

ON THE MILITARIZATION OF CULTURE IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY QING EMPIRE

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At the height of Qing imperial power in the mid-eighteenth century, the Qianlong emperor (1736–95) commissioned European Jesuit artists in his employ to illustrate recent imperial military victories in Xinjiang, the vast area of Central Asia recently incorporated into the empire. The resulting set of sixteen paintings, which included detailed battle scenes and victory celebrations, was displayed in a pavilion in central Beijing expressly restored to exhibit military memorabilia and receive visiting foreign dignitaries.¹ With missionary help, the emperor arranged for multiple sets of copper engravings to be made by the finest French practitioners in Paris, to which copies of the paintings were shipped on European trading vessels. Back in China, along with other engravings depicting subsequent wars, the war illustrations were hung in the imperial palace, distributed as rewards to loyal officials, and displayed in public buildings across the empire in

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1. The usage has continued down to the present; visiting foreign dignitaries are still sometimes received there.

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a manner somewhat reminiscent of the once-ubiquitous portraits of the British monarch placed in colonial settings. Those illustrations retained in France (in contravention of contractual stipulations) found their way into various collections across Europe and still surface periodically on the art market in London and New York.

The Qing war illustrations were sent to France for two reasons. The first was that the emperor saw no reason not to seek the best available work even if this was to be found only overseas; Chinese artists had forgotten how to engrave in copper and only later relearned the skill from court Jesuits. The second reason, both more compelling and more important, was that the emperor wished to impress upon the French, of whom he had heard much from his Jesuit interlocutors, that the great Qing empire, too, frequently waged and won spectacular wars. The empirewide distribution of the engravings at home ensured the dissemination of this same message of imperial power to his own subjects. Both in Europe and within the Qing empire, imperial attention to the broadcasting of military might attested to as strong a concern with the political power of display as with conquest itself.

Military power and the associated martial virtues were crucial to the self-image of the Manchu Qing polity (1636–1912), which at its zenith ranked among the most powerful in the world.² Indeed, its focus on military affairs was one of the defining characteristics that distinguished the Qing from other ruling houses in China's imperial period, which had normally preferred to subordinate military to civil matters. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a series of wars led to the expansion of the empire to an unprecedented extent. These wars were accompanied by a cultural transformation designed to propel military success, and the martial values that underpinned it, to the center of their subjects' attention. In keeping with a key principle of Qing rule—namely, universalism—this agenda aimed to extend consciousness of imperial expansion and military power into every sphere of life: political, cultural, moral, intellectual, spiritual, and material. In this contribution to the ongoing discussion of empire in *Common Knowledge*, I will focus on one influential aspect of this program: the wide-ranging incorporation of military and imperial themes into visual culture and its textual reiterations.

In doing so I have several purposes in mind. One is to demonstrate the considerable sophistication and effectiveness of the high Qing empire, not least its lucid understanding of the power of display and of the ability of representation to enhance or even de novo produce reality. Rather than indulging in what has been

2. At its mid-eighteenth-century height, the Qing empire encompassed not only China and the northeastern homelands of the ruling house itself but also Mongolia (both the modern Mongolian state and Inner Mongolia), Tibet,

Xinjiang, and Taiwan. Thus, ironically, the Qing set a precedent even for those successors whose mandate derived from anti-Manchu or anti-imperial nationalism.

called “a bout of me-too,” I seek instead to counter two misapprehensions. The first is the still-tenacious view that, by reading back from empire’s end, assigns wide-ranging ineptitude to the Qing over the entire span of their rule. The second is the misleading notion that the Manchus’ success in governing China arose exclusively from their adoption of Chinese institutions. Rather, as I will explain, the Manchus drew simultaneously on Inner Asian as well as Chinese political traditions—for the Qing were rulers of an empire that extended far beyond the borders of China. Third, I want to call attention to and reinforce a growing body of work that emphasizes the “orientalizing” tendencies of various parts of “the Orient” itself. Thus I seek to counter the neoimperialist tendency of some Western scholars who still assume that such wickedness (imperialism), with all its attendant techniques, has been a prerogative uniquely of “the West.” Finally, I suggest that not only an immediate concern with power, but also a long-term concern with history, can underlie an imperial agenda—and acutely so in the case of the Qing.³

