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Andrea, Georgian Theatine, Missionary in Goa in the XVIIth Century

“Il Padre Don Pietro [Avitabile], il Padre Don Antonio [Ardizone] e il fratello Andrea [Lippomano], che per non poter impanna ha professato da laico stanno e qui, e per fondare bene questa Missione per la loro Religione” (SOCG 141, fol. 331) – here is a good introduction to Brother Andrea, presented as one of the founders of the Theatine mission in Oriental Indies around 1640. When we think about the Theatine missionaries in Georgia in the XVII seventeenth century, Brother Andrea is not the first name we think of¹. However, it is on this little-known figure from the mission that we will be focusing: The only recruit to the order who came from Georgia, who died in Goa on 24 May 1642.

In the early seventeenth century, the order of regular Theatine clerics² had few foreign recruits. If we look at the general register of the religious professions of the order (Nomi, e cognomi de padri, e fratelli professi della congregazione de Chierici Regolari, 1742), particularly the origin of the fathers and brothers for the years 1600-1645, we find just a few Spanish, which is not surprising for an order established in Naples, and a few French in Northern Italy.

In the registers of the order, a line catches the eye: “*Andrea Lippomano*

1 The first names that comes to mind are fathers Cristoforo Castelli CR, Archangelo Lamberti CR, the writer of *Colchide Sacra*, the grammarian Francesco-Maria Maggio CR, and Angelo-Maria Verricelli CR, famous for his treatise on missionology.

2 The order was founded by Gaetano Thiene (Vicenza 1480 – Naples 1547), Pietro Carafa – future Pope Paolo VI – (Capriglia Irpina 1476 – Rome 1559), Bonifacio dei Còlli (Alessandria – Venice 1558) and Paolo Consiglieri (Rome 1499 – Rome 1557), who made their solemn profession on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 14 September 1524, in St Peter’s Basilica, in the presence of Monsignor Giovanni-Battista Bonciano.

Giorgiano [ha professato] in Goa, 22 febbraio 1641“ (Nomi, e cognomi de padri, e fratelli professi della congregazione de Chierici Regolari 1742, 525). It stands out for two reasons: He is a foreign recruit in a very young mission, and he was a brother who took part in the creation of the mission in India. Indeed, he took his vows in Goa, where the Theatines had established a mission at the end of 1640 (Iwaszczonek CR 2017, 35-55, 46). We can get to know him better through Father Pietro Avitabile’s (Naples 18-X-1590 – Goa 1-XI-1650) letters and relations, some decisions of the Propaganda fide, and with the help of Father Ferro’s (Ferro 1704, Ferro 1705) works on the history of the order’s missions.

The life and ecclesiastical career of Brother Andrea can be traced, as, by chance, we do know of some precise dates concerning him: His vesture, his religious profession, and his death. According to the order’s registers, his religious profession took place on 22 February 1641, in Goa. A detailed letter from Father Avitabile to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide gives the precise date of his death, just over a year later, on 24 May 1642 (SOCG 192, fol. 196-201), also in Goa. Meanwhile, Father Ferro gives a fairly precise account of his vesture on 17 February 1638, in the house of the Theatine mission in Mingrelia: *“il primo giorno di Quaresimo li 17 Febraro di quest’anno 1638 fù vestito in Cipurias di Mingrelia dell’abito della Nostra Santa Religione, et à tutti parve bene di cominciarlo da quest’ora à chiamare Andrea, avendo egli un nome stravagante, secondo l’uso del paese”*(Ferro CR, 1704, 396). The Georgian brother is never mentioned in any Italian archive by his birth name, Naskida (Merkviladze 2013, 75-85), but is instead named “Lippomano”.

