de la celestial Vocacion, Misiones apostolicas, y gloriosa Muerte; del Padre Marcelo Fran[cis]co Mastrili, hijo del Marques de S. Marsano, Indiatico felicissimo de la Compañia de IHS.* Antonio Telles da Silva, por el Pe Ignacio Stafford de la Compañia de Jesus. Lisboa: por Antonio Alvarez, 1639. Used with permission from the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal.

Xavier had instantly cured Mastrilli's prophetic wound, to a point that no trace of it remained to hamper his project. He was healthier than ever after the miracle. When he untied bandages on his head there were "no signs, no stitches, no scars of the fortunate blow; the hair that was cut some days ago during the [medical] treatment was all grown back and in order; and finally all in its previous state as if he had never received the wound."⁴² It is important to note here that the Society of Jesus avoided sending sick or deformed Jesuits to the missions.

The bodies of those that were touched by the divine healing hand acquired thaumaturgical powers in their own right. Just as objects belonging to Xavier became relics, those that were touched by Mastrilli were believed to have curing properties even during his lifetime.⁴³ Thus his bed was used to heal the sick, and the room in which he saw the apparition of Xavier was later made into a chapel "all embellished by golden works and excellent paintings representing what happened there and all that happened after the prophecy of the Saint."⁴⁴ In fact, Mastrilli's act amplified the tenor of Neapolitan baroque piety and enhanced the prestige of the Society of Jesus and their saints.⁴⁵ From his role as decorator of the ephemeral altars and theatrical structures, Mastrilli himself became the most important protagonist in the play. Not long after his recovery, under popular demand, the Neapolitan Jesuit College organized "the most glorious feast (*gloriosissima Festa*)" in honor of Saint Francis Xavier. The highest moment of the feast was when the painting of Saint Francis Xavier as a pilgrim, the one that served as an intermediary between the saint and the ailing Mastrilli, was brought to the church and suspended in the chapel dedicated to the saint. Reportedly, the image cured one person on the same day it was moved and continued to do so ever since. The problem was that

subsequent recovery of health was taken as a clear sign of divine predisposition for a particular mission. See Ines G. Županov, *Missionary Tropics: Jesuit Frontier in India (16th-17th century)* (Ann Arbor, 2005) and Ines G. Županov, "Conversion, Illness and Possession: Catholic Missionary Healing in Early Modern South Asia," in *Divins remèdes: Médecine et religion en Asie du Sud*, ed. Ines G. Županov and Caterina Guenzi, *Purushartha* 27 (2008): 263-300.

⁴² *Relaçam*, 30.

⁴³ Cinami, *Vita*, 60, "tutte le sue cose devantavano subito reliquie."

⁴⁴ Daniello Bartolli, *Dell'Istoria della comapagnia di Gesù: Il Giappone, seconda parte, Dell'Asia, Libro quinto*, (Florence, 1832), 115.

⁴⁵ On Jesuit "missionary theater" in Naples, see Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils; the Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Aldershot/Burlington VT, 2004).

the Portuguese Jesuits resented Italian missionaries sent to the Asian Assis-tancy of the Society of Jesus. Even during Portugal's Philippine period (1580-1640), when the crowns of Portugal and Spain were united, the "national quarrel" between the missionaries continued.⁴⁶ Hence, when Mastrilli "received" the saintly order to go to India, he was also challenging Spanish royal orders trying to diminish the number of Italian missionaries in Asia and the Portuguese Jesuit resistance to accepting them within their fold. As Thomas J. Csordas rightly put it, "the social control of prophecy went hand in hand with prophecy as social control."⁴⁷

Reproduction of Sacred Images

Mastrilli's life history after he departed from Naples spiraled upward towards sanctity, miracles, and martyrdom. Sacred objects, either existing before or constituted as such after Mastrilli had touched or implicated them in his enterprise, punctuate the stages of his life path. He left Naples equipped with a new name, Francesco, and thus nominally identified himself with his saintly predecessor. As he traveled through Italy on his way to Lisbon, the port of embarkation for Goa, Mastrilli visited various Italian towns and in each place stopped to tell his story to the enraptured audience and to multiply special signs of divine providence. Mastrilli's *Life* was engulfed by past and future, by unfolding maps of memory and prophecy from the beginning to the end. In the interstices of these lush floating *apparati* of the imagination, political and pragmatic interests can also be discerned. The number of martyrs that he saw in a dream in Loreto reappeared in Rome inscribed in stone. According to his biographer Cinami, when he visited the catacombs of Rome he read an antique inscription "that said, Marcello and forty companions, martyrs for Christ."⁴⁸ Forty is exactly the number of Jesuits he included in his mission group for the Orient. It was one of the largest batches of missionaries destined for Asia in years, and was an initiative that had been conceived over and against multiple obstacles. The general of the order, the Pope, and the king of Spain were all reluctant to commit more missionaries to the Oriental enterprise. The Portuguese were losing territories to the Dutch and were unable and

⁴⁶ Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540-1750* (Stanford, 1996), 267-272.

⁴⁷ Thomas J. Csordas, *Language, Charisma and Creativity, Ritual Life in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal* (New York, 2001), 205.

⁴⁸ Cinami, *Vita*, 122.

unwilling to provide financial support for missionary work. That Mastrilli managed to finally embark with at least thirty-two of his companions on the two ships that left for Goa in 1635 required intense lobbying in Lisbon in spite of the royal *placet*.⁴⁹

As successful as he was in summoning celestial beings to show him the future, Mastrilli was also skilful in procuring money. Both were crucial for accomplishing his mission—in fact, prophecy and finances mutually embodied each other. When passing through Rome, Mastrilli not only venerated a piece of Xavier's right hand sent from Goa at the insistence of the general Claudio Acquaviva in 1615, but also managed to collect alms for the costs of the Bull of Canonization which had not yet been sent to Goa because of the death of Pope Gregory XV.⁵⁰ More than the Bull of Canonization, a formal document by which the pope commanded public veneration of the saint, Mastrilli's vision became a powerful instrument for promoting popular devotion of Saint Francis Xavier. The Counter-Reformation tried to impose a strict control on visionary painting, "only visions whose authenticity had been verified and whose holy interpretation had been accepted were allowed to become a pictorial representation."⁵¹ This final guarantee of authenticity was not easily granted.