History played a major part in Qing policies. Eclectically drawing on historical precedent, emperors held themselves out as at once descendants of two distinct sets of traditions, Chinese and Inner Asian. In the former mode, they explicitly aimed to emulate or even outshine the glorious Tang dynasty (618–906), which had controlled some though not all of what became Qing Xinjiang. Notwithstanding its non-Han origins, the Tang is usually seen as one of the greatest native dynasties; thus the Qing could reasonably assume that their success in surpassing this historical exemplar would particularly impress their Han Chinese subjects. At the same time, however, the Qing claimed inheritance of the Chinggisid mantle of the Mongol Yuan rulers of China (1276–1368)—for example, in their patronage of Tibetan Buddhism, the religion of their Tibetan and Mongol subjects—and repeatedly called on their followers to resist acculturation to Chinese ways. In this mode, the Qing drew on Inner Asian tradition and aligned themselves with other imperializing polities across Eurasia well above and beyond any purely Chinese context.⁴

Chinese political culture had always recognized the need to maintain a

3. On “me-too” and “me-first,” see Craig Clunas, “Modernity Global and Local: Consumption and the Rise of the West,” *American Historical Review* 104.5 (December 1999): 1497–1511, esp. 1507. For the Qing understanding of representation and reality at this time, see Angela Zito, *Of Body and Brush: Grand Sacrifice as Text/Performance in Eighteenth-Century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). For discussion of “other” orientalisms, see, for example, Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Ussama Makdisi, “Ottoman Orientalism,” *American Historical Review* 107.3 (June 2002): 768–96. The “naming” of Qing imperialism first surfaced in Western scholarly publications in a special issue of *International History Review* 20.2 (June 1998) devoted to the topic.

4. For a summary of recent historiography with extensive references, see my “The New Qing History,” *Radical History Review* 88 (winter 2004): 193–206. See also James A. Millward, Ruth W. Dunnell, Mark C. Elliott, and Philippe Forêt eds., *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian History at Qing Chengde* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004). Tang rulers claimed descent from Turco-Mongol (i.e., non-Han) ancestors who had ruled China a century or so earlier, and, at least at first, distinguished themselves from their Chinese subjects in language and culture while holding themselves out as completely “Chinese” for purposes of legitimation.

balance between civil (*wen*) and military (*wu*) virtues. Yet from the outset, the rulers of the Qing empire expressed their desire to preserve the martial prowess of the Manchus—a virtue that was almost always more ideal than real—against the insidious effects of Chinese civilization. In other words, the Qing made it clear that they wished to favor *wu* over *wen*—the latter, a term that also translates as “civilization,” in the sense of a culture of educated men (and, up to a point, women).⁵ In exercising this preference, they did not call for any clear separation of civil and military, nor for the dominance of *wu* over *wen*, but instead sought to bring *wen* under the auspices of *wu*. This approach illustrated, again, imperial skill at blending Chinese and Inner Asian precedents, for, on the one hand, Emperor Taizong of the Tang (927–60) was considered by educated Chinese to have perfectly embodied a combination of *wen* and *wu* values, while, on the other hand, Qing rulers encoded martial values as a marker of Manchu identity.

The shift in favor of martial virtues derived in large part from emperors' understanding that it was precisely the dilution of those values through acculturation to Chinese ways (*wen*) that had brought about the demise of their ancestors, the Jurchen Jin. In the twelfth century, the Jin had driven the great Song dynasty out of north China, only to be driven out themselves a century later by the Mongols. Given Qing imperial ambitions, and bearing in mind the potency of the Mongol legacy, this precedent was especially poignant. Thus repeated injunctions exhorted the Manchus to hold on to their martial skills and the frugal way of life that supposedly accompanied them. In this context, Hung Taiji (1592–1636), the Manchu ruler who first proclaimed the Qing empire in 1636, set the standard when he commented: “What I fear is this: that the children and grandchildren of later generations will abandon the Old [Manchu] Way, neglect shooting and riding, and enter into the Chinese Way.”⁶ Later emperors often echoed Hung Taiji's fears, extolling the virtues of military preparedness, which “could not be laid aside even for one day” and which, with a nod to classic texts of military strategy, they explicitly regarded as the most effective means of maintaining peace in the empire.⁷

