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**Global Latin** (Siena, 31 January, 2019)

My presentation is a kind of introduction to the Siena exploratory workshop *Global Latin*, focused on a subject which is becoming a research line of our Center for Comparative Studies entitled to the medievalist and Koreanist I Deug-Su: that is, the Latin texts concerning East Asia in late Middle Ages and early Modern, written by merchants, explorators, missionaries, most of all Franciscan and Jesuits. Such project will have the international language that Latin was as a privileged material to analyze for illuminating cultural transfer. To gather material for such an analysis, we just started to digitize and process some texts in the Eurasian Latin Archive, which Emmanuela Carbé will show in her presentation. Therefore this workshop is also an attempt to consult some experts and specialists about this subject and possibly involve some of them into the project itself.

The great linguist Antoine Meillet 1977 reminded that « Jusqu'au seuil de l'époque moderne quiconque a pensé n'a pensé qu'en latin. Les mêmes maîtres ont enseigné d'un bout à l'autre de l'Europe, de l'Espagne et de la France jusqu'à la Pologne, de la Scandinavie à la Sicile; les étudiants ont voyagé d'un pays à l'autre; les mêmes livres ont été lus. L'Occident a été pendant plus de mille ans le domaine de l'unité intellectuelle ».<sup>1</sup> Some years ago Françoise Waquet masterfully demonstrated in her *The Empire of a Sign* how much Latin was the most recognizable mark of European identity, according to the Polish motto *Europe ends where Latin ends* and Diderot's word Latin is *the European scholars' language* or, like Leibniz wrote, the *lingua Europaea universalis et durabilis*.

But it was not really « just » Europe ! On the contrary, current researches and handbooks such as Leonhardt *Latein. Geschichte einer Weltsprache* and Korenjack *Geschichte der neulateinischen Literatur* underlined the wide diffusion of Latin outside Europe, and one of the merits of theirs overviews is that they enhance the cultural role of the scientific and religious literature, such as the so called late or baroque scholasticism, the treatises of mathematics, hydraulics, natural sciences and science theory, the Jesuit-theater, and so on. Such an enlargement of scope completely changes the panorama of a history of Latin as a cultural language.

And this was not exclusively the colonial history of an Imperial culture. As Yasmik Haskell recently wrote, « Latin and its meanings were regularly contested, negotiated, locally appropriated, and sometimes cunningly subverted in the early modern period. There are, in short, plenty of *other* stories to be told about Latin since the Renaissance [...] First, there are the stories in the Latin voices of *others*, of marginal European, women (European and non-European), indigenous and colonial peoples, and even slaves. These may be fruitfully compared and contrasted with stories in Latin *about others* ». That's the horizon which we have in approaching this area of studies and therefore we choosed Latin language as the common ground of research. The familiarity of the Centro I Deug-Su with the applications of computing to philological and linguistic inquiries encouraged us to perform such research through digital tools such as digital libraries, archives and language-analyzer: we hope that those instruments will help us to better shed some lights on that huge and unexplored heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> „Autant le pouvoir a été divisé, émietté, autant a été complète en Occident l'unité de culture. Jusqu'au seuil de l'époque moderne quiconque a pensé n'a pensé qu'en latin. Les mêmes maîtres ont enseigné d'un bout à l'autre de l'Europe, de l'Espagne et de la France jusqu'à la Pologne, de la Scandinavie à la Sicile; les étudiants ont voyagé d'un pays à l'autre; les mêmes livres ont été lus. L'Occident a été pendant plus de mille ans le domaine de l'unité intellectuelle.“ (Meillet 1977: 282-283)