However, Mastrilli's vision was induced by a real painting, which turned out to be a "window" through which the supernatural could meet the natural world. Miraculous images and their effect on popular devotion were never fully trusted by the ecclesiastical authorities, because of the permanent suspicion of theological unorthodoxy. Most of the theoreticians of post-Tridentine Catholic art, such as Gabrielle Paleotti, defined sacred images primarily in terms of their effects on the beholder. They were supposed to move the viewer to piety and ethical behavior. However, some sacred images could be "reckless, scandalous, erroneous, suspect, heretical, superstitious, and apocryphal."⁵² Mastrilli's choice of the image was

⁴⁹ Cinami, *Vita*, 123

⁵⁰ See Ines G. Županov, "The Prophetic and the Miraculous in Portuguese Asia; A Hagiographical View of Colonial Culture," in *Saints and Sinners*, ed. Sanjay Subrahmanyam (New Delhi, 1996), 135-161. The manuscript of the history of the Society of Jesus by Sebastião Gonçalves and the relic hand of Francis Xavier were sent together in the same package on the same ship.

⁵¹ Victor Stoichita, *Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art* (London, 1995), 25.

⁵² Pamela M. Jones, "Art Theory as Ideology: Gabriele Paleotti's Hierarchical Notion of Painting's Universality and Reception," in *Reframing Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450-1650*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven, 1995), 132.

felicitous in many respects. It was an anonymous, modest, even “invisible” work of art. Even the iconological aspect of the painting was dubious since, Cinami confessed, “I looked at it thousand times while passing through and I never saw the Saint on it, never even thought that it was the image of Saint Francis Xavier.”⁵³

The way the Neapolitan Jesuit College acquired the painting was also mysterious since it seems that it was offered for a very low price to a Jesuit scholastic travelling to Naples. These kind of authorless and unattractive paintings were typical candidates for receiving miraculous powers. They also proved to be hard to destroy in shipwrecks, fires, and similar natural and divine tests. It was as if their mediocre artistic accomplishment left enough space for the configuration of holy energy.⁵⁴ Even the audience did not expect to see the mere representation of a saint, but its potentially kinescopic version, a moving image and a speaking image—the prayer becomes a dialogue. Of course, this is scarcely new since popular devotion always depended on divine response, but what is unexpected was that the Jesuits seemed to presume that the right kinds of sacred images were capable of stimulating small daily miracles of piety *ad infinitum* in the souls of the beholders.

A miraculous painting cannot be reproduced in all its material and celestial substantiality. The unique image from which Saint Francis Xavier emerged to heal Mastrilli remained above the chapel altar in Naples and continued its miraculous vocation. Since a miraculous painting was considered a window into the supernatural, viewing the material object itself was just a first step on the ladder to the mystical experience. And the first step was important, hence the “mechanical” reproduction of the original in as many examples as possible became desirable and imperative. One can speak of a cult of an image. “The whole world is full of copies of this particular image,” wrote Cinami.⁵⁵ Besides “printed images” of the painting coming out of presses in Naples, Rome, Germany, Flanders, and Spain, various painters reportedly reproduced it in hundreds of examples. Cinami told of one painter in Naples who made three hundred of them.⁵⁶

⁵³ Cinami, *Vita*, 43.

⁵⁴ On miraculous images with obscure origins, see Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990), 5. On intersession of images and the notion of “authentic” images, see Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, 1997).

⁵⁵ Cinami, *Vita*, 43.

⁵⁶ Mastrilli did not give the names of the painters. The lineage of images that sprang from Mastrilli’s image of Xavier the pilgrim with a staff has not yet been studied by art

According to the later hagiographer-historian of the Society of Jesus, Daniello Bartolli, the paintings produced after the miracle actually depicted various stages in the movements of the Saint during Mastrilli's vision. Thus, he was sometimes portrayed clutching the staff in his right hand and the left hand flat on his chest, or with the staff in his left hand and the right hand pointing to the side of the head to which his relic had to be applied.⁵⁷ The images of the miracle traveled fast, either as engravings in books or as oil paintings. Mastrilli himself gave them away as presents at each and every stop on his way to India. Given that Mastrilli had no means of carrying with him hundreds of paintings as presents to his hosts, he employed various painters who literally embodied his narrative on the spot.

The close complicity between an engaged imagination and the pictorial arts was central to Jesuit visual sensitivity. After decades of teaching and practicing spiritual exercises under Ignatius's and Nadal's motto of "composition, seeing the place," the Jesuits educated generations of believers in approaching sacred images as sensory narratives. That is, the instability of the imagination required that the holy scenes be fixed in a particular space, but at the same time, the pictures were composed of a narrative closed circle. The eye of the beholder was invited to move from one spot to another as if in a rosary prayer. The introduction of small numbers and legends below the texts were further props for the memory and for meditation widely used in Jesuit engravings.⁵⁸ Between image and annotation, the dialectic of the gaze led to the spiritual entrapment of the viewer.

A miraculous image is similarly a snare for the beholders, and to an extent, for the painters. As a sudden visual rupture, the miraculous image precedes its own material execution. Thus, it chooses painters and leads the brush to its finishing. The day before leaving Lisbon and embarking on the sea voyage to Goa, Mastrilli found himself without a single painting of Xavier and was offered services of a Jesuit novice. Just as he made an effort "with worthy masters in Naples, in Rome, in Genoa and in Madrid to form images that resembled the true one," Mastrilli sat with the novice and described Xavier and the whole scene in detail until bedtime.⁵⁹ The next

historians. Perhaps the best-known painting of Xavier with the staff is by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo in Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford (Connecticut). Another painting is that of Mattia Preti in Saint John's Cathedral in Malta. Where those thousands of paintings are is hard to say, but a similar image itself appeared on the stamp of the Estado da India.

⁵⁷ Bartolli, *Dell'Istoria della compagnia di Gesù*, 115.

⁵⁸ Jeffery Chipps Smith, *Sensuous worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton, 2002), 43.

