

## On the significance of the Latin Language in Korean History

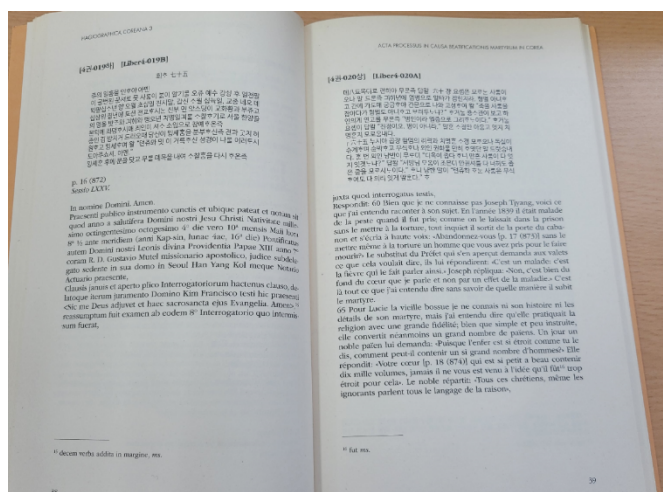
- focusing on *Congr. Riti* 5279-5282.

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Before I move on, I would introduce a research project that has been going on with the I Deugsu Institute of Siena University since 2007. This project aims to publish a series of *Hagiographica Coreana*, and was originally suggested by Prof. I Deugsu (1938-2003). It has been taken up by his successor Prof. Francesco Stella. Together with me, Prof. Stella has already published three volumes (*Hagiographica Coreana I-III*) of the series at Picini Editore. Now we are preparing for the publication of the 4<sup>th</sup> volume. This volume contains testimonies of and evidence on the martyrs who were executed in the persecution that took place in the years 1839-1846. It is named in Korean the Kihae-Byeongo (己亥-丙午) persecution. During the publication of these volumes, we have confirmed two things. One is that the original Korean document<sup>1</sup> that was translated into Latin is preserved in the Korean Catholic Church Museum. Thus, we have been able to compile a collation between the Korean original and the Latin translation and then to produce a bilingual edition based on the principle and methods of what we may call "German philology." In this way we have produced a complete text of the documents that were used as evidence for the beatification and canonization of the Korean martyrs. Here is a photo that shows how we made it.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was reproduced by The History Institute of Korean Catholic Church in 2004.



(*Hagiographica Coreana III*. pp. 38-39)<sup>2</sup>

The other thing is that in January 2019, we discovered a document concerning the martyrs of the Byeongin (丙寅) persecution (1866-1872). Prof. I Deugsu mentioned these once in a brief article that reported generally on a document relating to the Korean martyrs. In this article, indeed, he paid attention to demonstrating the significance and characteristics of the documents of the Kihae-Byeongo persecution. It may have been due to lack of time that the document about Byeongin came to be overlooked by him. Thus, I had supposed that these documents were no longer extant, but fortunately, in 2019, I had an opportunity to guide an academic excursion to Rome where, together with my students, I visited the Archivio Segreto and was able to see the document directly with my own eyes. For me, it was an awesome experience. Having returned to Seoul, I wrote an email to Prof. Stella to get a copy of the document, and he sent it to me this year. I thank him here again. Here again is a photo that was sent by my colleague Professor Stella.

<sup>2</sup> This book is edited by Ahn et al. under the supervision of Francesco Stella and published at Pacini Editore in 2017.

