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Fr. Giovanni Boccardi, C.M. (1859-1936)

Vincentian Missionary and Astronomer

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On this 70th anniversary of his death, it is fitting to commemorate this famous Vincentian missionary. He was a member of the Province of Naples, but resided for many years in other cities outside the province. While living out intensely his priestly and Vincentian vocation, he specialized in scientific studies and became a renowned astronomer with a worldwide reputation.

Soon after his death, a commemorative article written by Dr. Alfredo Fresa [1] and enriched with photographs was published in *Annali della Missione* 84 (1937) 494-505. Fresa used the diary that he said he received from the confreres in Savona. This diary is composed of several notebooks, found today in the provincial archives of the Congregation of the Mission in Turin.[2] The diary covers the period 1891-1925; from 1915 it was written in French, and from 1924 in Latin. The period from 1926 to his death in 1936 is likewise covered in his Memoirs (see note 1).

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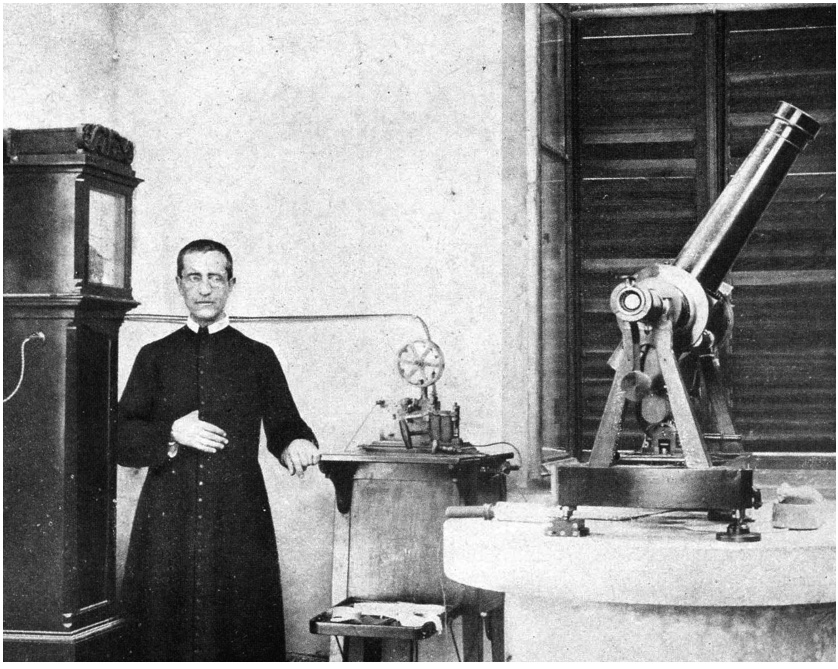
[1] Read in the Circolo Pio VII of Savona, 7 November 1937; Roma, Arti grafiche Trinacria, 1938, and developed in the necrology of Fr. G. Zeppieri, published in *Annali della Missione* 44 (1937) 37-48. Zeppieri uses sentences found in the Memoirs: GIOVANNI BOCCARDI, *Memorie della mia vita,* ms. in 32 large pages, found at the Collegio Alberoni, Piacenza. On the first page is written: "He first wrote pages 1-27 when pressed by friends; four years later, he continued and wrote pages 28-32." These memoirs were probably written in the last ten years of his life, a conclusion based on a letter to the Superior General, written from Varazze 27 January 1929 (in the Archives of the General Curia, Rome): "I had the idea — I do not know whether it was an inspiration — of publishing my little autobiography." Perhaps this is why his diary, mentioned above, stops in 1926. The necrology of Fr. G. Zeppieri was translated for the *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 102 (1937) 628-636; pages 636-645 have a translation of the necrology published in *Il Nuovo Cittadino* (Genoa) signed by Fr. G. Foddai.

[2] Historical Archives, items 4892 and 4895.



