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# Long Way to Japan – Short Way to Martyrdom: Wojciech Męciński, S.J., and His Letters in the Jesuit Roman Archives

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## ABSTRACT

The Jesuit Wojciech Męciński (1598-1643) was probably the first Pole to arrive in Japan. He died in Nagasaki in circumstances that are well remembered by the recent movie by Martin Scorsese, entitled *Silence*. The history of the missionary is inscribed in the history of Christianity in Japan, where Evangelization began in 1549, on the initiative of St. Francis Xavier, and which stopped with the brutal persecution in the early 17th century. The Polish Jesuit, and the story of his fellow co-religionists in Japan are known and already have their own literature, to which the present article is a mere contribution. Its aim is to publish Męciński's correspondence preserved in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus. His original letters archived there, although known and quoted by various authors, have never been published in full, which is the purpose of the article.

**KEYWORDS:** Wojciech Męciński, Japan, Jesuits, missions, seventeenth century

## STRESZCZENIE

*Długa droga do Japonii prostą drogą do męczeństwa: Wojciech Męciński SJ i jego listy w Rzymskim Archiwum Towarzystwa Jezusowego*

Polski jezuita Wojciech Męciński (1598-1643) to zapewne pierwszy Polak, który dotarł do Japonii. Zginął w Nagasaki w okolicznościach, które dobrze przypominał niedawny film Martina Scorsese *Silence*. Historia misjonarza wpisując się w dzieje chrześcijaństwa w Kraju Wschodzącego Słońca, którego ewangelizację rozpoczął w 1549 r. św. Franciszek Ksawerego, a którą zatrzymały brutalne prześladowania w początkach XVII w. Postać polskiego jezuitę, jak również historia jego współbraci oraz współwyznawców w Japonii są znane i mają już własną literaturę, do której obecny artykuł jest jedynie przyczynkiem. Jego celem jest publikacja korespondencji Męcińskiego zachowanej w Rzymskim Archiwum Towarzystwa Jezusowego. Przechowywane tam oryginalne jego listy, choć znane i cytowane przez różnych autorów, nie zostały nigdy opublikowane w całości, co jest właśnie celem artykułu.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Wojciech Męciński, Japonia, jezuita, misje, XVII wiek

The Polish Jesuit Wojciech Męciński is already known to the readers of this periodical.<sup>1</sup> His life and his cruel death in Nagasaki in 1643 have also become the topic of several publications starting from the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Among them, one could hardly find anything in English, while works in Polish did appear, as biographical articles by Bronisław Natoński<sup>3</sup>

- 1 Paweł F. Nowakowski, "Love Transposed in Silence. Wojciech (Albert) Męciński's Vocation to Japan", *Perspektywy Kultury* 19 (2017), p. 81-106.
- 2 See the bibliography on him in: Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, t. 9, Bruxelles, Schepens/Paris, Picard, 1900, col. 663-664; t. 11 (ed. Pierre Bliard), Paris, A. Picard, 1932, col. 1817. Robert Streit, *Bibliotheca Missionum* t. 5, Aachen, Franziskus Xaverius Missionsverein, 1929, p. 546-547, 564, 566, 569-570, 574. László Polgár, *Bibliographie sur l'histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus, 1901-1980*, t. III\*\*, Roma, Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1990, p. 522-523 [for the period since 1981, see also the supplements to this bibliography published by the periodical *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*]. Ludwik Grzebień, *Podstawowa bibliografia do dziejów Towarzystwa Jezusowego w Polsce*, t. 2, Kraków, Wydawnictwo WAM/Wyższa Szkoła Filozoficzno-Pedagogiczna „Ignatianum”, 2009, p. 159-160.
- 3 *Hagiografia polska. Słownik bio-bibliograficzny*, Poznań, Księgarnia Św. Wojciecha, 1972, p. 124-137 and *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* t. 20, Wrocław/Warszawa/Kraków, Polska Akademia Umiejętności/PAN/Ossolineum, 1975, p. 498-500.

or, older but still irreplaceable, the book by Marcin Czermiński.<sup>4</sup> Recently, also the motion picture *Silence* by Martin Scorsese<sup>5</sup> and the beatification of the Christian samurai Takayama Ukon<sup>6</sup> reminded the wide public about the history of the Christian missions in seventeenth century Japan – a story in which Męciński has his own chapter.<sup>7</sup> Yet, although not unknown, he is certainly less famous and not that much remembered as other missionaries from the Society of Jesus, both in Poland and abroad.

The hitherto historiography of this missionary is based on the literature and archival sources a considerable part of which has been preserved in the Jesuit Roman Archives. Among them, there are some autograph letters of Męciński. Similarly to their author, they are known to some extent and sometimes even quoted. However, there was never any independent publication of these letters. For that reason, the aim of the present article is to fill this gap by providing an edition of them. Its first pages recall the context and the circumstances in which this Jesuit wrote them, while a transcription of the letters follows.

## Mission in the Land of the Rising Sun

The very first Jesuit to arrive in Japan was St. Francis Xavier – one of the original companions of St. Ignatius of Loyola, whom he assisted in preparing the foundation of the new religious order – the Society of Jesus. When Francis landed on Kyushu in August 1549, from the beginning he was delighted with the inhabitants of this unknown country and had them in very high esteem. He was writing already a few months after his arrival:<sup>8</sup>

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4 *Życie ks. Wojciecha Męcińskiego T.J., umęczonego za wiarę w Japonii*, Kraków, Misje Katolickie, 1895 (French version: *Vie du Père Albert Męcinski S.J. mis à mort au Japon en haine de la foi, 1598-1643*, Troyes, Imprimerie Paul Bage, 1900).

5 It is the second filming of the novel published under the same title by the Japanese writer Shusaku Endo (*Chinmoku*, Tokio, Shinchosha, 1966; the English translation: *Silence*, Tokio, Sophia University, 1970; the Polish translation: *Milczenie*, Warszawa, Pax, 1971; 2nd ed.: Kraków, Znak, 2017). The first filming was done in 1971 by the Japanese film director Masahiro Shinoda, who made the *Chinmoku* Motion picture.

6 Takayama Ukon (1552-1615) belonged to an old noble Japanese family. During the persecutions, he decided not to apostatize and so lost all his properties and was exiled ending his life in Philippines. He was beatified in Osaka on 7 February 2017 (Anton Witwer, “Justus Takayama Ukon, missionario giapponese del Cinquecento”, *La Civiltà Cattolica* 3998 [14-28 I 2017], p. 175-184).

7 See also: Robert Danieluk, “«Milczenie» po polsku: Wojciech Męciński SJ (1598-1643) i jego długa droga do Japonii” published by the author in *Studia Bobolanum* 2 (2017), p. 5-31.

8 The letter addressed to the Jesuits in Goa, written in Kagoshima on 5 November 1549. Its English version is quoted here after Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier, His Life, His Times*,

... the people with whom we have thus far conversed are the best that we have yet discovered; and it seems to me that, among pagan nations, there will not be another to surpass the Japanese. They are a race of very fine manners and generally good and not malicious, a people of an astonishingly great sense of honor ... . They are a people of great courtesy in dealing with each other ..., do not tolerate any injuries or words that are uttered in contempt. ... They swear little, and when they swear, it is by the sun. A large portion of the people can read and write ... It is a land where there are few thieves .... They are a people of great good will, very sociable, and eager to know. They have a great delight in hearing about the things of God...

Francis did not remain in Japan very long, but his fellow Jesuit brothers successfully continued the mission that he had founded. After just a few decades of their work, the young Japanese Church was established well enough and with promising perspectives of further development. In fact, at the end of sixteenth century, there were ca. 300,000 Christians in Japan and their number was growing,<sup>9</sup> although from that time the situation in the country started to change to their disadvantage.

At that time Toyotomi Hideyoshi,<sup>10</sup> who managed to unify the country under his authority, decreed the expulsion of all missionaries in 1587. Ten years later, he ordered the execution of six Franciscans, three Jesuits and seventeen other Christians by crucifixion. Later, they became known as the “Twenty six Martyrs of Nagasaki” and were canonized in 1862 by Pius IX. The events from 1597 were just the *ouverture* for further persecutions.

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vol. IV: *Japan and China 1549-1552*, Rome, The Jesuit Historical Institute, 1982 (transl. M. Joseph Costelloe), p. 82-83.

9 In 1614, there were ca. 400,000; at the same time, there were 140 Jesuits, 26 Franciscans, 9 Dominicans and 4 Augustinians in Japan (*Encyklopedia Katolicka*, t. 7, Lublin, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1997, col. 1012-1013). Concerning the number of Christians in Japan and the differences in estimating it, see Kantaro Miyazaki, “Roman-Catholic Mission in Pre-Modern Japan” in *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2003, p. 7, 17. There are also differences as for number of Jesuits there, for example Josephus Franciscus Schütte, *Introductio ad historiam Societatis Jesu in Japonia, 1549-1650, ac proemium ad catalogos Japoniae edendos, ad edenda Societatis Jesu Monumenta Historica Japoniae propylaeum*, Romae, Apud Institutum Historicum Soc. Jesu, 1968, p. 367, estimates their number before the expulsion from 1614 as 115.

10 Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), outstanding Japanese military and political leader. He was the second – after Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) – author of the political unification of the country earlier divided into several dozens of dominions controlled by local feudal lords (the authority of the emperor was nominal). Hideyoshi introduced several important reforms that changed the social situation of Japan. He attempted to conquer Korea twice (1592-1593 and 1597-1598) and planned to attack China (Jolanta Tubielewicz, *Historia Japonii*, Wrocław, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1984, p. 232-245).

When at the beginning of the seventeenth century Hidetada<sup>11</sup> became Shogun, in 1614 he issued an edict forbidding Christianity in Japan at all. For many, it meant exile or persecution. The latter intensified at the end of the 1620s. Eventually, after the Shimabara uprising (1637-1638), the borders of the country closed for all foreigners. The only exception were limited commercial contacts with the Dutch, who were allowed to stay in the small island of Deshima close to Nagasaki. Thus, Christianity apparently disappeared from Japan up to the second half of the nineteenth century, when it was rediscovered to the great surprise of the world.