⁵⁹ Bartolli, *Dell'Istoria della compagnia di Gesù*, 125.

morning, when the novice presented his finished painting for inspection, Mastrilli said, “in less than one night you have finished what king’s painters in Madrid were not able to do in three months... This is not your work, but of Xavier, my holy father who portrayed himself by your hand.”⁶⁰

This novice was Domingos da Cunha (1598-1644), also known as *o Cabrinha* (“the little goat”), a famous Jesuit painter in Lisbon, who reportedly painted Saint Francis Xavier from Mastrilli’s vision in one night.⁶¹ There is also another, anonymous painting, extant today in the Bom Jesus Basilica in Goa that represents Xavier as pilgrim with a staff.⁶² The only detail that distinguished this image from Mastrilli’s description is that on the Goan painting, Xavier holds a little burning heart in his left hand. The veneration of the Sacred Heart was another devotional practice coming into prominence among the Jesuits and other Catholic orders, in France in particular, around the same time. It was only natural that these two devotional practices met at one point and were inscribed on a painting.

In India, the image finally encountered the original model. Mastrilli’s voyage to India was a return to the source of the saintly miraculous energy, the body relic conserved in the Bom Jesus Basilica in the center of the city of Goa. This imposing structure constructed of rust-colored laterite was built precisely to accommodate the sacred body. It took almost half a century to build, but it was basically finished for the celebration of Xavier’s canonization that took place in Goa in 1624.⁶³

⁶⁰ Bartolli, *Dell’Istoria della compagnia di Gesù* 125.

⁶¹ António Franco S. J., *Imagem da virtude em o noviciado da Companhia de Jesu na corte de Lisboa em que se contem a fundaçam da casa. & os Religiosos de virtude, que em Lisboa foraõ Novicos. Offerecida A’ Virgem Senhora da Assumpçao Padroeira do mesmo Noviciado* (Coimbra, 1717), 487-488. Serrão Vitor, *A Pintura Proto-Barroca em Portugal, 1612-1657* (Coimbra, 1992), 2.124. Joaquim Caetano de Oliveira, “Uma brevissima nota acerca das Fontes da vida de Santo Ignácio de Loyola na igreja de S. Roque de Lisboa (Catálogo da Exposição),” *O púlpito e a Imagem: Os Jesuitas e a Arte* (Lisbon, 1996), 43-55.

⁶² *Relaçam*, 39, “uma dos quaes, o mais semelhante no gestos e alegria ao S. quando appareço, esta ja nesta acidade de Goa, na Caza professa... pintalo em Lisboa hu irmão da Companhia em huma noite.” Pedro Dias identified this painting as Italian baroque. It can be found (neglected!) in the passage between the church Bom Jesus in Goa and the interior courtyard of the professed house. Pedro Dias, *História da arte Portuguesa no mundo (1415-1822)* (Lisbon, 1998), 210.

⁶³ Dias, *História da arte Portuguesa*, 87. For a new take on Goan church architecture see: Paulo Varela Gomes, *Whitewash, Red Stone: A History of Church Architecture in Goa* (New Delhi, 2011).



Fig. 2. Anonymous painting of Saint Francis Xavier as a pilgrim from Mastrilli's miracle. Bom Jesús Basilica, Goa, India. Picture by IGŽ. This figure is published in color in the online version.

It is precisely in India that the projected prophetic space of Mastrilli's vision encountered political space. These two spaces crossed each other literally in the materiality and production of another short hagiographical narrative of the miracle in Naples. The booklet entitled *Relaçam* was published in the Colégio de Santo Ignácio de Loyola in Rachol in 1636.⁶⁴ Moreover, Mastrilli himself narrated the story "viva voce" in Goa in the presence of the Viceroy Pedro da Silva on the December, 28, 1635. India was, therefore, a place from which Mastrilli spoke to his audience and to his readers in this particular Indian edition. His vision had, obviously, already traveled and arrived at its destination in Goa at the feet of the Saint Xavier, the Apostle of the Indies. The reenactment, re-transcription, and translation of his vision into Portuguese took place at a time when the Portuguese faced difficulties in Asia. The Portuguese were losing control of their Asian sea routes and mercantile networks to the Dutch, while at the same time a major political crisis simmered in Portugal itself that resulted in the severing of the ties with the Spanish crown and the rise of the third (or fourth, if one counts the Hapsburgs) and the last Portuguese dynasty in 1640.

Under permanent menace from enemies in the hinterland, the Dutch from the sea, and epidemics from within the Goan territory, the miraculous reappeared rhythmically in various churches and ecclesiastical milieus. On February 8, 1636, according to Manuel de Faria e Sousa, a statue of Christ crucified in the church of the female monastery of Santa Monica in Goa opened its eyes and threw the ecstatic nuns into sacred terror with loud screams. In the course of a couple of days, the sculpture also opened its mouth as if to speak, bled from its stigmata and appeared to be moving as if alive. These events filled the church with people and forced the bishop Dom Frei Miguel Rangel to investigate the miracle joined by the inquisitors and the Governor Pedro da Silva.⁶⁵ Another sign, perhaps of God's ire but also of his presence (or simply negligence) was fire that destroyed the old monastery on Christmas Eve of the same year (December 24, 1636). The fire started from the *presépio* illuminated with candles. The reconstructed building, still standing perched against the slope of the hill, is one of the most impressive structures in Goa today.

⁶⁴ Carlos Sommervogel, S. J., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus, Nouvelle Edition* (Bruxelles, 1944), 5.715-717.

⁶⁵ José Nicolau da Fonseca, *An Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa*, 1st ed. (Bombay, 1878), Rev. ed. (New Delhi, 1994), 310-11.

Spiritual Fundraising and Fabrication of Sacred Objects

What all these visions and apparitions have in common is movement. The holy subjects are represented as making special efforts at moving and speaking to their beholders. There is an urgency and craving for the miraculous, as if the time was running out (and it was) for this kind of divine display. By the mid-seventeenth century, the spectacular was, in fact, imperceptibly unseating the miraculous. For the four months that Mastrilli stayed in Goa, he succeeded in bringing the spectacular and the miraculous together. His experiences as a decorator in Naples and as a fundraiser throughout his journey through southern Europe were put to good use in Goa. Between December 8, 1635 when he arrived and April 1636 when he left for Melaka and further on to Macau, Manila, and Japan, he managed to inflame the Christians with extraordinary devotion.

