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Docere, Mouere Et Delectare: *The Use of Latin in the Annual Letters Sent From China – Father Manuel Dias Júnior and the Letter of December 30, 1616*

Abstract: We propose here a re-examination of the documents produced by Jesuit missionaries from a literary and stylistic viewpoint, since this perspective has remained in the background, to the detriment of these documents' importance as historical, ethnological, and sociological testimony. In order to explore this angle, we will analyse the account of the funeral of the Emperor of China's mother in the annual letter sent from Macau in December 1616, by Father Manuel Dias Júnior.

Keywords: Jesuit Missionaries, use of Latin in missions in China, Jesuit rhetoric and epistolography, Europe-China relations, annual letters, Ming dynasty, emperor Wanli, funeral ceremonies of the emperor's mother, Father Manuel Dias Júnior

[. . .] Tambem uai outra folha com titulo de carta annua em latim, que por ser o unico traslado uai tambem remetido a Vossa Reverencia para o promouer para Roma, emendando ahi os erros porque fui eu que a fiz a falta de Homens, e os meus Latinos sam de Penella como Vossa Reverencia sabe; pois na Companhia não tiue tempo de os aprender. [. . .]¹

This is an excerpt from a letter filled with information and sent from Beijing by a missionary to the Procurator General of China, Japan, and India, who was in Lisbon at the time. It raises what we consider to be an interesting question as a starting point for our reflection: how can a mid-18th century Jesuit confess his poor knowledge of Latin so far as to ask the Procurator General to ensure that the errors he had made in the annual letter were corrected before sending it to Rome? In fact, Father João Simões admits that the only reason he wrote the letter himself was the lack of someone else to do it for him, just as he admits that his command of Latin is minimal and incompatible with the linguistic correctness required in documents such as an annual letter, destined to be read by the highest authorities of the hierarchy of the Society of Jesus and disseminated in all Jesuit colleges.

1 Letter from João Simões to Marcelo Leitão, Procurator General. Beijing, November 13, 1749. ANTT, Jesuits, Mç. 98, No. 68 [Palaeographic reading by Maria João Pereira Coutinho].

But is the allegation that his knowledge of Latin is limited and inconsistent true? To begin, let us introduce, in a few words, Father João Simões.² Born in Penela, in the diocese of Coimbra, on September 8, 1713, he entered the novitiate on May 17, 1734 (aged 21, which is undoubtedly a little older than usual). He left as a missionary in 1741 and two years later he was in China where, in 1746, he was taken prisoner and sent to Macau. He was in Beijing in 1748, the year before the letter is dated. On August 15, 1751, he professed the four vows. The following year, he was the procurator of the Vice Province of China. He went to Brazil in 1758 and from there, following the order of the Marquis of Pombal concerning the extinction of the Society of Jesus in 1759, he went into exile in Italy in 1766, where he died after 1773. This biographical note raises new questions: what does Father João Simões mean by his *os meus Latins sam de Penella*? He no doubt speaks of what he learned before entering the Society, through the lessons of a master from his homeland, one of those who existed in many parts of Portugal as the only teachers of “reading, writing and counting”. These sometimes were parish priests, and other times teachers paid by the people but with the necessary approval from the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Therefore, it is not very surprising that in those early years of his life Father João Simões did not acquire a solid knowledge of Latin. But what about after he entered the novitiate? We know that this novitiate lasted two years, but it could be extended for another year or two if the young Jesuit was not well prepared. This applied specifically to Latin, which should have been consolidated in a total of five years of Grammar, Humanities, and Rhetoric classes. Only then could he go on to three years of Philosophy and, finally, Theology. João Simões undoubtedly had to follow this long path to be ordained a priest. Moreover, how could he have become Procurator of the Vice-Province had there been such a serious lack in his training?