### Apostates and martyrs

In such the difficult situation as the one then in Japan, several attempts were made to help the mission in that country. After 1614, more than twenty Jesuits remained in the country clandestinely. During the following thirty years, many others came hoping if not that the situation might change, at least that they might help the persecuted Christians. Altogether, before 1644 (date of the death of the last Jesuit in Japan), around one hundred members of the Society of Jesus died,<sup>12</sup> usually after ferocious tortures, because the authorities wanted them to apostatize and thus become an example to those Japanese Christians who were secretly practicing their religion. The police surveillance of the territory was so efficient that it was normally a matter of time that for any missionary to be discovered and arrested.

Of course, in such circumstances there was no question for the Jesuits of having any appearance of normal pastoral work. Despite the fact that since 1582 Japan was a vice-province, and since 1611 a rightful province of the Society of Jesus, in fact all its structures moved to Macau, while its members were working in several other regions of South-East Asia.

As for Japan, all attempts of keeping up with the mission there ended in 1643. One of the last Jesuits who dared to enter the country was precisely

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11 Tokugawa Hidetada (1579-1632) took over his father Ieyasu (1543-1616), founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, who earlier took the power away from the Toyotomi family. In 1615, Hidetada definitely destroyed his rival Hideyori (1593-1615), son of Hideyoshi, but in 1623 he abdicated in favor of his own son Iemitsu (1604-1651), keeping his influence on the government though. All three Tokugawas persecuted Christians (Tubielewicz, *Historia Japonii*, p. 257-261, 282-286).

12 The historian of the Society of Jesus, Bangert estimates their number as 87 (William V. Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, 2nd ed., St. Louis, Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1986, p. 241). From those who were killed, forty were beatified or canonized between 1627 and 2008 (three are saints, thirty-seven are blessed).

Wojciech Męciński – probably the first Pole who ever arrived to the Land of the Cherry Blossoms.<sup>13</sup>

Eventually, after 1644, only four former Jesuits remained in Japan (they were ex-Jesuits, because having apostatized excluded them automatically from the Order, as the historian of the Japanese mission Juan Ruiz-de-Medina reminds us<sup>14</sup>). Besides Christóvão Ferreira and Giuseppe Chiara – both appearing in Endo's novel and Scorsese's film (the fictitious Fr. Rodrigues seen there was in fact Chiara<sup>15</sup>) – there were also Pedro Marques<sup>16</sup> and the Japanese brother Andrés Vieira.<sup>17</sup> The most famous among them is certainly Ferreira – the figure equally symbolical and tragic as one of the main protagonists of this part of the missionary history.<sup>18</sup>

Born in Portugal ca. 1580 and a Jesuit since 1596, he arrived in Japan in 1609 having left Europe in 1600 and after several years of studies in Macau. Given the vicissitudes, in 1614, he started an almost twenty-years-long

- 13 K. Nowak, "Pierwszy Polak w Japonii – Wojciech Męciński" *Japonia* nr 12 (2000).
- 14 *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús. Biográfico-temático* [henceforth: *DHCJ*], vol. III, Roma, Institutum Historicum S.I. / Madrid, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2001, p. 2136. Altogether ca. eight Jesuits apostatized under torture, but it is not easy to prove (or to deny) how many of them later revoked.
- 15 Giuseppe Chiara (1603-?), Italian, Jesuit in 1623, in 1635 he left for Asia (Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu [henceforth: ARSI], *Schedario biografico del P. Lamalle*); he was a member of the last group of missionaries sent to Japan, where they arrived in June 1643; all of them were caught shortly after, brought to Tokyo and tortured; Chiara broke and apostatized.
- 16 Pedro Marques (ca. 1576-1657), Portuguese, Jesuit in 1593, he was missionary in Japan in 1609-1614; expelled, he came back there in 1643 in the same group with Chiara; similarly as him, he apostatized under the torture; since 1642 he was provincial of the Province of Japan (*DHCJ* III, p. 2512).
- 17 This is how Ruiz-de-Medina writes his name (*DHCJ* III, p. 2136). In the catalogues of the Japanese Province (published, but not complete), he appears as Andreas Vieira (?-1678), a Japanese from the region of Nagasaki, who entered the Society in Europe and sailed to Japan as a novice in 1629. In 1635 he was in Macau, and in 1643 he was a member of the Marques group of which he shared the misfortune. The existing sources do not help to answer whether he also apostatized (as suggested by the above quote in *DHCJ*), or died in prison (as mentioned in *Monumenta Historica Japoniae I*, Romae, Apud Monumenta Historica Soc. Iesu, 1975, p. 1322). Of course, it is also possible that both are true: he could have apostatized and then recanted.
- 18 A few years after the publication of Endo's novel and the film, Hubert Cieslik, a German Jesuit working in Japan, published a well-documented study about Ferreira ("The Case of Christóvão Ferreira" *Monumenta Nipponica* 29/1 (1974), p. 1-54; also available online: [http://pweb.cc.sophia.ac.jp/britto/xavier/cieslik/cie\\_ferreira.pdf](http://pweb.cc.sophia.ac.jp/britto/xavier/cieslik/cie_ferreira.pdf); 20 II 2018), which remains probably the best reference for those interested in deepening their knowledge of what they found in the literary narration of the novelist or in its two cinematographic representations.

period of hiding and secret pastoral and administrative work between the areas of Kyoto, Nagasaki and Osaka.

At the beginning of that time, he took his final vows in Nagasaki on 1st October 1617 and thus became a professed member of the Society of Jesus. The Jesuit Roman Archives have preserved a handwritten formula of these vows – the document of particular significance considers the further vicissitudes of its author.<sup>19</sup> The same archives also keep other writings of Ferreira – the fruit of his work as secretary of the vice-provincial of the Province of Japan. Besides the regular correspondence to which all Jesuits were obliged (for example, he authored the so-called “annual letter” from 1618), he collected information about the martyrdom of many persecuted Jesuits and other Christians.<sup>20</sup>

In 1633, he was arrested and tortured by means of the notorious “torture pit”. Broken by that, he apostatized and spent the rest of his life in Nagasaki (he died in 1650) as an employee of the Japanese authorities who used him as a translator (there are no evidences that he helped them in their inquiries against Christians as in Scorsese’s film)!

The news about Ferreira’s apostasy were a real shock for the Jesuits. At the beginning, they did not believe it. When it was confirmed, he was formally expelled from the Society on 2 November 1636 in Macau, as testified by a document signed by the professed fathers gathered there to address the issue.<sup>21</sup>

Given the difficulties in communication between Japan and other countries at that time, it is understandable that there was only a very limited communication. Thus, it remains impossible to prove or to deny that Ferreira, at the end of his life, revoked his apostasy and died as a martyr in the same pit that he had not been able to resist earlier.<sup>22</sup>

Poor and contradictory the news coming from Japan were, they were not a problem for many Jesuits who volunteered for that difficult and dangerous mission. Męciński was one of them.

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19 ARSI, *Lus.* 4, f. 6r; 106r (two copies were sent to Rome and both remain in the archives).

20 ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 17, f. 115r-117v and *Jap. Sin.* 59, f. 96r-135r. One part of these relations has been later published: Cieslik, “The Case of Christóvão Ferreira”, p. 9 quotes: *Lettere Annue del Giappone de gl’anni MDCXXV, MDCXXVI, MDCXXVII* (Roma, Francesco Corbelletti, 1632), 249-328 and *Relatione delle persecuzioni mosse contro la fede di Christo in varii regni del Giappone ne gl’anni MDCXXVIII, MDCXXIX, MDCXXX* (Roma, Francesco Corbelletti, 1635).

21 ARSI, *Jap. Sin.*, 18-II, f. 256rv.

22 Cieslik stresses the impossibility of any convincing answer to that question; at the same time he quotes Schütte, who thought it highly probable that Ferreira died as a martyr. Also Ruiz-de-Medina deems it as “morally sure” (*moralmente cierto*) that both Ferreira and Chiara revoked their apostasy and died, one under torture, while the other in jail (Cieslik, “The Case of Christóvão Ferreira”, p. 46-48; *DHCJ* III, p. 2136).

## Męciński's long journey

As has been said, Męciński is not an unknown figure and has his own historiography and literature, which makes it unnecessary to repeat the basic information about his life here. It is easily available both in general biographical dictionaries and encyclopaedias,<sup>23</sup> as well as in the Jesuit reference works<sup>24</sup> in some larger monographs dedicated to missionary history,<sup>25</sup> and in works of literary fiction.<sup>26</sup> Such biographical information could be summed up in a very simplified form, as follows:

- ca. 1598: Osmolice (Poland) – born in a rich noble family
- ca. 1612: Lublin – study in the Jesuit college
- ca. 1613: Cracow – study at the university
- ca. 1618: journey through Germany, Belgium and eastern France
- 1619-1621: journey to Italy
- April 1621: Rome – entering the Society of Jesus
- 1621-1623: Rome/Cracow – novitiate
- 1623-1625: Kalisz – study of philosophy
- 1626: Rome – study (of theology?)
- 1627-1628: Evora – study of theology
- 2 II 1628: Evora – priestly ordination
- spring 1628: Lisbon – first (unsuccessful) attempt to leave for Asia and journey to Poland
- 1628-1629: Poland
- 1629-1630: Rome
- 1631: Lisbon – unsuccessful journey for Asia and return to Portugal
- 1632: Coimbra – convalescence
- 6 III 1633: Lisbon – leaving for Asia
- 1633-1634: Goa and Salcette region – pastoral work
- 1634-1635: Cochin – pastoral work
- 1635-1636: Malacca – work in hospital
- 1636-1637: Taiwan – prisoner of the Dutch

23 *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, t. 12, Lublin, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2008, col. 679.

24 *DHCJ III*, p. 2598-2599. *Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach na ziemiach Polski i Litwy 1564-1995*, 2nd ed., Kraków, Wyższa Szkoła Filozoficzno-Pedagogiczna Ignatianum/Wydawnictwo WAM, 2004 [henceforth: *Encyklopedia*], p. 417.

25 Bronisław Natoński, "Wojciech Męciński" in Feliks Plattner, *Gdy Europa szukała Azji*, Kraków, WAM, 1975, p. 303-316. Duc Ha Nguyen, *Polscy misjonarze na Dalekim Wschodzie w XVII-XVIII wieku*, Warszawa, Wydaw. Neriton, 2006, p. 44-73.

26 Jan Dobraczyński, *Spotkania Jasnogórskie*, 4th ed., Warszawa, Pax, 1984, p. 74-94.



spring 1637: arrival to Macau

1638-1641: Cambodia – pastoral work

spring 1642: Manila – preparing the trip to Japan

July 1642: leaving for Japan

11 VIII 1642: arrival to Shimo Koski island (near Nagasaki) and arrest shortly after

August 1642-March 1643: Nagasaki – jail and tortures

23 III 1643: Nagasaki – death after six days in the pit

Of course, there are points in this schema that require more light regarding the details of what the existing sources say about Męciński.

