

Church, A “Sacred Event” and the Visual Perspective of an “Etic Viewer”: an 18th century Western-Style Chinese Painting held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France*

.....
Lianming Wang
Institute of East Asian Art History,
University of Heidelberg

Abstract

This paper deals with an 18th century oil painting produced by non-court painter(s) using Western techniques that conveys an etic viewer’s (an outsider’s) perspective of the depicted events. The artwork portrays an unusually solemn Christian procession which took place in a courtyard garden of a church in Beijing. Through the examination of contemporary accounts of rituals practised at the French North Church *Beitang* 北堂 in Beijing, and two recently discovered 19th century architectural drawings held by the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., this paper will begin with an iconographic analysis of the ritual depiction. Special attention is paid to the etic narration – the way in which the ritual event has been visually translated and re-constructed. Based on this discussion, I move to a stylistic analysis and reveal its European influences by comparing this painting with other contemporary or later narrative works by missionary court artists and their Chinese helpers, for instance the *Wanshuyuan ciyan tu* 萬樹園賜宴圖 (*Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees*, 1755). Finally, in the context of Qing court art productions, I analyse how Western pictorial narration influenced the traditional Chinese portrayal of ceremonial events.

Introduction

In Chinese art history, the 17th century was an era of remarkable transformation caused, above all, by encounters and conflicts with European science and art traditions. A view first suggested by James Cahill (1982), but which is now widely accepted. (Barnhart, 1997/1998, p. 7–16) Culturally and artistically, the Qing dynasty was heir to its predecessor in that it patronized Chinese painting and following it, that is, Kangxi (r. 1662–1723), Yongzheng (r. 1723–1736) and Qianlong (r. 1736–1796), pursued an even more permissive attitude. However, it is commonly held that the only site where an active artistic encounter between Europe and China could emerge was inside the court, the “secluded place” of

.....
* Thank you to Geschwister-Supp Stiftung (2011-2012) for all their support. Special thanks to Alan R. Sweeten (Denair, California) and Rui Oliveira Lopes (Lisbon) for their editorial suggestions. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Noël Golvers (Leuven) for generously sharing a copy of his unpublished conference paper and all those scholars who have contributed to the discussion on this painting over the last two years, in alphabetical order: Chen Yunru (Taipei), Claudia von Collani (Münster), Ghassan Moazzin (Cambridge), Michael Hesse (Heidelberg), Lai Yuchi (Taipei), Lin Hang (Würzburg), Yasumasa Oka (Kobe), Nicolas Standaert (Leuven), Gemma Toner (Newcastle upon Tyne), Wang Ching-ling (Berlin) and Zhang Ping (Hangzhou).

these emperors, while, in the late Ming, European influences flourished in the pictorial works of literati. (Corsi, 2005, p. 239–245; Mungello, 1999, p. 46)

Previously, scholars have focused mainly on the works of leading court painters and the pupils of missionary artists who were familiar with the European techniques, the so-called *taixi huafa* 泰西畫法 (*the painting style of the Far West*), paying little attention to those European-style works which were produced outside the court. (Aoki et al., 1995) During the reign of the three aforementioned emperors, exceptionally, one finds several amateur official-painters who directly or indirectly related to the circle of painters at the court, and a large number of folk painters and craftsmen versed in European techniques, in particular oil painting and linear perspective *xianfa* 線法. However, the identity of many of the latter painters remains unknown.

One such artist produced the subject of this paper: an unsigned silk painting composed using Western techniques and perspective, now held at the Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. The painting's most striking point, which deserves further study, is its theme, a solemn procession involving groups of Qing officials and visitors wearing wide-brimmed hats assembled in front of a church located within a walled garden – rare subject matter that is singular in contemporary court or non-court painting.¹ Ever since its “discovery” in the 1970s, the artwork's iconographical details have been the subject of scholarly debate, in part due to the extremely sparse textural records concerning its date, authorship and theme.²

1. The “Paris Painting”, Its Scholarly Response and Content

The painting entitled *Procession solennelle dans les jardins du Nan-t'ang (église également connue sous le nom de Collège de la mission portugaise) à Pékin* is presented in the form of a hanging scroll, which measures approximately 187.5 cm in height by 130 cm in width (Fig. 1).³ Once it was rolled up but is now

1 According to Nie (2008, p. 9–16), the theme of the court production of Qing could be classified in five genres: narrative painting, history painting, religious painting, flower-bird painting and landscape painting. However, the subject of the narrative painting is invariably the emperor or the members of imperial family.

2 According to Barbara Brejon (BnF), the painting was acquired by the Cabinet des Estampes from Commissaires priseurs Ader Picard Tajan, a famous French antiquities dealer of Asian art in Paris, on December 10, 1969.

3 Cote cliché: RC-B-0074 the current call number of the painting reads as “BnF Cartes et Plan Réserve Musée Objet 11”. (Golvers, 2012, p. 4, n. 5). Measurements differ slightly. According to the library, it is about 187.5 cm tall by 130 cm wide, but according to Séguy (1976, p. 228) and Golvers (2012, p. 4), it measures about 189 cm tall by 120 cm wide.

mounted on a wood frame. Apart from its catalogue entry, the painting has no title, no inscription nor any other written information.

Regarding its use of materials, it has long been claimed to be a colored-painting on Chinese silk (“peinture sur soie chinoise”) – a commonly seen presentation for Qing court paintings.⁴ However, careful observation of fine cracks (top left and bottom, close to the edge) indicate with certainty that the painting was made on a sturdy paper-like material, probably Korean paper *gaoli zhi* 高麗紙, rather than pliable woven silk. After the painting was completed, it was then trimmed and re-mounted, a process in keeping with the contemporary painting manufacturing techniques of the Qing. Moreover, considering its relatively large size, it seems reasonable to suggest that the painting should not be regarded as a portable hanging scroll, but rather as a picture mounted on a single wooden frame, a so-called *danping* 單屏 (*single-screen*), or, most probably, a painted panel *tieluo* 貼落 (*painted panel or wallpaper*) of the type that circulated widely among the wealthy outside the court as interior decoration.

Following its acquisition by the present owner in 1976, the painting began to attract scholarly attention, first in a text by Séguy (1976, p. 228–230). However, Séguy did not examine the artwork's iconography, comment upon its stylistic specificity or speculate on the issues of its authorship and date. She merely made the hypothesis that the “captured scene” probably represents the solemn Christian procession, which took place annually in the courtyard (“le grand patio”) of the Portuguese controlled church in Beijing, *Xuanwumen tianzhutang* 宣武門天主堂 (*The Hall of the Lord of Heaven near the Xuanwu gate*, later, *Nantang* 南堂 or South Church) during the 17th century.⁵ (Séguy, 1976, p. 230)

Nonetheless, following Séguy's text, mission historians accepted the painting as an authentic pictorial source of the Jesuits' earliest ecclesiastical building in Beijing, the Nantang. This hypothesis remained strong until 1993, when Golvers (1993, p. 12–13), annotator of Ferdinand Verbiest's (1623–1688) *Astronomia Europæa*, argued that the painting depicted the French North