The other dates can be calculated with varying degrees of accuracy. He died young, but we do not know exactly at what age. We can, however, attempt to estimate his date of birth, even if the date of his conversion is not known precisely as 1637. Father Avitabile’s biographer, a fellow missionary in India, Father Carlo Ferrarini, clearly mentions a conversion that took place in Gori that year: *“una volta in particolare nell’anno 1637 [...] un giovanetto Georgiano, che poi fu nostro fratello laico”*(Avitabile fol.22). Father Ferro notes that he was 16 years old: *“Fù questi il primo [...] ch’essendo di sedeci anni, abbracciasse in quel Regno d’ostinatissimo scisma la religione Cattolica”* (Ferro CR 1705, 34), so he was probably born between 1620 and 1622. This seems to be confirmed by the reply sent by Rome to Father Avitabile, at the request for a dispensation from the canonical age of ordination for “Brother Andrea”, dated 22 October 1639 (ASPF 1639, vol. 19, fol. 116 v): *“breve per l’ordinatione del fratello Andrea, nel quale, se bene per assicurarsi meglio si è notata nella narrazione*

l'età di 17 anni." With consideration of the delays of correspondence, we can suggest a similar year of birth, and we can assert that he died aged around twenty.

This request for dispensation raises another interesting question. In fact, as Andrea died as a lay brother, the fact of his vocation to the priesthood does not appear clearly. While the ordination registers of the Theatines were well kept in the seventeenth century, with precise dates for both minor and major orders, we unfortunately do not have any for the houses in Georgia or Goa. However, among the Theatines, vows were taken before ordination to the priesthood, at the entry to the major orders. Given that Brother Andrea died a year after his vows, we can assume that he was probably a sub-deacon or deacon at the time of his death.

Little is known of his childhood, except that he was an orphan from Gori and was educated by the fathers, as Father Avitabile writes from Constantinople on 10th September, 1638: *"il nostro Padre D. Giusto Prato, più tosto per compagnia, che per altro, prese in casa un Giovinotto Giorgiano d'anni 15 in circa, orfano, d'ottima indole, il di cui Padre fù tanto nostro affezionato, che frequentava ogni giorno la nostra Chiesa, e s'offervò, che quando tronava la porta d'essa chiusa, dalle parte di fuori, e sù la strada faceva la sua Orazione"*(Ferro CR 1704, 393). The young man is presented as pious and disciplined, familiar with the exercises of piety, and having been close to the Theatines since their arrival in the country. Father Avitabile summarises his character well in his book *Relatio de ecclesiastico Georgiae statu*: *"nam Andreas Lyppomanus conversus, in simplicium coetu puritatem custodiens, et a semita observationis mandatorum Dei et Regulae suae non aberrans"* (Avitabile 1690, 140). Beyond the standard character traits of a pious young man (Lévêque 1957, 620–632), we can see here a portrait that seems accurately portrayed, and all those who speak about him praise his piety, his great purity, and his moral rigor.

Father Ferro presents Andrea as the first Georgian Catholic, and mentions the bullying and sometimes violence he had to endure from some of his compatriots¹. On several occasions, there is talk of persecution against him, and it was this image (Bianchi 1758) that the engraver commissioned to paint his portrait chose to depict. The best-known fact, however, is the story of his marriage. It seems that the young man had been promised in marriage to a certain young girl, and those around him

¹The various sufferings experienced by young Andrea at the time of his conversion, mentioned in Father Tamarati's work, are described in detail in the works of Fathers Ferro and Silos, in particular: Silos CR 1666, 266, and Ferro CR, 1704, 393.

tried to divert him from his religious vocation by urging him to marry. With the help of the mission's respected superior, Father Avitabile, he always stood firm in his religious vocation: "*quando volendo sforzare il medesimo giovanetto à pigliar moglie, et havendo à quest'effetto chiamato in ajuto loro il Patriarca Giorgiano con alcuni vescovi, non solo alla presenza del Padre, che subito vi accorse però senza dir una parola, non gli fecero ver un'affronto, mà parve che non sapessero aprir bocca per parlare, [...] il nostro Padre comandato che egli medesimo respondesse, replicando molte volte, non voglio casarmi con la Creatura, mà con il Creatore perché existimo hoc bonum esse, propter instantem necessitatem*" (BNCR fol. 22). So we have the image of an upright and willing young man, ready to be persecuted for his faith, but also a religious man sure of his vocation.

