

**Centro Studi Martino Martini, Trento**

**Stiftungslehrstuhl für Missionswissenschaft, Universität Würzburg**

**TRENTO, 15-17 ottobre 2014**

**The importance of Martino Martini's SJ (1614-1661) works about China  
in the German and Italian culture**

**[a DAAD 2014 Project].**



Half German and half Italian by birth and education, the Jesuit Martino Martini was born in Trento/Trient in 1614 and died as a missionary in China (Hangzhou-Zhejiang) in 1661.

In 2014, we can celebrate the 400th anniversary of his birth in Trento: because of our input, the Italian Ministry issued an official commemorative postage stamp dedicated to Martino Martini. The “*Centro Studi Martino Martini*” of Trento, and the *Stiftungslehrstuhl für Missionswissenschaft und Dialog der Religionen* of the Würzburg Universität, proudly announce a great international Meeting of studies: Octobre 15 to 17. Our meeting will be held in Trento with the aim to discuss the influence of Martino Martini’s works on the Italian and German culture.

Since the last conference about Martino Martini in 1995 in Würzburg many of his works have a new, scholarly edition, and much research on Martini was done in China and Europe. Therefore in the year of Martini's 400<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary, the University of Würzburg would like to organize a joint project (Italy-Germany) in cooperation with the "Centro Studi Martino Martini" of the University of Trento. The main aim of this project is to examine how these two cultures have been influenced by Martini's multifaceted personality in the different fields of historiography, geography, cartography, astronomy, chronology, linguistic, librarianship, sinology and missiology. We expect to set up several sessions.

### **Martino Martini: an introduction to his life and his work.**

The Jesuit Martino Martini was born in Trento/Trient in 1614 and died as a missionary in China (Hangzhou-Zhejiang) in 1661. He came back as procurator from China in 1653 to undertake an important journey through the European countries, and it was during this experience that he visited the German regions before reaching Rome. In those years, until he went back to China in 1658, he strove to spread the information on China he had gathered, and collected funds for his Mission.

#### **A- Martini's main works**

Among Martini's main works mainly written in Latin and immediately translated into German and other European languages with many editions, we quote:

1. 1651-1653, the **first manuscript grammar of Mandarin Chinese**, written according to Western use, which eventually became the **first Chinese grammar ever printed and published** in the West in 1696: *Grammatica Linguae Sinensis*
2. 1654, the **first Western chronicle** about the invasion of the Manchu and the fall of the Ming dynasty (1644-1646): *De Bello Tartarico Historia*
3. 1655, the **first Atlas of China** published in Europe, based on Chinese sources, containing the maps of all the Chinese provinces (not only the coasts): *Novus Atlas Sinensis*
4. 1658, the **first Western work about the ancient history of China**: *Sinicae Historiae Decas Prima*
5. 1661, the **first anthology about Western writers on Friendship**, in Chinese language: *Qiu you pian*
6. His primary role as a missionary is described both in the **Letters**, in the **report about the Christians in China**, and in the positive decision he managed to obtain in Rome concerning the Chinese "**Rites Controversy**" in 1656.

#### **B- The influence of Martino Martini on the European culture**

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Martini's works, which were printed by the most important editors between Amsterdam and Munich and which were translated into many European languages (Latin, German, Italian, French, Spanish, English, Dutch, Swedish, Danish), and thus were very well known and inspired many Italian and

German missionaries, scholars and men of the Church: Johann Adam Schall von Bell, Ferdinand Verbiest, Goswin Nickel, Athanasius Kircher, the Protestant Jacob van Gool in Leiden (Golius) and Daniello Bartoli in Rome. Later famous scholars who were inspired by Martini's works were Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Voltaire in the 1700s, as well as all the cartographers (D'Anville, for example) and many other intellectuals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **C- Martini's contacts with the German-speaking world**

Martini returned from China in 1653 and visited many places that had connections to or belonged to the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation at that time: Bergen (a Norwegian city with a big Lutheran community started by merchants of the Hansa-Bund), followed by Amsterdam, Anversa/Antwerp, Bruxelles/Brüssel, Leiden, Leuven/Louvain/Löwen, Düsseldorf, München. During this trip, he caught the attention of many important figures of the time, who then sustained the China mission with donations and foundations: not only cardinals, bishops, and prince-bishops, but also European nobility and scholars as Jacob Edelheer from Antwerp, Leopold Wilhelm von Habsburg (Governor of the Spanish Netherlands), emperor Ferdinand III von Österreich, who wrote about Martini to king Philipp IV of Spain, duchess Maria Anna von Österreich, who ruled Bavaria for her son during his minority, and others. Besides that Martini corresponded with important men of his time (Athanasius Kircher).

### **D- The man of the dialogue**

Martini can be considered as a "man of the dialogue" from different points of view. The dialogue between the East and West; the dialogue between Catholics and Protestants (despite the fact that he was a Jesuit, several of his books were printed in Amsterdam); dialogue between the Italian and German culture via the Chinese culture.