4 Some scholars, namely Corsi (2010, p. 233), believe it is a watercolour.

5 “Ici, l'action se déroule comme dans un film: en tête du cortège, les confrères, bannières déployées, sont suivies des musiciens jouant du p'i-p'a ou de la flûte traversière; viennent ensuite les membres du clergé, cierges en main, précédant les thuriféraires, brandissant les encensoirs, et le dais sous lequel l'officiant porte l'ostensoir d'or. Tout autour, les fidèles sont prosternés en prière. Chaque détail est minutieusement exécuté; jusqu'à la présence inopinée d'une femme qu'un personnage semble prier de se retirer”. (Séguy 1976, p. 230) In any case, Séguy has linked the painting to a well-known religious institution, the “Hall of Lord of Heaven” (later: Nantang), the Baroque-style church built near the Xuanwu-gate 宣武門 by Johann Adam Schall von Bell, S. J. (Chinese name, 湯若望, 1591–1666), between 1650 and 1651. Until the 18th century Lisbon drawings of the Nantang were found (Wang, 2011, p. 1–10), it seems likely that Schall's church – as he himself claimed (Schall 1835, p. 355) – does indeed link to a remarkable atrium which is very similar to the one depicted in this painting.

Church, the Beitang 北堂 or *Jiushi tang* 救世堂 (*L'église du Saint Sauveur, The Church of the Holy Saviour*), and not the Nantang. Golvers based his argument on an observation that the inscription mounted on the pediment of the church façade, *chijian tianzhu tang* 敕建天主堂 (*The Hall of Lord of Heaven, built on Imperial Order*), clearly refers to the French Jesuit church that the Kangxi Emperor allowed to be built. This is possibly the most lucid and convincing statement made to date.⁶ (Rowbotham, 1966, p. 316, n. 3) Others now refer to the work as the “Beitang painting” as it appears in studies by Nanquin (2000, p. 35, n. 38), Guillén-Nuñez (2010, p. 106, n. 18) and Corsi (2010, p. 241–242, fig. 211). Golvers (2012, p. 4–7) made it the subject of a conference paper presented at the 11th International Verbiest Symposium in Leuven, Belgium, in 2012,

However, it should be noted that while Guillén-Nuñez and Corsi both engage passionately with the art historical and material aspects of Chinese mission history, neither of them express the slightest interest in exploring possible connections between the manner in which the ceremonial event is represented and the European modes of pictorial narration imported by the missionary artists. In other words, until now the painting has been considered more a pictorial source than an artwork. Against this background, it seems appropriate to re-examine the painting’s iconography, its genre and several other style-related issues from an art historical viewpoint, such as the type of perspective employed, its composition and spatial arrangement.

1.1 The Event’s “Prologue”

First, in order to adapt the subject to a rectangular form, evidently the painting’s narrative has been composed vertically, using a bird’s-eye view with a central axis. Its point of departure is an “event” consisting of numerous figures situated within a Chinese walled courtyard, the circumstantial setting. Second, interestingly the painter uses “linear perspective”, which makes distant objects look smaller and closer objects appear larger. Both factors are apparently essential in determining the reading sequence from bottom to top. In the painting’s foreground, where the prologue of the whole event takes place, one sees a traditional Chinese one-storied entrance hall with *yingshan ding* 硬山頂

⁶ Interestingly, however, Séguéy’s hypothesis was quoted again in 1998 by Rzepkowski (1998, p. 936, n.2) as evidence that the church was built by Adam Schall. In addition, Emily Byrne Curtis and Liu Qinghua (2012) both have reservations about Golvers’ attribution. (Golvers, 2012, p. 4, n. 6) The former’s doubts are based on the absence of a particular type of glass ware supposed to appear on the church’s west side, while the latter believes that the painting represents the Jesuit residence rather than the church itself.

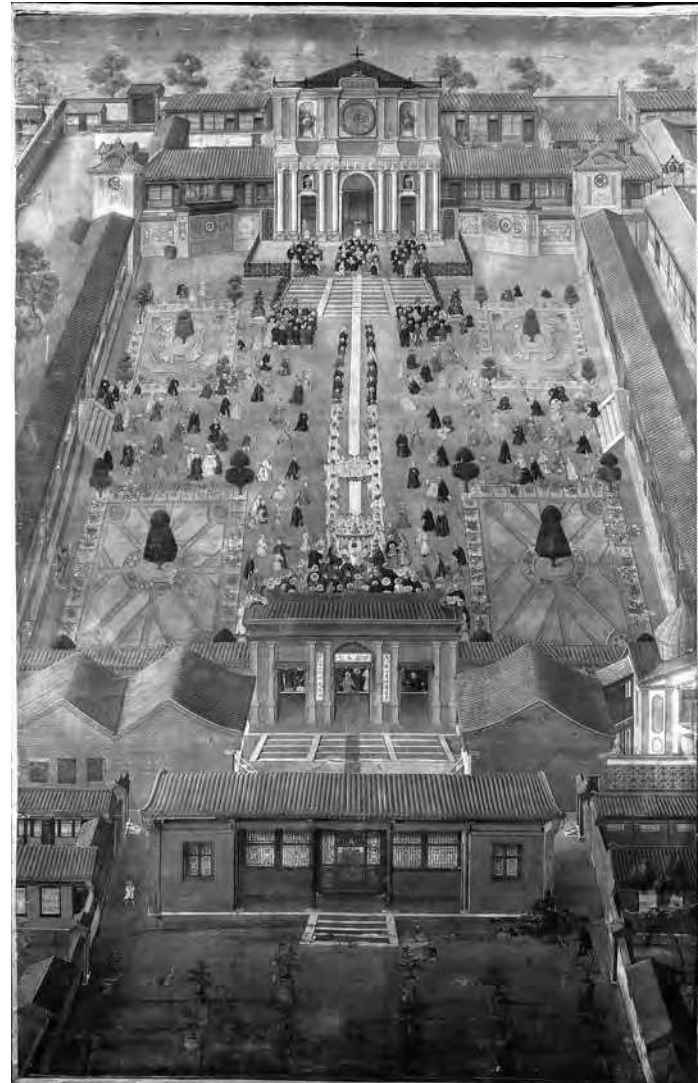


Fig. 1
The procession of the Feast of Sacred Heart in front of the Beitang church, anonymous Chinese painter(s), colour on Korean paper, 187.5 cm by 130 cm, after 1760s, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

(*yingshan*-roof) (Liang, 2006, p. 35, fig. 24; Guo, 2006, p. 95–96), from which a long and narrow carpet decorated with a pattern of figures stretches northward. In front of the hall, fourteen bonsai trees (some on pedestals) are placed either side of a paved path to decorate the outer courtyard.