5. On the interplay of civil and military in Chinese history, see my *The Culture of War in China: Empire and Military under the Qing Dynasty* (London: Tauris, forthcoming); see also Nicola di Cosmo, ed., *Military Culture in Chinese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, forthcoming); “Civil-Military Relations in Imperial China,” a special issue of *War and Society* 18.2 (October 2000): 1–91; Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). On women in the Qing imperial project, see Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

6. See Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 9:276, citing *Jiu Manzhou Dang (The Old Manchu Archives)*, 10:5295 (Chongde 1/11/13). Citing the Veritable Records, Elliott also notes that Qianlong would later (1752) order Hung Taiji's warning engraved onto stelae and displayed wherever bannermen underwent military training (Elliott, *Manchu Way*, 11). One is reminded, notwithstanding the profoundly different context, of Mao Zedong's theory of continuous revolution, intended to maintain revolutionary spirit in postrevolutionary generations.

7. *Qingchao Tongzhi (Comprehensive Annals of the Qing)*, *shitong* ed., 7013, Kangxi 24 (1684).

In calling for the maintenance of a military ethos, however, the emperors' principal goal was to create a new and distinctive Qing culture. Resting on the foundation of Manchu martial ideals, the new culture was intended to draw together the subjects of a vast empire without reliance on the adhesive power of Chinese civilization. Instead, the Qing way of uniting and ruling a multiethnic and multicultural empire was to create a common history whose shared cultural heritage would center on the naturalization of military power and imperial expansion. One important means to the achievement of that goal was the massive reconfiguration in militarized terms of existing genres of artistic and intellectual production and design. In a manner reminiscent of the mass reproductions of our own day, almost all such cultural products appeared and reappeared in multiple forms, indicating a firm grasp of the suggestive power of relentless repetition.

By the late eighteenth century, war itself had become, in effect, a defining feature of the Qing. The successful consolidation of dynastic power in the late seventeenth century had shortly been followed by a series of ambitious campaigns culminating in the elimination of serious rivals and the assumption of political control over what became Xinjiang. Toward the end of this series of campaigns, the Qianlong emperor began to propagate the idea that military triumphs were the hallmark and central accomplishment of his reign. This formulation culminated in 1792 when, with nearly sixty years' rule behind him, he began to style himself "Old Man of the Ten Great Victories" (*shi quan lao ren*). The title derived from his essay of that date in which he glorified, in addition to the several wars for Xinjiang, campaigns on the Tibetan border and later within Tibet itself, along with wars of more questionable success in Burma, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

As "Qing" and "wars of imperial expansion" became increasingly synonymous, the Qing emperors' finely tuned consciousness of history led seamlessly to their easy mastery of what we would now call the art of "spin." They aggressively claimed the right to define public events and thereby both to market the empire and its military power in the present and to control the historical record that would pass down to future generations. In that context, one major method they used to enhance perceptions of Qing military power was to characterize nonmilitary events as essentially military in significance, or even explicitly to liken them to military triumphs. We can see this tendency clearly in the acclaimed "return to allegiance" of the Torghuts in 1771-72. In that episode, a group of people, preferring Qing overlordship to that of the Cossacks (perhaps as the lesser of two evils), migrated en masse to the Qing empire. The Qianlong emperor celebrated this peaceful relocation, any credit for which he could claim only very loosely, as though it was either a consequence of a military victory or, in and of itself, amounted to one. Among other things he had a pair of commemorative stone stelae erected at the summer palace in Chengde (Jehol) alongside those that commemorated the actual wars of his reign. As on the war memorials,

quadrilingual inscriptions, purportedly imperial compositions, declared that the Torghuts' return was the culminating triumph of the Qing's Inner Asian adventures.⁸ This claim supports Jeffrey Auerbach's observation, in the first installment of this symposium, that historians' credulity with respect to imperial propaganda may have made more than one empire seem more formidable than in actuality it ever was.⁹

