

# Giuseppe Castiglione/Lang Shining 郎世寧

## A Review Essay

Susan Naquin

(Princeton University)

Giuseppe Castiglione was born in 1688 in Milan, became a Jesuit in Genoa in 1707, arrived in China in 1715, and lived in Peking until his death in 1766. Selected as a missionary because of his painting skills, the young Jesuit then demonstrated the temperament and talent to please the three Manchu emperors who employed him for fifty years. Moreover, Castiglione interacted fruitfully with artists and craftsmen at the Qing dynasty court and there became well known under his Chinese name, Lang Shining 郎世寧. Today, he is written about as a man who fused Western and Chinese artistic elements to establish a distinctive high Qing court style.

Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens' new book, a sustained analysis of the life and work of this unusual person, places him in the wider context of expanding scholarly knowledge of the artist and of eighteenth century China.<sup>1</sup> Although not an exhibition catalogue, the book is generously illustrated in color with more than forty of Castiglione's works from Taipei, Peking, Shenyang, and Paris. Perhaps better known to readers of this journal for her work on early China, Pirazzoli was part of the Sino-French "Mission Palais d'été de Pékin" project and is herself the author of half a dozen shorter works on Castiglione.<sup>2</sup>

Here, Michèle Pirazzoli approaches her subject chronologically. In the first chapter she gives an account of Castiglione's early life and

<sup>1</sup>) Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, Michèle, avec deux encadrés de Marco Musillo, *Giuseppe Castiglione, 1688-1766: peintre et architecte à la cour de Chine*. Paris: Thalia, 2007. 222 pp.

<sup>2</sup>) See Thiriez 1995. To her works cited in the book under review, one might add Hou & Pirazzoli 1979.

arrival in China, to which are appended two short essays by Marco Musillo (of whom, more below) on Castiglione's family and early Italian paintings. Pirazzoli herself examines the Jesuit's years at the Yongzheng court in the 1730s (one chapter), and then concentrates on his better documented decades as a versatile painter and designer during the long reign (1736-1795) of Emperor Qianlong (three chapters). In addition to Castiglione's many and various paintings, she considers his work on the European-style buildings at the Yuanming Yuan 圓明園, an imperial summer palace near Peking. A final chapter sums up her thoughts on the contributions and reception of this "peintre, décorateur, concepteur, architecte." The book relies on visual analysis of Castiglione's works, on the existing scholarly literature about the artist, and on research by Chinese scholars of the Palace Museum in Peking based on the archives of the Zaobanchu 造辦處, the palace workshops in which Castiglione worked.

Pirazzoli's account of Castiglione's remarkable life is a sympathetic one. She considers the full range of his paintings, from the individualized portraits of birds, flowers, dogs, horses, and emperors to the scenes of imperial activities, all rendered with his distinctive color, clarity, and precision. Looking at his works in various media—on silk and on paper and on walls, hand scrolls and hanging scrolls—Pirazzoli traces the evolution of Castiglione's style, and uses stylistic analysis to complement other information (e.g. texts and seals) and so incorporate undated works. Specific paintings are vividly described:

Comme toujours dans la peinture de chevaux de Castiglione, la façon de transmettre l'intelligence des yeux, les naseaux frémissants, les membres déliés, la souplesse de la crinière et de la queue, la rondeur des flancs, le luisant de la robe, parvient à faire de ces portraits des œuvres d'une intensité inouïe (187).

She considers what Chinese paintings in the imperial collection Castiglione might have seen (concluding interestingly that he had had the most extensive and intimate exposure to Chinese paintings of any Westerner before the twentieth century), and she takes note of the dozens of painters with whom he associated and collaborated at court. Pirazzoli examines, of course, both the realistic techniques brought to China from Europe (perspective, light and shadow) and the dictates of the Chinese brushwork tradition; indeed, throughout, she is

particularly concerned with identifying the combination of Chinese and Western elements in what she sees as Castiglione's "style nouveau, moderne."

The book under review is not the first scholarly work on Giuseppe Castiglione but it is much more than another collection of handsome illustrations. To evaluate it, it may be helpful to expand our horizons to the remarkably rich history of public knowledge and academic study of this artist and his works, in China and abroad, from his lifetime until the present day.<sup>3</sup> Let me sketch out this history here, to set a historiographical context for Pirazzoli's book, to invite others to undertake a more thorough study, and to suggest new directions for work on Castiglione.