There is no need point out what we all know: that the Jesuit educational model (as set out in the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599 but prepared as soon as Ignatius of Loyola considered education a priority) was very demanding, and normative. Just as in classical Rome, with the standardisation of a curriculum that began with the *litterator*, followed by the *grammaticus* and then the *rhetor* (a system that constituted a solid pillar of Romanisation and ensured the training of administrators, officials, magistrates, and politicians throughout the empire), also among the Jesuits what was taught and what was learnt, the methods and the results required, with few discrepancies, were the same in all colleges, whether in Lisbon or anywhere else. People studied in Latin, wrote in Latin, and read the classics, the philosophical and theological texts, in Latin. People spoke and argued in Latin. Latin was the language

2 Cf. Dehergne (1973) 252–253.

of work and study, the lingua franca that allowed access to works and documents which, if written in the vernacular languages, would not have the desired range.

Therefore: unless Father João Simões was an exception, what seems to motivate this claim of unskillfulness is perhaps an excuse or a concern with which he intends to guarantee the revision, and consequent refinement, of a document of such importance and with which his name would be associated. In other words, evoking his incapacity recovers the topic of the *locus humilitatis*, and this strategy was also learnt in rhetoric classes. It is also a means of *captatio beneuolentiae*, which predisposed the addressee, Father Marcelo Leitão,³ to a certain degree of indulgence, empathy, and understanding regarding possible mistakes or less-accomplished phrasings.

In fact, other data can be added to our reflection. If, at first, the Jesuit missionaries realised that the interpreters they used not only had serious gaps in their knowledge of Portuguese (or another European language) but also frequently altered or omitted what they were supposed to translate – not to mention being in danger from the Chinese political and religious authorities, because they could be seen as collaborating with foreigners, particularly foreigners who were possible heretics – learning Mandarin was soon made a priority, so that they themselves, having mastered the language and contacts, could fulfil the goals of the mission and reach those they intended to call to the Catholic faith and to the Church of Christ.

This, however, never meant that Latin ceased to be a matter of constant study and teaching in everyday life and in the various circumstances of the mission in China. The Latin readings continued. It was not by chance that the Jesuits carried books with them – some were personal, but most were destined for the Colleges and, therefore, also for teaching. Let us remember the enormous number of volumes that Nicolas Trigault carried with him, about seven thousand, on leaving Lisbon in 1619. These books were obviously intended for teaching, but also for reading and for the benefit of the Priests of the Society, who were living, evangelising, and continuing their training during their mission in China. Even when the owner died during the journey, the books he carried were incorporated into a common heritage from which all benefited. The detailed study by Golvers (2011) provides a revealing overview of the books that circulated in China and were printed in Portugal. Unsurprisingly, we can find among them Manuel Álvares' *Gramática*, Jerónimo Cardoso's *Latin-Portuguese / Portuguese-Latin Dictionary*, Cipriano Soares' *De Rhetorica libri tres*, and Bento Pereira's *Prosódia*. These four

3 About Marcelo Leitão, cf. Pereira Coutinho (2021).

works represent, not least because of their wide distribution, the indispensable tools of those who read, wrote, and taught in Latin.

Latin was also used as an intermediate language for conversation manuals, dictionaries, and glossaries created for learning Chinese. We have manuscripts of these instruments which, more than serving those who created them, allowed for a wider use by the missionaries, whatever their native language, through Latin. They all shared a knowledge of Latin. Thus, not infrequently, a dictionary would have three entries: Portuguese, Latin, and Chinese characters. Latin was fruitfully suited to the specification of different characters for the same reality or object with, for example, dimensions, weights, or different uses. Furthermore, it was an instrument of great richness and rigor for explanatory periphrases, as well as the contextualisation of realities that decency did not recommend translating directly into vernacular languages.⁴

Lastly, Latin was necessary for drafting most of the documents through which they communicated with the hierarchical superiors of the Society, or for personal correspondence when it was addressed to priests who spoke other languages. The documents produced were widely disseminated, so the use of Latin as the *lingua franca* was the most appropriate. Even when these documents were not originally written in Latin, they were translated to widen their reach. One last observation: it was no coincidence that even the documents that were not written in or translated into Latin incorporated (with great semantic and syntactic pertinence) words, phrases, and quotations from the Bible or classical authors which, clearly, both the author of the text and its recipients were expected to understand perfectly, both in meaning and in scope.