It is worth noting the proportion between the bonsais and the figures among them. Three men wearing official caps, one with a child (the man on the left wears a “winter hat” or “cold hat” *dongmao* 冬帽 or *nuanmao* 暖帽, the others the “summer caps” *liangmao* 涼帽). (Nakagawa, 1799, fol. 9r) Notice how the figures are relatively small and out of proportion with the bonsais.⁷ Next to the carpet, the viewer’s attention is drawn to a Western-style three-door gate in the form of a triumphal arch. This arch is located at the *chuihua men* 垂花門 (*chuihua*-gate) of a traditional Chinese *siheyuan* 四合院 (*quadrangle*), and serves as the entrance to the main courtyard. (Liang, 2006, p. 23, fig. 8) To the fore of its right side, a wooden staircase connects to a central yet indefinable Western building with a remarkable cupola. Here, it is worth noting that the tympanum of the triumphal arch is decorated with a beautiful floral hoop and bears a horizontal scroll made on white paper (or silk) which reads (from right to left): 德教長存, literally, “Virtuous religion is eternal”. The scroll is flanked by a couplet, split between double pilasters, in eulogy of the virtues of the Lord of Heaven, the Chinese name for Jesus Christ. The verse, traced to the Nestorian Stele (vertical line 6) excavated in 1623 in Xi’an fu 西安府 (present day Xi’an 西安, Shaanxi province), states:

製八鏡之度煉塵成真 (*right*)

啟三常之門開生滅死 (*left*)

[*He, the Lord of Heaven*] fixed the extent of the eight principles, thus completing the truth and freeing it from dross (*right*); [*He, the Lord of Heaven*] opened the gate of the three constant principles, introducing life and destroying death.

(Horne, 1917, p. 381–392; Xu, 2004, pp. 132–134, n. 51–57)

Remarkably, the unusual white colour of the banderoles, the special choice of the words *changcun* 長存 and the inscriptions which were originally used to praise the virtues of the Lord of Heaven, all add to the probability that these are elegiac elements commonly used in funeral ceremonies. Could it be, as the

⁷ Another figure, clothed in white and viewed from behind is seen in the alley on the left side of the entrance hall. He appears to be even smaller than other figures in the main courtyard. But according to the principles of linear perspective, these figures should be smaller than him. In my view, the painter(s) lacked skill in perspective drawing.

couplet suggests, that the event taking place behind the triumphal arch is a magnificent “funeral” for the Lord of Heaven?

1.2 Courtyard, Buildings and the “Circumstantial Setting”

As mentioned above, the event is taking place within a courtyard walled by a roofed corridor or veranda. The courtyard complex is divided into four rectangular parterre sections. The parterres are planted with exotic flora and trees, creating a unique combination of Chinese architecture and European garden design. The courtyard is surrounded by several trees – one to the left outside the courtyard, seven at the top – which add a naturalistic backdrop.

Each parterre is arranged in a geometric pattern, with different shaped topiaries. A larger tree trimmed horizontally into two parts – upper in the shape of a cone with slightly rounded corners, lower shaped with four trapezoid lateral sides – and approximately twice the height of surrounding plants stands at the centre, while the parterre’s corners have smaller shaped trees to maintain a visual balance. The four parterres have the same layout but with different patterns.

To the side of the courtyard, entrances open two corridors with precious Persian-style carpets that run Northward with a prominent Western bell-tower covered by a traditional Chinese roof, the one to the left with a Western clock indicating local time, which is either 07:10 or 08:10 the one to the right shows the same time but with a mistake, the Roman number XII is missing.⁸

Looking through two symmetric screen walls at the end of the courtyard, one realises that the church stands among auxiliary buildings. Rising over a grand staircase decorated with remarkable black railings, the façade is divided horizontally into two stories by an entablature decorated with triglyph-like tablets. On the lower floor, the main entrance takes the form of an arcade, and two lateral gates flanked by massive Doric double columns indicate a three-nave church interior. In niches over the lateral gates, one finds two vases decorated with blooming flowers. On the upper floor, between slim double pilasters, a huge monogram “IHS” is illuminated by a beam of light and flanked by two three-footed vessels, in lateral niches, which are larger than the vases on the lower floor. Above this, a pediment with a Latin cross bears an inscription that reads from right to left:

敕建天主堂

⁸ In my view, this indicates that the painter was not entirely familiar with Roman numerals, indirectly suggesting that the artist was Chinese.

Literally, it means “The Hall of the Lord of Heaven, built on Imperial Order” or, according to Jean de Fontaney “Coeli Domini Templum mandato Imperatoris eectum” (LEC, vol. 17, p. 5–8; Golvers, 2012, p. 5, n. 7)

In summary, the courtyard and the surrounding church complex, which serves as the circumstantial setting for the whole event, is a modified architectural form, combining the spatial arrangement of a Chinese residential building *siheyuan* and a type of religious building complex *langyuan* 廊院 (*courtyard walled by a roofed corridor*). Through the triumphal arch that functions as a *chuihua*-gate, the courtyard is divided into two parts, outer and inner. In addition, certain parts of the side chambers, which are traditionally located at the sides of the courtyard, are replaced by verandas serving as pathways to the adjoining buildings. Similarly, the place of the main hall is occupied by the church building.

1.3 Figures, Costumes and A “Sacred Event”: A Sacrificial Ceremony Dedicated to the Lord of Heaven?

The painting’s spatial arrangement focuses the narration of the event on two supposedly concurrent “episodes”. The first, which occurs behind the entrance, involves a “protagonist” under a Western-style baldachin escorted by groups of musicians and servants, around which a crowd has gathered. The second consists of the five groups of Qing officials wearing Mandarin robes and caps situated in front of the church façade. Both “episodes” are seen from behind and are connected by a white carpet indicating the route of the procession. The scene captures the moment when the former group enters the courtyard and walks toward its destination, while the latter group is apparently unaware of its presence.

In the first “episode”, there are several points to consider. The “protagonist” wearing a white costume with a hat-like object on his back, walks northward, accompanied by a crowd of officials and strange visitors wearing wide-brimmed hats. Numerous people come from both sides, some of whom kneel humbly in the manner of *zuoyi* 作揖 to pay respect to the “protagonist” who stands under a huge baldachin. On the right side of the musicians’ parade, many kneeling figures hold rosaries with tiny Latin crosses. The baldachin, carried by two “servants” in white trappings and summer caps, is hexagonal with a scalloped and tasselled border, tinkle bells and a gilded finial in the middle.

Around the “protagonist” one sees a number of senior officials holding slender, flaming torches in their hands. Behind them one sees a foreign visitor, marked by the fact that he does not wear his hair in the braided queue-style of the Qing and has a very unusual hat (probably a European style), from which hang red

and green ribbons. On the left side, a figure chats with what appears to be a giant. The latter is considerably out of proportion with the rest of the group. On the right side of the baldachin, a figure holding a bamboo walking stick (Standaert, 2008, fig. 1.1, 2.6) wears a kind of *huoji* 活計, a special hanging ornament worn at Chinese funeral or sacrificial ceremonies.