Employed by the wealthy and powerful Imperial Household (Neiwufu 內物府), the Jesuits of the mid-eighteenth century were at the service of Qing emperors, forbidden to proselytize or to leave Peking. Their works do not appear to have circulated in China beyond the Jesuit churches in Peking, the nearby palace, the summer residences in the suburbs of the capital and in Rehe (熱河, Jehol), the hunting grounds further north in Manchuria (Mulan 木蘭), and certain imperially patronized temples (e.g. the Yonghegong 雍和宮 in Peking). Chinese and foreign outsiders learned about what took place within this imperial world first-hand only if they were temporarily a part of it, or second-hand through gossip.<sup>4</sup> This seeming encapsulation of the Jesuits did not, however, prevent Lang Shining from becoming more widely known in his lifetime inside the Qing empire and beyond it. After his death, writings in English, Italian, Chinese, and French continue to track his expanding reputation.

Of these, as Michèle Pirazzoli's own work attests, French interest in this Italian painter and his colleagues came early and remains influential. French Jesuit letters published in the course of the eighteenth century gave the China enterprise considerable recognition in Europe, and although Castiglione's younger French colleague Jean-Denis Attiret

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<sup>3</sup>) I can only tell a preliminary story here in hope that others will take it up properly, and I have cited only a small, uneven portion of the voluminous but scattered scholarly literature.

<sup>4</sup>) For eighteenth century art collections in China, see Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens & Kerlan-Stephens 2008.

(1702-1768) may initially have been better known, it was hardly a secret that there were Jesuit artists serving Qing emperors.

Although paintings done at imperial command do not seem to have left China, some Jesuit works were sent back to Europe, usually remaining buried in libraries and archives. Figures 25 and 26 of Pirazzoli's book, for example, reproduce two lovely drawings by Attiret that were recently located in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Copies of prints more easily reached a larger audience. In the 1760s-1770s, the French undertook a commission from the Qianlong emperor to engrave sixteen copper plates (based on sketches sent by Castiglione, Attiret, and other court artists) showing the emperor's recent successful Central Asian campaigns, to make several hundred prints, and to return everything to Peking. After 1783, however, unauthorized editions were made in France for sale and these became the foundation for an initial Western understanding of what Castiglione's Chinese work looked like.<sup>5</sup>

Giuseppe Castiglione passed away in 1766, the Jesuit order was dissolved in 1773, Qianlong died in 1799, and by then the heyday of court missionaries was over. In the subsequent era of the Opium wars, eighteenth century emperors were generally seen as unattractive examples of debilitating extravagance. Castiglione and his colleagues were of much less interest abroad, although they were not entirely forgotten.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Castiglione-related materials were (identified and?) taken out of China by European invaders, first in 1860 when the summer palaces were burned and looted, and then in 1900-01 during the Eight Nation occupation of Peking. These events brought a wider range of visual materials from court circles to foreign (and perhaps Chinese) audiences.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, with a growing interest in Chinese art, fresh textual and visual material, and an increasingly open market for antiques, scholarly work blossomed. Portions of Henri Cordier's extensive *Bibliotheca Sinica* started to appear in 1878, and the Variétés sinologiques series commenced publishing in 1892, continuing the study of Jesuits by Jesuits. *T'oung Pao*, begun in 1890 under

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<sup>5</sup> I have not traced the history of the circulation of the twenty copper-plate engravings of the European buildings of the Yuanming Yuan made in 1781-1785, and handsomely reproduced in the book under review from a set in the Bibliothèque nationale.

<sup>6</sup> The footnotes of early twentieth century scholarship cite these occasional articles.

the editorship of Cordier and Gustave Schlegel, was during this same period establishing standards and a sense of community among a new generation of European specialists on Asia.<sup>7</sup>

Giuseppe Castiglione's place in the history of "Chinese art," a new subject much debated during the early twentieth century, was an uncertain one.<sup>8</sup> Short pieces about the conquest prints—still the major focus of interested scholars—appeared in French, English, German, and Japanese in the 1910s. These studies were superseded by the substantial *T'oung Pao* article of 1921 by Paul Pelliot, survivor of the Boxer siege and now Cordier's co-editor.<sup>9</sup> This thoroughly researched and critically minded ninety-two-page essay on these well known engravings set the standard for later scholars and raised questions about court art that are still of interest: How should we characterize the interaction between Europeans and Chinese artists? What different forms did their artistic collaboration take? Can their works be considered "œuvres d'art"? The solid French sinological foundations for our understanding of what Pelliot suggested might be an "école 'européenne' de la Cour" were being laid down in these years.