Concerning the letters that are the subject of the present publication, they belong to the period of his life extending from 15 March 1625 and 1 March 1638 (these are the dates of the first and the last of them). They are fourteen and are all originals written personally by their author. Seven of them are in Latin, five in Italian and two in Portuguese. Their addressees were three different Jesuits: the Italians Muzio Vitelleschi (11 letters) and Oliviero Pensa (2 letters), and the Portuguese Nuno Mascarenhas (1 letter).

The first addressee, Vitelleschi, was at that time the Society's superior general. Born in 1563 in Rome, he entered the novitiate in the same city in 1583. Before becoming general in 1615, he had several important charges as professor and superior in Rome and Naples, including being provincial of both of these two provinces in 1602-1605 (Naples) and 1606-1608 (Rome). As superior general, he governed the Society for thirty years before dying in 1645, the second longest generalate in the Order's history right after his predecessor, Acquaviva, who had governed thirty four years.<sup>27</sup>

The second addressee, Pensa, was born ca. 1584/1585. Since 1604, he was a member of the Roman Province of the Society of Jesus, of which he was also superior provincial in 1639-1642. Earlier, he was rector of the Roman novitiate house at Sant'Andrea in Quirinale (1625-1628) and rector of the Roman College (1629-1632 and 1635-1637). He died in 1653. When Męciński entered the Roman novitiate in 1621, Pensa was there as *socius* (assistant) of the novice master. They met again, when the missionary was in Rome at the end of 1629, while coming back from Poland to Portugal.<sup>28</sup>

The third addressee, Mascarenhas, was born ca. 1562 and became a Jesuit in 1578. In 1615-1637, he was the assistant of the general for the

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<sup>27</sup> DHCJ II, p. 1621-1627.

<sup>28</sup> ARSI, *Schedario biografico del P. Lamalle*.

Assistancy of Portugal (which included missionary provinces in Asia and Brasil). He died in 1637.<sup>29</sup>

With the exception of the last three letters sent from Goa, Cochin and Macau (Letters 12, 13, 14), the first eleven were written in several European countries, Poland, Italy, France, Spain and Portugal. Lisbon is the only city from where more than one letter was sent (Letters 9, 10, 11). All the other cities mentioned in this correspondence were places where only one letter was written: Kalisz and Cracow (Letters 1, 7), Rome, Milan and Genova (Letters 2, 3, 6), Avignon (Letter 4), Madrid (Letter 8), and Evora (Letter 5).

All the letters are short and usually fit on one page of Męciński's handwriting. They are preserved in several fonds of the archives, mainly in the volume 38 of the series called "Japonica-Sinica" (usually abbreviated in the literature as *Jap. Sin.*) that contains documents belonging to the Jesuit activities in South East Asia, mostly China and Japan.

Let the reader be the best judge of the value of these letters. They seem not to add a lot to what is already known about Męciński, however, they will possibly complete it.

They belong neither to the category of the Jesuit correspondence called *litterae ex officio* in Latin (i.e. written by the reason of office) nor to a more general typology called *litterae annuae*, named after the frequency of their preparation. It would be too long and out of purpose to discuss here the characteristics of both and their place in the whole system of the Jesuit written communication,<sup>30</sup> however, it must be said that one part of what Męciński wrote is closer to the former than to the latter. Obedient as the Jesuits had to be in following the rules of their official correspondence in both of the above mentioned genres, they were also free to write to their superiors and their fellow brothers out of this formal structure. The Polish Jesuit also took the liberty of using this possibility, which is the origin of the present letters, although by the force of the circumstances some of them bear some similarity to both genres without clearly belonging to any.

The main questions, as his religious vocation or his volunteering for the mission, are not discussed in these letters. Thus, one would fail to

29 ARSI, *Lus.* 44-I, f. 11v, 25Gr; *Lus.* 44-II, f. 302v; *Synopsis historiae Societatis Jesu*, Lovanii, Typis Sancti Alphonsi, 1950, col. 632.

30 A monograph by Markus Friedrich, *Der lange Arm Roms?: Globale Verwaltung und Kommunikation im Jesuitenorden: 1540-1773* (Frankfurt/New York, Campus Verlag, 2011) is dedicated to that issue, on top of the paper by the author of this article, "From Manuscript to Print: At the Origins of Early Jesuit Missionary Strategies of Communication" presented during the symposium *Legacies of the Book. Early Missionary Printing in Asia and the Americas* (University of San Francisco, 24-26 September 2010; forthcoming).

find an explicit answer to such questions. Instead, some useful elements appear there, sometimes between the lines.

Of course, Męciński must have known quite a lot about Japan. Information about the progress of that mission was arriving to Europe regularly enough (especially before 1614) thanks to reports sent by the Jesuits. First, it caused joy and enthusiasm, when it seemed that there was a real chance that Japan could become a Christian country, then concern and preoccupation when the news about cruel persecutions followed. The main tool in this information campaign were the already mentioned *annuae*, i.e., special letters that the Jesuits were obliged to prepare according to detailed instructions that were in use in the Order since the time of its founder. These writings were addressed not only to the Jesuits, but also to the wider public. For that reason, the missionaries were told to write them such a way that they could be shown to everybody. In fact, this often happened and such letters were not limited to the Jesuit communities to be read in the refectories, but were also communicated to the Order's relatives, friends and benefactors. Furthermore, their history shows that they became an excellent tool of propaganda promoting the missionary (and other) activities of the Society, which provided many candidates, if not for foreign missions, at least for religious life. The students of Jesuit colleges must have known them as well.

No evidence proves either that the young Męciński was moved by similar readings while studying in Lublin, but it is legitimate to admit that it could have happened. He certainly had to know the famous "Lives of Saints" by Piotr Skarga – the book first published in 1579, which at that time was already entering the list of the most favored writings in Poland, in which Japan is mentioned.<sup>31</sup> It is difficult to say to what extent this literature influenced Męciński's decision to join the Society or to volunteer for the mission in Japan. What is certain is that one part of this literary genre – also published, and which must have reached him at some point of his career – was dedicated to Japan.<sup>32</sup> It is also known that in 1626 he confessed to his sister Zofia that his desire to be a missionary appeared more or less coincided with his decision of becoming a Jesuit.<sup>33</sup>

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31 See, for example, the description of Japan in: Piotr Skarga, *Żywy świętych*, t. 4, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Księży Jezuitów, 1936, p. 576-577. About other literature in Polish about Japan at that time, see also *Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach*, p. 240-241.

32 For example, *Litterae Annuae Iaponenses Anni 1591. et 1592. quibus res memoratu dignae, quae novis christianis ibidem toto biennio accidunt, recensentur. A P. Ludovico Frois ad Reverendum Patrem Generalem Societatis Iesu conscriptae* (Coloniae Agrippinae, 1596) or *Litterae Annuae Iaponicae a Reverendo P. Francisco Pasio V. Provinciali ad Admodum P.N. Claudium Aquavivam Societatis Iesu Praepositum Generalem Anno Domini MDCL. datae* (Moguntiae, 1604).

33 The letter quoted in Czerwiński, *Życie ks. Wojciecha Męcińskiego*, p. 53.

What is equally certain is that such publications somehow accomplished the desire of St. Francis Xavier, who already in 1544 wrote from India to his fellow brothers in Rome:

Multitudes out here fail to become Christians only because there is nobody prepared for the holy task of instructing them. I have often felt strongly moved to descend on the universities of Europe, especially Paris and its Sorbonne, and to cry aloud like a madman to those who have more learning than good will to employ it advantageously, telling them how many souls miss Heaven and fall into Hell through their negligence!<sup>34</sup>

As for Męciński's ARSI letters published here, one of the themes that appear in the first part of them (Letters 1, 2, 3, 5, 7) is his fortune. At the beginning of his religious life, in 1623, he became the owner of considerable possessions, namely, the landed family property, of which he was the only heir after the death of his brother Stanisław (both parents were already dead and his sister was married, so obviously she must have received a sufficient dowry). Męciński decided then to offer all this fortune to the Society and so he became the second founder of the Jesuit college in Cracow (the first founder was King Sigismund III Vasa himself!).

At that time, the future missionary could not guess how many problems this decision would cause him and certainly did not imagine how actually his departure for Asia would be delayed. In fact, a few years later, his relatives in Poland expressed doubts about the validity of his previous donation, accusing the Jesuits of fraud and summoning them to the court. At that moment, in 1628, Wojciech, who was already in Portugal and was about to enter the ship in Lisbon to sail east, had to postpone his departure and instead of travelling towards Asia, he had to go back to Poland in order to testify in the court. This explains why Letter 6 is written from Genova where he was during that unexpected journey to Poland that he did not plan at all. For the same reason, Letter 7 is written from Cracow where he arrived at the end of the same year, while Letter 8 is from Madrid where he was in January 1631 during his long trip back from Poland through Rome to Portugal.

What is clearly visible in all this correspondence is the zeal of Męciński for the desired mission in Japan and his impatience to leave for it. Thus, Letters 5, 9, 10 and 14 testify his joy and readiness to sail east as soon as possible. For the same reason, in Letter 6 he complains about the delays in the journey to Poland in 1628, while in Letter 12 he expresses his hope that

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34 Letter from Cochin written on 15 January 1544 ; English version quoted after James Brodrick, *Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552)*, London, Burns Oates, 1952, p. 157-158.

in spite of all difficulties, he would find a way to sail further from India where he already was in 1634. Furthermore, on different occasions (Letters 4, 7, 9) he was suggesting to the general the names of possible candidates for foreign missions that he met among the Jesuits during his journeys in Europe.

Obviously, given his numerous journeys, there is also the question of some adventures that he had while sailing through so many seas and oceans. In Letter 4 he mentions difficulties of crossing the Mediterranean in 1626, while in Letter 12 he recalls the dangerous storm at the coast of Mozambique in 1633 that almost sank their ship. This last episode would certainly enter the literary genre of the *annuae* to which it corresponds better than some other letters of that dossier.

As has already been said: let the readers be the best judges of the letters' value.

## The letters

The present transcription has been prepared according to following rules:

1. Introducing paragraphs, changing punctuation and use of capital letters were made in order to facilitate reading, with the attempt of being as respectful as possible of the style and spelling of Męciński.