A number of other unusual details reveal information. For instance, hanging at the waists of some of the visitors one sees pieces of white or cyan “towel” *biaojuan* 表絹 and black ribbons in the style of *liangdai* 涼帶 and two figures, one to the left of the baldachin, the other standing behind an “official” using an open fan, both hold bamboo cases used for storing the hand-held fans *shantao* 扇套. Here, only a few of the Mandarin robes worn by officials bear embroidered squares that indicate their rank. (Nakagawa, 1799, fol. 1v–3r) Interestingly, the robes are an unusual nut-brown colour, not the dark blue used during the Qianlong period. (Nakagawa, 1799, fol. 1r)

In front of the baldachin, stand two orderly rows of figures on top of the white carpet. Their uniforms indicate two groups: “accompanying staff”, in white robes, and “official-participants”. From bottom to top, the former group consists of six figures, three on each side wearing warrior’s bows eight more swinging incense burners and facing the “protagonist” – four in front of the baldachin, four standing behind at a distance –, sixteen musicians play traditional Chinese instruments,⁹ two holding dishes and two carrying wooden Latin crosses. It is worth noting that, their summer caps suggest they are officials, or Manchu people. Following them are two continuous rows of officials holding flaming torches, extending to the church’s staircase. Surrounding them are five separate crowds of people: three crowds on the staircase and two in front of church’s façade, each of which consists of numerous officials and visitors, each standing in front of an “ancestral tablet”. All the tablets are flanked by torches. The tablet in the middle, situated in front of the main entrance, is considerably larger than the others.

In short, apart from the “protagonist”, children and women, the figures in the painting can be divided into three groups based on the style of their hats and caps: Qing officials with summer caps but without finial decoration and peacock feathers (Nakagawa, 1799, fol. 5v–6r; Garrett, 2007, p. 73),¹⁰ visitors in wide-brimmed, Ming-style hats (Ye, 1991, p. 134) or Korean *gats* and those wearing European hats. It is worth noting, that as well as its distinct flower-shaped motif

⁹ From bottom to top, the instruments are the: *dizi* 笛子, *fangsheng* 方笙, *xiao* –, *pipa* 琵琶, *sihu* 四胡, *erhu* 二胡, *bangzi* 梆子 and *yunluo* 云锣. (Liu, 1992, p. 87, 114, 122, 156–157, 216–219, 236–237, 244)

¹⁰ Except for one person in the outer courtyard seen in a winter hat.

on top, the wide-brimmed hat also has a hemispherical crown, which clearly distinguishes it from the Korean *gat*. (Lee et al., 2007, p. 24–28)

Furthermore, based on colour and style, one can identify four main types of costume. There are “staff” with their white sacrificial robes, officials in Mandarin robes with *buzi* embroidery but without formal “cloud” shawls or court necklaces usually worn on such occasions (Garrett, 2007, p. 73 “yunjian”, 120 “chaozhu”), officials in earth yellow surcoats (Nakagawa, 1799, fol. 11r), and visitors in white, pale yellow or cyan coats. Here, the variety of official robes and their assorted colours, begs the question of whether the scene shown occurred before to the 1759 Qing edicts on rituals and robes.¹¹ (Garrett, 2007, p. 16) A vivid example of unregulated “dress code” is found in the *Kangxi nanxun tu juan* 康熙南巡图卷 (*Emperor Kangxi Going on an Inspection Tour to the South*) (Fig. 2) by court painter Wang Hui 王翬 (1632–1717) and his assistants. I will expand on this idea towards the end of this paper by looking at the work of contemporary and later painters.

Taking all the above into consideration, one may conclude that the painting depicts an informal occasion, at least for the officials concerned. The inscribed couplets taken from the Nestorian Stele, the varied costume types, the colour of clothing¹² and the special use of personal objects (the bamboo stick, black or white ribbons and rosary), suggest that the image is of a procession held during the summer, commemorating the death of someone connected to Christianity, and as the couplets reveal, most probably the Lord of Heaven. Therefore, one might assume the “protagonist” to be a priest conducting the ceremony.

However, it seems highly unlikely that a Christian ritual, such as the sacrificial ceremony depicted, would include women, children and European visitors as well as Manchu officials and court musicians. If the musicians were not court staff as I propose, and there is virtually no link between the depicted ritual and the royal family, who could they be? If they were servants sent by the officials, why do they then wear official caps? In my view, this is one of the most controversial issues posed by the painting. In addition, if the painting is considered to be 18th century, its content provides some striking evidence to contradict the prohibition of officials and women entering churches dating to a proscription edict issued by the Kangxi Emperor in 1707, and following his death further intensified by his son, Yongzheng, in 1724. (Yu, 2006, p. 310, n. 1)

¹¹ Cf. also part 3.

¹² Except for the two children dressed in red, most of figures are in white, black, cyan, dark brown and light brown.

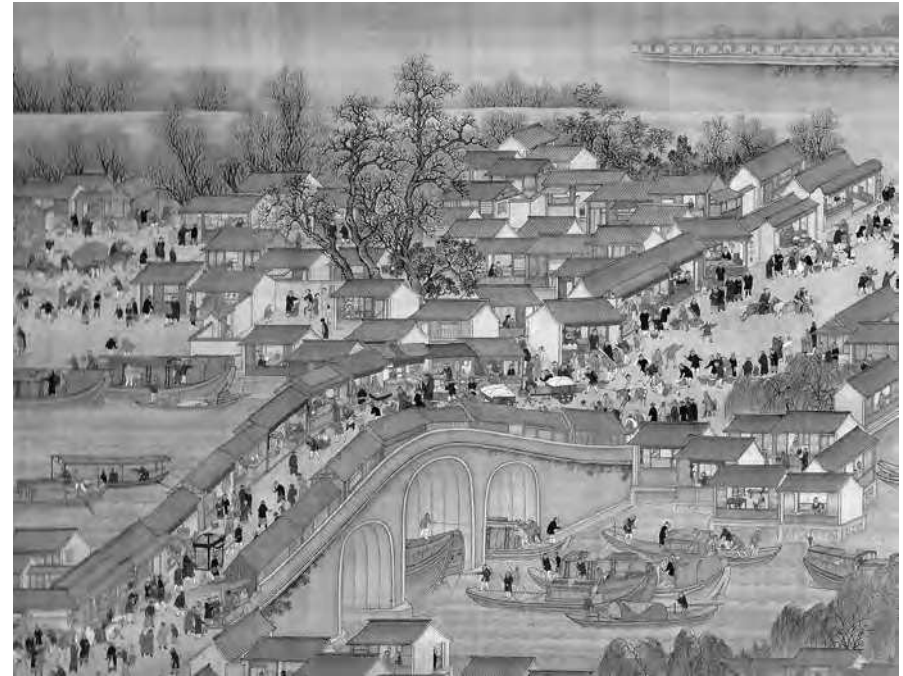


Fig. 2
Kangxi nanxun tu 康熙南巡图卷
[Emperor Kangxi Going on an
Inspection Tour to the South],
no. 11, Wang Hui 王翬 (1632-
1717) and others, handscroll,
colour on silk, 67.8 by 2227.5
cm, Palace Museum Beijing.