The commemorative monuments at Chengde formed part of a larger project to recreate the empire in miniature at the summer palace complex. To that end, emperors constructed temples that almost exactly replicated famous landmarks from around the empire, with subtle alterations intended to reiterate their ascendancy. Thus Chengde included several Tibetan Buddhist temples, most notably a copy of the Lhasa Potala Palace altered to demonstrate Qing dominance, as well as copies of such important religious institutions from the Chinese heartland as the Jinshan temple, the original of which is located along the lower Yangtze river. Similarly, emperors had terrain at Chengde altered to create an artificial landscape that would deliberately mimic the different regions under their control, such as the Mongolian steppelands. Beyond the immediate expression of dominance, the creation of this kind of imperial theme park constituted another way in which the Qing staked their claim to a place in history, both past and future, as creators of an empire that was simultaneously Chinese but filled with elements from other traditions. Its audience included not only the imperial family, courtiers, and officials, but the huge army of workmen required to carry out all these public works projects. Given the power of word of mouth in premodern societies such as that of Qing China, descriptions of the palace doubtless spread indirectly to remoter family members and associates of all these people as well.

The expression of Qing ideology in material terms took many other forms. Ranking in a somewhat different register were the imperial southern tours, undertaken every few years by both the Kangxi (1662–1722) and Qianlong emperors. These tours ostensibly provided a means for the emperor, whose court resided in north China, to “connect” to his Chinese subjects in the economically and culturally rich lower Yangtze region. But in reality the tours were designed to accomplish much more, in other words to function as a material allusion to Inner Asian martial prowess. Requiring huge logistical efforts, they were conducted very much in the manner of military campaigns. Vast numbers of people—emperor, entourage, escort, hangers-on, and still others—traveled over

8. Though it should be pointed out that those adventures included elimination of the Zunghars and the annexation of Xinjiang. On the Torghuts, see James A. Millward, “Qing Inner Asian Empire and the Return of the Torghuts,” in Millward, Dunnell, Elliott, and Foret, *New Qing Imperial History*, 91–106; Patricia Berger, *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China*

(Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003) 14–22; on war memorials, see Joanna Waley-Cohen, “Commemorating War in Eighteenth-Century China,” *Modern Asian Studies* 30.4 (October 1996): 869–99.

9. Jeffrey Auerbach, “Imperial Boredom,” *Common Knowledge* 11.2 (spring 2005): 286–87.

enormously long distances, with overnight stops at encampments whose style and operation deliberately recalled military bivouacs. Qianlong did not leave this connection to his subjects' imagination but made the martial subtext crystal clear in his official word on the tours, explicitly according them equal significance with his military victories in the achievements of his reign.¹⁰

The official account of the southern tours joined a number of other large compilations intended to inscribe Qing achievements into the written record. Prominent among these were a series of campaign histories assembled by a government office created especially to establish the place of Qing empire-building in history. Campaign histories as a genre built on existing (Ming) precedents but massively elaborated them, creating an impressive textual monument that would ensure "the permanence of the conquests in the literary tradition." They and other such compilations contributed to an overall expansion of military themes in literature to correspond to the expansion of the empire—to make its extent and prowess seem, at the time and in retrospect, perhaps more monumental than they were.¹¹

It will already be apparent that, in the context of promoting empire, visual and textual culture constantly reflected and reiterated one another. The war illustrations were a leading example of this genre, along with other military-themed paintings produced in large numbers by artists of the Court Painting Academy working both individually and in collaboration with one another. These artists, including a number of European Jesuits, functioned much as would official photographers in a later age, generating a huge pictorial record. This genre of artistic production was not unprecedented in China. Political paintings of this type had been known from the early imperial age, but in the eighteenth century it was far more extensive than ever before and its authority was enhanced by inscriptions composed, so it was said, by the emperor and written in his calligraphy. Thus even without reproduction of the paintings themselves, their message could be—and frequently was—replicated in texts where military themes might not on the face of it be anticipated. A prime example was the elaborate victory celebration held outside the Meridian Gate of the Forbidden City in 1760 to mark the end of the Xinjiang wars. Included among the sixteen events engraved as war illustrations in Paris, the celebration was also separately painted by the court artist Xu

10. "Yuzhi nanxun ji" ("Imperial Account of the Southern Tours"), in *Qinding nanxun shengdian* (*Imperial Commissioned Account of the Southern Tours*), comp. Sazai, *juan shou* (chap. 1), 1b. See Michael Chang, "A Court on Horseback: Constructing Manchu Ethno-Dynastic Rule in China, 1751–1784" (PhD diss., University of California at San Diego, 2001), 240, in which the author suggests that the southern tours and the imperial wars were "two poles of a single continuum." See also Chang, "Court on Horseback," 143, 189.