Ultimately, however, understanding Giuseppe Castiglione's art depended on a fuller access to the products of his labors than was possible before 1925.<sup>10</sup> This once closely held imperial material became progressively better known in what might be called a series of waves emanating from the palace collection. The first rippled out from Peking in the 1920s, the second in the 1960s from Taipei, and the third in the 1990s, again from Peking. These periods of discovery decisively shaped and reshaped the scholarship on this artist.

Castiglione's public debut in China accompanied the 1925 conversion of large sections of the Forbidden City into the Gugong Bowuyuan 故宮博物院, the Palace Museum, and the subsequent exhibition and

<sup>7</sup> See Ang & Will 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Jesuit painters are not treated, for example, in Hirth 1905. Kang Youwei, on the other hand, mentioned Lang Shining in 1917 in the manuscript catalogue of his painting collection, noting that Lang had "joined China and the West 合中西": Kang 1917, p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> Pelliot 1920-21. He was also the author of a shorter piece just a year earlier on "La peinture et la gravure européennes en Chine au temps de Mathieu Ricci."

<sup>10</sup> The availability of catalogues of the imperial collection, beginning with the *Shi qu bao ji* 石渠寶笈, in which some of Lang Shining's works were listed, made possible only preliminary identifications based on "titles."

publication of some of its holdings during the next decade. The *Gugong zhoukan* 故宮周刊 [Palace Museum Weekly] appeared in the autumn of 1929, its reproduction of unique works of art facilitated by improved (black-and-white) photographic and printing technology. One of Lang Shining's bird paintings was showcased in the third issue (October 1929), alongside works by the now acknowledged masters Ma Yuan 馬遠 (Song), Wang Meng 王蒙 (Yuan), and Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 (Ming). Lang was there identified as an Italian missionary painter at the courts of three emperors, famous East and West.<sup>11</sup> His animal and plant paintings were a staple for the first year, and then appeared much more rarely until the journal ceased in 1936.<sup>12</sup>

In 1929-1931, the reproductions of 120 paintings in the four-volume *Qingdai di hou xiang* 清代帝后像 [Paintings of Qing emperors and empresses] revealed for the first time the range of imperial portraits and scenes of imperial activity that had been done privately at court. Today, scholars including Pirazzoli see European influence even on the portraits of Kangxi and Yongzheng, and feel confident in calling the one of Qianlong as he took the throne in 1736 the work of Castiglione himself. Nevertheless, what are now regarded as famous and emblematic Castiglione works, even those with Lang Shining's signature, were not explicitly identified with him in this important palace publication.

Another set of reproductions was published by the Museum in 1931-1935, this one dedicated to work that was explicitly called Castiglione's, and showed his horses, flowers, dogs, and birds. *Lang Shining hua* 郎世寧畫 [The Paintings of Giuseppe Castiglione] included a few paragraphs of basic biographic information on this artist and architect (including his name in Roman letters), references to some earlier literature, and then (by my count) black-and-white reproductions of forty-three paintings, one album, and one handscroll in seventy-eight 40 x 26 cm sheets. His style was said to "strike a balance between China and the West" (參酌中西).

Despite the Palace Museum's apparent willingness to publicize Castiglione's paintings, like many of the Qing dynasty objects in its

<sup>11</sup> *Gugong zhoukan* 1:3 (1929) 2. The painting was "Hawk in a Pine Tree" 松鷹. It appears to be the one now held in Taipei and published in C. & M. Beurdeley as #35.

<sup>12</sup> Imperial portraits from past dynasties were prominently featured, but none from the Qing; Qianlong as Manjusri appeared in issue #323 (1934).

collection, his works were being edged out of the emerging canon of Chinese art as it was being defined in English language materials. Samuel Bushell's 1909 *Chinese Art* had already emphasized the incompatibilities of European and Chinese painting ideals.<sup>13</sup> More significantly, despite (because of?) the publications of the early 1930s, only one work by Castiglione was sent from the Palace Museum to the influential exhibition at the Burlington House, London, in 1935-1936, a show whose standard-setting contents had been negotiated among Chinese and Western museums and connoisseurs.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, intermittent scholarly work on court artists had continued in many languages, but mostly not by specialists in art. In 1934 John Ferguson, resident in Peking, attempted to broaden knowledge (in English) of Castiglione's fellow painters, not only Attiret 王致誠, but also the less well known Michel Benoist 蔣友仁, Ignatius Sickelbarth 艾啟蒙 (his paintings with Castiglione of horses had already been published), Giovanni Damascene 安德义, Louis de Poirot 賀清泰, and Giuseppe Panzi 潘廷璋.<sup>15</sup> A short biography in Chinese by Liu Naiyi appeared in 1944,<sup>16</sup> while Henri Bernard tried to make more French material available about the life of Attiret (albeit with little attention to his paintings).<sup>17</sup>

