## A Tale of Two Readings

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Sometimes we find avvisi organized in the most curious ways. Consider this example from MdP 4891, beginning at fol. 1056r. On the left we have the first page of the writing, headed with "De Paris le 7e Mars 1661" (From Paris, the 7th of March 1661). Following the story under that heading, which regards the last days of Cardinal Mazarin, we have another heading, dated on the 10th of the month, reporting the actual death having occurred the night before. This story continues on the flip side of this page--but remarkably, upside down!

1056r

1056v

ausquel Elle Loille Montrier enfatrothe, et a

[in Medici Archive Project Database, https://mia.medici.org/Mia/index.html#/mia/document-entity/54834] This curious orientation continues in fact to the third and last page of the newsletter, as in the following illustration on the left, where the new folio as we can see is numbered in the upper corner as 1057 (recto). Now, if we go to the other side of this page (1057 verso) we find the addressee and traces of sealing wax, for this entire writing was evidently folded up and sealed, as was customary, somewhat like a twentieth-century air letter, making its own envelope. So the newsletter, for better or worse, was sent as written, to a certain "Monsieur" in Lyon whose identity has since been obscured.

1057r 1057v Amonfrier Here and suppose Reale dealer ALiont

Why the upside-down writing? Did the hurried writer pick up the pen for side two without looking at the orientation of side one? This seems hardly likely, since the sentence on the bottom of 1056r continues on the next (upside down) page, as we can clearly see if we use our tools to place folios 1056r and 1056v side by side, re-orienting the latter for better consultation:

| 1056r<br>last line: <i>le Roy</i><br>the King | 1056v<br>first line: s'en alla au Palais Mazarin consoler<br>les niepces et nepveux<br>went to Mazarin palace to console the nieces<br>and nephews |
|---|--|
|---|--|

Baris Leg. Marsible. og etter lefand. Ar anom I wor avallen Denled den abortin n Postole filt entrest Ebsesband fait corym oul. a muie aranon is ellopiro al afin anodes regr antes deluers Mig principallem? du St not de to ne Son bestoant es fodicille signe eo n? vestimo do oblage ryent, aufily de is bouttes Les disposions portes parents To Amr. be Brellin gant Leyounes meftiques ausquel Elle Laisse bea rulle, a Brilleon celling dul yourshur Ja Mor abenufon el atince very en Brerry autoro. Elast on will ade Les your er. despone co Le Tellier comet Les plus o alavalloir cellery ve detmuille, afons spellet, apres Sonde rge in Phildes Mousquetaires dus auth bost que La Rey ne Scraen Estat dalles Vaillant the Comp." aux Garded, Alforpital gr litiers gurdant aprefent Selict af aufe de la grothett Infond de 2 millions po Inbreten - filler on tient pour allurie 1 Elton. fert Jutqua Laage de 20 and dans Lefollige A David Le io Massil Dier que po Leurs and lacra Enternet ily a mautre fore por faire baltir to Auter Sur La Minuid Ar L. Sapelle Sabiblistergs y Doir author eltre brants lation alliste tour Demaurera ensepotodand I 1 Leglifed of ine ps, Expier Sur Les ? a Die fort resigne, Leurs A. ormer copoles and affor wellin mest . Letellies Lut foreto Brog Devouloir but agente pupe, Lebont oto Compose nes your rever Paris derincen re Lefurintens. Levellier and forme 1 . le acacete vela Grosselle, En Lo Broy Montreur infarrolle, et authy bort a

Here is a likely explanation for this strange occurrence. Many copies were being made, with the writer copying multiple page ones, all ending in mid-sentence, before embarking on the copying of the flip side, which may have been interrupted causing an accident not considered serious enough to require adjustment.

A somewhat far-fetched notion might occur to the mysterious-minded: are we in the presence of a subtle hint left by the writer, regarding the possibly disturbing consequences of this death of a key state figure at the top of the court hierarchy, overturning the previously established order? Perhaps the old Cardinal would have approved.

Now we turn to another example of texts changing direction in mid-sentence. This time the text is a newsletter-like personal correspondence to a certain personage, written by a "Père de Saint Laurent" and dated (newsletter style) "de Paris le 19 décembre 1670", conserved in the same volume of the Mediceo del Principato as the previous example. Here on the flip side of page one (i.e., on folio 1508v) we find, as in the right hand image below, a surprise. The text is turned at a 90 degree angle with respect to the usual orientation.