2. The abbreviations have been expanded.

3. A distinction between “u” and “v” was introduced. I followed what the contemporary phonetics suggests (e.g. where Męciński writes “consueui” and “uero”, I transcribe it as “consuevi” and “vero”, etc.).

4. A question mark in the square brackets [?] indicates passages where I was not able to read the text, or where I am not sure of having deciphered it correctly, e.g., [Massi?] in Letter 12.

### 1. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Kalisz, 15 March 1625

ARSI, *Pol.* 77-I, f. 92rv.

Męciński informs the general that, according to his will, he has sent an authorization to the rector of Lublin to sell the goods he offers. He recommends the fate of this donation to Vitelleschi's concern, suggesting a proper deposit of the money, and asks permission to make use of what will remain after handing over to the Cracow college the sum that he estimates at about 100,000 (he does not specify the currency). He also asks that he be able to go to Rome after the end of his case, to be able to continue his religious formation there, away from the distractions

he feared in his homeland from his family and friends wanting to persuade him to change his life decisions. He also asks that two scholastics could study in the Eternal City with him, using the scholarship he wanted to fund from the sale of his goods.

Admodum Reverende in Christo Pater. Pax Christi.

Magnum profecto ex literis ad me a Paternitate Vestra datis praesidium sensi contra mundi insultus, qui me de tam alto statu inter mundi squisquillas [sic!] deturbare conabatur. Quas certe saepe lectitare cum magna animi mei iucunditate consuevi. Caeterum nondum finis tricarum, quas puto innotuisse Paternitatem Vestram ex literis meis, ad quas cum responsum non acceperim, dubito ad manus Paternitatis Vestrae pervenisse.

Sed quidquid sit perspecta voluntate Paternitatis Vestrae ex literis ad Patrem Albertum Fabritium<sup>35</sup> datis, tum etiam ad Reverendum Patrem Provinciale nostrum<sup>36</sup>, ut nimirum bona vendantur, confestim, revestitus superioris nutum, iuridice pro more Regni, potestatem a me delegatam Patri Rectori Collegii Lublinensis<sup>37</sup> ad vendendum bona Calissio misi. Atque ita, ut antea Paternitati Vestrae scripsi, centum millia Collegio Cracoviensi applicabuntur circiter. Residuum vero, ut secundum intentionem meam colloceam, quaeso facultatem mihi a Paternitate Vestra dari.

Id vero a Paternitate Vestra suppliciter peto, ut serio auctoritate sua firmet et superiore collegii moneat, ne videlicet haec summa pecuniae quam dono, pro aliquibus minoris momenti rebus necessariis dividatur, sed potius ut aliqua bona stabilia emantur, vel certe ita collocetur, ut ex ea annuus proventus pro victu fratrum et fabrica tantum collegii cedat.

Unam vero gratiam peto, ut obtineam a Paternitate Vestra: nimirum, ut statim venditione facta, liceat commigrare Romam fuere propter assiduos clamores et vexationes ab amicis, quas licet acerbas pro Christi amore non detrecto, tum quod caput est, ut meipsum mente et corpore a patria avellari, quae certe cum semper in oculis sit, non modicas tam in profecto spirituali quam in studiis literarum mihi perturbationes et inquietudines paret.

35 There were two Jesuits of that name: Wojciech Fabricius (Fabrycy; 1581-1642, Jesuit from 1603) and (1577-1637, Jesuit from 1597; *Encyklopedia*, p. 151, 820). This is probably about the latter, who was then staying at the Lublin college.

36 Jerzy Tyszkiewicz (ca. 1574-1625), Jesuit from 1593, provincial of the Polish province in 1622-1625 (*Encyklopedia*, p. 707). Since he died on 14 August 1625, the letter Męciński mentions must have been addressed to him.

37 Henryk Pichert (1579-1636), Jesuit from 1598, was the rector in Lublin in 1623-1625, when he replaced the deceased Tyszkiewicz in the position of provincial. (*Encyklopedia*, p. 375, 504).

Demum, ut ea quae in animo meo constitui tam Beato Stanislao offerre quam etiam Collegio Romano, scilicet pro allendis duobus saltem perpetuis temporibus scholasticis, hac occasione expleam, et ut liceat mihi duos scholasticos, Reverendo Patri Provinciali propositos et ab ipso, si illi ita videbitur, idoneos approbatos, mecum accipere, a Paternitate Vestra humillime peto, ut Romae possint sua studia perficere.

Haec omnia mihi (polliceor de Paternitate Vestra) non gravatim Paternitatem Vestram concessurum, ut illi qui mundo contra se lacescito, in solo Deo et Societate matre sua constituit omnem fiduciam, et ea quae ut in resignatione bonorum, ita et in his postulatis nonnisi pure ad majorem Dei gloriam vergunt.

Commendo me interim Sanctissimis Sacrificiis Paternitatis Vestrae.

Datum Calissii, 15. Martii Anno Domini 1625.

Paternitatis Vestrae in Christo humilis servus,  
Albertus Męciński

[Address:] Admodum Reverendo in Christo Patri, Patri nostro, Patri Mutio Vitellesco, Praeposito Generali Societatis Jesu. Romae.

## 2. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Rome, [between 29 June and  
2 November]<sup>38</sup> 1626

ARSI, *Rom.* 117, f. 79rv.

Męciński thanks for allowing him to go on missions. He instructs the general to take care of his property, which he donated to the Cracow college and asks for 2,000 scuds from the 10,000 florens which should come to Rome from his estate. He asks for the payment of his Roman debts from this money and for transferring the rest to the local professed and novitiate house, or for another purpose at the discretion of the general. He also asks Vitelleschi to remind the rector of Lublin about the obligation to build a grave in the local Jesuit church for Męciński's late brother Stanisław and asks for permission for Father Vega to deal with matters related to his donation in Poland.

Admodum Reverende in Christo Pater. Pax Christi.

Gratias quam maximas possum ago Paternitati Vestrae, imprimis pro gratia mihi exhibita eundi ad convertendos infideles in Indias, quam maximam inter omnes mihi in haec vita praestitis et praestandis censeo. Tum demum pro aliis multis beneficiis et animo vere paterno mihi semper

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<sup>38</sup> Męciński learned about the permission to go on a mission on June 29 (cf. Czermiński, *Życie ks. Wojciecha Męcińskiego*, p. 47-48), so the letter had to be written between this date and November 2, the day the trip started.

declarato. Dabo operam, ut nunquam mihi tanta pietas Paternitatis Vestrae excidat e memoria, sed semper praecipue in meis indignissimis orationibus vigeat.

Hoc vero quod supplex peto a Paternitate Vestra, rogo quam maxime possum, ut cordi sit Paternitati Vestrae tanquam id quod ad gloriam Dei et ad Societatis nostrae bonum dirigitur. Id autem est quod rogo: ut iubeat Paternitas Vestra semper dari idoneos procuratores ad gubernanda bona a me Collegio Cracoviensi data, ne negligentia illorum diminuantur, et ut Paternitas Vestra semper se exhibeat defensorem illius collegii. Scio enim aliquos etiam ex nostris aliquo modo illi loco contrarios esse.

Deinde peto supplex a Paternitate Vestra, ut iubeat adhuc semel per literas, ne mora fiat in his pecuniis transmittendis, nempe decem millibus florenorum. Nam ego bona mobilia reliqui parata et hic debitum est quod prae reliquis omnibus maxime urget, et scio quod postquam iusserit Paternitas Vestra, fient omnia.

Postquam vero venerint, quaeso ut Paternitas Vestra de illis disponat. Mihi sufficient duo millia scutorum quae a Paternitate Vestra in Lusitania secundum promissum expecto. Quod residuum est, pro debitis a me hic contractis rogo, ut Paternitas Vestra iubeat impendi. Debita vero sunt ista quingenta scuta, quae ex gratia Paternitatis Vestrae habui, et alia ducenta Reverendi Patris Rectoris Sancti Andreae in novitiatu<sup>39</sup>, quae ante aliquot menses mutuo acceperam. Istud vero quod residuum fuerit, committo dispositioni Paternitatis Vestrae, ut applicet ad Domum Professam Romanam, et aliquam bonam partem etiam pro domo Sancti Andreae novitiatus, vel quomodo melius visum fuerit Paternitati Vestrae.

Demum rogo, ut iubeat Paternitas Vestra Patrem Rectorem Lublinensem<sup>40</sup> sepulchrum accomodare Fratris mei in templo nostro Lublinensi, siquidem cum hoc pacto donavi illi collegio quandam aulam cum horto suburbano in illa civitate.

Ultimo peto a Paternitate Vestra, si ita visum fuerit, ut habeat auctoritatem a Paternitate Vestra Pater Emmanuel Vega<sup>41</sup> scribendi in meis negotiis in Poloniam si opus fuerit, quia rogavi illum ut hoc faceret tanquam procurator rerum mearum, vel si aliquis alius magis videbitur Paternitati Vestrae.

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39 Olivier Pensa, addressee of Letters 10 and 12.

40 In 1626-1629, Stanisław Brzechwa was the rector in Lublin (Brzechffa; 1587-1649), Jesuit from 1608 (*Encyklopedia*, p. 71, 375).

41 Manuel de Veiga (Vega; 1549-1640), Jesuit from 1569 ; in 1580-1587 professor of theology in Vilnius; since 1623 confessor and director of the Marian congregation at the Roman college (*DHCJ* IV, p. 3917).



Dominus Deus interim conservet nobis Paternitatem Vestram cuius Sacrificiis, humilis servus, me multum commendo.

In Romano Collegio. Paternitatis Vestrae humilis servus,  
Albertus Męciński

[Address:] Admodum Reverendo in Christo Patri, Patri nostro Mutio Vitelleschi, Praeposito Generali Societatis Jesu.

### 3. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Milan, 4 December 1626

ARSI, *Mediol.* 95, f. 31rv.

After receiving permission to work in Japan, Męciński left Rome on November 2, 1626 in the company of Sebastian Vieira,<sup>42</sup> the procurator of the Japanese mission, to whose intercession he owed the general's consent for his trip. The aim of the trip was Portugal, where the future missionary was to complete his theological studies and from where he would sail to Asia, following the ordinary route around Africa, through Goa and Macao. The first part of the journey led through Loreto to Milan, where Męciński wrote this letter to Vitelleschi. He informs herein that at his order he made a written confirmation of his previous donation to the Cracow College (the general was to receive a copy of that from the superior from Milan). He mentions the hospitality that they experienced everywhere in the Jesuit colleges, where they stopped. He promises to send a more detailed account of this journey later.