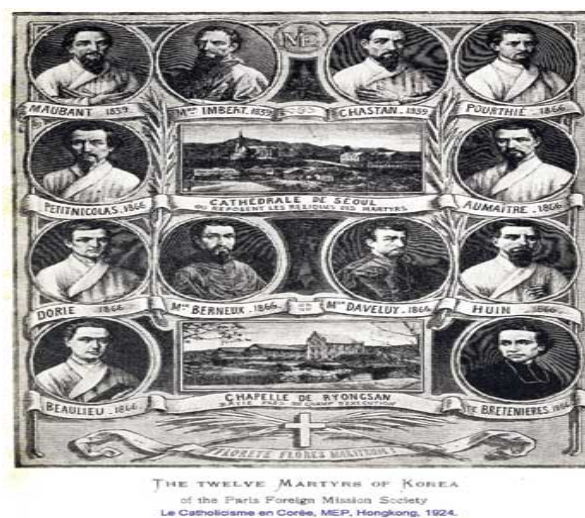
*Eminentissime Domine,*

*Annis aliquot. vix elapsis a quo vera fides Coreanis affulgere cepit, ecclesia illa novella testimonium sanguinis Christo suo Fundatori generosa praestitit & proterea continuis persecutio- nibus impetita, innumera- biles Martyres Caelo misit, quorum certa intercessione adju- ta, in Risque novis incrementis repa- rata usque nunc percrebrat & augetur.*

*Postrema persecutio magna ob ipsa tolerata primis mon- & Rēmo Cardinali Maxella Rituum Congregationis Praefecto.*

(Congr. Riti. Processus. 5280. p. v.)

For better understanding, I will provide a brief view of the document, which is now available in folders 5280, 5281, and 5282. They comprise testimonies of and evidence about the martyrs of the Byeongin persecution. During this persecution, according to Catholic Church studies, about 8.000 Christians were persecuted, including 9 French missionaries. Here is an image<sup>3</sup> that shows their portraits.



<sup>3</sup> The image was taken from <http://info.catholic.or.kr>. 2022.08.18

Three of those depicted in the first line were executed in the Kihae-Byeongo persecution. The rest were executed in the Byeongin persecution. Unfortunately, however, the document contains the testimonies and evidence of only 29 martyrs out of the 8,000 executed, due to lack of witnesses and evidence. In this regard, Ep. Mutel, who as judge took charge in the "*Processus Informativus*", remarks:

Quum autem pace aliquomodo ecclesiae reddita, testes interrogare et investigationes facere locus datus est, nova mora inducta fuit a multitudine ipsa martyrum. Primo enim 877 nomina collecta sunt eorum qui a christianis tanquam veri Martyres reputabantur, sed deficientibus plerumque testibus ad probationem martyrii et causae martyrii inducendam necessariis, de 29 tantum processum instituimus pro quibus et testimoniorum copia et causae eminentia maiorem spem nobis praebebant ad felicem exitum perveniendi. (However, peace somehow returned to the Church. And so a place was prepared for questioning and investigating witnesses. But a new obstacle came up from the very number of martyrs, for at first were collected the names of 877 victims who were considered by Christians to be true martyrs, but in most cases due to lack of necessary witnesses for the proof of martyrdom and the cause of it, we have decided to conduct a process on only 29 martyrs for whom sufficient numbers of witnesses and the eminence of cause offered us a greater hope of reaching a fruitful result.)

As seen above, the number of names collected at first was 877. But only 29 martyrs were selected through the rigor of 43 *interrogatoria*. For this, 136 *sessiones* took place throughout Korea and 129 *sessiones* of collation were held in Seoul. For a better view, I provide an overview of the document in general.

(1<sup>st</sup> Inquisition)