In the scientific field, his name is associated with the history of the Observatory of Pino Torinese, which he founded in 1913. Both the *Lessico Universale Italiano* (Treccani, Roma 1969) and the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Treccani, Roma 1969) have entries with a brief sketch dedicated to the astronomer Boccardi.[3]

What is striking is the unity that Fr. Boccardi cultivated throughout his life between his vocation as a missionary and his scientific talents. Despite the practical difficulties that he indeed encountered, he held that it was his purpose to sanctify scientific activity,[4] and this would give him access to the Creator. "Certainly, if

[3] Already on the occasion of his ordination anniversary, in *Annali della Missione* 40 (1933) 438-441 (with a picture showing him seated at his desk), a sketch was dedicated to him by Umberto Repetti. Another one, on the occasion of his golden jubilee of priesthood, appeared in the weekly *Il Bene* published by the Pio Istituto pei Figli della Provvidenza (in the Provincial Archives of Turin, item 4901).

[4] Letter from Fr. Fiat, Superior General, dated 4 May 1897. All the letters sent to the Superior General in Paris are now found in the Archives of the General Curia of the Congregation of the Mission, Rome (ACGR). These are all written in French, which Boccardi knew very well.

the world is to be only a ladder for us to use to mount to heaven, it is especially the study of the stars, which according to Holy Scripture speak to us continually of God, that makes our ascension to the Creator of the universe that much easier." [5]

In a letter of 3 July 1928, written to Fr. Verdier, Superior General, Boccardi told of several conversions, the fruit of his apostolic and missionary zeal. In 1922 he traveled with six students from the Observatory in Turin to Brussels, generously helping them with their expenses, a typically Vincentian gesture. When he was 63, during the annual retreat of September 1922,[6] he went back over his memories. He wrote: "I am also astonished to see how I was able to do the work of two men, as if two were living in me, the priest and the scholar!"

Childhood and vocation to the priesthood in the Congregation of the Mission

Giovanni Boccardi was the second child, born at Castelluccio Acquaborrana (called Castelmauro since 1885), in the province of Campobasso, on 20 June 1859.[7] (In his Memoirs he speaks of an older brother and of another brother.)

Today, in the Piazza del Popolo of his native town, a bronze bust, dedicated in 1995, recalls its famous fellow citizen; also, in Castelmauro, a street was dedicated to him. Streets bearing his name are also found in Termoli and Campobasso; and, of course, in Pino Torinese. At Termoli, in 1962, the Istituto Tecnico Commerciale was renamed Giovanni Boccardi.

After only four years of marriage, his mother, Cleonice De Notariis, died in 1861, when her son Giovanni was barely two years old. His father, Antonio, a surgeon, moved to Naples, where he confided the education of his boy to a priest uncle. Fr. Giuseppe Zeppieri, in the account of him in *Annali della Missione* 44 (1937) 37-43, ascribes Boccardi's "not always likeable" character to the lack of a mother figure. But Boccardi himself also admitted this: "Without a mother's smile, without a father's hugs, my childhood developed in dour and severe surroundings." To compensate for such a negative situation

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[5] To the Secretary General, Fr. Milon, 24 April 1913.

[6] Letter to Verdier, 19 September 1922.

[7] The date varies in some registers (25 June) and the same document of vows, in his own hand, says that he was born on 22 June (Provincial Archives of the Congregation of the Mission, Naples: ACPN); but we say 20 June, on the basis of the baptismal register in the Collegiate Church of S. Leonardo, Diocese of Termoli, where it clearly says that he was born on the 20th and baptized on the 25th.

"I made use, instead, of a manly formation of will and character, allowing myself room and a continual occasion of developing myself as a warrior through struggle." "At four years old, I was already reading and I translated from Latin the first book of the famous *Selectae,* or selections from classical authors." [8]

At age 18 (1877) he determined to embrace the clerical state (he was then living at Salita Miradois, 6, which belonged at the time to the parish of the Vergini in Naples). He studied philosophy with Fr. Nunzio Signoriello [9] and, as an external seminarian, attended the functions and meetings of the novices (which took place in the provincial house of the Congregation of the Mission); "as a cleric, I always lived at home and I never breathed the air of a seminary." [10]

On 29 March 1879 (during his second year of theology), he received tonsure and the four minor orders. In the same year of 1879 he requested and received admission to the Congregation of the Mission and began his novitiate on 16 November 1879. He took vows on 17 November 1881, in the presence of Fr. Léon Forestier, Assistant General, who was then in Naples accompanying Fr. Fiat during a visit to Italy. Certain spiritual notes and resolutions of Boccardi's date from his period; he always kept them, and today they are found in Turin.[11] There are also some notes about music that he intended to use while practicing the piano. Fresa also mentions that, besides French, he also knew various other languages.[12]

He was ordained to the priesthood in Naples, in the church of the provincial house, by Bishop Vincenzo Tagliatatela, on 29 April 1883.