1 Xto ibro de Pavis congelacomberby o quey Monsieur nous me fostes un grande lettre de compliment pour quelle soins que iny pris de Monsieur not be fer penilant sa maladie, un nevide cet exces de emonie ne convient n'a l'amitie que uou afflige de ueir me frites la grace d'anoir pour may, ni a cell que is dois anoir pour nous et pour tous ceux rance qui nous apartirment atre nous assure que mawon quand Monsirur worke frere ne nows seros has aquil nous est, son sul merite maurois engage a prendre un fout grand interesta sa citre Innte, elle saugmente de rouv en rouver Sevoit in estatile routiv si la saison nestor Si vude · ic noudoois Girn nous manilev con nous le sou haites des nouvelles pausientime

[in M.A.P. database: https://mia.medici.org/Mia/index.html#/mia/document-entity/54836]

What's going on here? The last lines of 1508r seem to be:

Son seul merite m'auroit engagé a prendre un fort grand interest a sa santé, elle s'augmente de jour en jour et il seroit en estat de sortir si la saison n'estoit [...] si rude. Je voudrois bien vous mander comme vous le souhaités des nouvelles particulières ....

Reorienting the verso side (1508v) we get this continuation:

....de les voir separés et les voeux que je fais pour les revoir ensemble.

The whole translation would be: (1508r) "His sheer merit should have gotten me to take a great interest in his health, which improves from day to day and he would be able to go outside if the season were not ... so rigid. I would like to send you as you wish the particular news (1508v) to see them separated and the vows I make to see them together again."

e i fais pour Consemble, nous maiser fait un tres grund plaisiv ile me maniler que nous partes que que pois de moy aure Monsieur cini es je nous assure tous drux quil ny aura iamais de floventin ni mesme de floventine qui aille insqu'à l'endroit de mon cour ou ie nous ay places et ou ci nous conserveray toute ma me nure toute route destine de tendourse chile respiret : cé croy que nous reavés desir que le comse de lansan lun il es capitaines des gaudes du coups du Roy esponse la guanile Mademoiselle c'it un maviage dont on deuro, 2 prendre le douit a northe cour aussi birn qu'a la northe, tout le monite est estorme et afflige de noir faire a cette malheureuse Princesse une action qui blesse si fout la bienseance de son sexe, la dignité du sang Royal, et le sens commun, mais on doit estre Gien moins clomé et bien moins afflige de noir ce quelle fait que de

But what is the subject of "separated"? Are we missing something?

Another candidate for what might go after fol. 1508r, is the very next page, 1509r (skipping the verso side of 1508). Then we get:

| 1508r<br>Last lines:<br>Son seul merite m'auroit engagé a prendre<br>un fort grand interest a sa santé, elle<br>s'augmente de jour en jour et il seroit en estat<br>de sortir si la saison n'estoit pas si rude. Je<br>voudrois bien vous mander comme vous le | 1509r<br>First line:<br><i>Monsieur l'Abbé Panciatichi et de vos autres</i><br><i>Messieurs de Florence mais je n'ay pu avoir</i><br><i>avec eux tout le commerce que j'aurois</i><br><i>voulu</i> |
|--|--|
|  |  |

1 2th the de Pavis congelecomber by o Monsien 1406 Panisabilis it the not hatter Messious de florence mais is n'ay pri autor nuire eux sour le commerce que l'aurris worke frere ma oblige a suspendee dos affaires he query Monsirur nous me fostes un ou is hoursille si assidurment depuis quitgranile lettre de compliment pour quelque poute mirun, que l'may pureque pas le lois soins que s'ay pris de Monsieur nos be frese de penser a aube chose is nome versiones penilant sa maladie, un nevilé cetences de de l'omploy que nous me mandés que le grand covernonie ne convient n'a l'amilie que usu due a dome dans lestat de siene a Monsie me faites la grace d'anoir pour moy, ni a coll phoynulini qu'acque que iciuis persua des que is dois auoir pour nous et pour tous ceus quit y vinskiva Li Give que son Allerse qui nous aparticoment et ce nous assure que levenissime to wouden service de luy an quanil Monsirur worke frere ne nows seros flovence of quelque birn que nous farre la has aquil your est, son soul me vite maurois forhune elle ne meunte pas le nom de Come enjage a prendre un fout grand interestasa à fauture quanil ille nous es loigne de no Innte, elle saugmente de rouv en rouver j amis at particulievement tien any auser Sevoit in estat de souhi si la saison mestor acempty que Monsieur cini, ir usus suppl Sivule . ic noudvois Girn nous mander con quite sachent tous down to deplacin que in nous le sou haites des nouvelles pautientire

And hence, the translation, (1508r) "His sheer merit should have gotten me to take a great interest in his health, which improves from day to day and he would be able to go outside if the season were not ... so rigid. I would like to send you as you wish the particular news [about] (1509r) Monsieur Panciatichi and the other gentlemen of Florence, but I have not been able to have as much association with them as I would have liked." Sounds more logical, doesn't it?

But then what do we do with our twisted segment? Are we missing a page?

For the moment, we close this Tale of Two Readings on an inconclusive note, in the expectation that we will have the definitive answer as research proceeds!

FURTHER READING

Pierre Goubert, Mazarin, Paris, Fayard, 1990