**- Congr. Riti. Processus 5280**

**1. Pages 1~910: *Letter of Ep. Mutel* (pp. I- XVII), Sessiones 1~56.**

**2. Dates: 1899. 6. 19~1900. 1. 10.**

**3. Places:**

**(1) Seoul: Sessiones 1 ~ 12 (pp. 1-258)**

**(2) Incheon: Sessiones 13 ~ 26 (pp. 258~479)**

**(3) Pyongyang: Sessiones 27~32 (pp. 480~570)**

**(4) Seoul: Sessiones 33~42 (pp. 570~702)**

**(5) Wonju: Sessiones 43~56 (pp. 703~910).**

**- Congr. Riti. Processus 5281**

**1. Pages 911~1910: Sessiones 57~114.**

**2. Dates: 1900. 1. 11~1900. 7. 20.**

**3. Places:**

**(1) Wonju: Sessiones 57~60 (pp. 911~953)**

**(2) Chungju: Sessiones 61~63 (pp. 953~1009)**

**(3) Incheon: Sessio 64 (pp. 1010~1025)**

**(4) Jeonju: Sessiones 65~77 (pp. 1026~1249)**

**(5) Geumgu: Sessiones 78~82 (pp. 1249~1328)**

**(6) Yeosan: Sessiones 83~87 (pp. 1329~1402)**

**(7) Gongju: Sessiones 88~91 (pp. 1403~1463)**

**(8) Deogsan: Sessiones 92~96 (pp. 1464~1538)**

**(9) Asan: Sessio 97 (pp. 1539-1550)**

(10) Seoul: Sessiones 98~114 (pp. 1551~1910)

- *Congr. Riti. Processus 5282*

1. Pages 1911~2805: Sessiones 114~136, Sessiones collationis 1-118

2. Dates: 1900. 7. 20~1901. 4. 21.

3. Place: Seoul. Sessiones 114~136 (pp. 1911~2805)

4. Sessiones collationis

(1) Place: Seoul. Sessiones 1~56 (pp. 1-116)

(2) Dates: 1900. 11. 5~1901. 4. 25.

(2<sup>nd</sup> Inquisition)

*Congr. Riti. Processus 5279*

1. Pages 1~1035: Sessiones 1~129)

2. Dates: 1921.2.12. ~1926. 5. 17.

3. Place: Seoul.

It is notable that the original Korean document that was translated into Latin and French is still extant. According to our studies, there are observed some slight differences between the original and the translations. Even though slight, these differences are also significant for later comparative studies. Dr. Ha Sungrae, who is a leading figure for Korean hagiography, reported on this

- Document of the 1<sup>st</sup> inquisition: 9 volumes (1<sup>st</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> volumes are lost but the contents of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> volumes were certified in *The Document for the*

*Canonization of 103 Martyrs* (published 1983))

- Document of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inquisition: 9 volumes (The 1<sup>st</sup> volume is lost.)

Dr. Ha says that the 1<sup>st</sup> volumes of both documents are lost. In fact, however, they are not lost, and they contain a general introduction about holding *processus informativus* and inquisition, for example, name lists of martyrs and witnesses.<sup>4</sup> In my view, both 1<sup>st</sup> volumes may be considered as the head of both the original Korean document and the Latin and French translations.

To the point. The significance of the document is noticeable from four perspectives. First of all, from the historical perspective, the document is a primary source for research not only of the earliest history of the Korean Catholic church but also of the history of encounters and conflicts between western and eastern civilizations. Taking a macroscopic view, the persecution itself is not to be estimated as an episode that took place as a simple and accidental reaction against the introduction of an alien religion, like an alien species in nature, because conflicts and disagreements between the two civilizations are scattered all over the background of the persecution. How to solve these conflicts or to effect a reconciliation between religions in Korea is still a 'hot issue.' It is remarkable to see that this issue is directly connected to the identity of present-day Koreans. Whatever position one may take on the issue, it is undeniable that the Confucianism that dominated the Chosun kingdom at that time was cast into doubt and seriously challenged by Christianity. In this regard, I would emphasize that the document is a text that will provide many sources and opportunities for reflection on and discussion of how to define the identity of modern Koreans and also how to shape a "Koreanity" from a universal perspective. More generally, the document is

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<sup>4</sup> On this, see in more detail, Ahn, Jaewon (2014), On the relationship between Congr. Riti. Processus (4858, 4859 and 5279) and Korean Martyrs Testimony in the years 1839-1846, in *Research Journal of Catholic Church History*. pp. 35-94.