2. Questioning the Authenticity of The Painting's Content

2.1 The Beitang (1699–1887), its Textual and Pictorial Sources

As for an examination of the painting's "circumstantial settings", until now, Golvers is probably the only scholar to note distinctive features that deserve special attention. Added to the inscriptions on the church's pediment, which closely match contemporary accounts of the Beitang (LEC, vol. 17, pp. 5–8), he provides a new and thoughtful study based on further evidence. For instance, the iron railings used to decorate the staircase seem highly plausible when we consider the similarities between the balustrades found at the Beitang ruins as "testified" by Brother J. Guillon (?) S.J., in 1863, and those in the painting.¹³ (Golvers 2012, p. 7)

Furthermore, this element might be regarded as an indisputable fact when we compare Guillon's description with another "contemporary" or slightly earlier pictorial source. The ground plan of the Beitang during Kangxi's reign, made by P. Moreau (?) S.J., shows the railings were donated by Louis XIV ("Grille donnée par LOUIS XIV").¹⁴ (Dehergne 1973, fig. "Ancien Pét'ang au temps de K'ang-hi") They also appear to match the account of J. Jartoux (1669–1720), a Jesuit father in Beijing at that time, who also corroborates details about the precise size of the church and the courtyard.¹⁵

However, if Jartoux's account is reliable, the church is considerably larger than the courtyard, which measures only 40 *pieds* wide and 50 *pieds* long. Thus, the authenticity of the painted scene meets severe challenges. Here, matters might be clarified by a brief history of the Beitang, which apart from the Portuguese controlled Nantang and Dongtang 東堂 (*East Church*), was the most extensive Jesuit complex in Beijing.

13 Bulletin Catholique de Pékin (BCP) 1945, N° 380, p. 180 (Golvers, 2012, p. 7, n. 15): "Balustrades... contourné en forme de dessins qui rappellent les balcons des maisons bâties en Europe à cette époque. Au pied d'escalier les rampes viennent s'appuyer contre deux pilastres ouvragés de la même manière, mais plus riches et surmontés de grosses boules en cuivre".

14 The same plan is also published in De Rochementeix (1915, p. 49, n. 1) and Curtis (2001, fig. 1).

15 BCP 1945, N° 379, p. 123–124: "On entre d'abord dans une avant-cour, large de quarante piéds sur cinquante de long: elle est entre deux corps de logis bien proportionnez; ce sont deux grandes salles à la Chinoise. L'une sert aux Congrégations et aux Instructions des Catéchumènes: l'autre sert à recevoir les visites. On a exposé dans celle-ci les portraits du Roi et des Princes, du Roi d'Espagne, etc"; and also (Pfister, 1932–1934, p. 447; BCP 1945, N° 379, p. 124): "C'est au bout de cette cour qu'est bâtie l'Eglise: elle a soixante-quinze piéds de longueur, trente-trois de largeur, et trente de hauteur (...) L'ordre supérieur est percé de douze grandes fenêtres en forme d'arc, six de chaque côté, qui éclairent parfaitement l'Eglise".

It is well-known that the Beitang, later known as "L'église du Saint Sauveur" or *Shoushan tang* 首善堂, was built between 1699 and 1703 on the west bank of Lake Canchikou 螻池口 inside the Xi'an gate 西安門 of the Imperial City.¹⁶ It was a privileged site given by the Kangxi Emperor as a token of gratitude to French Jesuits, Jean de Fontaney S.J. (洪若翰, 1643–1710) and Claude de Visdelou S.J. (劉應, 1656–1737), whose medical expertise had cured his illness. (Pfister, 1932–1934, p. 446–449; BCP, 1945, N° 379, p. 118; Corsi 1999, p. 106) After its consecration on 9 December 1703, the church was equipped with an astronomical observatory and a library which was situated on its chancel side, as is seen on Moreau's ground plan. On the church's west side there was an imperial glass workshop for *verrerie*s that had been established in 1696. (Curtis, 2001, p. 82) Before the Lazarists took over the church in 1785 and following several natural disasters, the Beitang seems to have received some remarkable and clearly visible, architectural modifications as did the other Jesuit churches in Beijing.¹⁷ In 1887, as the imperial house extended the boundaries of the palace compound, the Guangxu Emperor (光緒, r. 1875–1908) requested that the new Beitang, constructed in 1864, be moved to Xishiku 西什庫 street, its present location. (Corsi, 2010, p. 241; Curtis, 2001, p. 87, fig. 7)

However, despite the striking similarities between Moreau's diagram, produced during Kangxi's reign, and the contemporary Jesuit accounts, I remain unconvinced that the Paris painting represents the Beitang. Not just because the famous glasswork, made by Kiliam Stumpf S.J. (紀理安 1665–1720), is missing on its west side, but also, in my view, due to the absence of architectural elements such as the French style garden, the lateral bell towers and the strange chapel-like building next to the triumphal arch. Furthermore, we have to face the fact that none of these elements were mentioned by Jesuits before the 1740s.

Fortunately, additional pictorial sources have been recently discovered in the "Yudin Collection" (Krasnoyarsk in Eastern Siberia),¹⁸ now at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C., which support these unexpected contradictions. According to my observations, and because of their substantial inconsistencies with the 19th century "gothic corpus", both drawings represent, without doubt,

16 It has been claimed that the church inside the Beitang was designed by the French artist Charles de Belleville (衛嘉祿, 1657–1730) and ingeniously decorated with frescoes using striking perspective by Giovanni Gherardini (年修士, 1655–1723?). (Pfister, 1932–1934, p. 537, 586) Before returning to Europe, de Belleville and Gherardini also trained the first generation of Chinese painters in techniques of oil painting and perspective drawing. (Mungello, 1999, p. 47)

17 Both the Nantang and Dongtang were badly damaged by earthquakes in 1720 and 1730 respectively.

18 On the history of this collection, see Dash (2008, p. 92–114).

the Beitang prior to its demolition in 1887. The first, drawn with a skilful use of perspective¹⁹, indicates that the exterior of church's chancel is directly connected to an annex building ("Tour d'Astronomie et Bibliothèque") as on the ground plan. But the distinctive French-style garden either has been "purposefully" disregarded by the author or is simply non-existent. Moreover, the garden including two laterals bell towers and four shaped parterres which, except for the absence of the chapel-like building, closely match the Paris painting (except the absence of the chapel-like building), becomes the subject of the second drawing, executed in an undeveloped manner.²⁰

Thus, the dissimilarities between the two drawings enable us to identify with certainty that they were indeed made in two different periods. The former during Kangxi's reign, the latter probably after the church's enlargement in the 1740s, when the French garden was added, designed by Jean-Denis Attiret S.J. (王致誠, 1702–1768) or Michel Benoist S.J. (蔣友仁, 1715–1774) (Mungello, 1999, p. 49); Both were involved in a number of imperial art and architectural projects. This further explains why the Paris painting fails to follow Moreau's ground plan, but does correspond with another ground plan in *Qianlong's Complete Maps of Beijing* (*Qianlong jingcheng quantu* 乾隆京城全圖) from the 1750.²¹

According to the evidence of the Yudin drawings and the "predications" on the Qianlong map of old Beijing, it is reasonable to suggest that the Paris painting depicts a sacrificial ritual related to the death of Jesus Christ which took place within the Beitang courtyard during the summer, most probably after the 1740s.

2.2 Pierre-Martial Cibot S.J. and His Account of the Feast of Sacred Heart

Having established a link between the ritual, the summer season and the Beitang, based on the figures' costumes, a question arises about which particular feast day might have been celebrated during or after the fourth decade of the 18th century. Contemporary written sources suggest that a famous account of the Feast of Sacred Heart requires examination.²² An account rich in detail in relation to

19 Call number DEWG 1 – Russian, No. 323, 24.6 by 31.3 cm, 19th century, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C..