The first years of his priesthood (1883-1897)

After his priestly ordination, it was decided that he be sent to teach. But first, to get some pastoral experience, he was assigned to the house of Oria (Brindisi), a house of the Province of Naples.[13] One year later, in 1884, he was put in charge of the Collegio Sisto Riario Sforza.[14] This had just recently been opened in the provincial house

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[8] *Memoirs,* p. 4.

[9] Certificate of the Office of the Clergy of Naples in ACPN, Boccardi.

[10] *Memoirs,* p. 5.

[11] Provincial Archives of the Congregation of the Mission, Turin, item 4896: collection of spiritual writings.

[12] Fresa, *op. cit.,* pp. 401 and 476.

[13] *Provincial Council Minutes,* Naples, 24 April 1883.

[14] See *Storia dei Missionari Vincenziani nell'Italia Meridionale,* Rome 2003, pp. 112-114.

of Naples (1883), through the wish of the archbishop of the city, Cardinal Sisto Riario Sforza.[15]

Meanwhile, sensing the disproportion on the one hand between his inclination to teach and the sciences, mathematics in particular, to which he was being applied, and, on the other, to the works of the Province of Naples in which he felt underused, he asked to have some experiences in other provinces of the Congregation.[16]

For this reason, he went to Smyrna in 1887 and to Thessalonica in 1889, where he had been sent as professor of mathematics in the schools run by the Congregation. It was here, in the Middle East, while using a sextant and azimuth purchased with his own funds, that he began to develop his studies in astronomy, a passion that he had known since childhood. But along with teaching, he was also involved in pastoral ministry, as the spiritual director of a "Workers' Union." [17]

He led a pilgrimage of 18 youngsters from Thessalonica to Rome on the second centenary of the death of St. Aloysius Gonzaga. In a letter to the Superior General from Fr. F. Denoy, dated 21 September 1891 and published in the *Annales,*[18] the writer underscored the importance of what had taken place: the first Latin pilgrimage from the Middle East to the tomb of the apostles. "In Rome, they will be lost in the crowds; but for here, in this humble corner of the world where we live, this departure was quite an event."

At a certain point, the desire of returning to Naples prevailed, and he asked repeatedly to come back. He returned in 1892.[19]

His character, along with some medical conditions that he always had, caused him on more than one occasion to be a huge bother and polemical. Also, on more than one occasion, he had to be treated for neurological disorders.[20]

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[15] Letter of 21 February 1887 to the Superior General: "I have had the direction of the school of this house for two years."

[16] *Idem.*

[17] *General Council Minutes* (ACGR) vol. V, 12 May 1890.

[18] *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 57 (1892) 123-124.

[19] *General Council Minutes,* vol. V, 12-14 April 1892, and also 25 April; diary, 6 June 1892.

[20] "I had scarcely started breathing the air in Turin when my illnesses disappeared." Letter to Verdier, 4 July 1927.

Naples, Sicily, Lecce

Upon his return to Naples in 1892, he was appointed superior at Acireale in Sicily in 1893. In a letter he wrote to the Superior General,[21] he admitted the difficulties of the job entrusted to him; besides, he knew that the Jesuits were the competitors of the school confided to the Vincentians.[22]

In Acireale he handled not only the duties of the superior, but also those of the professor of mathematics and of French. After scarcely a year, however, he was unhappy about how he was living[23] and, on 19 December, he returned to Naples.[24] Here, he was assigned to the house of Chiaia as part of a group of confreres dedicated to the provincial house of the Daughters of Charity. He thereupon became involved in the issue raised by the decree *Quemadmodum* (issued by the Holy See in 1890, which laid down certain prescriptions about the confession and the frequent communion of the sisters). Some of his confreres complained to the Visitor, A. De Angelis, and demanded a more correct application of the papal decree about the discipline of the sacraments of confession and communion,[25] and Boccardi, despite himself, was regarded as part of this group.