The entry into religion of a foreigner, just converted, was already exceptional among Theatines in the early 17th century, but this was not simply a case of a lay brother remaining attached to the mission in Georgia: Brother Andrea was destined for the priesthood and did not remain in Georgia. Indeed, Brother Andrea's vocation went further than that of a lay brother, and in 1638, he set off for Rome: "*quando non so per qual negozio fù necessitato di nuovo partirsi per Roma, come fece del 1638 accompagnato dal suddetto fratello Andrea alla volta di Costantinopoli*" (BNCR fol. 22). This can be explained by the special bond between the young brother and his superior. From the first mention of his name in 1637, until his death five years later, he is often mentioned as accompanying Father Pietro Avitabile, and it was thus quite natural for him to follow him to Rome. However, simple filial piety towards his superior was not enough to explain his desire to go on a mission to India. Among the Theatines at the time, even though the missionary idea was very much alive - for example, Father Michele Ghisleri CR was the confessor and spiritual director of Monsignor Juan Bautista Vives (Valencia 3.III.1545 - Rome 22.II.1632), founder of the *Collegio Urbano di Propaganda Fide* (Pizzorusso 2004, 471-498) - there were still very few missionaries. The choice of missionaries is made very carefully, and is subject to the recommendations of the superiors, but above all to the voluntary will of the religious.

During his stay in Rome, Andrea volunteered for the Goa mission. The *Propaganda Fide* archives contain no letter about his application, although the application itself would come as no surprise, as he was staying in Rome at a mission house. This mission to Goa, like that of Georgia, was initiated at the request of Father Pietro Avitabile. It seems that he orally presented his project to Pope Urban VIII and the *Propaganda Fide* at the

occasion of the audience, during which he gave a report of the state of the Georgian mission. (*“Beatissimo Padre, gran tempo è, che da impulso Divino stimolato intraprendere la Missione dell’Indie Orientali, portai le mie umilissime suppliche al moi Padre Generale”* Ferro CR, 1705, 9). The Goa project was ratified by the General Chapter of the Order a few weeks later, and on 11 July 1639, the Decree of Urban VIII established the mission in the Kingdom of Idelcan in the East Indies. Father Avitabile himself pleaded the cause of the young lay brother: *“Volle però de sua conserva Andrea Lippomano Giorgiano, quegli, ch’avendo abbandonata la promessa sposa per servir a Cristo, nel nostro abito, si sottopose à doloroso martirio [...] fatto sicuro, che se frà gente cristiana scismatica ebbe animo per sopportarlo ; molto maggiormente l’averebbe fatta frà gl’Infedeli, quando l’avesse il bisogno portato ; nè dalla Sacra Congregazione gli fù negato, ma ben volentieri approvandolo, godè in eccesso, che un trionfo della Cattolica fede frà gente barbara conducesse, stimando più efficace per muoverli la sua virtù, che il dire di qual si fosse Oratore per convincerli, come à suo luogo vedremmo”* (Ferro CR, 1705, 13). Thus, Andrea was added to the list of missionaries to be sent to India, along with Father Pietro Avitabile, Antonio Ardizzone (Naples 1605 - Naples 1699) and Francesco Manco (Lecce - Regno di Golconda 1646).

This article will not dwell on the founding of the Theatine mission in Goa, but we will note a curious fact: The mission was initially seen not as a new mission, but as a continuation of the mission of Georgia. An anonymous account (BNN fol.35) of this Indian mission sums up the fact that this mission was fairly quickly decided as a continuation of the Georgian mission: *“Fu destinato missionario all’Indie Orientali [...] il Padre D. Pietro Avitabile, uno de i duè fondatori della missione giorgianna sopradetta, in tempo che trovarsi questo Padre in Roma, venutovi per urgenti negotij dalla Georgia.”* In fact, Father Avitabile was appointed Prefect in India while he was still Prefect of Georgia. Sometime later, the two prefectures were separated and a new prefect was appointed for Georgia.

Leaving Livorno in October 1639, Andrea and his companions arrived in Goa a year later, on 25 October 1640. The journey was long and difficult: By sea to Alessandretta, where they arrived for Christmas, on 25 December 1639. Then they reached Aleppo, and on 25 January 1640, they joined a caravan crossing the desert via Babilone to Basra, where they embarked for Mascate, then Comorano (Gomron), where, with some difficulty, they found a Portuguese ship. The last part of the crossing was complicated, only possible a few months each year. They finally reached the coast

of India on 15 October 1640, at Chaul, and arrived in Goa (Avitabile 1641, fol 404-406) ten days later. Not much is said about Andrea in the travel accounts, and he seems not to have suffered any particular misfortune. On arrival in Goa with his superior and confreres, he was able to start his missionary work.