20 Call number DEWG 1 – Russian, No. 140, 23.4 by 29 cm, 19th century, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C.

21 Tokyo: Digital Silk Road Project Digital, Archive of Toyo Bunko Rare Books, vol. 7, p. 9 [online]: http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/cgi-bin/toyobunko/show_page.pl?lang=en&book=II-11-D-802/V-7&page=0009&keyword=%E5%A4%A9%E4%B8%BB%E5%A0%82 [Accessed 15 January 2013].

22 On the history of the feast, see LTK (Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche), p. 52–58.

the Paris painting, but also on the specificity of the feast itself, which was, as a privilege, held exclusively at the Beitang. (Pfister 1932–1934, p. 891)

The account containing this valuable information is included in a letter by Pierre-Martial Cibot S.J. (韓國英, 1727–1780), a French missionary who worked at the Beitang and led the Congregation of Saint Sacrament *shengti xiuhui* 聖體修會 in the 1770s. (Pfister, 1932, p. 891) According to Bornet (BCP, 1945, N° 379, p. 128–132), the letter was written in Beijing, probably on 11 June 1772.²³ It has two parts: first, a description of the preparations made for the feast including its physical setting, that is, its venue and the decorations, and second, an eyewitness account of the ritual itself, in particular its final *Grand-Messe*, the day's main event. In the letter's first paragraph, Cibot clearly indicates that the Feast of Sacred Heart started several years ago in Beijing,²⁴ and although he offers no precise date, it might be supposed to be five to ten years earlier. (LEC, vol. 30, p. 95)

Another insight into the feast's history is offered by François Bourgeois S.J. (晁俊秀, 1723–1792), a French Jesuit missionary who arrived in Beijing in 1767, almost a decade after his confrere Cibot.²⁵ Just ten months after his arrival, Bourgeois writes that he conducted the Feast of Sacred (Heart) LEC, vol. 24, p. 607), so evidently Catholics were celebrating the feast in 1768.²⁶ However, the feast's origins in Beijing are even earlier.

According to *Gongjing shengxin guicheng* 恭敬耶穌聖心規程 (*Regulations on the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*)²⁷, written by Father Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla S.J. (馮秉正, 1669–1748) in 1744, a devotional ceremony *Qingzong dianli* 欽宗禮典 dedicated to the Sacred Heart already existed in Beijing. (Pfister, 1932–1934, p. 600) About its origin, date and practices, he explains:

天主耶穌，仁愛大恩，我等感謝不遑。故聖名，聖十字架，聖五傷等，靡不起敬起畏，最重要者，莫如耶穌聖體，此教中所共知共行也，然聖體之死於十字架，聖體之五傷，長留聖體，之特恩皆從聖心所發，應舉行欽宗禮典，以展其誠……每年聖體瞻禮第九日，為恭敬聖心瞻禮……耶穌念珠，三十三子……恭敬聖心者，手捧念珠，十字架，將向念珠十字架誦
(De Mailla, 1744, fl. 1v–3r)

23 Before Bornet presented the letter to the scholarly public, a copy was included in the widely circulated *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* (LEC) (vol. 30, pp. 94–114) in 1773. To whom the letter was addressed is still unknown.

24 LEC, vol.30, p. 95: "(...) est établie à Peking [Beijing] depuis plusieurs années".

25 Cibot arrived in Beijing in 1758.

26 LEC, vol. 24, p. 607: "J'ai prêché la fête du Sacré Coeur, dix mois après mon arrive".

27 The book (with a second part on the Sacred Heart of Virgin Mary) is held in the collection of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Chinois 7442.

Jesus, the Lord of Heaven, we are all grateful for your kindness and supreme grace without any impieties. Therefore, we shall all be in awe of [Jesus'] holy name, the holy cross and the holy five wounds. But, the most important thing is nothing more than that of the corpus of Christi – it is a fact which is also well-known within the church. However, the holy body lay dying on the cross; the five holy wounds remained on body. [This is] a specific grace which originated all from the Sacred Heart. That is also the reason why we held the devotional ceremony in order to show our sincerity (...) every year, the ninth day after the Feast of Corpus Christi is the Feast of Sacred Heart... The rosary of Jesus consists of thirty three beads (...) the one who devoted to the Sacred Heart should hold rosary, cross and chant scriptures to them.

It is worth noting that as well as the rosary and the cross, de Mailla also mentions the five holy wounds and their close connection with the Sacred Heart. This reminds us of the five “ancestral tablets” in the Paris painting. Likewise, the unusual connection between the Sacred Heart and the devotion of “Corpus Christi” also deserves our attention. Apparently, a congregation dedicated to the Holy Sacrament *Shengti xiuhui* had been established in the first decade of the 18th century, during Joachim Bouvet’s S.J. (白晋, 1656–1730) stay in Beijing. (Pfister, 1932–1934, p. 436, 439)

In 1719, de Mailla composed the first manual for the congregation, *Shengti ren’ajing guitiao* 聖體仁愛經規條 (*Exercises and Regulations on the Congregation of Saint Sacrament*).²⁸ (Pfister, 1932–1934, p. 599) Regards this unexpected connection, Cibot, who was responsible for the Beitang’s *Shengti hui*, noted in the aforementioned letter of 1772 that: “La Congrégation du sacré Cœur, qui est unie avec celle du Saint-Sacrement, est à la tête de toutes les autres”. (LEC, vol. 30, p. 98) According the missionary, the feast he witnessed took place in the chapel dedicated to the Holy Sacrament *Shengti xiuhui* located in front of the parterre-garden to the right. The most striking feature here is that the garden was also surrounded by a roofed veranda and situated in front of a church which matches exactly the “architectural setting” seen in the Paris painting. Furthermore, Cibot claimed that the style of the courtyard was the same as the Jesuit College, Le collège royal Henri-le-Grand (1604–1762, present day Le Prytanée National Militaire) in La Flèche (Sarthe) where he had been educated.²⁹

²⁸ Book held in the collection of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Chinois 7293.

²⁹ *Jardin de l’ancien collège royal des jésuites (...)*, engraving, 30 by 40 cm, Franz Ertinger (1660–1706), Bibliothèque du Prytanée National Militaire; [online] <http://bibliotheque-du-prytanee.fr/galleries/varia/jardin-de-l-ancien-college-royal-des-jesuites/tableau-restaure/gravure-xviii-reduite.jpg.php#> [accessed 15 January 2013].

This further illustrates the astonishing correspondence between the Beitang’s garden and its French inspiration. Cibot also mentions an entry gate, or in his words “portico”, with three doors – probably a triumphal arch –, that faced the church’s façade.³⁰ Although there is no mention of a “canvas tent” (“tente de toile”)³¹ he refers to the staircase from which the church façade arises, the sumptuous carpets, the famous railings bestowed by Louis XIV and gives a detailed description of the proceedings of the last “Grand-Messe”.³²

Despite some minor discrepancies such as the absence of the grand “canvas

³⁰ LEC, vol.30, p. 95–96: “Le lieu où elle se célèbre est la Chapelle de la Congrégation du Saint-Sacrement; cette Chapelle est à droite de l’avant – cour du parterre environné d’une galerie couverte qui est devant notre Eglise; la grande cour est à peu près comme celle des Pensionnaires de la Fleche; on en sort par un portique qui fait face du frontispice de l’Eglise: elle a trois grandes portes sur l’avant-cour où est la Congrégation”.