In 1895 he was sent to Lecce. There, he studied mathematical analysis and mechanics (diary, 14 October 1896); and he was encouraged by his friends to study astronomy (diary, 26-29 October 1896).

At the Vatican Observatory (Specola Vaticana) (1897-1903)

Two years later, the real scientific career of Fr. Boccardi began. Pope Leo XIII, who had founded in 1891 the Specola Vaticana in the Vatican gardens,[26] asked for the collaboration of Boccardi through the Procurator General to the Holy See. For this purpose,

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[21] 29 May 1893 in ACGR.

[22] *General Council Minutes,* vol. V, 5 June 1893.

[23] *General Council Minutes,* vol. V, 18 December 1893 and 8 January 1894.

[24] Diary, 18 and 19 December 1893.

[25] In the provincial council of Naples, held on 2 August 1895, the Assistant General, Fr. Chevalier, who was making a canonical visit of Naples, told the members of the council that the archbishop wanted certain men removed from Naples, Frs. Francia, De Dominicis and Boccardi. The latter wrote from Lecce to the Superior General (7 June 1896) that it was not right for some to be able to consider him as seditious, since he had been expressly invited to Lecce.

[26] Previously, in the Tower of the Winds, near the Sistine Chapel, Pope Gregory XIII had some celestial calculations made for the reform of the calendar. In the mind of the Pope, the observatory should demonstrate with facts the profound harmony existing between Church and science. In 1935 the

Fr. Barbagli already had Boccardi come to Rome on 21 December 1896.[27] In a letter dated 17 February 1897, he wrote to the Superior General that the Pope had wanted Boccardi at the Observatory. It was on 8 March 1897 that the priest wrote the Superior General with the news that he had already been moved into the provincial house of Rome, Montecitorio (via della Missione). On 1 March he, with other members of the Observatory, had been received by the Pope.

As it had been in Thessalonica, his scientific activity in Rome was interwoven with preaching and priestly ministry (letter to the Superior General, 21 December 1898). He is listed in volume V of the publications of the Observatory as an adjunct member of the personnel.

He developed calculations on asteroid 416, discovered by Auguste Honore Pierre Charlois at Nice in 1896 and called, based on his proposal, *Vaticana,* in homage to Leo XIII.[28]

To honor St. Vincent he called asteroid 366, discovered by Charlois in 1893, *Vincentina* and called another one *Pariana* (in memory of Paris, the city of the mother house of his Congregation). This was asteroid 347 discovered by the same Charlois in 1892: "St. Vincent and Paris: these are the names that make me thrill with joy." [29]

There were some misunderstandings with the Secretariate of State about the projects of the Observatory entrusted to Boccardi, as well as those developed in scientific institutes in Paris (in a letter to the Superior General, Boccardi complains about his new titles).[30]

After seven months at Teramo, near the Observatory,[31] he perfected his knowledge at Paris in 1900 at the *Bureau des Longitudes,* founded in 1795. He would be unanimously elected a member on 12 January 1921, the first Italian to be so named.[32] He

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Specola Vaticana moved to Castel Gandolfo; then, in the 80s, the decision was made to create a new observatory in Arizona.

[27] Diary, 21 December 1896.

[28] Diary, July 1897: "Charlois answered me and authorized me to call asteroid 416 *Vaticana.*" Diary, 9 July 1897: "The Holy Father had Cardinal Rampolla write to Charlois to thank him."

[29] Letter to the Superior General, 4 May 1899. Diary, 26 February 1899: "I got an answer from Charlois who approves with pleasure the name *Vincentina.*"

[30] Cf. also the Diary, 16 January 1898: "If they continue to call me adjunct, I will resign from the Observatory." As we will see, he then left the Observatory because of other burdensome responsibilities.

[31] *Memoirs,* p. 8.