During these years of war and revolution, new research on Castiglione himself was done in Italian by an American.<sup>18</sup> George R. Loehr not only gave attention to the Jesuit's paintings and architectural projects both, but especially to his early life in Italy. In Loehr's 1940 *Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766): Pittore di Corte di Ch'ien-Lung, Imperatore della Cina*, he brought to light paintings that Castiglione had done as a young man before his departure for China, and considered his exposure to European ideas of perspective. And like Pirazzoli,

<sup>13</sup> Bushell 1909, 2:104-106.

<sup>14</sup> Two paintings were shown, one a Chinese style landscape from the Palace Museum (C. & M. Beurdeley #59), and one a vase with flowers supplied by Sir Percival David. See #174 and #175 in volume 3 of *Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Government Exhibits* 1936. Also Plate 99, #2097 in *The Chinese Exhibition* 1936.

<sup>15</sup> Ferguson 1934. I have not done a proper survey of the many histories of Chinese art that appeared in the 1920s and 1930s.

<sup>16</sup> Liu Naiyi 1944.

<sup>17</sup> Bernard 1943.

<sup>18</sup> Because there is very little in print about the elusive Loehr, I have put together a short biography as an appendix to this essay.

Loehr also admired Castiglione's personality, "umile e mite, ma pieno di coraggio."<sup>19</sup>

Ishida Mikinosuke 石田幹之助, stimulated perhaps by two paintings that were in Japan, had begun writing about Castiglione by at least 1919, had had his short biography translated into Chinese, and published a much longer article in English in 1960.<sup>20</sup> Ishida's thorough research and command of the existing secondary sources in many languages not only surveyed the Jesuit's life but attempted a complete list of the growing number of known works.

With the advent of war in 1937, Peking's palace collection was effectively off limits, and with war's end, in a well known sequence of events, the Museum's holdings were unevenly divided between Taipei and Peking. Both museums held works by court Jesuits, although most of the imperial portraits and court scenes stayed in Peking. The second wave of exposure of Jesuit court art took place when China was hard to visit, when Taipei's palace material was being slowly made known, and as Castiglione's works in Western museums became recognized.

In 1961-1962 choice selections from the Taiwan collection travelled with much publicity to the United States as "China's Art Treasures"; two years later a large scale American photographic project made the palace collection accessible to specialists on a new scale.<sup>21</sup> Three important publications in 1971—none by academic art historians—created a much larger and more general world-wide audience for Castiglione. Thirty-two paintings by the artist (seventy-two images, one-quarter in color) from the Taipei museum were published inexpensively in Hong Kong in Chinese and English, a volume that praised the work while acknowledging that it was neither Chinese nor Western (不中不西).<sup>22</sup> In that same year, Harold Kahn, one of a new generation of Qing historians in the United States, drew on and republished some of the

<sup>19)</sup> These works were not widely known and it was only in 1963 that Loehr's photographs of two Castiglione paintings from Portugal and Italy became somewhat more accessible: Loehr 1962-63.

<sup>20)</sup> Ishida 1960. See *Yūrin taikan*, volumes 3, 4, and 5 (not paginated) for three works ascribed to Rō Seinei 郎世寧. Of these, the best known was the short handscroll "Qianlong Taking Out the Horses in the Spring 春郊試馬," which had been published separately in Shanghai in 1924.

<sup>21)</sup> Rogers 2006, p. 47.

<sup>22)</sup> *Lang Shining hua ji* 1971. Many had appeared in 1931-35.

Qianlong portraits still in Peking as part of his study of the many personas of that emperor.

Most influential in art circles was the thorough study by Cécile and Michel Beurdeley published in 1971 first in French, and then immediately in an English translation. The Beurdeleys reproduced in one volume a wide range of Castiglione's known engravings and paintings, from Italian altarpieces to animals and portraits, buildings and battle scenes. In addition to works from Taipei, the book illustrated the handscroll of Qianlong and his concubines in the Cleveland Museum (心寫治平); the "Kazaks Presenting Tribute Horses" 哈薩克貢馬 and "Mulan Hunting Ground" from the Musée Guimet; and the familiar engravings of the Central Asian conquests. This book also showed pictures of Castiglione's seals, gave a list of his known correspondence, and supplied an inventory of his works (each item accompanied by a small image). Moreover, the Beurdeleys were able to ground their admiring study of Castiglione's life in the just developing field of pre-1840 Qing history and to examine his artistic contributions in terms of each of the different genres in which he worked. The provenance of the paintings outside China was left vague, but familiarity with what was coming to be recognized as Lang Shining's characteristic style, visible in different media and a range of subjects, was enhanced by these now accessible examples in luminous color.<sup>23</sup>