³¹ LEC, vol. 30, p. 96–98: “(...), on l’allonge de toute la cour par le moyen d’une grande tente de toile, au milieu de laquelle est un arc de triomphe de vingt ou vingt-quatre pieds; cet arc de triomphe est couvert de pièces de foie de différentes couleurs, entrelassées en différentes manières, & suspendues en forme de guirlandes & de festons (...) Nos Lettrés Chrétiens n’ont pas manqué d’y fermer des inscriptions à la louange du sacré Cœur de Jésus; comme elles sont écrites sur de longues pièces de satin blanc, & enfermées dans des cadres dorés, ou des bordures de soie de diverses couleurs, elles n’ajoutent pas peu à l’éclat & à la magnificence des décorations. Vous aimeriez l’amphithéâtre où se placent les Musiciens; il s’avance dans la cour de plusieurs pieds hors de la galerie du corps-de-logis qui lui sert de fond, & relève fort agréablement le frontispice de la Chapelle par sa petite balustrade de soie, son tapis, ses vases à fleurs, & les pièces de satin dont il est orné. Tout le pavé de la cour est couvert de nattes fines, de toiles peintes, & de tapis rares & précieux, sur lesquels on met de petits carreaux qui sont les seules chaises des Eglises Chinoises”.

³² LEC, vol. 30, p. 107–111: “(...) après les prières vient le Sermon, puis la troisième Grand-Messe (...) cette dernière Grand-Messe dure une heure & demie, & finit par la bénédiction du Saint-Sacrement, qui est précédée d’une amende honorable, pendant la quelle il y a bien des larmes répandues. On porte ensuite le Très-Saint-Sacrement en Procession, & voici l’ordre qu’on observe dans la marche (...) après la Croix sont quatre petits chantres en longues robes de soie violette, & en bonnet de cérémonie; suit la partie des Musiciens sont en habits séculiers, vient ensuite la Congrégation du sacré Cœur de Jésus, avec les Musiciens en surplis, & quatre petits chantres de soie de diverses couleurs, des rubans & des crépines d’or. Immédiatement après sont deux portes-encensoirs, deux portes – navettes & deux enfans en aube & en rubans de soie: ceux-ci portent des corbeilles de fleurs & en sement sans discontinuer devant le Saint – Sacrement; les turiféraires & les fleuristes se succèdent & se relèvent tout à tour encenser ou jeter des fleurs, & ce changement se fait avec un ordre qui ne varie jamais; le maître des cérémonies suit en surplis, & il ne fait que présider; deux des principaux Membres de la Confrérie tiennent les cordons du Dais sous lequel est le Tr. S. Sacrement; le Prêtre qui le porte, revêtu des habits sacerdotaux, est environné de ses Acolytes & suivi des Missionnaires qui portent chacun un cierge à la main: J’ai oublié de vous dire que depuis le portique qui sépare l’avant-cour de l’Eglise, il y a des enfans de chaque côté du chemin, tenant à hauteur d’appui, de longues pièces de soie de diverses couleurs; les deux chœurs de musique chantent sans interruption & sans confusion, & leurs reprises sont le signal des évolutions des fleuristes & des turiféraires... Quand la Croix entre dans l’Eglise, les tambours & les autres instruments se sont entendre, & continuent jusqu’à ce que le Très-Saint-Sacrement soit sur l’Autel; ce troisième corps de musiciens se trouve au jubé qui est dans le fond de l’Eglise. Le Saint-Sacrement passe au milieu des Congréganistes qui sont à genoux un cierge à la main, le reste des Néophytes est derrière eux, & remplit l’Eglise; tous ceux qui sont en surplis, & il y en a plus de cinquante, vont se ranger au sanctuaire dans un fort bel ordre”.

tent”³³, the colourful costumes and the appearance of children, it is reasonable to suggest that the painting depicts the final procession of the Feast of Sacred Heart, maybe not exactly the one Cibot witnessed, but something very similar held at the Beitang during the summer sometime between the 1745 and 1760s. It captures precisely the moment after the third grand mass when the Corpus Christi, escorted by a priest and his acolytes, was carried towards the church. The astonishing correspondence between Cibot’s description and the scene depicted in the Paris painting, is also supported by further evidence.

First, there is the material information contained in the painting: the elegiac banderols with Chinese inscriptions praising the virtues and merits of Jesus before his death – that is, before the crucifixion – which also match the atmosphere of the Feast of Sacred Heart; the colour of the participants’ costumes and the appearance of the objects used in Chinese sacrificial ritual; the fact that it is summer as suggested by the participants’ clothes; the procession with flaming torches and the time as seen on the bell tower clock. The time is almost identical to that in Cibot’s account: “(...) qu’on en chantoit une seconde vers les six heures (...) cette dernière Grand Messe dure une heure & demie, & finit par la bénédiction du Saint-Sacrement (...)” (LEC, vol. 30, p. 107–108), which suggests the procession was held in the morning around 07:10 or 08:10.

Second, there is the patriotism of the French Jesuits. The fact that the Feast of Sacred Heart was held exclusively at the French Beitang explains why Cibot sent such a letter to his European colleagues and, more importantly, why it was chosen as the theme of the Paris painting. Its artistic and stylistic aspect support the belief that the painting dates from between 1745 and the 1760s and, by examining other contemporary works, below I will elaborate on these traits in detail.

3. The Visual Perspective of an Etic Viewer and its Relationship to Court Paintings

Over the past few decades a new approach in cultural anthropology has emerged whereby events are evaluated and differentiated according to the perception of an *etic* (outsider’s) observations and *emic* (insider’s) performances, since the latter’s view of events might not always have been reliably recorded. Significantly, the *etic* approach helps to prevent researchers seeing only one aspect of a single culture and simply applying it to another. Using this approach with reference

³³ In my opinion, the canvas tent’s absence in the painting is explained by the choice of scene. Most probably, the tent had already been removed before the procession of the Holy Sacrament entered the courtyard.

to the case at hand, I question how a certain event, originating from a European culture and tradition, has been visually translated and re-constructed through the eyes of an *etic* observer. That is, on the one hand, how did an 18th century Chinese painter appropriate European visual vocabularies in the depiction of a Christian sacrificial ritual, and on the other hand, in which ways did the painter combine both European and Chinese perspectives – not only painting techniques – for his own use?