[32] Cf. letter from Boccardi to P. Cervia, Pino Torinese, 11 January 1921. *Annali della Missione* 86 (1921) 72-73.

followed other programs in Berlin and then was named a professor of astronomy at the University of Naples.[33]

In 1900 he was named Assistant and Chief-of-Services at the Observatory of Catania. This mission entrusted to him is described in a letter of 17 December 1900 written to the Superior General from the Vincentian house near the Church of SS. Ritrovato:[34] "A fine lesson for the enemies of the Church. Let them now accuse us of ignorance and superstition."[35] Since he had to travel ten kilometers a day to reach the Observatory, he moved next to the house of the sisters, closer to his work.

Meanwhile, the Visitor of Rome, Vincenzo Segadelli, wrote to the Bishop of Catania on 20 February 1901[36] stating that Boccardi depended juridically on the Province of Naples. Since he had become an expert in the calculation of orbits and in the drafting of astronomical diagrams, he wrote the *Guide du Calculateur,*[37] published in Paris in 1902, an important two-part manual to aid those beginning in astronomical calculations.

Director of the Observatory of Turin (1903-1926). Special permissions received from the Superior General

The activities of an astronomer and the duties connected with them clearly are not adapted to the rhythms and rules of common life. In those days, uniformity and observance were much more rigorous than today, and they did not take flexibility and adaptations into account. Nonetheless, Fr. Boccardi on various occasions asked special permissions from the Superior General and always emphasized his attachment to the Community in which he always intended to remain a faithful member. In fact, he never switched these permissions into pretexts for doing something else. The tenor of his priestly and missionary life remained very regular, severe and rigorous. Indeed, he never agreed with the advice he received to leave

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[33] At Naples, naturally, he often visited the Astronomical Observatory, constructed in 1819. Diary, 30 July 1897: "After lunch, I went to the observatory at Capodimonte." Diary, 9 November 1900: "In Naples I visited De Bernardis, the Observatory and the University." Diary, 29 July 1903: "I have been at the Observatory, where I examined carefully all the bookshelves of the library."

[34] Diary, 9 November 1900: leaving for Rome in the name of God.

[35] Diary, 21 February 1901: "I asked for all my things from Rome... I rented an apartment near the Observatory."

[36] In ACPN.

[37] G. Boccardi, *Guide du Calculateur (astronomie, géodésie, navigation, etc.),* 2 vol., Paris 1902.

the community,[38] and his comment is very meaningful: "I am prouder of being a priest than a scientist." [39]

In two letters sent to the Visitor of Naples (Fr. G. Morino, who was from Turin) dated 7 May 1901 and 15 July 1908,[40] Boccardi spoke of the vow of poverty and of the permissions that he had received. He confirmed his membership in the Province of Naples.

He received a special permission from the Superior General to live his life as a Vincentian missionary living physically outside the Community. As he wrote in a letter in 1924, it had been 25 years, from the beginning of 1900, that he had lived outside the community, helped by an devoted elderly woman (called in the diary, 1904, Anna Bertolini) who acted as his secretary.[41]

In 1903 he won the competition and advanced as professor of the University of Turin and Director of the Observatory found on the terrace of the Palazzo Madama.[42]

As he admitted himself in his Memoirs (p. 10), it was here that the most important period of his life as an astronomer developed.[43]

He had a portable altar and a residence near the Palazzo Madama.[44] The Observatory was then moved, thanks to the work of Boccardi himself, to Pino Torinese, about 11 kilometers from Turin, and at 620 meters above sea level. The work of moving, begun in 1910, concluded in 1913. He received from the Ministry of Public Instruction more convenient lodging, in Via Po, 11.

His telescope and a radio station were furnished through a subscription sponsored by a newspaper in Turin and by another subscription taken up in his native town.[45]

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[38] Opportunities (twice he could have agreed to become a bishop) never got the better of him (letter of 5 July 1900).

[39] Cited in FODDAI, *art. cit.,* p. 641.

[40] Provincial Archives of Turin, item 4891.