The Theatines arrived in the Kingdom of Idelcan on 25 October 1640. As in Gori, where they joined the Augustinians already established, in Goa, they joined the Discalced Carmelites of Persia, who had been there for several years already. The Theatines stayed for around two months in the house of Saint Theresa before finding a home for themselves. It was not until 4 July 1642 (Ferro 1705, 28), that the Theatines opened their first church in Goa, dedicated to Saint Gaetan (Moreira 1997). In addition to the evangelisation and baptism of infidels, the main focus of the Theatines' apostolate in the East Indies was the conversion of Christian renegades, Italians and Portuguese, and Dutch and English Protestants. The Apostolate of the Theatines in Goa was particularly marked by what is known as the *Confessorio notturno*: As the inhabitants were ashamed to go to confession, the fathers offered night confessions, which apparently attracted many faithful (Ferro 1705, 94-95). We will say nothing more about this curious practice, and will merely point to the fact that Brother Andrea was only involved in the early stages of this mission, and passed away before the opening of the Saint Gaetan Church.

Where the main part of Brother Andrea's life and religious career are only referenced in more general documents about the history of the mission, the end of his life is described in two documents that concern him more specifically. These are almost identical reports by Father Avitabile, one dated 15 November 1642, in Goa (Avitabile 1642, 409-412), the other from 15 December 1642 (ASPF, 196-201). The first part of this account is devoted to the illness and death of Brother Andrea. It is from this eulogy, with all the limitations that must be accorded to this literary genre, that we draw the essence of the portrait of Andrea during his stay in India. Father Avitabile recalls that he had already almost died twice: *"la prima, quando per sentenza d'un infuriato prefetto fu condannato a morte, o per dir meglio giudicato meritevole de vivere eternamente per premio di non haver voluto bestemiare quella fede cattolica [...] la seconda volta che dissi di sopra essersi esposto a dar la vita per Dio non fu già per sentenza d'altri, ma per elettioe propria di lui, stimano esso migliore il non essere più, che essere ma non di Dio"* (ASPF, 196-201). He enumerates the various abuses suffered by Andrea while he was still in Georgia, to demonstrate again his great Christian virtues. Of his missionary work, strictly speaking,

we know nothing precise, except that he helped to set up the mission in Goa.

However, Brother Andrea Lippomano did not die suddenly, he did not suffered any accident, and he was not martyred, but died after a long illness. *“Quanto al nostro fratello Andrea Lippomano, georgiano, laico professo, doppo d’esser stato fuor di letto pochi giorni, si delli ultimi dell’anno passato, como del principio di questo presente, pero sempre con un poco di tosse et una febricola che fu da tutti stimato catarro, in un subito si scoverse ettico e di mal contagioso in questa specie, che per molti mesi mi tocco servirlo solo, e poco meno, che apportato dal commercio dell’altri”* (Avitabile 1642, fol. 409). The Theatines arrived in Goa at the end of 1640, and Brother Andrea fell ill at the end of the following year, having spent just one year with the active apostolate in India. The symptoms of his illness were not specified, but its issue was fatal, as he died after seven months.

The account of Brother Andrea’s death corresponds exactly to what would be expected of a Christian death. We are told that he died a holy death, helped by the sacraments of the Church: *“doppo sette mesi di dolenza, cioè li 24 di maggio di quest’anno, alle tre in circa della tardi, havendo prima ricevuto divotamente, con straordinario suo contento, nostra consolatione et edificazione insieme, tutti li santissimi sacramenti della penitentia, viatico et ultima onzione, pieno de meriti e di corone, con lunga et ammirata patientia se hevrà acquistato in dette infermità”* (ASPF, fol. 196-201). His pious death is presented as an example to his confreres, and Avitabile did not hesitate to point this out: *“Fu similmente sentita la morte di questo nostro benedetto fratello non solo nella città tutta, ma anche in alcuni luoghi lontani, tenendolo chiunque lo conosceva, come essi medesimi dicevano, per un Santino”* (ASPF, fol. 196-201). But, unlike many of the Theatine fathers who died in the early years of the mission, he was not considered by his order to be “a servant of God”.