Admodum Reverende in Christo Pater. Pax Christi.

Accepi literas Paternitatis Vestrae Mediolani, quo pervenimus, Dei gratia, sani post superatas (ut autumnali tempore solet esse) satis difficiles vias. Ubique memor sum Paternitatis Vestrae, nam quo magis ulterius pergo, tanto uberius Divina gratia mentem illuminat quantum sit hoc bonum quod per medium Paternitatis Vestrae mihi caelitus obtigit.

De confirmatione donationis in Polonia factae, post acceptas literas cum superioribus contuli, praesertim cum Reverendo Patre Praeposito<sup>43</sup>

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42 Sebastião Vieira (ca. 1573-1634), Portuguese, Jesuit from 1591, missionary in Japan from 1604; after the Jesuits were driven out in 1614, he went to the Philippines for a short time, then he went into hiding in Japan; as a provincial procurator, he went to Europe in 1623. It was during his stay in Rome that the General authorized Męciński on a mission in Japan. They both traveled to Portugal, from where in 1628 they would sail together to Asia, but Męciński was stopped due to the matters of property in Poland. As planned, Vieira left Europe and in 1632 he was in Japan again; there he was arrested and tortured in the pit in Tokyo (*DHCJ* IV, p. 3952).

43 Jesuits had a college and professed house in Mediolan then. The rector of the first was Fabrizio Banfi (1579-1658), Jesuit from 1595. In 1640-44 he was the Visitor of the Polish and Lithuanian Provinces, then to become the provincial of the latter in 1644-1646 (*Encyklopedia*, p. 25).

(prout erat voluntas Paternitatis Vestrae), quod quidem negotium, Deo favente, bene successit, quamvis non sine magna difficultate, praesertim in conquerendis testimoniis, sed opera Patris Octaviani Citadellae<sup>44</sup> et testes qui me noverant Poloni adfuere, et alia omnia quae ad hoc negotium conficiendum necessaria videbantur, optimum eventum habuere. Mittetur, credo, Paternitati Vestrae copia inscriptionis a Reverendo Patre Praeposito Mediolanensi, quas posthac, si voluerit Paternitas Vestra, in Poloniam mittere mandabit.

Ubique, solita charitate Societatis, in collegiis excepti sumus propter fidem literarum Paternitatis Vestrae. Dominus Deus largiatur Paternitati Vestrae omnia quae desiderat bona propter tantam charitatem plus quam paternam erga nos.

Commendo quam maxime possum Paternitati Vestrae illa omnia quae discedens in scripto Paternitati Vestrae offerenda curavi. Alias brevi scripturus sum literas Paternitati Vestrae, iuxta mandatum et voluntatem Paternitatis Vestrae, ubi ulterius iter maiorem scribendi segetem suppeditaverit.

Precor Divinam Maiestatem, ut Paternitati Vestrae, pro tot in me collatis beneficiis, merces sit sempiterna, simul humiliter petens aliquam in Sanctissimis Sacrificiis Paternitatis Vestrae sui indigni servi memoriam fieri.

Mediolani, 4. Decembris Anno Domini 1626.  
Paternitatis Vestrae in Christo humilis servus,  
Albertus Męciński

[Address:] Admodum Reverendo in Christo Patri nostro, P. Mutio Vitellesco, Praeposito Generali Societatis Jesu, Roma.

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*Constantius Bovonus* (ca. 1572-1644) was the superior of the house of the professed, Jesuit from jesuit from ca. 1588 (ARSI, *Mediol.* 1, f. 128Arv). The letter does not indicate where exactly Męciński was staying and whom this reference concerns.

44 Sommervogel notes in his repertory that there was a Jesuit named *Citadelli*, but he does not provide any biographical data (*Sommervogel* 2, kol. 1190-1191). Two fathers named *Citadella* are listed as deceased, however, none of them bore the name of *Octavianus* (Josephus Fejér, *Defuncti secundi saeculi Societatis Jesu 1641-1740*. Vol. 1. Romae, Curia Generalitia S.J./Institutum Historicum S.J., 1985, s. 267). Meanwhile, in the order's catalog from late 1626, there are a few Jesuits of the same (or similar) name, who stayed then in Mediolan: *Octavius Strasoldus*, the provincial's socius; *Octavius Boninus*, professor of logic at Brera; *Octavius Lanzauecchia*, a professor of literature there, and *Octavianus Cittadinus*, confessor in the San Fedele church (ARSI, *Mediol.* 1, f. 128Arv). This probably concerns the latter; born ca 1588, joined the Society ca. 1618, lawyer by education (ARSI, *Mediol.* 49, f. 5v).

#### 4. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Avignon, 26 December 1626

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 38, f. 1rv.

Męciński's another letter from the trip to Portugal. From what he writes, it does not follow whether he only traveled with Vieira or in a larger group of Jesuits (Czermiński, *Życie ks. Wojciecha Męcińskiego*, p. 54 cites another letter, where Męciński mentions several companions). Through Milan and Pavia, they reached Genoa. Hence, after three days they went by land to Oneglia, from where they sailed. After four days of sea travel they came to Nice. Męciński mentions the hospitality of the Jesuits in Nice and Avignon. He informs the general that the next day they would set off towards Spain, and that they met mission candidates in the colleges in Milan and Pavia (two are mentioned: Leria and Morandus).

Admodum Reverende in Christo Pater. Pax Christi.

Deo duce satis feliciter pervenimus ad Collegium nostrum Avinionense. Experti sumus suam manum liberatricem tam in periculis terrae quam maris. Nam Genua discedentes, trium dierum spatio per terram iter facientes, ex civitate quaedam Onelia dicta solvimus per mare, ubi per tres dies, paucis milliaribus confectis ob ventos contrarios, quarto tandem die, vento secundiore flante, pervenimus Nizzam, ubi charitate Patrum in nostro collegio recreati sumus et superioris illius Patris Peire<sup>45</sup>.

Ubique per Dei gratiam custodimur a periculis aliquanto apertis. Praecipue vero nuper in itinere iuxta Paviam Dominus custodivit Patrem Procuratorem. Nam cum periculose equus suus oecidisset, pedem tantum modice satis laesit, sed jam optime convaluit et iter egregie continuat.

Vidimus transeuntes per aliqua collegia nimium suspirantes aliquos pro hoc beneficio obtinendo quod Deus per medium Paternitatis Vestrae nobis indignis contulit, inter quos maxime fuerunt Charissimus Leria<sup>46</sup> Mediolani et Charissimus Morandus<sup>47</sup> Parmae, quibus optimam spem fecimus de benignissimis visceribus Paternitatis Vestrae, quae nunquam piis conatibus defuerunt.

Caeterum oramus Paternitatem Vestram, ut iubeat pro nobis orari, ut aliquid dignum pro gloria Dei faciemus in longanimitate et perseverantia usque ad finem.

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45 Giovanni Francesco Peyre (Peire; ca 1568-1642), Jesuit from 1586 (ARSI, *Mediol.* 49, f. 68r; Fejér, *Defuncti secundi saeculi*, vol. 4 [1989], p. 93).

46 Giovanni Maria Leria (1601-1655), Jesuit from 1616; he went to the missions in 1635; he worked mainly in Indochina; In 1661-1664 he was the provincial superior of the Japanese Province (with the center in Macao, where he resided and where he died; *DHCJ* III, p. 2336). The title of *Carissimus* was used to address novices and junior brothers in the Society (Jakub Kołacz, *Słownik języka i kultury jezuitów polskich*, Kraków, WAM, 2006, p. 69).

47 Francesco Morando (Morandi; 1597-1655), Jesuit from 1618; went on an Indian mission in 1629; he mainly worked in the Moghul Empire (*DHCJ* III, p. 2739).

Discedimus Avionione cras in Hispaniam, excepti cum summa charitate a Patribus huius loci.

Hoc est quod breviter Paternitati Vestrae scribere volui, memor semper singularis benevolentiae Paternitatis Vestrae erga me immeritum, cui orationibus indignis et quibuscumque tenuibus officiis proponere, respondere contendam.

Datum Avinione, 26. Decembris Anno Domini 1626.

Paternitatis Vestrae indignissimus servus,  
Albertus Męciński

[Address:] Admodum Reverendo in Christo Patri, Patri nostro Mutio Vitellesco, Praeposito Generali Societatis Jesu, Romae.

### 5. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Evora, 4 April 1627

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 38, f. 2rv.

Męciński writes to the general in Evora, where he is finishing his theological studies, expecting to be able to go to Japan. Despite the delays, he plans to travel to Asia in the following year. The prospect of the mission for him is a source of joy and spiritual comfort. He commends the Cracow college and concerns about his donation for it to the general.

Admodum Reverende in Christo Pater. Pax Christi.

Parabam literas ad Paternitatem Vestram, quae et rationem itineris nostri in Lusitaniam et simul discessus in Indias comprehenderent. Sed voluntas Dei fuit, ut propter naufragium adeo funestum navium indicarum quod nuper in Lusitania accedit, nostrum iter in annum sequentem prolongaretur.

Desiderium quidem fuit omnium nostrum quam citius evolandi, ut eo opportunius possemus illis Christi athletic japonicis in agone certantibus suffragari, quorum multi iam pro Christi fide gloriose vitam fuderunt (ut ex literis recentibus in Lusitaniam allatis constat).

Sed sic Deo nostris desideriiis fraenum iniiciente, curabimus interim ea quae usui necessaria in hoc nostro luctamine futura sint, nimirum, aspirante Sancti Spiritus gratia, aliquos progressus in spiritu ac doctrina. Unde nunc, superiorum visu huius loci, iis studiis theologicis do operam, quae mihi ad iuvandas animas presto esse possint, comite bona valetudine, quam Dominus Deus mihi, ut eunti ibi Lusitaniam, ita et commoranti pro gloria sua (ut spero) largitur. Nec dubitamus, huic similes et etiam maiores gratias nos obtenturos confisi in Sanctissimis Sacrificiis et orationibus quas Paternitas Vestra ex benevolentia sua (ut scimus) iubet pro nobis fieri.