[41] Cf. letter to Verdier, dated 7 February 1924. In a letter (to Fiat ?) dated 18 December 1903, he described the situation, but emphasized the permission of the Superior General. The *Personnel* (the catalogue of the members of the Congregation) lists him, however, in 1916 as depending directly on the Superior General, and a *rattaché* to the house of Turin.

[42] Diary, 21 July 1903: "Today I am leaving for Naples." Diary, 18 August 1903: "I have written for the death of my father." Diary, 28 October 1903: "I won the competition with 45 out of 50."

[43] Even if all his activity were to be forgotten, "the foundation of the new Observatory of Pino Torinese would be the greatest glory of Fr. Boccardi" (FRESA, p. 488).

[44] Letter to Fiat, 18 December 1903.

[45] Letter of 18 December 1903 to an unknown correspondent; letter from Catania, from the church of SS. Ritrovato, 17 December 1900 to an unknown correspondent.

He supervised the *Annuario Astronomico* begun in 1905. He founded, in 1906, the Italian Astronomical Society, along with its *Rivista di Astronomia,* but this had to be closed by the infiltration of individuals affiliated with freemasonry and materialistic ideas. He then founded a new society, *Urania,* with its publication, *Saggi di astronomia popolare*.

While in Turin, he continued to combine his priestly ministry with his scientific activity.

There was no lack of problems, especially from the Masonic atmosphere that was widespread and very influential in that period. "The Masonic sects hold everything in their hands."[46] He wrote: "I have had and I still have many enemies, freemasons and atheists, who, I am certain, will come together to ruin me after my death."[47] In fact, among all the titles and recognition that he received from abroad, none were received in Italy.[48]

His most systematic bibliography is found in the appendix to Dr. Fresa's commemoration, and it lists 312 titles, generally concerning science. This list does not include non-scientific writings, which are more difficult to find, even if they are listed in private notes. For example, in the letter to Fr. Verdier of 11 March 1930, he mentions ten meditations done with the help of the Ladies of Lecce.[49] In a letter written 1 January 1931, he regrets the loss of 34 manuscript pages.

His last 14 years

We are already at the beginning of Fascism. As for many in Italy, enthusiasm and disappointment alternated also in the judgments of Fr. Boccardi. On Christmas 1924, while he was in France, he had written to Verdier: "I am waiting to see from a distance how the scaffolding of Mr. Mussolini, the head of the Italian brigands, is going to collapse. The debacle has already begun. We uncover crimes everywhere inspired by the Duce!" In another letter to the Superior General, 8 March 1928, by contrast, he wrote: "Fascism is a blessing for our country." He had not been able to refuse the honorary pass that had been granted him. In his memoirs, p. 3, he recounts how his university career had developed *before the sun of the Fascist regime had shone on our fatherland*. The judgment of Dr. Fresa, writing in 1937,[50] should be placed within this ambivalent context. In the midst

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[46] Letters to Fr. Verdier, 19 September 1922 and 25 February 1924.
[47] Letter to Fr. Verdier, from Varazze 27 January 1929.
[48] Cf. Zeppieri, p. 42.
[49] *General Council Minutes,* vol. XI, 17 March 1930.
[50] *Annali della Missione* 84 (1937) 493.

of the Fascist period, he describes Boccardi as "a Fascist, and a great admirer of Mussolini, and I well recall with what enthusiasm he used to speak to me about the clever Ethiopian business."

In 1923 he went into retirement and thus left both the observatory and the University of Turin.

Naturally, his reentry into Community was not smooth.[51]

On the other hand, his critical character, which had seen him as a declared polemicist against freemasons, Protestants and his scientific opponents, did not even spare his Community.[52] Nevertheless, he always maintained, beyond critical observations, a constant bond of affection full of gratitude toward his Community.[53]

He went to France and held scientific conferences and participated in congresses from 1924 to 1925.[54]

Granted membership in the *Pontificia Accademia dei Lincei*, for his many publications, researches and calculations, he received the Valz Prize from the *Académie des Sciences* of Paris in November 1916, particularly for his research into the variations of the

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[51] Cf. his letter dated 17 May 1923 to the Superior General in ACGR. In the commemorative piece cited above, Fresa says that "someone" had suggested that Boccardi had thought about becoming a French citizen; in fact, someone had suggested this to him, and this was mentioned in a letter to Verdier, 17 May 1923: "It would be a proud gesture against the sects and the Italian rabble, who are doing whatever they can to exclude me from all the bodies of the wise."