In Taiwan in the 1970s, Lang Shining was also becoming a researchable and marketable commodity. Color reproductions of his paintings were a staple of the National Palace Museum gift shop, even though scholars associated with the museum did not begin to take up the subject in earnest until the 1980s, accompanying the 1983 multilingual volumes of "The Works of Lang Shining" for Chinese, English, Japanese, Spanish, German, and French readers.<sup>24</sup>

The problem was that during this same period Castiglione remained outside the now canonical history of Chinese painting. Already by Taipei's 1961-1962 landmark National Palace Museum exhibition in

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<sup>23</sup> For more on the most famous of the oil paintings said to have been painted by Castiglione in China, that of the "Fragrant Concubine" (Xiangfei 香妃), see Millward 1994. I have not researched the history of his works in oil.

<sup>24</sup> *Lang Shining zuopin zhuan ji* 1983.

the U.S., a consensus was being reached that literati (*wenren* 文人) calligraphy and landscape painting, with their emphasis on going “beyond representation,” constituted the masterpieces of the tradition. “The Palace Museum Collection contains hundreds of paintings by court artists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but they were not considered to be of sufficient interest to warrant inclusion in the exhibition,” explained an accompanying publication.<sup>25</sup> The first Museum handbook (1965) similarly declared the Qing to be a period of “general decline in originality,” and excluded both Castiglione and Qing imperial portraits,<sup>26</sup> while the standard 1971 edition of the China volume in the Penguin History of Art series declared Lang Shining’s work to be “a curious blending of occidental naturalism and a pseudo-Chinese technique” that had “little to do with the history of Chinese art.”<sup>27</sup> Such views were particularly strong in the United States.

Meanwhile, in China during the 1950s-70s, understandings of the past were being shaped by nationalism and Maoism. The Peking palace remained a museum, but one in which objects displayed in galleries were ideologically framed and dominated by the more ambiguous building complex itself.<sup>28</sup> Foreign Catholic painters of the feudal Qing dynasty were hardly to be admired. However, in 1979, after the Cultural Revolution had ended, Nie Chongzheng 聶崇正, a member of the Gugong staff and still today an authority on Castiglione, published the first of many articles on the artist in the *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal].<sup>29</sup> The opening of Peking’s Qing archives accompanied a renewed dedication to research on the part of the Gugong staff, who in the years since have put to good use

<sup>25</sup>) *Chinese Art Treasures* 1961, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup>) *Chinese Cultural Art Treasures* 1965, p. 77.

<sup>27</sup>) Sickman & Soper 1971, p. 340. The 1956 edition was similarly dismissive.

<sup>28</sup>) See pp. 464-79, especially p. 468 in *Nagel's Encyclopedia-Guide* 1978. Some of the rooms with “trompe l’œil views” (ones that have been recently restored and are also associated with Jesuit painters) are mentioned on p. 472. According to the Foreword, the research for this guide was done by French “students and teachers” under the direction of Michel Girard, the Peking sections being researched by “Denys and Claudine Lombard” and the ones on Chinese art by “Michèle t’Serstevens,” seemingly in 1965 (Castiglione is not mentioned). I have not seen the original French edition: *Nagel, Encyclopédie de voyage, Chine* (Genève: Nagel, 1967).

<sup>29</sup>) Nie 1979.

their special access to Imperial Household records (not taken to Taipei and opened much more slowly to foreigners).<sup>30</sup>

The third and largest wave that showed the world what the works of Giuseppe Castiglione looked like began, as I have argued in an earlier article in this journal, with the exhibitions that were sent from the Peking Palace Museum to Hong Kong and overseas museums beginning in the early 1980s.<sup>31</sup> Eighteenth century court paintings became an important feature of these shows and their resultant catalogues. It was with the 1985 Berlin exhibition (catalogue by Lothar Ledderose and Herbert Butz), however, that the formal imperial portraits we now associate with Castiglione appeared in impressive numbers.<sup>32</sup> Thereafter, the engravings and paintings of Jesuit court artists were a regular feature of the Museum's foreign shows.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, even now among art historians, a canon of post-1720 masterworks is far from settled and Castiglione seems to be regarded with continued ambivalence, even disdain.