11. On the campaign histories and the offices founded to compile them, see Peter C. Perdue, "The Qing Empire in Eurasian Time and Space: Lessons from the Galdan Campaigns," in *The Qing Formation in World-Historical Time*, ed. Lynn A. Struve (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 57–91; Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723–1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

Yang. In that version, it formed part of the imperial paintings collection, in the catalog of which a minute description appears. This work is particularly interesting because it “records” not only the large numbers of civil and military officials in attendance but also a vast range of allegedly tribute-paying visitors bearing their national flags. These visitors included both the representatives of nearby states and, according to the catalog description, French, Dutch, and English envoys. Missionary accounts of the same event do not suggest any European presence apart from their own; and although missionaries claimed close links to the French crown, they were not qualified to act as national representatives or to “present tribute” at such occasions. No other Europeans are known to have been present. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Qianlong ordered the record embellished to suit his own purpose of inflating the image of imperial power. Notice of the same event appears in a late-eighteenth-century multivolume description of Beijing and its public buildings, many of which housed war-related paintings or inscribed stelae commemorating the events depicted and reproducing the full text of Qianlong’s triumphal inscription. This mass production and reproduction, promoting notions of imperial splendor and military power in various media, has an almost postmodern feel.

Not all the artworks depicting military subjects are as recognizable as such to us as they would have been to an educated subject of the Qing: the most famous example is the series of horse paintings by the Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766). Other war-related works include sets of portraits of military commanders and officers, one hundred per war, who had distinguished themselves in the war though not necessarily in the field. These portraits hung alongside the war illustrations in Beijing. Another group of documentary paintings consists of scrolls depicting imperial hunts. These annual expeditions served the several purposes of military training, war games, and the not coincidental intimidation of subject lords required to participate. As in the case of the southern tours, whose northern counterpart they effectively represented, the hunts and the scrolls depicting them enlarged the military emphasis both in real life and in the realm of representation.¹² Finally, beginning in the later seventeenth century, porcelains made at the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen increasingly displayed military themes in their decoration. This development may have reflected simultaneously the Manchu promotion of martial qualities and their marketability among Chinese and other subjects of the empire.¹³

12. The Qianlong emperor, under whom the artistic documentation of warfare and empire reached its height, may have been influenced by European models, some of which he certainly saw; and he may have heard about European practices in that area from Jesuit missionaries employed at court. For some illustrations, see Jessica Rawson and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., *China: The Three Emperors, 1662–1795*, exhibition catalogue (London: Royal Academy of

Arts, London, forthcoming). On the Imperial Painting Academy, see essays in Chou Ju-hsi and Claudia Brown, eds., *The Elegant Brush: Chinese Painting under the Qianlong Emperor, 1735–95* (Phoenix, AZ: Phoenix Art Museum, 1985).

13. See Jonathan Hay, “The Diachronics of Early Qing Visual and Material Culture,” in Struve, *Qing Formation*, 319.

Categories of artistic production that were closely related to empire, if not quite so immediately to military power, included cartography and ethnography. Under imperial auspices, Chinese and Jesuit cartographers produced detailed maps of the expanding empire all through the eighteenth century, incorporating the latest mapmaking techniques from Europe. Additions marked each new conquest; repeated invocations of the Qing's great achievement in surpassing in extent even the great Tang empire became a matter of routine. Although maps of frontier regions usually were regarded more or less as state secrets, at least some of these maps were reproduced in the great contemporary compendia and encyclopedias that circulated among educated readers. Emperors were not just talking to themselves and their immediate entourage. Moreover, the use of European cartographic techniques was rhetorical as well as practical, because they made their point understood in a universally legible language. Even those who could not read Chinese could understand what these maps represented: both a claim to territory and an assertion of imperial power.¹⁴ At much the same time as these great surveys were being prepared, court artists produced massive illustrated ethnographies depicting imperial subjects and remoter acquaintances (such as trading partners), including some Europeans. Each group, usually represented by a man and a woman, bore a bilingual (Chinese and Manchu) legend discussing where they lived and something of their customs, clothing, and way of life. The definition by depiction of vanquished and other peoples, as much as the representation of newly fixed land frontiers in maps, formed part of a much wider project of knowledge production linked to the advertisement of imperial power.¹⁵ British attempts to dominate other peoples through the production of knowledge (maps, ethnographies, and so forth) was not dissimilar in purpose and has been studied more thoroughly.¹⁶