What comes clearly from the hagiographical thick description by Cinami and Bartolli was Mastrilli's obsession with Xavier's relic.⁶⁶ The management of the Saint's body has a rich history itself.⁶⁷ The Jesuits in Goa struggled hard against the attempts to disperse Xavier's relics, since from the moment of his death, the saint's body had been stolen, mutilated, pieces of it were bitten off, and both Lisbon and Rome had never stopped demanding the repatriation of the whole relic under whatever pretext. Moreover, Portuguese officials and Jesuit provincials continued to open up the coffin and to examine the body in spite of the strict prohibition by the General of the order. The reason for this endless interest in the state of Xavier's body was the fact that the incorruptibility of the relic was invested with the ultimate political meaning. In the Torrid Zone where, according to Portuguese experience, everything rotted (including the bodies and the souls of the Portuguese) their saintly protector's fresh body was a permanent religious and political miracle. In the saint's body the Portuguese Indian colonial society observed itself in all its vaunted, uncorrupted glory. After the canonization, access to the body was restricted, especially since reporting any sign of decay was politically unpopular.

⁶⁶ In the same way, Mastrilli's letters from Goa described Xavier's tomb ("Sepulcro del mio Gloriosissimo santo") as "giardino delle mie delizie... fiume delle Divine Dolcezze." Letter to Italian Ambassador to Madrid, from Goa, March 6, 1636, *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, Jap/Sin 37, f. 236.

⁶⁷ See the first chapter in Zupanov, *Missionary Tropics*. Maria Cristina Osswald, Pamila Gupta, and Ananya Chakravarti have recently written their dissertations on topics that engage with Francis Xavier and his cult.

Mastrilli, who knelt night after night in the chapel-niche at the feet of the saint in deep prayer and meditation, devised a strategy of compelling the Jesuit authorities to let him “stroke and kiss” the saint with whom he claimed he was in a permanent mystical communication. In the first place, he had a very persuasive pretext to open the coffin. The Queen of Spain had sent through Mastrilli an expensive chasuble to replace the ancient “poor (*povero*) one” in which “he was enveloped rather than dressed.”⁶⁸ The highest privilege to undress and dress the saintly relic and to fondle it and take some relics was accorded to Mastrilli a month before his departure for Melaka. Thus Mastrilli was given a cloth (*tovagliuola*) impregnated with Xavier’s blood that used to be tied around his throat and a small box (*forzierino*) with some parts of his intestines.⁶⁹ During the last leg of the saint’s terrestrial journey through Southeast Asia, Xavier’s grounded and pulverized intestines were reported as producing miracles; before his execution in Japan, Mastrilli would offer them as a remedy for the Shogun’s illness.

The rehousing of Xavier’s relic became possible after almost three months of Mastrilli’s persistent and successful canvassing for money to pay for a sumptuous silver coffin, which is still on display in Goa. Most of the Goanese fidalgos and rich merchants contributed money for a silver casket twice as big as the older one and embellished on all sides with thirty-two silver engravings of scenes from Xavier’s life. It is a masterpiece of Indo-Portuguese silver craftsmanship.

Mastrilli managed to collect twelve thousand “*scudi*” and his friend, Captain António Teles da Silva, contributed at least two thousand *scudi*.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Bartolli, *Dell’Istoria della compagnia di Gesù*, 141.

⁶⁹ Bartolli, *Dell’Istoria della compagnia di Gesù*, 145.

⁷⁰ Another miraculous story of António Teles da Silva’s illness (brought to him by the divine hand) is also woven into the production of the silver casket. As he was ill and thought he would die, Mastrilli persuaded him to leave 2,000 scudi in his last will and testament for the new Xavier’s coffin. As soon as António Teles da Silva pledged the money, he recovered from the illness. Bartolli, *Dell’Istoria della compagnia di Gesù*, 142. According to Georg Schurhammer, da Silva gave 3,000 scudi, Georg Schurhammer, S. J., “Der Silberschrein des Hl. Franz Xaver in Goa: Ein Meisterwerk Christlich-Indischer Kunst,” in *Varia I* (Anhänge, 1965), 561-567. The sum of 12,000 scudi was quite important given that during the second half of the sixteenth century a good artisan received a salary of 100 to 200 scudi, a large altarpiece would cost 200 scudi, while Grand Duke Francesco Medici gave Filippo Sassetti 500 scudi to buy him exotic objects in the East, and Claudio Acquaviva, the general of the Society of Jesus, granted an annual sum of 4,000 scudi “towards support of the church in the East” in 1583. See Barbara Karl, “Galanterie di cose rare . . .” Filippo Sassetti’s Indian shopping list for the Medici Grand Duke Francesco and his Brother Cardinal

It took twenty months for the local silversmiths to finish this complex structure of bas-reliefs, columns, consoles, foliage scrolls and arabesques, encased precious stones and figures of angels. On top of the structure is a cross with the emblem of the Society of Jesus carved in the middle. The lower part of the sarcophagus consists of two levels of silver engravings representing Xavier's life-cycle from the vision/prophecy of his sister Magdalena, who saw that her brother would be one of the columns of the church, through his life in Europe, India, and Japan to his death in Sanctian and his afterlife miracles.

Therefore, the narrative of the most important events in Xavier's life was engraved in silver, and the one responsible for the design was Marcello Francesco Mastrilli himself. The scenes selected were partly based on emerging *topoi* in the printed hagiographical literature on Xavier that the Society of Jesus promoted during the campaign for his and Ignatius of Loyola's canonizations.⁷¹ They were often pictorial comments on or citations from Xavier's *vitae* by João de Lucena and Orazio Torsellino.⁷² According to Georg Schurhammer, many of the silver engravings were connected to a collection of prints by Regnartius Valerianus.⁷³ However, at a closer

Fernando," *Itinerario* 32, no.3 (2008), 23-42; *Annual List of Donations and Bequests to the Trustees of the British Museum*, MDCCCXXVIII (London, 1830), 8.