We have thus reached the core of our reflection, based on the assumption already sufficiently evident in what we have said so far: that of the mastery of Latin by the Jesuit missionaries in China and the dexterity and naturalness with which the rhetorical norms were learned, ingrained, and applied over many years. This breaths and shines through their texts, particularly when the subject matter of a document goes beyond the standardised model of official documents. This happened, for example, when a report of exceptional, non-routine events was given. In cases like these, we can more easily appreciate a less-studied aspect of the textual production of the Jesuits, specifically the missionaries of the East:

⁴ As part of his PhD project, integrated into the project '*Res Sinicae*, Base digital de fontes documentais em latim e em português sobre a China (Séculos XVI a XVIII). Levantamento, edição, tradução e estudos', (*Res Sinicae*). A Database of Latin and Portuguese Sources on China (16th–18th Century). Survey, Edition, Translation and Studies (PTDC/LLT-OUT /31941/2017), of the University of Lisbon Centre for Classical Studies, João Pedro Riso is currently working on two unpublished dictionaries, one from the 17th century (1640), the other from the 18th century (1725).

the literary value, the stylistic mastery, and the beauty of the narrative with which they made Europe and the world aware of a distant, different reality, of places, customs, and people barely known until then. The Jesuits, who thus assumed the role of what we would today call world reporters, did not hide their own fascination, mistrust, or strangeness, just as they did not fail to use all the stylistic techniques that would produce the three effects that rhetoric taught them to achieve: inform, move, delight. Or, in Latin words, *docere, mouere, delectare*. Moreover, let us not forget a particular detail: the Jesuit missionaries were fully aware that the dissemination of their texts, read or heard by the young novices would ignite in them the missionary vocation, translated into the desire to face the adversities of travel, rough stops, and illness, as well as the danger of being unwelcome, or even persecuted, for the noble purpose of revealing the Christian faith; but they also knew that the same desire that would make them fiery and insistent *indipeti* would be born from their human curiosity to know a reality that was very different from the one in which they lived, which was for that very reason more attractive and full of challenges. That was the *mouere*. The *docere*, of course, would come with the volume of information produced and disseminated about history, geography, customs and practices, and religion: in short, the culture of China, with all its sociological, anthropological, ethnological, and historical interest.

It is worth remembering that this type of account, disclosing the way of life of distant and different peoples, as well as their intended effect (knowledge of the Other), already existed in classical literature. Many of the authors who developed it were certainly known to the Jesuits, either because they had studied them or because they had found and read their works in the libraries of the Colleges and Residences. Of these, I will note a few names: among the Greeks, Herodotus, the father of history, who spoke sublimely of Egypt; the geographers Strabo and Ptolemy; Pausanias, the great traveller on a tour of the known world. Among the Romans, Tacitus and his texts on Germania and Britannia, where his father-in-law, Agricola, had been imperial legate; Quintus Curtius and the romanticised biography of Alexander, during his adventures and conquests in exotic places such as India; Pomponius Mela and his *Chorographia* on the peoples and places around the *Mare Nostrum*; Pliny the Elder, with his encyclopaedia of knowledge that was read and accepted as a scientific authority until the 19th century, despite everything in those 37 books being pure fantasy. This did not prevent Pliny from being fascinating to so many readers, and his *Naturalis Historia* among the favourite texts in Jesuit teaching.