But not every theme familiar to students of Western colonialism is valid in studying the Qing. The feminization of conquered peoples, for instance, did surface under the Qing empire.¹⁷ Yet because of its peculiar connection to the militarization of culture, this feminization took forms that Western postcolonial theorists would not expect to find. The conquest of China reconfirmed the Manchus' self-image as martial (*wu*) and masculine, in contrast with what they saw as the weak, indeed effeminate, scholarly (*wen*) ways of their Chinese subjects.

14. See Laura Hostetler, "Qing Connections to the Early Modern World: Ethnography and Cartography in Eighteenth-Century China," *Modern Asian Studies* 34.3 (July 2000): 623–62.

15. See Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

16. For the British case, see Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton,

NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); on Britain, China, and the "archive state," see James L. Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), which, however, barely acknowledges Qing practices of knowledge production for the purposes of intimidation.

17. See, for example, Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

However, in the Chinese scheme of things, *wu*, the military principle, correlated with the dark, female side, while *wen*, the civil (or civilized) principle, correlated with the bright, masculine side. In other words, the Chinese perspective exactly contradicted that of the Manchus. The Qing emperors had to appear simultaneously to their Chinese subjects as rulers conforming to the Chinese tradition and to other subjects elsewhere according to their own, often quite different traditions. Thus the Qing case does not correspond precisely to analyses that work elsewhere.

How useful is the standard model of orientalism when applied to colonial situations where the conquered and the conqueror are both Asian peoples? Certainly the Qing, in more or less subtle ways, reduced conquered areas and peoples to inferior, let us say feminized, status and produced knowledge about them in ways that we recognize as orientalist from our reading of Edward Said and other postcolonial theorists. But take the case of stories surrounding the so-called *Fragrant Concubine*, a young Muslim woman brought to the imperial harem in 1760. Her tantalizing refusal to submit to the emperor, and her ultimate suicide at the insistence of the emperor's mother (who feared for his safety since the concubine defended herself with a dagger), vividly symbolized both Xinjiang's intractability and its exoticism.¹⁸ The young Muslim's dangerous, even *wu*, femininity was captured in a famous portrait by a Jesuit artist that depicts her as Joan of Arc.¹⁹ It is not so simple a matter to determine where the valences of feminine and masculine should be placed. And in the end, of course, but even before the Manchu rule concluded, the Western powers and Japan came to regard the Chinese and Manchus alike as weak and effeminate, drawing no distinction between the two peoples and paying no respect to claims of onetime military might. That ellipsis came about only as empire drew to a close, by which time the Qing had become victims of the imperialism and orientalism of which they themselves had once been guilty.

The Qing militarization of culture, with its gendered twist, and the enormous efforts allotted to its dissemination through artworks and scholarship, demonstrate phenomena worth observing in the global context of this symposium. First was a sophisticated grasp of culture's potency as a tool of empire and an enthusiasm for carefully diffused display—the display, often enough, of peaceable events as military triumphs. Second was a paradoxically orientaling tendency to produce and circulate knowledge in ways intended to enhance imperial control over subject peoples. Third was a desire to surpass the great empires of the past and to bequeath a sense of community to subject peoples: a sense deriving

18. See James A. Millward, "A Uyghur Muslim in Qianlong's Court: The Meanings of the *Fragrant Concubine*," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53.2 (May 1994): 427–58; and see Zito, *Body and Brush*, esp. 17–26, 211–13.

19. Castiglione is known to have painted the *Fragrant Concubine*, but it is uncertain whether he executed this particular portrait of her.

ultimately from pride in the imperial expansion to which they contributed. The power of the Qing, in other words, was as much rhetorical (that is, persuasive, affective, and seductive) as it was a matter of force, but for all that it was very considerable. Qing rulers were not deluded in regarding their empire as ranking among the great powers of the world in their time.