⁷¹ From the time of Xavier's and Loyola's death until their canonization in 1622, there was an epidemic of images disseminated through the channels of the Society of Jesus. However, unlike what appears to be a piecemeal approach to developing Xavier's iconography, there was a sustained and organized effort at developing Loyola's saintly iconography. I thank Gauvin Bailey for sharing his opinion and surprise that this problem has not been remarked by art historians. For connections between iconography and canonization of Xavier see, Maria Cristina Osswald, "The Iconography and Cult of Francis Xavier, 1552-1640," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 142-143 (2002): 259-277. Fernando García Gutiérrez, S. J., "Iconografía de San Francisco Javier en Oriente," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 142-143 (2002): 279-301. Maria Cristina Osswald, *Jesuit art in Goa between 1542 and 1655: from "Modo Nostro" to "Modo Goano"* (Ph.D. dissertation, European University Institute in Florence, 2003). For Loyola's canonization iconography, see Ursula König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola: Studien zur Entwicklung einer neuen Heiligen-Ikonographie im Rahmen einer Kanonisierungskampagne um 1600* (Berlin, 1982). Emilio Píriz Pérez, "Una aproximación de la iconografía de San Ignacio de Loyola," *Quadernos ignacianos* 5 (2004): 19-30.

⁷² João de Lucena, S. J., *História de vida do padre Francisco de Xavier*, 2 vols., facsimile ed. (Lisbon, 1600); and Horatius Tursellinus, S. J., *De Vita Francisci Xaverii* (Rome, 1594), 2nd ed. (Rome, 1596).

⁷³ Schurhammer, "Der Silberschrein des Hl. Franz Xaver in Goa," 561-567. Except for Valerianus's engravings published in Schurhammer's article, I was not able to find any copy his collection. In addition, to my knowledge the iconography of the Goan silver coffin has



Fig. 3. Francis Xavier's tomb, Bom Jesús Basilica, Goa. Picture by IGŽ. This figure is published in color in the online version.

inspection, the goldsmith's interpretation of Lucena's narrative appeared to be quite free, both in the treatment of human figures and of natural and supernatural episodes, and at least two plates were obviously Mastrilli's iconographical inventions. Significantly, these were the first and the last stages in the saint's life cycle that were represented on his silver coffin.

The first stage showed Xavier's sister Magdalena de Iassu, the abbess of the monastery of Clarissas in Gandía, prostrated on her bed beneath a painting of a saint, with her hands clasped in prayer. The saint carried a staff in his right hand and was dressed as an engirded pilgrim. With his left hand, he pointed towards Magdalena as if giving her advice or a command. What is interesting is that this scene did not exist in João de Lucena's *Historia da vida do padre Francisco de Xavier*, or in any other hagiography written before 1636. According to the early standard *narrative*, Xavier's sister received prophetic "illustrations and revelations from Heaven" about her brother with no other specific details regarding her life.⁷⁴ There was no description of any miraculous image helping her see future events.

Why then did Mastrilli include the picture of an unspecified saint on the wall in this image? The answer lies, I think, in the last illustration on the casket portraying a scene that had not yet been represented as part of Xavier's life or afterlife miracles. It was the episode of Mastrilli's prophetic vision and healing itself. The chosen moment of the miracle was that in which Xavier stepped out of the frame of the miraculous portrait, leaving the empty picture frame in the background, while Xavier stood next to the bed of the ailing Mastrilli in the foreground. The saint held his staff in the left hand and with the right hand he was touching, or almost touching, Mastrilli's throat. Mastrilli himself lay expecting death with his eyes closed, a cross in his left hand and a small relic-box in the other. A skeleton with a broken arrow stood behind him and on the upper part of the painting three angels gazed down from the fluffy silver clouds.

What the opening and the closing scene have in common was therefore the representation of a saint dressed as a pilgrim and with a staff in his

received no proper scholarly attention. Maria Cristina Osswald, "S. Francisco Xavier no Oriente: aspectos de devoção e iconografia," in *São Francisco Xavier, Nos 500 anos do nascimento de São Francisco Xavier: Da Europa para o mundo, 1506-2006*, (Porto, 2007), 119-142. Klaus Schwager, "Anlässlich eines unbekanntes Stiches des Römischen 'Il Gesù' von Valerianus Regnartius," in *Festschrift Lorenz Dittman*, ed. Hans-Caspar Graf von Bother et al. (Munich, 1994), 295-312.

⁷⁴ Lucena, *História de vida*, 2-3.



Fig. 4. Image of Xavier's sister Magdalena de Iassu, abbess of the monastery of Clarisas in Gandía. Silver reliquary casket, Bom Jesús Basilica, Goa. Picture by IGŽ.



Fig. 5. Saint Xavier stepping from his painting during Mastrilli's healing in Naples. Silver reliquary casket, Bom Jesús Basilica, Goa. Picture by IGŽ.

hand.⁷⁵ Mastrilli added the portrait of the pilgrim saint to Magdalena's vision on the coffin. The ambiguity of representation—since the figure with the staff and girded tunic could have been equally Saint Thomas, the first Apostle to India, as well as Saint Xavier—worked well for his closing engraving in which he portrayed himself receiving the prophetic call to the East by Xavier.

This cycle of prophetism moved all the truly saintly *Vitae*, since the divine scenario had always already been written for everyone. Mastrilli, given his experience with *apparati de festa*, probably made the designs for Xavier's coffin though never saw the actual finished product. A similar image showing Mastrilli's healing, almost identical to the casket except for the picture frame on the wall, was included on one side of a silver reliquary containing Xavier's chasuble, perhaps the same one that Mastrilli stripped with his own hands from the saint's body.⁷⁶

The question of Mastrilli as a pilgrim remains and may not be easily answered. The striking fact is that he did not even wait to see his grand project accomplished but had to move on. According to hagiographers, the news about the apostasy and martyrdom of the Jesuit missionaries in Japan hastened Mastrilli to the last leg of his journey. Mastrilli's stay in Goa was just long enough to give a boost to the cult of Xavier, which the Jesuits vigorously promoted, especially after the canonization.

⁷⁵ This article is not a place to discuss in more detail the representation of Xavier's staff in Mastrilli's vision. In the early paintings and engravings, created under Mastrilli's supervision or imitating the first model, as well as on Xavier's silver casket, the staff resembles that of a Santiago de Compostela pilgrim, but it had an additional hook-like prong. Later pictorial representations of Xavier either used this original double pronged staff or the simple Santiago de Compostela type. The pronged staff in question resembles mahout's staff as it was already known in Europe from Raphael's engraving of Hanno, the elephant sent to the Pope as a gift of the Portuguese king. More research is needed and a better art historian's eye to confirm what is now only not more than my impression. See Silvio A. Bedini, *The Pope's Elephant* (London, 2000).