In the 1990s, a number of reinforcing factors promoted interest in and knowledge of not just Castiglione but the context of his life in China. The resulting scholarly literature in many languages now includes: frequent museum publications with excellent illustrations of court art; studies of eighteenth century history based on rich archives in Taipei and Peking; fresh investigations of the court missionaries, their politics, and their involvement in many forms of technological exchange (porcelain, glass, mathematics, cartography, etc.); and explorations of Tibetan Buddhism and its arts at court. Scholars thus know much more, but are still trying to overcome the challenge of linguistic and academic fragmentation that a unified study of Castiglione's life has long presented.<sup>34</sup> Because there is now a popular audience for the

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<sup>30</sup> Considering the importance of Chinese scholars to the study of this topic and period, it seems a shame that Pirazzoli's book does not provide any Chinese characters.

<sup>31</sup> Naquin 2004.

<sup>32</sup> *Palast-museum Peking* 1985.

<sup>33</sup> One important exhibition that took place too late for my 2004 article was that in London in 2006, *China: Three Emperors. Exilo Dourado* (2002) exhibited the paintings of several missionary artists in Macao.

<sup>34</sup> For example, the excellent but obscure work by Pierre Huard and Ming Wong (1966) on French studies of Chinese technology in the eighteenth century in which Jesuits played a key role is rarely cited.

artist, moreover, during the last decade there has also been a proliferation of books and exhibitions specifically on Castiglione, too often of uneven quality and rarely groundbreaking. Nevertheless, as the book here under review demonstrates, we finally have a large scholarly literature on which serious work can be based, separate topics drawn together, and new issues addressed.

Pirazzoli's own essay in the 2001 *Handbook of Christianity in China* is a helpful summary of "Artistic Issues in the Eighteenth Century"<sup>35</sup> and reflects her familiarity with the relevant questions. Some new directions are represented by the work of Patricia Berger on Tibetan Buddhist art, of Elisabeth Corsi on perspective, and of Annette Bügener on the portraits of the heroes of the Central Asian campaigns.<sup>36</sup> James Cahill's pioneering lines of inquiry have followed the transmission of Western artistic conventions to Chinese artists, first through the European prints of the seventeenth century, and more recently to the painters in and beyond Peking whom Castiglione and Attiret influenced directly or indirectly.<sup>37</sup> Historians of twentieth century Chinese art, slowly following the early lead of Michael Sullivan, have finally seen "the meeting of Eastern and Western art" as an intellectually compelling issue, a trend with roots in the Qing and serious "modern" relevance.<sup>38</sup>

The recent investigations of Marco Musillo, whose work is briefly introduced by Michèle Pirazzoli in the book under review, are also concerned with the interaction of two painting traditions. In his 2006 Ph.D. dissertation in Art History at the University of East Anglia (U.K.), Musillo made use of Italian and Latin sources to locate the young Castiglione's professional training as an Italian Catholic painter firmly in its local contexts, and then to link it closely to his development as an artist in China. Moreover, Musillo complicated our understanding of the role of geometry and perspective in Castiglione's murals (in both Italy and China), examined his training in *quadratura*

<sup>35</sup> See pp. 823-39 in Standaert 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Berger 2003. Corsi 2004. Bügener 2009.

<sup>37</sup> Cahill 1982 and Forthcoming.

<sup>38</sup> Sullivan 1973; although devoting twenty pages to Jesuit court painters and their "blending of Chinese and European methods," what mattered to Sullivan was that their lasting influence did not extend beyond "professional and craftsmen painters" (85).

(illusionistically painted architecture), and emphasized that “Castiglione and his patrons together made pictures that [were] perfectly homogeneous in their functions and style” (184-185). The result was “not a hybrid but an elegant act of translation” (150).<sup>39</sup>

Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens' readable 2007 *Giuseppe Castiglione, 1688-1766: peintre et architecte à la cour de Chine* thus continues several centuries of research on this artist (much of it in French), and draws on our present access to hundreds of his works in many media. Moreover, she represents what might be called the more generous European approach to the man, less concerned about his place in a canon of literati masterworks and more ready to consider his involvement in arenas besides painting. Moreover, she is actively engaged with the one issue relating to Giuseppe Castiglione that has consistently interested scholars, Chinese and foreign: the ways in which he brought together two artistic traditions.