already very helpful for anyone who is curious about the scenes and landscapes in which one can observe how Korean people changed mentally and spiritually during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. If we take a microscopic view, to be sure, the document is very important in itself for the study of the history of Korean Catholicism, because it shows just how far the church extended its reach from Seoul to out to the provinces. This is indicated by the places where inquisitions took place, which are located all across the country, as evident from the above. It shows that Christians were forced to make a diaspora from the capital and suburban area to regional areas to escape pursuit and persecution by the Chosun government. The places in which inquisitions were held were also those where many Christians survived and evangelized local people. This took place exactly 20 years after the Kihae-Byongso persecution, which happened in the years 1839-1846. It is a miracle, or an irony, because the persecution had the effect of spreading Christianity more widely, into the backwoods, remote villages, and all over the countryside. An example of this is Geumgu, where Suryu Catholic church, which was used as court, still stands and functions as a church today. Here is a photo of it.



(Suryu Church, located at Gimje, Jeollabukdo)



This church was built in 1889 in Geumgu but moved to the place seen here in 1895. From an architectural point of view of, the style of the church would have been a new monument to people there at that time. To exaggerate a little, the church may be seen as a symbol representing an early scene from the modernization of Korea. The document is thus evidence from which can be explained how Christianity took root in the tradition and culture of Korea. In this regard, I would argue that the modern history of Korea may be explained in many ways from the country's Christianization, because the *modus vivendi* of Korean people has developed sometimes from conflicts and sometimes through conversations between Christianity and Confucianism, Buddhism, and even Shamanism. In addition, it is remarkable that the document itself is a medium through which Korean history became directly incorporated into world history, since it was not reported as a kind of footnote to Chinese history and it did not use the Chinese language. It is necessary to point out that the ancient history of Korea had to accept and begin with a couple of passages documented by Chinese historians. Korean historians regard a chapter of *The History of the Three Kingdoms* (『三國志』「魏志東夷傳」) as the starting point of the country's historical record. In my view, this present document deserves equal attention among scholars. It is not necessary to stress that it is written in Korean and translated into Latin and French. What is important is that the document follows the rigor of the precepts of Vatican documentation, and thus qualifies itself as an historical resource.

Secondly, the document is a historical monument in terms of law, since it shows vividly how inquisitions took place according to the judicial system and rules of Vatican law. The *informativi processi* and *sessiones collationis* were activated not according to the process and system of Chosun law, named *Kyungkuk Daejeon* (『經國大典』), but to verify and certify truth, interrogations were tactfully and precisely formulated, systematically and cohesively organized, and cross validations were applied to witnesses. This was truly a new method of investigation in Korea, where usually at that time interrogation and torture were used. Here is a report of Ep. Mutel.

Die tandem 18 Iunii 1899 manum admoveere licuit praedictae causae per decretum in quo instantibus precibus a Christianis nostris hac de re mihi porrectis annuens, statim processum informativum instituere super vita, martyrio, causa martyrii, non cultu, siquis seu miraculis nec non et inquisitione scriptorum viginti novem servorum Dei scilicet. 1. Simeonis Berneux Ep. tit. Capsen. Vic. Ap., (...), 29. Petri Ryou Tjyeng-ryoul. Processum illum cum summa diligentia confectum et post duos annos absolutum iam S. Congregationi mittere licet. Ut videre est in epistola iudicis subdelegati omnes testes examinati sunt probatae vitae et omni fide digni. Iudex subdelegatus pro suo munere omisit ad investigationem exactissimam faciendam circa omnia et singula adiuncta huius causae laborem et defatigationem haud minimam, ultro amplexus est longinquis pergrinationibus in toto vicariatu susceptis ad testes interrogandos. Si qui autem defectus in constructione processus forsitan irrepserint, tribuendi sunt potius ignorantiae quam malitiae aut negligentiae et difficillimis locorum circumstantiis. (*Epist. Mutel.* 1901. 05. 02)