⁷⁶ The dating of this silver reliquary is difficult. Nuno Vassalo e Silva thinks it is a work prior to his canonization. However, since Xavier has a halo around his head, in principle, though not in practice, the "*resplendor*" would not have been permitted before canonization. Nuno Vassalo e Silva, "The Art of the Goldsmiths in the Portuguese India," in *A Herança de Rauluchantim* (Lisboa, 1996), 20 and idem, "A arte da prata nas casas jesuítas de Goa," in *A Companhia de Jesus e a missão no Oriente* (Lisboa, 2000), 372. Schurhammer thinks that it was made in 1678 and quotes Francisco de Sousa who talks about two reliquary caskets, one smaller and older, and one new. Schurhammer, "Der Silberschrein," 566-567. Francisco de Sousa, *Oriente Conquistado a Jesus Christo pelos padres da Companhia de Jesus da Província de Goa* (Porto, 1978), 583.



Fig. 6. Silver reliquary box for Xavier's chausible, showing the healing of Mastrilli. Museum of Christian Art, Goa. Picture by IGŽ.

If Xavier's entombed body continued to provide legitimacy for the Jesuit presence in Asia, it also became a bulwark of Portuguese national pride and imperial wishful thinking. Increasingly after the end of "Spanish captivity" in 1640, the militant and military role of the saint as the patron of Goa was emphasized. Not only did he continue to heal the sick, he was also seen in apparitions hovering on a white globe and praying for the new Portuguese king, João IV, and so on.⁷⁷ The veneration of Xavier took new forms; besides taking pieces of relics from his tomb, more and more objects were placed in his vicinity and on his body. Mastrilli himself had insisted on placing a note written in his own blood in Xavier's remaining left hand, in which he vowed to follow Xavier's steps all the way to Japan.⁷⁸ Through the second half of the seventeenth century, almost every Governor or Viceroy added an item—for example, the staff of authority in gold, decorated with diamonds and emeralds, seemed to have been a usual present by the highest in command of the *Estado da Índia*, especially during times of danger when Xavier himself was invested with the command of the city.⁷⁹

Under the Banner of a Warrior Saint Before the Final Crossing

In April of 1636, Mastrilli crossed the seas to Melaka where he stayed for a short period before continuing to Macau and Japan. He came ashore at Cavite on July 30, 1636 in the Bay of Manila, where he encountered Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, the knight of the Order of Alcántara, who also appeared to him during his illness.⁸⁰ For Corcuera, a former governor of Panama, governor of the Philippines from 1645, and who was otherwise in conflict with the archbishop of Manila Fray Hernando Guerrero, the alliance with the Jesuits was a local strategic choice. He required "religious" support for his military expeditions in the region and the Jesuits were ready to comply. Mastrilli, on the other hand, needed a patron to help him get to Japan. In the two hagiographical narratives, a gentle pilgrim turned at this point into a combative soldier of Christ and joined Corcuera's army

⁷⁷ Sousa, *Oriente Conquistado*, 581.

⁷⁸ Bartolli, *Dell'Istoria della compagnia di Gesù*, 145-146.

⁷⁹ There was also a question of whose staff it was and how close it was placed to Xavier. Some staffs were even taken back. The casket was generally opened only once a year during the celebrations of the anniversary of his death.

⁸⁰ Cinami, *Vita*, 41.

against Kudarat, a skilful Muslim lord of the Great River, and his commander Tagal of Mindanao.⁸¹

In the hagiographical literature on Mastrilli this straightforward military engagement dissolved into a permanent miracle. “As soon as they were armed and they started to battle on the sea and on land against the barbarian Corralat, the one who will read this history will see a continuous miracle of Saint Francis Xavier as it was the case during the whole life of Father Marcello, because it was not a war, but a continuous triumph.”⁸²

Corcuera’s flotilla, when it was ready to set out from Manila, was thus portrayed as a crusade rather than the small-scale local affair that it actually was. Moreover, Mastrilli ordered two sacred images to be hoisted on the mast as flags. One was the “miraculous image (*imagine miracolosa*)” of Saint Francis Xavier, presumably one of the numerous copies made after the original in Naples. The second image was a rescued piece of a painting representing Jesus on the cross that had been found in the most recent battle on the body of a dead Muslim. Mutilated and wounded sacred images had a particular value throughout Christian history. These images were martyrs in their own right and they were pretext for violent responses. Just like miraculous images, they usually had no identifiable authors, aside from those who injured them. The painting found on the dead Muslim had Christ’s right hand and two legs amputated and was pierced in the middle to be worn as a mantle (*capoto*).⁸³ Under these two powerful banners, Corcuera’s army resembled less “a company of soldiers than a religious procession under such a good captain.”⁸⁴ While these saintly images protected the fleet, the most crucial strategic decisions were made, according to Cinami, through a popular method of divination. Even before, while on the sea traveling to Goa, Mastrilli was famous for consulting letters by Francis Xavier in order to decide the right, and the divinely inspired, course of action. By arbitrarily opening any of the pages and reading the first sentence that met the eye, Mastrilli was able to guide the ships to the safe haven.⁸⁵

This military conquest, in which Mastrilli gained acclaim as courageous soldier, was concluded with a triumphal entry into Manila. “On all the

⁸¹ Asraf Mohamad Samalan Dipatuan Quدراتullah Fahar’uddin Nasiruddin, popularly known as Kudarat (1581-1671), was a Sultan of Maguindanao.

⁸² Cinami, *Vita*, 112.

⁸³ Cinami, *Vita*, 113.

⁸⁴ Cinami, *Vita*, 114.

⁸⁵ Cinami, *Vita*, 114-115.

streets were erected triumphal arches and all the walls were dressed in precious tapestries, throughout the town were heard bells and other demonstrations of happiness were seen.”⁸⁶ As a soldier, Mastrilli was a long way from his job as a decorative scene painter, but not far from his final act, his martyrdom in Japan.