It is also worth noting regarding the contact of the Romans with other peoples and civilizations, often recorded in reports of a political-ideological nature, that commercial relations with the territory, or part of the territory, of China

dated back at least to the end of the Republic.⁵ From there came silk, one of the most coveted luxury products to which only the rich could aspire. Silk was quickly associated with Rome's refinement, manifestations of grandeur and opulence, but inevitably also with lust and the corrosion of traditional values. It was no coincidence that wearing silk garments was associated with the effeminate, to the point that the emperor Tiberius promulgated a *senatusconsultum in luxum ciuitatis*, against luxury, which forbade men from wearing silk garments (Tac. *Ann.* 2.33.1: *uestis serica*). The Romans were aware of silks coming from other places, such as the island of Kos, but Chinese silk (traded through the Parthians, one of the peoples with whom Rome had the most belligerent relations) was the most coveted for its whiteness, brightness, delicacy, and its excellent capacity to absorb a wide variety of shades. Although they appreciated it, they also had no idea about how it was produced. It is humorous to read the explanations and conjectures of authors such as Vergil (*G.* 2.121) and Pliny (*HN* 6.24.3).⁶ They called silk *sericum*, because it came from a distant people which they called the Seres (identified with the Chinese, not without some controversy). But it was not just silk that the Romans valued. They also brought spices, which they used in cooking, pharmaceuticals, and ointments and perfumes. In the 2nd century, the historian Florus (whose epitome was present in the mission to China) speaks of a delegation coming from India and the country of the Seres that travelled for four years and brought precious stones, pearls, and elephants as gifts (2.34). Florus dates it to the time of Augustus, but it is not possible to know for sure whether it was an embassy or merchants. On the other hand, we owe to a Chinese chronicle of the 5th century, the *Heou Han Chou*, the record of an embassy sent by the Romans to China in the year 166, the era of Emperor Marcus Aurelius: Western travellers brought gifts which barely impressed the Chinese, namely ivory, rhinoceros' horns, and tortoise shells, all quite poor. The Roman empire is referred to as Ta-t'sin, the Roman emperor as An-toun (*Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*), and the Chinese was called Huan, for the Han dynasty. Historical vicissitudes interrupted this emerging contact. Much later, in the 13th century, Marco Polo travelled along these ancient routes. The Orient then gained the status of a literary object, just as also happened in Portugal in the 16th century with the *Peregrinação* of Fernão Mendes Pinto, and with other authors who wrote about the Orient, such as Diogo do Couto, Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, João de Barros, Gaspar Correia, and even Camões.

⁵ Cf. Robert (2004).

⁶ Suffice it to say that only Pausanias, in the time of Marcus Aurelius, asserts (6.26.6–9) that silk comes from a small animal and not from tree bark.

This literary tradition, which reveals the unknown and places it before the eyes of the reader, must follow rules if it aims to achieve its three purposes, notably to inform, but also to leave an impression on the reader, and to delight him with the required embellishments so that the imagination can make one see what has not been seen, and what is narrated as if one were present.

This was achieved by Father Manuel Dias Júnior in an annual letter that he sent from Macau on December 30, 1616 to the Superior General of the Society.⁷ Father Manuel Dias Júnior was born in 1574, in Castelo Branco, in the diocese of Guarda. A novice in 1593 at the College of Coimbra, he left for Goa in 1601, where he was ordained in 1604. He was in Macau from 1604 to 1610, where he taught theology. He then was in Beijing in 1613, and in 1614–1615 he was Visitor of the missions, and in 1616, the date of our letter, he was exiled in Macau due to persecution resulting from the Nanking Religious Process. There he professes the four vows. He became Vice-Provincial of China twice (1623–1635; 1650–1654). He was an astronomer and translated the Gospels of Sundays and Feasts into Chinese. A man of culture, he died on March 4, 1659, at the very advanced age of 85.⁸

The letter⁹ is quite extensive and covers the usual topics of this type of document. From the outset it refers to the obligation to record the most relevant facts pertaining to the situation in the Kingdom of China (*rerum memorabilium ad politicum pertinentium statum*). The classic tradition of the *memorabilia* is here conveyed, introduced by a note *De Statu Regni huius politico*, in which it is assured that *nil aliud novi* is to be registered, since *pace, et tranquillitate frui* are still possible. It then focuses on the figure of the emperor, recognising his *magna prudentia* and *experientia diuturna* as someone who has ruled for forty-four years.¹⁰ Following this favourable depiction, however, the Jesuit mentions, euphemistically, a delicate matter: the emperor did not like to leave the Palace (*se intra Regiam praeclusum esse delectat*), spending his days *cum solis Eunuchis et feminarum grege*. He continues by saying that no one even thought to conspire against him, due to the high *reverentia* and *metus* they had for him. We cannot here expand on the reasons why Wanli kept himself away from active governance during the last twenty years of his reign, watching the irrevocable decline of the Ming dynasty without reaction. Let us only

7 ARSI, *Japonica Sinica*, 113, 429–460. There are 2nd and 3rd copies of the letter, in Portuguese. See the transcription in de Assunção (2021).