Reliquum est, ut orem quam maxime possum Paternitatem Vestram, ut recordetur mei indigni sui servi, qui Paternitatem Vestram semper loco

amantissimi mei patris post Deum habui et habere volo, tum aliquando per literas, quae mihi semper magnae erunt consolationi, tum in iis, quae Paternitati Vestrae scripta reliqui ad memoriam revocandam dum Roma discederem; omnia tamen ita submittendo voluntati Paternitatis Vestrae, ut nulla alia res ita me quietum et contentum reddere possit, nisi quod Paternitas Vestra de rebus meis per se determinaverit.

Caeterum notum vellem esse Paternitati Vestrae ita me, Dei gratia et favore Sanctissimae Deiparae, de hac mea vocatione in Japoniam esse contentum et laetum, ut illam cum nulla mundi felicitate permutari velim, nil in illa gravius ferens, nisi moram quam ipsam, etiam ex voluntate Dei, ut non invitus sustineo. Certe tam magnum beneficium mihi a Deo per Paternitatem Vestram collatum de memoria nunquam excidere poterit.

Commendo quoque Paternitati Vestrae quam maxime possum nostrum Collegium Cracoviense, ut illa pauca quae Deo obtuli, benignitate et cura Paternitatis Vestrae foveantur et augeantur.

Dominus Deus conservet nobis Paternitatem Vestram quam diutissime ad gloriam suam et communem omnium nostrum utilitatem.

Dat Eborae, 4. Aprilis Anno Domini 1627.

Admodum Reverendae Paternitatis Vestrae indignissimus seruus,  
Albertus Męciński

[Address:] Admodum Reverendo in Christo Patri, Patri nostro Mutio Vitelleschi, Praeposito Generali Societatis Jesu, Roma.

## 6. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Genua, 15 September 1628

ARSI, *Pol.* 77-I, f. 139rv.

Męciński's letter from his trip to Poland, where he went as instructed by the general to order the matters of his earlier donation to the Cracow College.

Admodum Reverende in Christo Pater. Pax Christi.

Recepi literas Paternitatis Vestrae Genuae, in quibus iubet ut vadam in Poloniam. Hoc unum anget me quod nulla ratione citius potuerim venire Genuam ex Hispania, quia non aderat navigatio opportuna. Haec die statim scribo Paternitati Vestrae quo veni. Et volo quamprimum discedere. Desunt quidem mihi omnia, praecipue viaticum, sed Pater Praepositus<sup>48</sup> promisit procurare mihi apud aliquem, cui postea possum reddere.

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<sup>48</sup> In 1628 the Jesuits had a college, novitiate and professed house in Genoa. Only the superior of the latter had the title of *praepositus*, under which Agostino Vivaldi (1565-1641), Jesuit from

Gratias maximas ago Paternitati Vestrae pro promissione facultatis redeundi alia vice in Japoniam, quod solum in haec vita me consolatur.

Haec pauca significare volui Paternitati Vestrae, nam deerat scribendi tempus.

Genuae, 15. Septembris Anno Domini 1628.

Paternitatis Vestrae humillimus et indignus servus,  
Albertus Męciński

[Address:] Admodum Reverendo in Christo Patri, Patri nostro Mutio Vitelleschi, Praeposito Generali Societatis Jesu, Romae.

### 7. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Cracow, 24 November 1628

ARSI, *Pol.* 77-I, f. 140r-141v.

After arriving in Cracow, Męciński informs the general about the bad administration of the property he had given to the Society and asks for intervention. He intends to confirm the donation, but would like to be more confident that the order will deal with the matter better than before. He reports about his health problems and suggests to the general two candidates for the Japanese mission he met among his confreres in Cracow.

Admodum Reverende in Christo Pater. Pax Christi.

Post tot itinerum difficultates iam tandem sanus perveni per Dei gratiam in Poloniam, nil amplius desiderando quam omnimodam liberationem ex illa ad evolandum quo me Deus vocavit et vocat, quam citissime, in Japoniam.

Laborare coepi oculis postquam veni in Poloniam, quorum etiam nunc vix aliquem usum recepi. Sed spero in Deo quod ab hoc malo curabor.

Nunc, statim post convalescentiam ibo salutaturum Reverendum Patrem Visitatorem<sup>49</sup>, ut cum illo quaedam maioris momenti pertractem, quae etiam maxime Paternitati Vestrae significare necessarium putavi de his bonis a me donatis Collegio Cracoviensi, quorum gubernatio pessima hucusque fuit. Non solum per triennium nil solverunt debitorum, sed maiora contraxerunt, et etiam fabricae templi pecuniam quam nescio quando consumpserunt, nolunt refundere supra bona a me donata. Quod si fiet, ego frustra donavi et nil ex omnibus fiet propter pessimam

1581 is mentioned in the catalog from that year (ARSI, *Mediol.* 1, ff. 129r-137v. *Mediol.* 49, f. 92r; *Schedario biografico del P. Lamalle*).

49 In 1628-1629 Pompilius Lambertengo (ca 1568-1635), an Italian, Jesuit from 1584; multiple times provincial in several different provinces of the Society in Italy, was the Visitor of the Province of Poland (*Encyklopedia*, p. 353, 750).

administrationem et propter frequentem mutationem superiorum, qui quoniam ad tempus sunt, nil omnino curant et omnia sinunt perire, quia non possunt.

Per misericordiam Dei Vestra Paternitas provideat et provideat et regimini et bonis, et aliquem stabilem assignet rectorem vel si non fuerit ad manum, mittat nobis aliquem ex Patribus Italicis, quem recipimus tanquam Angelum Dei. Ego, quantum in me est, nullo modo possum confirmationem bonorum facere, donec sim certus ex parte Societatis, ista bona debere permanere pro gloria Dei, quae nunc per summam negligentiam ruunt superiorum istius loci.

Habeo hic aliquos, qui desiderant valde profectionem Japonicam, praesertim Pater Plossinius<sup>50</sup> et Carissimus Trzaskowski [sic]<sup>51</sup>, quos ego comites optarem, si ita Paternitati Vestrae videbitur. Sunt enim apti, ut mihi videtur.

Caeterum, mi amantissime et observantissime Pater, recordetur mei Paternitas Vestra, sicut coepit, et me commendet in Sanctissimis Sacrificiis Deo.

Cracoviae, 24. Decembris Anno Domini 1628.

Admodum Reverendae Paternitatis Vestrae indignus servus,  
Albertus Męciński

Gratias ago meo Amantissimo Patri pro soluto debito. Patri Procuratori Goano<sup>52</sup> ego curabo quam citissime reddi. Dominus retribuit hanc charitatem Admodum Reverendae Paternitati Vestrae.

[Address:] Admodum Reverendo in Christo Patri, Patri Nostro Mutio Vitelleschi, Praeposito Generali Societatis Jesu. Roma.

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50 Błażej Płocki (Plossinius; 1590-1634), Jesuit from 1608, he was a professor of theology in Cracow (*Encyklopedia*, p. 516).

51 Mikołaj Trzaskowski (ca. 1598-1645), Jesuit from 1617, was studying theology in Cracow; he could have encountered Męciński still in Kalisz in 1623 (*Encyklopedia*, p. 701).

52 I could not determine the identity of this Jesuit. The procurator's title meant various functions in the order (Kołacz, *Słownik*, p. 213-214); this is probably about the father responsible for the financial affairs of the province (in this case, an incomplete collection of catalogs in the ARSI does not allow, unfortunately, to determine who occupied this position in the Province of Goa then), or responsible for the overseas matters. In the latter case it could have been Francisco Crespo (ca. 1583-1665), a Spaniard, Jesuit from jesuit from ca. 1598, who stayed at the college in Madrid in these years as "Procurador de las Indias" (ARSI, *Tolet.* 15, ff. 10r, 20r; *Tolet.* 23, ff. 225r, 320r; Fejér, *Defuncti secundi saeculi* vol. 1 [1985], p. 314).

## 8. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Madrid, 29 January 1631

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 38, f. 3rv.

Męciński writes to the general on the return trip from Poland, where he had to go in 1628, to confirm his earlier donation to the Cracow College. The return trip to Lisbon led through Rome, where he spent several months in 1629-1630, and Madrid, from where he wrote this letter.

Molto Reverendo in Christo Padre nostro,

Siamo arrivati a Madrid sani per gratia di Dio, et si siamo trattenuti alcuni giorni perché così pareva all'nostro Padre procuratore portughese<sup>53</sup>, il quale veramente ci ha ricevuti con una charità di madre et veramente è un homo di grande perfettione et charità.

Habbiamo visitato qua alcune volte il Padre Salazar<sup>54</sup>, al quale bisognava dar titolo di Vostra Signoria, et veramente trovo che li nostri Padri non sono bene visti in [corte, come erano?] inanzi. Non so la causa; ogni cosa è molto mutata.

Sia benedetto il Signore il quale vuole provar in tutte le cose la Compagnia, et Vostra Paternità sia benedetto cento millia volte che proverà impedire questo negotio tanto contrario all'nostro Istituto.

Scrivero poi de Lisbona a Vostra Paternità ogni cosa con ogni confidenza come all' mio amantissimo padre. Per adesso recommando me molto ai suoi Santissimi Sacrificii.

Di Madrid, 29. *Januarii Anno Domini 1631.*

Di Vostra Paternità servo indigno,

Alberto Męciński

[Address:] All molto Reverendo in Christo Padre, Padre nostro Mutio Vitelleschi, Preposito Generale della Compagnia di Giesù. Roma.

## 9. Męciński to Nuno Mascarenhas

Lisbon, 19 April 1631

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 38, f. 4rv.

Męciński writes to the assistant at the moment when he is preparing to leave Lisbon. He managed to overcome difficulties in obtaining the necessary permits, but asks the addressee to settle some other matters.

53 Sebastião de Moraes (Moraes lub Morales; 1585-1633), Jesuit from 1592 (*Sommervogel* 5, col. 1280). In the Society's catalog of 1631 he is mentioned as one of the Jesuits at the college in Madrid as „Procurador de Portugal” (ARSI, *Tolet.* 15, f. 39v).

54 Fernando de Quirino (Chirino) Salazar (1576-1646), Jesuit from 1592 he was an influential figure in the royal court of Philip IV, who offered him several times as a candidate for various episcopal seats (*DHCJ* IV, p. 3270).



Reverendo in Christo Padre. Pax Christi.

Ja per gratia de Deus de manana partiremos, *utinam feliciter*. Vamos con alegria todos porque tenemos causa grande, amor de Deus, e mais eu que me parece que Deus ja quere complir meus deseos de tantos tempos.