Pirazzoli herself analyzes the problem in terms of the presence or absence of “techniques,” “means,” “coloration,” or “domains” that might be judged “à l'Europe” or “à la Chine.” She writes of the Jesuit’s “compromises,” “adaptations,” and “innovations” between traditions, and of the “syntheses” that could make “une création sino-européenne.” Although she finds the combination not an “intégration unifiée” and sometimes a “métissage,” Pirazzoli can admire it: “Jamais l'éclectisme n'avait été aussi radical” (124). Today, many academics hesitate to use such essentialized categories as East and West, even for a general audience, believing that they obscure more than they clarify and are better avoided or disaggregated. At the same time, this vocabulary of 中 and 西 has an enduring legitimacy and interest because the Chinese themselves have continuously used it to describe what they have seen as a meaningful and troubling dichotomy.

It is a challenge to find the right words to talk about the interaction of two sets of cultural ideals and practices. We use language that is, variously, botanical (transplant, hybridize, graft), culinary (stir, blend, digest), artisanal (copy, refashion, modify), chemical (filter, combine, fuse), linguistic (translate, understand, misinterpret), and economic

<sup>39</sup> Musillo 2006. (His B.A. and M.A. were from Bologna.) See also his more recent “Reconciling Two Careers,” 2008.

(borrow, exchange, transfer). Some terms emphasize power gradients (influence, share, invade), while others stress agency (adopt, resist, reject). One may focus on the source or on the target, or on the brokers. (And here I invoke only the English vocabulary.) These processes are, of course, going on everywhere all the time on a small scale, but Jesuit artists at the Qing court seem to focus with unusual clarity the issues involving the encounter between two well developed cultural traditions.

Let me close by wondering where scholarship on Lang Shining might go from here. One has only to look at Pirazzoli's bibliography, not to mention the many works that lie behind it (only some of which have been mentioned in this review), to see, in the first place, that many languages remain necessary for such research. Moreover, Castiglione still stands at the intersection of a number of separate fields: the Catholic missionary endeavor in China, life at the Qing court, the Jesuit's Chinese colleagues and students, the manufacturing and building operations of the Imperial Household, European art and architecture. By using an encompassing frame and asking newer questions, accessible archival primary sources in France, Italy, and China could be probed more fully. A joint project might produce a current catalogue raisonné of the known works of Castiglione (and what must have been his workshop), one that would be even more useful if it included the many spurious Lang Shining paintings that have passed through auction houses and remain in museums and private collections. Other questions that seem interesting to me and that might prove fruitful include: Are there relevant archival sources in Manchu? Can we learn about the individual eunuchs who were ubiquitous associates of the Jesuits? What personal connections were there among those at court who worked on pigments in ceramics, enamel, and painting? Can a fresh study of Canton in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reveal more cultural connections between the Peking court and those coastal port cities that would dominate Sino-Western interactions in the nineteenth century?

If historians and art historians of China have both come to understand the process of "conjoining East and West" as a significant long-term dynamic, then shouldn't we give Giuseppe Castiglione/Lang Shining 郎世寧's artistic creations and his interactions with artists and patrons in Peking during the eighteenth century the significant place they deserve in this decisive trend in the history of modern China?

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## Appendix

### George Robert Loehr (1892-1973?)

#### A Belated Obituary<sup>40</sup>

George Robert Loehr came from a family of American Methodist missionaries from the state of Georgia. His father, George R. Loehr, Sr. (d. 1920), had married Malvina Allen, the daughter of Young J. Allen (1836-1907, 林樂智). Allen, who had arrived in China in time to meet the Taiping kings in their Nanjing capital, thereafter had a distinguished career in Shanghai. The grandson of this impressive man, George Robert Loehr Jr., was born in Shanghai on March 16, 1892; he had one brother, Allen George Loehr (d. 1936), and two sisters, Marie Loehr Arnold and Louise Loehr Soretti. He never married, and was no relation of his contemporary Max Loehr.

As a boy, George Jr. went first to “the German school” (the Kaiser Wilhelm School?) in Shanghai, and then was sent to Florence for his secondary education, thus initiating a peripatetic life built on language skills. He then, like his father, attended Emory University in Atlanta, receiving a B.A. in 1915. From there he went to Cuba, where he attended Candler College, a Methodist school in Havana associated with Emory, and received an Emory M.A. in 1917. In 1917-1918, Loehr did service in the U.S. Army Y.M.C.A. and starting in April 1918 was a private first-class in the U.S. Tank Corps, part of the American Expeditionary Force in France, where he served until March

<sup>40</sup> My sources are primarily the information Loehr supplied for some of his publications and for Princeton University (Faculty Files, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.) Also: “East & West: Europe’s Discovery of China and China’s Response to Europe, 1511-1839,” check-list for an exhibition, compiled by Howard C. Rice, Jr., Shih-kang Tung & Frederick W. Mote. (Princeton: Princeton University Library, 1957); Bollingen Foundation, *Report, 1959 & 1960* (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1961). There appears to be more material in the Young J. Allen Papers in the Emory University Archives.