Crossing over to Japan was definitely seen as a form of holy madness. Japan was already considered as unsafe and closed off to Catholic Europeans while a small window for commercial exchanges were left open to the Dutch. The two major early hagiographers of Mastrilli’s *Vita* diverge considerably in their interpretation concerning the events leading to Mastrilli’s departure for Japan. For Cinami, the signs of Xavier’s holy encouragement continued to reveal themselves in many small and large miracles. Without official permission to go to Japan, Mastrilli nevertheless prepared for his journey in secret. For six months, he was hard at work learning to look like, to behave, and to speak Japanese. He let his hair grow long and dressed in Japanese clothes.⁸⁷ It was obvious that Mastrilli was preparing himself for another “accommodationist” mission. Italian Jesuits, in particular, were employed in India, China, and Japan in these experimental and dangerous missions, and were looked upon with suspicion by Portuguese and Spanish authorities and even by Portuguese Jesuits. These missions were also considered very expensive and thus Mastrilli mobilized pious Spaniards in Manila to contribute to his mission budget. According to Cinami, he was showered with money since people “tore their golden buttons from their clothes, chains from their chest, women unbuckled their earrings and removed their pearls” in order to collect money for Mastrilli’s journey.⁸⁸

The fact that Mastrilli prepared by learning the language and the customs of the country was, according to Daniello Bartolli, the proof that he was not envisaging being martyred right away. In Cinami’s hagiographical language, Mastrilli’s “vows, and desires ran only towards death,” however Bartolli did not agree with this.⁸⁹ As an official historian of the Society of Jesus in Asia, he had not just a better access to the documents, testimonies, and letters of the historical actors, but his duty and vocation was to present a sanitized picture by rigorously applying institutional norms and frameworks. The Jesuit official guideline on martyrdom was to avoid rather than

⁸⁶ Cinami, *Vita*, 130.

⁸⁷ Cinami, *Vita*, 136.

⁸⁸ Cinami, *Vita*, 136.

⁸⁹ Cinami, *Vita*, 137.

seek it out at all costs, precisely because the costs were high and the Society of Jesus was constantly strapped for money, especially in the overseas missions. Thus, the desire for martyrdom was excellent, but the renunciation of martyrdom for even greater efforts at learning languages and pastoral and missionary work was even better.

Against Cinami's hagiographical exaggerations, Bartolli quoted a letter in which Mastrilli unveiled his desire to reconvert Cristóvão Ferreira so that eventually both of them could die martyrs to provoke a "temporal and spiritual transformation in the emperor of Japan."⁹⁰ In order to fulfill both, Mastrilli needed at least one year, claimed Bartolli. "It can be seen clearly from this how far went the one who wrote that Father Marcello foretold that he would be taken and martyred as soon as he arrived to Japan."⁹¹ Obviously, this was the failure of hagiography, not of prophecy. However, an indirect critique of Mastrilli's behavior was apparent in the letters sent to him by his superiors, the letters that never reached him, in which he was strongly denied permission to travel to Japan. Bartolli juxtaposed Mastrilli's claim that his decisions came from his miraculous communication with the "most glorious Apostle of India," to a letter of his superior Manuel Dias, reminding him that the servants of God should understand the divine revelation as no more than "inspiration and good thoughts," and should not neglect "human prudence."⁹²

Even Cinami had to acknowledge that something went wrong with Mastrilli's human judgment. The Neapolitan missionary became excessively certain about his role in the conversion of Japan and of the whole world, and he was not alone in having such high expectations, Cinami wrote, since "the whole Europe expected, and the whole India, that Father Marcello would convert the whole world by his voice."⁹³ The voice, however, failed him. In Cinami's hagiographical narrative, motives and plots turned endlessly in circles. Each new turn legitimated the former and prefigured the next. Thus, the wound Mastrilli received in Naples reappeared as prophecy of Mastrilli's mortal wounds in Japan. The "medical" treatment that traumatized his mouth prefigured the tortures in Japan in which a piece of metal garnished with spikes was shoved in his mouth in order to

⁹⁰ Bartolli, *Dell'Istoria della compagnia di Gesù*, 168-169.

⁹¹ Bartolli, *Dell'Istoria della compagnia di Gesù*, 169.

⁹² See letter to Mastrilli from Manuel Dias, in Macau, April 16, 1637, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Jap/Sin, 29, ff. 155-156v.

⁹³ Cinami, *Vita*, 144.

prevent him from preaching. Recycled prophecies were reutilized in order to solve all the knots of unexplainable destiny and to transform the downright futility of his sacrifice into a “triumph.”

From the moment Mastrilli landed in Hyūga in September of 1637 until his decapitation not even a full month later on October 14, his biography read like an ordinary martyrology. The Japanese space was flattened into an empty stage on which Mastrilli’s torturers, amazed, but mute spectators, and angels, enter and exit in a rhythm and cadence of a slow agonizing tragedy. As Mastrilli’s body weakened under painful tortures—such as hanging upside down in the pit full of water or intoxicating fumes or having his private parts branded with the red-hot iron rod—his soul acquired supernatural spiritual strength. Thus, he was seen levitating above ground, just as Xavier did in his time. A magnificent ray of light was seen descending from heaven straight into the prison in which he was kept. The angels came to keep him company. Instead of pain, the tortures produced ecstasy. Instead of hanging in the pit, he felt like “lying on the bed of roses” and demanded to be left alone in his Paradise.⁹⁴

The effect of this series of inversions was the enhanced aesthetics of pain. The crude naturalism of describing affected body parts was overwritten with supernatural splendor of celestial beings hovering above and basking in the beams of light. Just as in baroque churches where celestial beings sit on the ceilings, sending seductive glances to the living below; the scene of Mastrilli’s martyrdom was constructed in a top-down view. What was moving top-down was providence. Prophecy became the particular moment when this beam of providence met the eye of the terrestrial beholder.