Avia alguna difficultad de minha partida, ma todavia Deus me quiso consolar que alcancei licentia del Rei<sup>55</sup> o [?] que con difficultad ja tomei. Agradeco a Vossa Reverencia a charitad en fazer este negotio.

Meu Padre amantissimo, faca esta charitad Vossa Reverencia come me prometeu et permitir que vaia [Irman?] La Cabra<sup>56</sup> de Aragon ja eu li diz que [?] em confianza que tenho in grata de Vossa Reverencia elle non aggravera missam elle ai un ingenio mui grande de mui rara virtud assi todos lo tienen en sua Provincia. El P. Provincial<sup>57</sup> se contenta tambem mandar lo fara Vossa Reverencia tambem per amor de Deus ai otros que queren ir come Irmao Olsina Joseph de Valencia<sup>58</sup> de grandes partes qual ca commendo muito a Vossa Reverencia Irmao Ortigas<sup>59</sup>, Irmao Ignatio Carbonell<sup>60</sup> et otros de Castella quais cuida ja escriviron a Vossa Reverencia.

As caxas non chegaram et assi vamos sen ellas. Vossa Reverencia fara charitas encommendar muito serio que se mandem luogo a primera occasiam.

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55 Philip IV Habsburg (1605-1665), King of Spain since 1621 and Portugal in 1621-1640 (Maciej Serwański, Józef Dobosz (eds.), *Słownik władców Europy nowożytnej i najnowszej*, Poznań, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2002, p. 94-96).

56 This was probably Antonio La Cabra (ca. 1606-1638), Jesuit from ca. 1617; who belonged to the Province of Aragonia (ARSI, *Arag.* 25-I, f. 328r; Fejér, *Defuncti primi saeculi*, vol. 2 [1982], p. 117).

57 The provincial superior of Aragonia was *Crispinus Lopez* (ca. 1573-1631), Jesuit from ca. 1595 (ARSI, *Arag.* 10-II, f. 406r; *Synopsis historiae Societatis Jesu*, Lovanii, Typis Sancti Alphonsi, 1950, col. 660), while the Province of Portugal, Fr. Diego Monteiro (1561-1634), Jesuit from 1577 (*Sommervogel* 5 [1894], col. 1241).

58 This was probably *Josephus Olzina* (1607-1667), Jesuit from ca. 1622, who in 1628 and 1633 stayed at the college in Valencia as a scholastic of philosophy, then as a priest finishing his studies in theology (ARSI, *Arag.* 10-II, ff. 407r, 445v; Fejér, *Defuncti secundi saeculi*, vol. 4 [1989], p. 44).

59 This was probably Emanuel Ortigas (ca. 1610-1678), Jesuit from ca. 1624; in 1628 he stayed at the college instayed at the college in Gandia studying philosophy and in 1633 stayed at the college in Saragossa studying theology (ARSI, *Arag.* 10-II, ff. 408r, 448v; Fejér, *Defuncti secundi saeculi*, vol. 4 [1989], p. 52).

60 This was probably *Ignatius Carbonell* (ca. 1609-?), Jesuit from ca. 1623; in 1628 stayed at the college in Valencia studying philosophy; in 1633 he stayed at the college in Barcelona (ARSI, *Arag.* 10-II, ff. 407r, 452r); he is never mentioned as deceased by Fejéra.

Sabe Vossa Reverencia quanto importa mais a stampa de Athyopia. O companheiro do Padre Antonio Freier<sup>61</sup> nos fizo provisione per a nao con muito cuidado. Vossa Reverencia fara charitad de agradecer le per cartas; se chama Irmão Carvalho<sup>62</sup>.

Et Vossa Reverencia me conservi en sua charitad como antes et fara nos encomendar a Deus que facamos muito fruito assi em nos mismos como nos proximos.

De Lisboa, 19 de abril Anno 1631.

De Vossa Reverencia servo indigno,  
Alberto Męciński

[Address:] Ao Padre Nuno Mascarenhas, Assistente de Portugallo de Companhia de Giesu. Roma.

#### 10. Męciński to Oliviero Pensa

Lisbon, 16 February 1633

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 38, f. 5rv.

Męciński is preparing for his next trip to Goa. He hopes that this time the expedition will end better than before. He commends himself to the confrere's memory and asks for news when he is in Asia.

Reverendo in Christo Padre. Pax Christi.

Ho ricevuto da Vostra Reverenza una sua amorevolissima et veramente non so come ho corresponder a Vostra Reverenza per tanta charità, perque [sic] molti già non si ricordano di me.

Io per gratia di Dio me trovo meglio dalla mia malattia, si bene non sono sano perfettamente, tuttavia per gratia di Dio me pare que ho forze bastanti per imbarcar questo anno come fò si Dio piace.

Andaremmo sei de Compagnia in una nave. Spero in Dio che haveremmo miglior viaggio que inanzi. Haverei caro que Vostra Reverenza me mandasse in alguna cosa que le potesse servir in Indie per molte obligationi que ho di Vostra Reverenza.

Et se Vostra Reverenza me fara charita scriver alcune volte in India, haverai caro de saper alcune cose de Roma, come Vostra Reverenza apunto adesso haverà fatto scrivendo me queste cose de Reverendo Padre Rettore de collegio, la qual cosa non sapevo de nessuno.

61 Antonio Freire (ca. 1586-1650?), Jesuit from ca. 1604; in the catalogs from 1628 and 1633 he is mentioned as residing in Lisbon (S. Antao college) procurator of the Asian missions (ARSI, *Lus.* 44-II, ff. 447r, 486r; Fejér, *Defuncti secundi saeculi*, vol. 2 [1986], p. 152).

62 Gaspar Carvalho (ca. 1595-1663), Jesuit from ca. 1613 as religious brother he was an assistant of Fr. Freire (ARSI, *Lus.* 44-II, ff. 448r, 487r; Fejér, *Defuncti secundi saeculi*, vol. 1 [1985], p. 226).

Non habbiamo qui cose nuove, si non che si apparecchiamo patir per amor di Dio perché veramente sono molte occasioni in navigatione così longa, ma Dio ci consola et aiuta in tutto et fara de qui inanzi più se Vostra Reverenza ci ricomendarà nei suoi Santissimi Sacrificii.

De Lisbona 16 di febrero *Anno Domini 1633*.

Servo indigno de Vostra Reverenza,  
Alberto Męciński

Se Vostra Reverenza parlerà alcune volte con Eminentissimo Signore Giovanni Battista Pillota<sup>63</sup>, farà me charità dire que non li scrivo adesso, ma scriverò si Dio me da la vita et arrivar sano in Indie.

[Address:] All moltro Reverendo in Christo Padre, il Padre Oliverio Pensa de Compagnia di Giesù. Roma.

## 11. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Lisbon, 4 March 1633

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 38, f. 6rv.

Męciński writes to the general two days before departure. He has not yet regained his full strength after diseases resulting from the previous unsuccessful expedition, but he feels healthy enough to set off. He has welcomed the stay in Coimbra, but criticizes the poor availability of some of the Spanish confreres in the general's disposition.

Molto Reverendo in Christo Padre nostro.

Si bene Iddio questo anno me volle castigar questa con travagliosissima malattia, tuttavia per sua misericordia mi ha fatto haver bastanti forze per navigare questo anno, ancor que non siano come prima. Niente dubito que me darà da qui inanzi per sua maggior gloria.

In tempi passati non ho scritto a Vostra Paternità niente supra mia malattia, solamente me pareva ben toccar questo punto a Vostra Paternità que in quell collegio donde stavo, tutto necessario per un amalatto mancava, non c'era neanche infermero. Bisognava que me provedesse per denari fora cose necessarie, come se fosse secolare. Questo non scrivo perché me scandalizi di questo, si non perché un missionante qui verrà in questo luogo, sappi donde haver recuso mentre già non le può haver de suo in una de sue malattie.

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63 I could not determine the identity of this person.

Sono stato in Coimbra dove risplende la charità et ordine bon de Compagnia, può esser per buon governo de Padre Antonio Mascarenhas<sup>64</sup>, il qual in tutto veramente homo raro et grande exemplo de Compagnia, como ancor Padre Simon Alvarez<sup>65</sup>, le cui virtù non si possono esplicar con questa carta.

Padre La Cabra<sup>66</sup> et Fratello Giovanni Baptista<sup>67</sup> non vanno a Indie, ancor che ha ordenado Vostra Paternità. Può esser que c'è qualche ragione, solamente veddo que en Spagna li ordini de Vostra Paternità difficilmente si eseguiscono. Questo scrivo a Vostra Paternità con tutta confidenza como a mio amantissimo padre, perque cosi me encommendò Vostra Paternità que scrivesse. Fò per dar gusto a Vostra Paternità et per monstrar mio animo a Vostra Paternità, a cui Santissimi Sacrifici humilmente me incommendo.

4 di marzo *Anno Domini 1633*.

Servo indignissimo di Vostra Paternità,  
Alberto Męciński

Al Molto Reverendo Padre Nostro.

Va per nostro superiore, Padre Sebastiano Alvarez<sup>68</sup>, persona virtuosa e degna di ogni favore di Vostra Paternità.

[Address:] All molto Reverendo in Christo Padre nostro, il Padre Mutio Vitelleschi, Preposito Generale de Compagnia di Giesu. Roma.

## 12. Męciński to Oliviero Pensa

Goa, 20 February 1634

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 38, f. 7rv.

Męciński is already in India, where he arrived on August 21, 1633. He counts on the possibility of continuing the journey. He mentions dangerous sea navigation,

64 Antonio Mascarenhas (ca. 1564-1648), Jesuit from 1578, he held many important superior functions in the Order, in 1633 he was the rector of the college in Coimbra (ARSI, *Schedario biografico del P. Lamalle*).

65 Probably Simão Álvares (1577-1641), Jesuit from 1592, in 1633 he was rector and master of the novitiate at Casa da Cotovia (*DHCJ I*, p. 91).

66 Cf. footnote in letter 9.

67 In the catalog of the Portuguese province, drawn up in May 1633, there is a brother among the Jesuits in the capital city of San Antao, Joao Baptista (ca. 1599-?), Jesuit from ca. 1617 (ARSI, *Lus.* f. 487r).