(Finally on 18th June 1899 it was permitted to undertake the inquisition mentioned previously according to the resolution to which I nodded assent to the prayers of Christians who were reaching out their hands to me. The *processus informativus* was set up immediately for the purpose of investigating the life, martyrdom, the cause of martyrdom, while not being worshipped, or also some miracles and writings of 29 servants of God: 1. Simeon Berneux Ep. tit. Capsen. Vic., (...), 29. Peter Ryou Tjyeng-ryoul. The Processus was performed with the utmost diligence. After two years it was completed and allowed then to be sent to S. Congregatio. As is evident in the letter of the subdelegate judge, all witnesses examined are verified in their life and belief in all perspectives. The subdelegate judge went to great pains, even to the point of exhaustion, to carry out his duty to make the investigation as precise as possible on each and every point related to the inquisition. Furthermore, he was willing to undertake journeys to all vicariates for the purpose of questioning witnesses. If there may be some things lacking in the construction of the *processus*, these are from ignorance rather than from malice, or from negligence in the hard circumstances of the regions.)

As seen here, the document makes it evident that inquisitions were performed and completed according to the legal system of the Vatican. From this it may be assumed that the systems and ways of the Vatican inquisition had left some traces in the early stages of the modernization of Korean law. It is certain that there were some Koreans who had a new experience of courts and the law in the inquisitions carried out in 240 *sessiones* which continued for about 20 years (1883. 5. 18 ~ 1901. 4. 21). The reformation of the Korean legal system took place in 1894, and torture was prohibited for the first time in Korean history by this reformation. As a matter of fact, Ep. Mutel was a good friend and adviser of King Kojong (高宗, 1852-1919) at that time.



(Photo of Ep. Mutel (1854-1933))

Thirdly, in terms of hagiography, the document exemplifies some significant features of Korean hagiography. The most noteworthy feature is that it is rare to find miracles being observed, while they appeared frequently in the hagiography of the Medieval period in Europe. Stories of mystical phenomena are not noticeable in the document, while It contains testimonies, short biographies of the martyrs, translations of bodies and moral lessons. I think it is a miracle that they have been beatified and canonized as “sancti”, even without any miracle. In this regard, it is remarkable that the document

offers here and there theological and philosophical arguments on Catholic doctrine justifying the newly introduced beliefs and the worldview of Western civilization. In the process, the martyrs used the power of universal logic skillfully and were also able to overcome the fear of death with the strength of faith. It is already a matter of philosophy that awaits a close analysis, because it is also directly connected to “Koreanity”, i.e. the identity of modern Koreans. In the document, there are many testimonies of martyrs being imprisoned, tortured and executed. *De facto*, there was no savior present and there was no *deus ex machina*, but nevertheless, they did overcome death and accept it willingly and happily. Just reading the document is sometimes awesome and sometimes inspiring. So far, thus, I argue that the document is in general a new departure in hagiography. In particular, however, it is certain that it is itself a text that aids in identifying the uniqueness and universality of the Korean saints.



(A depiction of the torture of Saint Agatha<sup>5</sup>)

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<sup>5</sup> She was the first to be captured and spent the longest time in prison. The picture was drawn by Tak, Heeseong. It is drawn from <https://cbck.or.kr/en/CatholicChurchInKorea/103->

Finally, in terms of language, the document draws attention to scholarship. As mentioned, the document was written in Korean and then translated into Latin and French. It is interesting to see that there are many names of persons and places which have been transcribed into Latin and French. The transcriptions are very important in figuring out how these were pronounced at that time. Shameful to say, however, there is no lexicon for 19<sup>th</sup> century Korean language. Because of this, it is very difficult even for Korean linguists to read texts written at that time. They read them with their own personal experiences. But the document provides a comparison that helps greatly to comprehend the real sounds of the Korean language at that time. I should provide an example of this.

[Sessio 3] (*CRP. 5280*, pp. 124-125)

Ad 2um Int. respondit:

Nominor Ouen Susanna, oriunda sum ex Yong Me Ri, in praefectura Ko Yang. Pater meus est Petrus Ouen et mater Lucia Ni, amboque mortui sunt. Nata sum annis quinquaginta sex. Annis nata quindecim matrimonium inivi cum Petro Syeng, annis nata quadraginta tribus, effecta sum vidua, maneoque in viduitate. De processione autem mea, curam habeo hospitii senum et ideo non sum anxia de victu, quamvis mihi nullae sint divitiae propriae.