The act of prophecy in Jesuit literature was an inherently didactic situation geared at shaping the folds of collective and institutional memory. Cinami was witness to the power of the printed word for the “success” of a prophetic event and, necessarily, to a life crowned by official sanctification. Jesuit writers took words very seriously because they were divine antennae, and the printed books were their loudspeakers. Mastrilli may have won the freedom to leave Naples and travel the world, but he was still impelled to comply with his own prophetic insights. His final suicidal trip to Japan, that even his most devout hagiographer Cinami had difficulty in justifying, was a logical step in the build-up of his biographical choices. Again, his aristocratic habitus made it impossible for him to retreat and lose his

⁹⁴ Cinami, *Vita*, 155-156.

saintly honor. In perfect imitation of Xavier's life, Mastrilli moved on the wings of prophetic intuitions of his own making and with every step, his maneuvering space became smaller. Since Xavier went to Japan, Mastrilli had no choice but to follow his predecessor. Therefore, he was following his destiny as if reading a book of his own future. Sometimes, according to Cinami, Mastrilli actually showed not only his ample prophetic gifts to the people who surrounded him, but also the books, of the same type as the *Relaçam* which recounted his life and miraculous healing, that proved his future was already written.⁹⁵ These material objects, which Mastrilli both carried with him and commissioned, served as a promissory note for his life and afterlife.

Epilogue: "The Second Xavier"

Uncertainty, if he had any at all, about his destiny ended with the third blow of the sword upon Mastrilli's neck. Unless, of course, we decide to trust the hostile Japanese sources that claimed that he died howling in the pit. With his *curriculum vitae* concluded, the next logical step was Mastrilli's canonization. However, this part was out of his hands and in the hands of his friends and clients. During three years of extensive travel, he had managed to establish a solid network of admirers in Europe and in Asia.⁹⁶

Not long after his death, seven biographies of Mastrilli and many other accounts of particular miracles and his martyrdom were published and translated "in all the languages."⁹⁷ His fame was so great, insisted Cinami, that he was revered by all the nations, not only in Europe and in Asia, but also in places where he never went in person such as Bahía de Todos os Santos in Brazil, where they called him "the Second Xavier."⁹⁸ Mastrilli's

⁹⁵ Cinami, *Vita*, 147.

⁹⁶ Cinami, *Vita*, 173.

⁹⁷ Cinami, *Vita*, 173. The most successful *vitae* until the middle of the eighteenth century that were translated into other languages, reprinted, or reedited were those by Ignacio Stafford and Juan Eusebio Nierenberg, in addition to the ones by Leonardo Cinami, Giovanni Acolito, Jeronimo do Valle de Lacerda, Philippus Alegambe, and Daniello Bartoli. Among the booklets preceding the *Relaçam* published in Goa, see *Relación de un prodigioso milagro que San Francisco Javier: Apóstol de la India, ha hecho en la ciudad de Nápoles este año de 1634* by Diego Ramírez and the anonymous *Ristretto del Miracolo operato da S. Francesco Saverio in persona del P. Mastrilli* (Napoli, 1734).

⁹⁸ Cinami, *Vita*, 173.

admirer here was the governor António Teles da Silva, whom Mastrilli met on a ship carrying them from Lisbon to Goa in 1635.

In 1642, Teles da Silva, a friend of the Society of Jesus, sponsored a celebration of the feast of Saint Roque in the Jesuit professed house in Lisbon. The person who delivered the sermon was no less a figure than the most famous Portuguese Jesuit, António Vieira.⁹⁹ He had arrived in Portugal a year earlier from Brazil in order to convey to the new king João IV the loyalty of his Brazilian subjects.¹⁰⁰ Portuguese independence from Spain and the restoration of the Portuguese royal dynasty became one of Vieira's favored topics. It is quite certain that António Teles da Silva mentioned his close relation with Marcello Mastrilli. However, Vieira's Lusocentric millenarian project was much more important to him than celebrating an Italian Jesuit in Asia. Vieira considered the Portuguese Empire as the fourth and last empire before the Fifth Empire of Christ. The Portuguese nation and the Society of Jesus were part of this divine plan, Vieira believed, and tried to prove in all his texts. He worked out all the fine points of this theme throughout his prophetic writing.

However, Marcello Mastrilli's story fitted well into Vieira's project. In the Seventh Sermon of the "Xavier Awake" cycle, entitled the "Arm (*Braço*)," Mastrilli played a side role in Xavier's saintly afterlife. According to Vieira, the Saint saved Mastrilli from the "gorges of death" in Naples in order to send him to be martyred in Japan.¹⁰¹ Xavier, therefore, used Mastrilli to accomplish some of his old, terrestrial dreams, the most important of which was the restoration and the glorification of the new Portuguese royal dynasty.¹⁰² In the larger picture, Mastrilli was obviously very small fry for the famous Brazilian Jesuit preacher. There was no place for an Italian as a "second Xavier." For Vieira, the destiny of Christianity and of the world at the end of the seventeenth century was in Portuguese hands and in Portuguese blood. Vieira's "second Xavier," Don António, was born

⁹⁹ *SERMAM QVE PREGOV O P. ANTONIO VIEIRA DA COMPANHIA de IESVS na caza professa da mesma Companhia em 16. de Agosto de 1642*, Domingos Lopes Rosa (Lisboa, 1642). See also António Vieira, *Obras Completas, sermões* (Porto, 1993), 3.479-532.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas M. Cohen, *The Fire of Tongues: António Vieira and the Missionary Church in Brazil and Portugal* (Stanford, 1998), 4.

¹⁰¹ Vieira, *Obras*, 5.380.

¹⁰² Vieira, *História do Futuro*, 230. See also Luís Filipe Silvério Lima, *Padre Vieira: Sonhos proféticos, profecias oníricas, O tempo do Quinto Império nos sermões de Xavier Dormindo* (MA thesis, São Paulo, 2000), 48-54.

to Queen Maria Sofia Isabel in 1695, for whom Vieira gave an ornate and ambiguous prophecy of the future.¹⁰³

In the end, however, Vieira's euphoric seventeenth century, immersed in prophetic expectations, vanished—as did the dream of the Portuguese “Quinto império.” What were left behind were books and objects made of precious metals and stones that continue to enchant, entice, and narrate the history of the future that never happened.¹⁰⁴

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¹⁰³ Vieira, “Sermão gratulatório a S. Francisco Xavier,” in *Sermoes*, 5.974.

¹⁰⁴ For practicing Catholics, Mastrilli inaugurated the “Novena of Grace to Saint Francis Xavier,” celebrated from March 4 to March 12 or November 25-December 3.