[52] At Naples, in the provincial house, he remarked on an excessively monastic observance: "They are not Lazarists; they resemble monks." Cf. letters to Verdier, September 1927 and 27 January 1929; he had already expressed the same opinion to the Visitor of Rome many years before, on 26 February 1901; copy in ACGR. But in a letter to Fiat, 11 December 1899, he complained also about the house of Montecitorio, which he had praised two years before, 8 March 1897. He wrote to Verdier, 1 January 1931, to criticize other confreres in the north.

[53] From Rome he described his apostolic work and his gratitude to the Community (to Fiat, letter of 21 December 1898). "I have nothing to reproach myself about being where I am with the permission and approval of so many ecclesiastical authorities. They well understand that the *spiritus ubi vult spirat* and that each one has to serve God in accord with the talents that he has given him." Letter to Fr. Villette, 7 July 1916. "Doubtless, the honor that they pay me will not stop at my poor person, which will be forgotten tomorrow; but it will go to our Congregation, which enjoys so much sympathy, and to the Church, which has always favored the natural and exact sciences as the means of rising to invisible things" (to the Secretary General, Fr. Milon, 24 April 1913).

[54] Congress at Bordeaux: *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 88 (1923) 262; Congress at Turin: *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 92 (1927) 267-268. In 1925 he held a conference at the University of Lyons, at the Catholic faculties; *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 90 (1925) 738-739, citing a report from *Nouvelles de Lyon*.

semilunar latitude. In March 1928, he was the only Italian scientist named a member of the *Washington Academy of Sciences*.

In 1933, while celebrating his golden jubilee, he sent to the Pope some publications, and received a letter from the Secretary of State, Pacelli (4 February 1933).[55]

His relationships with his confreres in Naples always continued, as his correspondence with them shows.[56] But a return to Naples was not a happy one for him; after so many years spent in the north, he could not readapt to the climate and ambience, which was that of his origins.[57]

In fact, he remained only briefly, and then moved definitively, after a few months in Varazze, to the Vincentian house in Savona.[58]

As always, the writing of articles and scientific contributions would alternate, even in the last phase of his life, with his pastoral and missionary life. On 8 January 1932, he held at Savona a conference on "Saint Vincent de Paul and his institutions," given to the Culture Club of the Women's Catholic Associations.[59]

In the last years of his life, he could hardly see. But prayer and a regular life lasted to the end. This would happen in the evening of 21 October 1936, when, after suffering a stroke, he breathed his last. The tombstone dedicated to him in the cemetery of Zinola (Savona) summarizes his life and work: "Giovanni Boccardi – Priest of the Mission – for 24 years professor of astronomy – at the Royal University of Turin – founder of the Observatory of Pino Torinese – member of the Accademia dei Lincei – of the Bureau des Longitudes – of the Washington Academy of Sciences – and of other numerous academies – Volta Prize 1926 – In his study of the stars – he saw more and more – the light of God – in which he lived and died – Castelmauro, 20 June 1859 – Savona 21 October 1936."[60]

(JOHN E. RYBOLT, C.M., translator)

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[55] In the Provincial Archives of Turin, item 4897; *Annali della Missione* 40 (1933) 38.

[56] See, for example, the letter of Fr. S. Pane (25 October 1923) and of Fr. L. Grimaldi (7 November 1932) in the Provincial Archives of Turin, item 4891.

[57] The same Visitor of Naples, Fr. R. Rispoli, had advised him to remain in the same condition (letter from Boccardi to the Superior General, 7 February 1924); later he was told to return (Provincial Council of Naples, 26 July 1926).

[58] Letter of September 1927 to Verdier.

[59] Provincial Archives of Turin, item 4891: Collection of spiritual writings.

[60] From *Latimbro,* 29 January 1937, quoted in *Annali della Missione* 44 (1937) 48.