[2권-003] (병인박해 1차재판록)

Ad 2um Int. respondit : 성명은 원 수산나요, □□은 고양 용머리, 부 원 베드루, 모 니 누시아 둘이 다 죽고 나히 오십륙이오. 십오세에 설 베드루의게 식집가고 □십삼세에브터 과슈로 잇고, □명은 양노원 웃듬으로 잇□니 먹을 걱정 업□나 본 □몰이 업□이다.

The transcribed names like Ouen, Ni, and Seyung are names of persons, and Yong Me

Ri and Koyang are names of places. Among these, the sound of Ni is now pronounced widely as "I". Some people still use "Lee" for it in passports. This is a trace of the sound of 19<sup>th</sup> century Korean Language. From the citation above, it is noticeable that there are a lot of new coinages or modern technical terms. An example is "양노원" (Yangnowon) which is translated as "*hospitii senum*." This institute was introduced by the Church into Korean history. An interesting point is "웃듬"(Euddum) translated as "cura." "웃듬" means "chief", "leader" or "director." Unfortunately, we Koreans now don't use this word as an official term. But it deserves to be used, because it is easier and closer to intuition than other terms. This is the tip of an iceberg. To make a long story short, the document is full not only of new coinages but also of pure Korean words. Undoubtedly, it is a raw *thesaurus* of the Korean language and also provides a great deal of linguistic evidence that helps to demonstrate the transition from Medieval to Modern Korean language. In my view, the document *per se* is a reference for proving that the Latin language is alive and functions well as a medium of science and civilization. Regarding this, what to add is that *Parvum Vocabularium Latino-Coreanum ad Usum Studiosae Juventutis Coreanae* was published in year of 1891 at Hongkong. It contains 9,310 lemma. Here is the first page of it.

A, ab, abs, (præp. abl.) Secundus a rege.	브러, 조후, 로, 애셔 후애, 다음애, 남금후애 저
A tergo.	로, 뒤로
A summo.	우회로
Hoc factum est a me. (Cic.)	위하야, 나물위하야거시 되엿다
A primo.	브럼, 처음으로
A principio.	처음브럼
A parvulo.	기러셔느럼
A concivibus suis inter- emptus. (Cic.)	로, 데몽모로극이인자
Cadere ab hoste. (Ov.)	원슈의게로죽다
Ab ira.	발노로
A desperatione.	절망함으로
Ab irrisu. (Liv.)	능욕으로
Ulcisci se ab inimico.	원슈를잡다
Nonnulli a primis.	출애, 웃듬출애엇건이
Abbas, atis. subst. m.	슈원회장, 대회장
Abbreviatio, onis. s. f.	감함이, 반말
Abbrevio, as, avi, atum, are. v. a.	감함다, 덜다
Abdicatio, onis. s. f.	보림이, 전위함
Abdico, as, avi, atum, are. v. a.	내여보리다, 전위함다, 스 양함다

To conclude, it is widely accepted that Latin has been substituted or replaced by modern national languages like English, French and German. This is a recent story and young history. As a matter of fact, however, Latin was alive and played a role sincerely and excellently as a medium of history and civilization. The document is a significant indication of this. I think that the reason we are now standing here under the conference title "Global Latin Research Project" is to explicate the global history of Latin as a medium of science and of civilization. Regarding this, I would point out that there are a lot of lexicons that were made in the bilingual form, for example, *Latino-Sino*, *Latino-Japanico*, *Latino-Sanscrito*, *Latino-Annamico*, *Latino-Manchuriano*, etc, for the future cooperative research. Interestingly to see is that even a lot of grammars were made or created on these lexicon bases and Latin grammar. It means that *Lingua Latina* played vital rules of basic ground for establishing of modern system and structure of Asian languages, too, like European modern languages.