8 Cf. Murta Pina/de Assunção (2021).

9 I am grateful for the suggestion of reading this text to João Teles e Cunha, who also provided me with a copy of the document. I also thank Arnaldo do Espírito Santo who read this text and helped me with pertinent suggestions.

10 Wanli was born on September 4, 1563. He reigned from 1572 until his death on August 18, 1620. His was the longest reign of the Ming dynasty.

note the care with which the Jesuit, opening the letter, alludes to the political situation about which he must speak. I stress: opening the letter. Because, towards the end of the letter he ends up giving a prolific account of the difficulties being experienced in China (due to drought and food shortages, as well as riots and even plots against the emperor) and of the actions that the Jesuits were forced to take. In the letter's *exordium*, however, there is strategic mention of a peace and tranquillity that is only later denied. Also, perhaps, to give prominence to the story that immediately follows, and whose theme it announces: *veteris Reginae interitus, ipsius Regis matris . . .* The relevance of what he is about to tell is justified by highlighting *Ex rebus notatu dignioribus quae usu in Regia curia evenerunt*, but also because all the ceremonies resulting from that death are events *nondum apud Europaeos nec fama nec literis cognita atque adeo apud ipsos etiam indigenas peregrina*, as they are infrequent. According to the rules of Rhetoric, this completes the first phase of the discourse, the *inventio*. Cicero and Quintilian, both exhaustively studied, knew how to guide the writing hand of our Jesuit. Before we continue, it seems useful to clarify briefly the second protagonist of this episode: Xiaoding, the old queen, who died on March 18, 1614, aged 69. She was buried in the Zhaoling Mausoleum, one of the Ming Tombs on the outskirts of Beijing, obviously with her husband, of whom she, of course, had not been the only wife (nor even the first). Nevertheless, on the moment of death, it is the emperor's mother that adds pomp and solemnity to the ceremonies and rituals. And it is the actual magnitude of the event that justifies, demands even, a *relatio paulo fusius distinctiusque [. . .] quam forte literarum breuitas postulabat*. In fact, and before moving on to the *De Communi Societatis Statu* chapter (with its details, numbers, and recurrent "edification cases" that should integrate the annual letters in their final parts), the narrative of the funeral ceremonies of the old queen extends over no less than ten folios, in a narratological process of perfect fit.

In a manner of *dispositio*, the plan of the narrative is then presented. This indication also refers to the *auctoritas* of a source: the three printed books that the *caeremoniarum magistri, seu tribunal* of China had ordered to be printed about the event, with a structure that Father Manuel Dias Júnior claims to follow. Therefore, there are three parts he considers: first, the *de caeremoniis a morte Reginae ad funeris usque celebrationem seruatis*; second, *de ritibus exequiarum*; and finally, the third, which refers to all the benefactions and pardons the emperor granted on that occasion (*communem veniam ab Rege hac occasione per universam iurisdictionem concessam*).