We are fortunate to have a detailed account of the organisation of his funeral. As the Theatines did not yet have a church, they had to choose which convent to bury him in, and that of the Discalced Carmelites seemed the most natural. Father Avitabile describes the incredible twists and turns, the disputes between the religious orders, each one wanting the privilege of organising the funeral. He even mentions an attempt by some to remove the body by night in order to keep it from the others. Brother Andrea was finally buried with the Augustinians, *“dove tutti quei santi religiosi lo accompagnarono e levarono essi medesimi sopra delle*

loro spalle la domenica, con musica funesta, solennità di canto, officio di measa e d'ogni altro suffragio et honore che haveriano potuto fare ad un provinciale del loro sacro Ordine” (ASPF, fol. 196-201). All these details demonstrate once again the sanctity of the deceased, while also giving us a better understanding of the interactions between the different missionary orders present in Goa, showing us an element of Goa's daily life.

With this brief presentation of Andrea Lippomano, we discover the picture of a young religious, pious, zealous and disciplined man, one who died before his ordination. In the absence of external sources, we can only note the many qualities that his confreres and superiors ascribed to him, keeping in mind the often-hagiographic vision typical of the beginning of missions. Not a great missionary, neither a preacher nor a confessor, he was simply a lay brother, but Brother Andrea has some symbolic importance, being significant for the history of the Theatines and their missions, as he was the first young convert of the order's first mission, and chose to enter into the regular cleric order. Local recruits in mission lands hardly existed in the seventeenth century. This was not unique to the Theatines, but the idea of providing the missions with a native clergy (Rossignol 2008, 9-21) did not develop until after the 1640s.

While Brother Andrea did not have much influence on the catholicisation of Georgia in the seventeenth century, his conversion and his entering into religion, which aroused a great deal of passion, paved the way for others. Although there is no mention of any other Theatine religious vocation in Georgia, many Georgians began to attend the mission churches and to have their children baptised by the Theatines. Georgian priests and bishops were also drawn closer to the Catholic Church at the time. For the general history of the missions in Georgia, the figure of Brother Andrea is even more important, as he was the first Georgian friar of the modern period.

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ელისაბედ რიშარი

EPHE (პარიზი) და L'Orientale (ნეაპოლი)

**ანდრეა - მე-17 ს-ში გოაში მოღვაწე
ქართველი თეატინელი მისიონერი**

ძმა ანდრეა ლიპომანო, დაბადებული ნასყიდაში, არ არის ყველაზე ცნობილი მისიონერი საქართველოში მოღვაწე თეატინელ ბერებს შორის, თუმცა, ის შეიძლება ჩავთვალოთ მისიის ყველაზე საინტერესო პიროვნებად. ერთი შეხედვით, ანდრეა ის ჩვეულებრივი ახალგაზრდა კაცია გორიდან, რომელმაც განათლება მიიღო კათოლიკე მისიონერებისაგან. იმის გამო, რომ ანდრეა მოექცა კათოლიკედ, თანამემამულეების მხრივ, დიდი წინეხის ქვეშ აღმოჩნდა. თავის სულიერ მოძღვარ, თეატინელთა მისიის დამფუძნებელ, პიეტრო ავიტაბილიესთან ერთად, ანდრეამ ბევრი იმოგზაურა როგორც საქართველოსა და სომხეთში, ასევე – იტალიასა და ინდოეთში. ის გულმხურვალე მორწმუნე, თავისი საქმის ბოლომდე ერთგული და თავგანწირული ქრისტიანი იყო. მან აქტიური როლი შეასრულა გოაში თეატინელთა მისიის დაფუძნებაში. შეიძლება ითქვას, რომ ანდრეა, პირველი ქართველი კათოლიკე მღვდელმსახური, საკვანძო ფიგურაა საქართველოს კათოლიკობის ისტორიაში.