**TEXTS SERIES on HISTORY of CULTURAL EXCHANGE between CHINA and the WEST in MING and QING DYNASTIES from the VATICAN LIBRARY-**

**by Rosa Dalmiglio for “WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK 2018”**

**GUARDIAN of MEMORY**

**The oldest library with the largest collection of ancient Chinese texts in Europe.**

**The Vatican Library (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana) is one of the libraries with the largest European collection of ancient Chinese text. According to the study, its collection of ancient Chinese text dates back to the end of the 16th century. The collection is mainly from the works brought back from China by Western missionaries such as Jean-Francois Foucquet (1665-1741), Philippe Couplet (1623-1693)and Carlo Orazi da Castorano (1637-1755), and from the original collection as well by foreign Sinologists such as Antonio Montucci (1762-1829) and Stanislas Aignan Julien (1797-1873). Based on preliminary statistics, the Vatican Library now has a collection of over 1300 ancient Chinese texts, roughly divided into six groups: texts on Christianity, on Western Science, on arts, ancient Chinese books, dictionaries, as well as maps and star atlas.**

**Japanese scholars TAKATA Tokio (1949)points out that the feature of the collection lies in the fact that “the library has many rare missionary books represented by Jesuit versions, precious books sometimes included in the collection by missionaries in China for obtaining the knowledge about China, as well as manuscripts by missionaries written in Chinese, Latin, French.”**

**THE PRECIOUS TEXTS IN ACADEMIA**

**These ancient books play a significant role in the historical researches of Chinese Ming and Qing Dynasties, Chinese ideology and culture, Catholicism, Chinese translation, Chinese language, western Sinology and globalization. However, these treasures still remain in the Vatican Library for a very long time and are inaccessible for the scholars. They only can approach them by Brief Inventory of manuscripts and published text in the Vatican Library which was compiled by the French sinologist Paul Pelliot (1878-1945), and also edited by Takata Tokio, a Japanese scholar. Moreover, even if a few scholars had the fortune to go to Roma, they could not find these documents as a whole due to time restrictions and vast amounts of literature. With the further academic research in recent years, scholars in China and western academia urgently require these texts to be published as soon as possible.**

**THE LARGEST SCALE COPYING ANDS PUBLISHING EUROPEAN ANCIENT CHINESE TEXT PROJECT CONTAINS FOUR SERIES, 300 VOLUMES IN TOTAL.**

**The number is only next to the Dunhuang texts. It is the one of the most important achievements Chinese academics has made in copying, editing and publishing ancient Chinese texts stored in Europe. thank to its richness, it will definitely make great contribution to the research of cultural exchange between China and West in Ming Dynasties.**

**THE FIRST SERIES by Lodovico Buglio (1606-1682)**

**the National Library of France also keeps this text, but only its preface, afterword and catalogue are collected in the Chinese Christian texts from the National Library of France while its full text is totally omitted. Moreover some other rare and precious texts are also collected in this series, such as the first edition of the Wan Wu Zhen Yuan published by Shou Shan Tang in the first year of the reign of emperor Chongzhen in Ming Dynasty, Qi Ke.**

**Zhen Dao Zi Zheng published in Vietnam and Tian Zhu Yao Li in the Philippines. In order to perfectly present those ancient texts, grey scale image technology suggested by the National Planning Office for the Collation and Publishing of Ancient Chinese Books is used in publishing. Clear pictures intactly display the full content of those texts. Therefore, the series can not only be consulted as a reference but also appreciated as an artwork.in general, the series outshines its previous similar works because of the unprecedented rarity, quality, and integrity of the texts it contains.**

**THE MODEL OF MULTINATIONAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY COOPERATION**

**The series of books, relying on the National research Center of Overseas Sinology of the Beijing Foreign studies University, are cooperatively completed with the Vatican Library and the Elephant Press, many excellent scholars and experts have participated is the compilation. Dai Yi, the famous historian, has been the academic advisor. Zhang Xiping and Ren Dayuan, the professors of the National Research Center of Overseas Sinology of the Beijing Foreign Studies University, Prof.Dr. Federico Masini, vice chancellor of University of Rome, La Sapienza in Italy, and Dr. Ambrogio M. Piazzoni, deputy director of Vatican Library, have been editors in chief. Meanwhile , Wang Qianjin, Shi Yunli and Zhang Baichun, experts in the history of the Chinese scientific and technology development, professor Zhuo Xinping, expert in the religion history and Dr. Yu Dong Clara, the head of the Vatican Library in East Asia are all invited as the editorial board members. Among them, professor Zhang Xiping has devoted continous attention to these texts an early as 1990.**

**He has been to Roma many times in order to do his research and had written down 11 notebooks of reading notes. With his painstaking efforts, the project, Gathering and classifying the whole texts regarding the cultural exchange between China and the West during Ming and Qing Dynasties collected in Vatican Library, was approved by the National Codification Committee of Qing Dynasty History in the publication of the first edition for the texts series (44 volumes) on the history of cultural exchange between China and West in Ming and Qing Dynasties from the Vatican Library was pressed in 2015.**