Before we go on, a brief note to underline the concern of Father Manuel Dias Júnior with all the facts that, in his view, needed to be explained for the benefit of those not familiar with them, sometimes adding periphrases or synonyms, other times looking for equivalents known to Europeans that might clarify the realities

or circumstances of which he speaks. He does so regarding the Chinese *caeremoniarum magistri, seu tribunal*, as well as throughout the entire letter – for example, when he explains about the *magistratus: Mandarinos vocant*, or when he proceeds with equivalences, such as *per spatium ducentorum passuum, quod li vocant*. This concern regarding what is specific to the Chinese reality, made pressing by the *docere*, also translates into certain features of precision, of which I give the following examples:

1. Conversion of a Chinese way of counting time into a date format of European understanding (in this case, the text being in Latin, taken from the Roman calendar): the queen's death *in nono die fuit secundae lunae pridie videlicet Calendas Aprilis*, that is, two weeks before March 31st, the day before the Calends of April – thus, the 18th of March. Or the use of *papyrus* when referring to paper, as well as using the term *epicedia* when referring to the compositions that the greats of China created to mourn the death of the queen (*carmen, seu epicedium*).
2. Use of technical terms such as Chinese coins or the measurement system, in addition to the strict lexical distinction between the various types of temples (*templum, delubrum, phanum . . .*), or priests (such as the *Bonzii*, called *Idolorum Sacerdotes* and *secta et vana religio*; or the *sacrificulus*).
3. Use of modality that seems to ameliorate the strangeness of a Chinese custom or practice, but which achieves the opposite effect, i.e., that of underlining its peculiarity. For example, explaining that white is the colour of mourning *apud Sinas*, that saffron yellow is the colour specific to kings (*crocea terra [. . .] color est apud Sinas Regius*), or that it is the custom in China to burn the bed, clothes, and all valuables that were with the person at the time of death, shortly after death (these ashes would then be deposited in a proper place outside the Palace), as well as *ut apud eos mos est* – in times of mourning the seal colour of the mandarins was not red, but sky blue (*signo rubro [. . .] caeruleo*).
4. Reference to the materials from which objects and utensils are made, as well as their specific characteristics, such as the rough hemp garments worn at a specific moment of the ceremony; or the type of wood used to make the coffin, the *arca*, in which the corpse was placed, sourced from the roots of a tree resistant to humidity, and thus guaranteed to remain incorrupt; or the way in which the pavement of the path that the funeral procession took between the Palace and the Mausoleum was repaired and prepared.

Let us return, however, to the letter and the narrative sequence, noting the exact words of Father Manuel Dias Júnior: *Aggredior igitur iam ad huius mortis peculiaritatem . . .* And in fact, the entire story stands out for its attention to detail, combined

and integrated in successive close-ups, which alternate the focus of the narrative. Just like a video camera registering the moment, the narrative focuses on several specific moments: individual characters (the King or the Prince), restricted groups (like the many wives of Wanli and his many children and grandchildren), or the priests and magistrates (even though “restricted”, when referring to the Chinese court, is a reductive hyperbole), as well as large crowds of people in streets and squares, thousands of soldiers (some guarding the Forbidden City’s nine gates – one thousand per gate, five hundred on the outside and five hundred on the inside – others, either on foot or horseback, accompanying the *arca* and regularly taking turns, three hundred at a time out of three-thousand in total, and others standing still on both sides of the path where the parade was taking place, and a further forty thousand guarding the burial site).

We proffer this description based on the idea that the effect achieved by the narrative is equivalent to a film, a spectacle that we can see distinctly using the imagination, *oculis mentis ostendi* (Quint., *Inst.* 8.3.62): essentially, what was referred to as the *ante oculos ponere*, for its use of rhetorical figures which the Latins, such as Cicero or Quintilian, called *evidentia* or *illustratio*, whereas the Greeks called it *enargeia*. Father Manuel Dias Júnior must have been perfectly aware of the effectiveness of the image he was creating and the success of his art in capturing the reader, since he writes at the end of the letter that he reported on the most important event that happened that year in order to make it *modo aliquo uno conspectu . . . ante oculos V.[estrae] P.[aternitatis]*.