68 It was probably a Portuguese jesuit, *Sebastianus Alvarez* (?-1633), who was at the head of a group of six missionaries who sailed the day later from Lisbon (ARSI, *Goa 77*, f. 21v). He died on the trip. He belonged to the Malabar Province (Fejér, *Defuncti primi saeculi*, vol. 2 [1982], p. 10).

and especially an episode off the coast of Mozambique, where the ship almost crashed, and the situation changed only after attachment of the relic of St. Francis Xavier to the anchor, which in the opinion of many present should have been treated as a miracle.

Reverendo in Christo Padre. Pax Christi.

Mi sono rallegrato molto de quella letera che Vostra Reverenza mi ha scritto in Portugallo et così ho rescritto subito, et adesso de India, in memoria de beneficii ricevuti de Vostra Reverenza, scrivo questo poco, avisando de nostro viaggio di novo, che fu ex parte molto felice, ex parte habbiamo havuto molti pericoli et travagli, perché erano moltissime malattie, infermi e morti. I compagni miei morti et altri ammallati e vivi, solo Iddio mi ha conservato sano, inutile peso di questo mondo.

In terra de Mozambique habbiamo havuto un pericolo evidente di naufragio dove humanamente non potevamo scappar, perché eramo tutti messi dentro scogli asprissimi con grandissimi correnti de aque. Essendo cosa così desperata, il capitano ha fatto voto a san Francisco Xavier, et io ho ligato una reliquia de Santo a una anchra, la quale subito doppo esser ligata la reliquia, ha tenuto la nave essendo cossi che inanzi quante ne habbiamo buttate tante si ruppero, et infine venne un vento piacevole in poppa di quella parte donde si desiderava, perche solo de una parte poteva per noi esser buon vento. Et quando habbiamo tirata anchra, la trovassemo senza unghie in quali consiste forza de anchra. Multi gridavano havendo visto a anchra: “Miracolo!, miracolo!”. Et poi siano arrivati in cinqu mezzi et mezzo a Goa, ricevuti con charita.

Provai tutte le missioni serrate, che non si può andar in nessuna parte excepto China, ma Iddio che mi ha portato per tanti travagli, troverà la strada che sarà de più grande suo servitio che questo e che pretendo io in India.

Vostra Reverenza me fara charita raccomandarme caldamente alla Madonna Santissima et Sant Ignatio accioché mi impetrino spirito apostolico de Compagnia.

Mando alcune cosucce a Vostra Reverenza de poca substantia, perché per adesso non si trovano altre. A Santissimi Sacrificii de Vostra Reverenza molto me recommando.

De Goa, 20. Februarii Anno Domini 1634.

Seruo indigno de Vostra Reverenza,

Alberto Męciński (adesso me chamo “de’ Polonia”).

Qui sta un parente de Vostra Reverenza, fratello de Ottavio et Gaspar [Massi?]<sup>69</sup> [damaged manuscript] con Vice Rei procurò li

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69 I could not determine who it was.

far là [cartesca?] che può un religioso par amor de Vostra Reverenza. [damaged manuscript] canna de pesce [mulier?] et una da un pesce chamado [armenell?], molto medicinale per la peste et mala aria, et una de sandalo bianco.

Saluto molto, molto il Padre Orsino<sup>70</sup>.

[Address:] All molto Reverendo in Christo Padre, il Padre Oliverio Pensa de Compagnia de Giesù, Roma. De Goa. Prima via.

### 13. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Cochin, 19 April 1635

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 38, f. 8rv.

Męciński writes from Cochin in southern India, where he is preparing to go to Malacca. He provides information about Fr. Antonio Rubino and Br. Pedro de Basto. According to him, Rubino should return to Italy, because in this way he could serve the Church and the order more as a writer. He writes about Br. de Basto positively, although he points out that many people doubt his alleged visions.

Molto Reverendo Padre nostro. Pax Christi.

Di poi di essere arrivato a questa città di Coccim, ho scritto a Vostra Paternità et dato conta de travaglio e pericolo di che Iddio mi liberò. Stando già per partire domatina per Malaca, fò questi quatro versi volendo in essi dar conta a Vostra Paternità del Padre Antonio Rubino<sup>71</sup> e del Fratello Pedro de Basto<sup>72</sup>, come Vostra Paternità me ha ditto che facessi.

E cominciando dal Padre, intenda Vostra Paternità che è religioso di rarissime virtù et eminentissimi talenti, et può ancor honorare la Compagnia con suo scritti. Actualmente sta componendo un libro che intendo deverà essere di molta gloria di Dio e della Compagnia, e già molti Padri che sanno e conoscono li talenti di questo Padre, e che l'hanno udito predicare, desiderano molto havere suoi scritti, e Vostra Paternità mi pare

70 In July 1627, a priest named *Franciscus Ursinus* (c. 1600-1667) joined the Roman novitiate; since he spent the next few years in the College of Rome completing his studies, Pensa was his master as a novice and rector ca. (ARSI, *Rom.* 80, ff. 119r, 120r, 135v). Męciński could have met Ursinus during his stay in the Eternal City in 1629-1630.

71 Antonio Rubino (1578-1643), Jesuit from 1595, he went on missions in 1602; after many years of work in India, in 1638 sent by General to Macau; as an inspector, he organized the risky missionary expedition to Japan in 1642, in which he took part himself accompanied by, among others, Męciński; they died together in Nagasaki Jesuit from (*DHCJ* IV, p. 3430).

72 Pedro de Basto (ca. 1569-1645), Portuguese, Jesuit from ca. 1588; as a religious brother, he worked for many years at the college in Cochin, Jesuit from ca. (ARSI, *Goa* 29, ff. 35v, 43r; Fejér, *Defuncti secundi saeculi*, vol. I [1985], p. 93).

non deva far poco caso di questo, anzi aiutarlo in tutto perché continui il cominciato.

Ben vero è che non potrà questo negozio haver buon successo, se il detto Padre Antonio Rubino ne resta in queste parti, dove non ha comodo né per imprimere, né per presentar i volumi a Vostra Paternità, senza molto pericolo de si perder tutto, pur star in terre così remote. Et così intendo che farebbe Vostra Paternità servitio a Iddio et alla Compagnia in chiamare questo Padre per Italia, che sarà cosa molto facile, e penso che senza dispendio di questa Provincia, così perché con sua partita non farà male a alcuna christianità, perché si è già ritirato in questo collegio, né si tratterà più di mandarlo altrove, come anco perché, come il detto Padre è di molto negocio, negotierà la sua partita senza denari della Provincia.

Del Fratello Pedro de Basto, lasciando a parte le sue continue visioni che ha nell'hostia consecrata – alle quali non tutti danno fede, e con alcun fondamento – dico tutto ciò che *est vere religiosus humilis, pauper et devotus*, et il medesimo volto represe [damaged manuscript] santità, e per questo è da tutti venerato per santo, principalmente da secolari.

Nei Santissimi Sacrificii de Vostra Paternità molto me recommando.

De Cochin, 19 april *Anno Domini 1635*.

Servo indegnissimo de Vostra Paternità,

Alberto Męciński (adesso me chamo “Alberto Polaco”).

[Address:] Al molto Reverendo in Christo Padre Nostro, il Padre Mutio Vitelleschi, Preposito Generale della Compagnia di Giesù, Roma. Soli. Prima via. Del India Orientale.

#### 14. Męciński to Muzio Vitelleschi

Macau, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1638

ARSI, *Jap. Sin.* 38, f. 9rv.

Męciński mentions his captivity by the Dutch, from which he managed to escape. In Macau, he is preparing to go to Japan, for which chance appeared thanks to the help of the Spanish colonial authorities in Manila.

Muito Reverendo Padre Nosso,

Nam tenho que scriver a Vossa Paternidade de minha missam, porque ainda nam posso chegar a ella. Seja Senhor por sempre louvado. Tantos impedimentos et trabalhos tenho procurando chegar et nam posso. Tantas arribadas, tantos perigos, tantas doenzas ate dar na mam de inimigos de fe Hollandeses, donde tenho padecido que Deus ordenado. *Evasi tamen manus illorum in nomine Domini*, porque da ilha Fermosa trouxeram nos

a Cochinchina, de donde foi per Macao. Et assi o mesmo Hollandese foi causa porque o Padre Marcello<sup>73</sup> fosse a Japam et eu a ilha Fermosa.

Daqui da Macau de sair nam nos aproveitam cartas de Vossa Paternidad ainda que o Governador de Manilla<sup>74</sup> offerceco lancar Padres o Japam. Ja me parece que esta missam sta ingeitada por mais que facamos. Et ainda que Vossa paternidad scriva nam faltaram resoins que nam si faca nada. Fiat voluntas Dei custa nos muito dopois tantos trabalhos et riscos de vida nam alcancar nosso fim a donde fomos mandados. Succedeo em fin ao Padre Marcello ainda que elle cudo nam tenha melhor carta de Vossa Paternidad que eu; em somma Deus et San Francesco concerto as cousas di tal manera que so mister que chori meus peccados que sam causa de tanta minha infelicidade que todo acho atravessado. Si me achara a Roma agora, bem sei que carta ouvera pedir a Vossa Paternidad perque qui appareceo a Macao eo [ipso?] nam speri ir a Japam; in tal stado aqui stamos gemendo nossa miseria.

Nam scrivo mais porque as lacrymas nam me dexam scriver mais. Scrivo esta so per diabaffar com Vossa Paternidade, porque esto sta mui longe, et ainde que ordene Vossa Paternidade se fara em otro modo et assi suffrir ate morrer.

Deus conserve Vossa Paternidade per largos annos.  
De Macao, 3 Januarii Anno Domini 1638.  
Di Vossa Paternidade servo indigno,  
Alberto Polaquo (assi me chamo agora).

Ao Reverendo Padre Geral.

[Address:] Ao muito Reverendo Padre Nosso, Padre Mutio Vitelleschi, Geral de Compagnia de Jesus. Roma. Sequnda via.

73 Marcello Mastrilli (1603-1637), Italian Jesuit from 1618; he ventured on Asian missions in 1635, and two years later he reached Japan, where he was quickly detained and tortured in Nagasaki; in 1636, Męciński traveled together with him to Macau, but was stopped by the Dutch, while the ship on which Mastrilli sailed escaped the corsairs (*DHCJ* III, p. 2566).

74 Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera y Gaviria (1600-1660), Spanish officer and a high-ranking colonial official; in 1635-1644 Governor of the Philippines (*Diccionario Biográfico Español*, vol. 26. [s. l.], Real Academia de la Historia, 2009, p. 516-518).



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