1919. Surviving both the war and the influenza, Loehr then moved to Hawaii, where he worked for two years at the Honolulu Y.M.C.A.

In 1921, now in his late twenties and still without an obvious career, George Loehr returned to Shanghai where he became "chairman of the Shanghai Y.M.C.A. school" (1921-1924). Then he put his knowledge of German, Italian, and French to work teaching "modern languages," first at the Shanghai American school (1924-1925) and then at Yenching University in Peking, where he was appointed to the faculty, settled in the city, and taught for twenty years (1925-1946). Around 1936, perhaps prompted by the invasion by the Japanese, perhaps following up research interests that he had been developing in Peking, Loehr left his position as head of the Department of Modern Languages and went to Italy, this time to Rome. There he studied at the Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri (then promoting Italian culture in many parts of the world, including China), from which in March 1937 he received a "diploma and bronze medal." In 1938, Loehr was awarded a Dottore in Lettere (cum laude) from the Royal University of Rome (established in 1303 but newly reopened in 1935), apparently working with Arturo Farinelli, a Dante specialist. Two years later, a 126 page, well researched book in Italian (presumably based on his work for the degree) on the career of Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), Jesuit painter at the Qing court, was published in 1940 by the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (also newly founded). It is for this book, with its pioneering attention to Castiglione's Italian training and the church paintings that he did before leaving for China, that Loehr is probably best known today.

By this time, China was at war and so was Italy, and Loehr apparently went back to Peking and to his position at Yenching. In the spring of 1943, at the age of fifty, he was interned by the Japanese with 1,700 other Westerners for twenty-nine months at the "Civil Internment Camp" at Weihsien (濰縣), Shandong. After this brutal experience (Loehr's job was to haul water), he returned to the Yenching faculty for one more year (1945-46), and then decided to leave China for the United States.

In September 1946, a need for instructors in German and French brought Loehr a short-term appointment at Princeton University (possibly because his sister Marie lived in the area?). The position became

an assistant professorship in the Department of Modern Languages; two three-year contracts followed, but then his appointment was terminated. After June 1953 George Loehr, then sixty-one, with no immediate employment prospects, stayed on in New Jersey. In the spring of 1957, he loaned five engravings and fifteen rare books to an exhibition on China and Europe in the Princeton University Library, including copper-plate engravings of the European buildings at the Yuanming Yuan summer palace. In 1960, Loehr received a fellowship from the Bollingen Foundation in New York for a study of "the life and work of Giuseppe Castiglione." During these years, with a fine library at hand and resources for European travel, Loehr was able to bring together some of his research in his self-described field of "Sino-European Cultural Relations in the 17th and 18th Centuries," and he published five good articles in 1962 and 1963 in English. These essays, which appeared in European journals of history and art history, relied on a combination of visual material and Jesuit archives (particularly those in Paris). They demonstrated Loehr's thorough command of the multilingual sources on "missionary-artists" in Peking in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and illustrated unfamiliar works by them.

By 1963, however, George Loehr had relocated yet again, leaving the United States and becoming an "art critic" in Florence. He was still alive, presumably in Italy, at least as late as 1973 (then age eighty-one), his book on Castiglione apparently never completed. He vanishes from obvious view after that.

Because of a remarkably cosmopolitan education and obvious language talent, George Loehr had a fair claim to at least seven languages in one form or another: Shanghainese, German, Italian, Spanish, French, Mandarin, and English (and seemingly reading knowledge of Latin and Classical Chinese). His career as a scholar was, however, a rather lonely one. His 1940 book was written during dark times, in a language that few specialists on China could read, and during a long period when there was no active community of scholars concerned with eighteenth century Jesuit artists. Loehr's research on the early life of Giuseppe Castiglione in Italy was all the more original and unusual for being done in such isolation. Twenty years later, when he finally published in English, he was nearly seventy and the situation was only

slightly better. Loehr had not been formally trained in history or art and his university career had been dedicated to language teaching. His interest in the visual evidence of Westerners in China made him, like Castiglione, a marginal figure, especially in the United States, and he had no obvious audience or colleagues. It would be the 1990s before there were many scholars to follow in his wake.

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