As a matter of fact, we follow the many months of ceremonies chronologically – let us evoke here the Japanese Akira Kurosawa – as if we were watching a marvellous epic film (*Primo die . . . Secundo . . . Die tertio . . . Quarto die . . . Quinto demum, ac postremo die . . .*), and on each day the succession of rites (*deinde . . . post . . .* and the anaphoric structure of verbs and polysyndeta); we contemplate the hierarchical and defined parade of those who come, and when they come, to pay homage (*Primo loco, ibat Rex, deinde coniuges, tum filii, quos sequebantur nepotes, postremo tandem nonnuli Eunuchi ex aulicis praecipui*); we follow the changes in location, from the Palace of the King to that of the Queen Mother, from the interior of the Palace to the courtyard, from the squares within the walls of the Forbidden City to the embellished path along which the coffin passes; we distinguish day from night, as when describing the places where the procession stays overnight, in large tents with mats and, in the middle, the tent where the coffin was placed, and the awnings under which the sacrifices were made; we even see the break of day, *illucescente die*, at which moment the emperor leaves the Palace, *funerali amictu inductu[s]*, together with his son and heir and other individuals from the court, moving towards a temple, *intra muros*, where he would perform sacrifices in honour of his mother.

Yes, the text reads like a film. All five senses are called upon by the imagination. The movement; the colour of the clothes, shoes, and caps; the differences in dress between men and women; the zoomed-in detail of the white ribbons that obligatorily should hang from the caps, with the right measure to make them fall down to the shoulders (*candidas [. . .] vittas ex ipsis pileis ad humeros pendentes*); the tables with the animals, a pig and a ram, the fruits and the cakes that will be consecrated in sacrifice; the unfurled banners and the silk-covered floats; the paper figures of men, lions, elephants, and horses; the prostrations, describing in detail how many times they should be done and by which gestures they should be accompanied (the “head banging” performed dozens of times, *genibus ante cadauer flexis capite leniter humum attingens*) – everything appeals to the eye. Copious weeping, woes and sighs reach our ears, also normatively determined – fifteen, no more and no less – that must be performed during reverent homages; the sound of drums and cymbals, and that of bells, along with the music-less silence of all temples; the trotting of horses; the voices of those who ask the deceased to agree to spend the night in that chosen place and, the following day, to leave again to continue to the burial place; and the sense of smell, the incense and the aromatic tablets (*thymiamata*) that burn, but also the smoke from incinerated objects and sacrificed animals; the sense of touch, suggesting rough fabrics and shoes, and the ropes replacing belts, the rough wood of the coffin, and the soft silk of flags and banners, or the softness of the silky cushions of various sizes which the King placed inside, for the comfort of his mother’s defunct body, with his own hands (*puluinaria multa, et magna, et parua [. . .] ut cadauer sit melius compositum*); the sense of taste, especially the fasting which forbade the population of consuming meat and fermented drinks, and the fasting of the King who, in the first three days after his mother’s death, ate nothing but a little boiled rice dissolved in water, after which he then ate rice with only a few greens (*sola [. . .] oryza cocta admodum exigua, aquaque diluta, reliquis vero diebus oryza [. . .] adiunctis oleribus*), thus respecting the Chinese fasting rite during profound mourning.

Hence, we propose to introduce to scholarship texts that have been considered marginal and which have only been appreciated seldomly for their historical or ethnographic value and interest.¹¹ As we can see from what has been said, this text is thus anthological, in addition to raising other questions that are not discussed here, e.g., the way in which the Jesuits associated themselves with mourning and funerals that lasted for many months. But what we wish to highlight is

11 Among the few that have merited attention from a literary point of view is the Diary where the Jesuit Tomás Pereira (1646–1708) tells the story of a voyage by an embassy from China to

this text's literary value, its richness of construction and style, aspects that are overlooked in so many other texts of Jesuit missionaries. Historical and literary analysis are complementary here. Consider that the detailed description of the funeral rites represents, in good classical fashion, the insertion of an *exemplum* which, in this particular case – and Father Manuel Dias Júnior mentions it – depicts the love and respect for parents expressed by their offspring, so often recognised by the Jesuits as another Chinese quality, especially because it coincides with the fourth Christian commandment. Father Manuel Dias Júnior concludes his account by stating the purpose which guided such a detailed and extensive narrative: *ut intelligatur, quanti sint apud Sinas de mortuis honores*.

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