Among this painting’s many distinctive features, our attention is first drawn to the unusual manner in which its vertical format is combined with a symmetrical composition. Although this is not unprecedented in early Chinese visual art, the combination seems only to be employed in the figurative stone carving of Buddhist steles and seldom used in conventional pictorial work. A rare example of the latter is offered by the Ming master Zhu Bang 朱邦 (?) of Zhe school *zhepai* 浙派 in an untitled portrait of an official in front of the Forbidden City (Fig. 3).³⁴

However, what might be considered most innovative in the case of the Paris painting is that the artist used neither the traditional spatial treatment, that is the parallel perspective, typical of Zhu’s work, nor the central perspective introduced by European missionaries. The painting offers a bird’s-eye view, which, using a vanishing point outside the scene, is categorically distinguished from the mode of projection associated with *Xianfa hua* 線法畫, a perspectival painting style based on the line method. It is probable, that the perspective employed in this painting is more closely related to Chinese court works executed during the reign of Qianlong than European-style painting of the early Qing, like the famous screen painting, *Tongying shiniu tu pingfeng* 桐蔭仕女圖屏風 (*Beauties in Phoenix Tree Shade*) circa 1700, which was produced employing precise central perspective with a vanishing point located within the scene. (Nie, 1996, p. 245–252; Nie, 1999, p. 69–71, fig. 8)

In fact, paintings in a purely European style, like *Beauties in Phoenix Tree Shade*, were not greatly appreciated among court painters, who instead preferred the hybrid form. The hanging scroll *Jingshi shengchun shiyi tuzhou* 京師生春詩意圖軸 (*A Scene Described in Emperor Qianlong’s Poem*)³⁵ dated 1767, is a vivid example that combines features of *jiehua* 界畫 (architectural drawing with the aid of a ruler *jie*) and European perspective painting. (Nie, 1990, p. 242, fig. 65) It was executed by Xu Yang 徐揚 (1712– c. 1777), who was deeply influenced by his European colleagues at the court. In my view, this work’s unclear use of

³⁴ For more on this painting, see Whitfield (1972, p. 285–294).

³⁵ Like the “Paris Painting”, this painting is a painted panel *tieluo*.

perspective is more a matter of personal taste rather than the painter's ability; that Xu purposefully chose a bird's-eye view combining multiple perspectives (instead of a central focal point) to demonstrate the imposing size of the capital city implies a rejection of totally Europeanized taste.

Compared with Xu, the artist – or eventually the artists – of the Paris painting appears to be even more concerned about creating a sense of depth, one of the highest goals of Chinese landscape painting. (Zou, 2011, p. 76) To this end, he rejected the use of central perspective as employed in a later screen painting, *Qianlong wanfa guiyi tu* 乾隆萬法歸一圖 (*Qianlong's Painting of Ten Thousand Dharmas Return as One*) (Fig. 4), dated 1772 or later by the court painter Ignaz Sichelbarth S.J. (艾啟蒙, 1708–1780), with the help of his Chinese colleague Yao Wenhan 姚文翰 (active 1743–1761 or later) and other Tibetan-Buddhist painters.

This narrative painting is especially significant not only because it is the only court work composed vertically using bird's-eye view perspective with a condensed spatial projection, but also because, compared to the Paris painting, it proposes an entirely different spatial solution. The scene depicting the imperial banquet for Torghut-leader Ubashi Khan (1742–1775) on his return to Qing territory is horizontally divided in two: the event at the Potala palace (Chengde 承德, Hebei province 河北省) in the foreground and landscape in the background.

According to Wang Jiapeng 王家鵬 the painting's composition integrates both architectural techniques of *jiehua* and European perspective painting. (Yang, 2011, p. 106) The pyramidal composition directs our attention to the pavilion, the Hall of *Ten Thousand Dharmas Returns as One* in the middle of the scene. Also located there, is the Buddhist altar, placed exactly at the vanishing point, and the scene's most important figures, namely the Qianlong Emperor on the right and Ubashi Khan on the left. In front of the pavilion, one finds the main entrance in the form of a pyramid, crammed with Tibetan-Buddhist Lamas. At its centre, the two key figures conduct the ceremony: the third Jebtsundamba of Uрга Ishi-damba-nima (1738–1773) on the left, and the guru of Qianlong, Rolpa Dorje (1717–1786), on the right. Thus, those who conduct the ritual are intentionally placed at the painting's focal point.

In contrast to Sichelbarth's screen painting with its fixed focal point, our painter purposefully enlarged the near square courtyard adapting it to the painting's format in the form a vertical rectangle in a manner very similar to a widely circulated woodcut from Giulio Aleni's (艾儒略, 1582-1649) *Tianzhu jiangsheng chuxiang jingjie* 天主降生出像經解 (Illustrated History of the Life of Jesus Christ) dated to 1637, *Sheng yuehan xian tianzhu er yun* 聖若翰先天主而



Fig. 3
Portrait of an official in front of the Forbidden City, Zhu Bang 朱邦 (?), hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk, 170 by 108 cm, with signature and seal, 16th century, British Museum, London.



Fig. 4
Qianlong wanfa guiyi tu 乾隆萬法歸一圖 [Qianlong's painting of Ten Thousand Dharmas Return as One], Ignaz Sichelbarth (1708-1780), Yao Wenhan 姚文翰 (active 1743-1761 or later) and Tibetan-Buddhist painters, single screen painting, heavy-colored on silk, 164.5 by 114.5 cm, 1772 or later, Palace Museum Beijing.

孕 (*John the Baptist was born prior to the birth of the Lord of Heaven*).³⁶ (Fig.5) As result, one's attention is given to the whole event taking place in the courtyard rather than individual figures, and thus, the Paris painting seems to have little to do with the *Qianlong's Painting of Ten Thousand Dharmas Return as One* – it is also worth noting the latter's purely European spatial arrangement did not appeal to Qianlong's taste.

Evidently, it is more closely related to the hybrid works which integrated both European and Chinese modes of narration during the middle years of Qianlong's reign, for instance the hanging scroll, *Wanshiyuan ciyan tu* 萬樹院賜宴圖橫幅 (*Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees*) (Fig. 6). According to Ledderose (1985, p. 142–143), this painting was executed in 1755 by Jean-Denis Attiret – court painter since 1738 – in collaboration with Giuseppe Castiglione S.J. (郎世寧, 1688–1766), Sichelbarth and other Chinese painters. It portrays the eleven banquets and receptions given by the Qianlong Emperor to welcome the leaders of the Dörböt tribe in the fifth lunar month of 1755 at the Summer Palace in Chengde. (Millward et al., 2004, p. 87; Ledderose, 1985, p. 142)

Unlike other hand scrolls from Kangxi's reign, such as the aforementioned narrative painting *Emperor Kangxi Going on an Inspection Tour to the South* by Wang Hui and his assistants (1697) (Fig. 2), Attiret's painting appears to be more concerned with combining European and Chinese modes of narration. Here, the emperor having just entered the garden moves toward a splendid tent in the form of a Mongolian yurt. Interestingly, the yurt is neither placed at the centre of the scene like the pavilion in the *Qianlong Wanfa guiyi tu* nor in the middle of the background, but has been moved Eastward, adapted to the format of a traditional hand scroll, where the story is told horizontally, either from left to right or vice versa, as in Wang Hui's work. Purposefully, to suit the taste of Chinese viewers, two types of view, central and parallel perspective, originating from entirely different cultural traditions, are integrated into a completely new form of pictorial narrative.

Furthermore, this innovative “hybrid solution”, rather than being a flash in the pan proved to be widely influential especially on Qianlong court painting. A decade later, between 1762 and 1765, when Attiret, Castiglione and other European court artists were asked to make a set of prints commemorating Qianlong's campaign against East Turkestan, the *Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees* has been served as an important source. Before the drawings were sent to France for further work, the artists had prepared a total

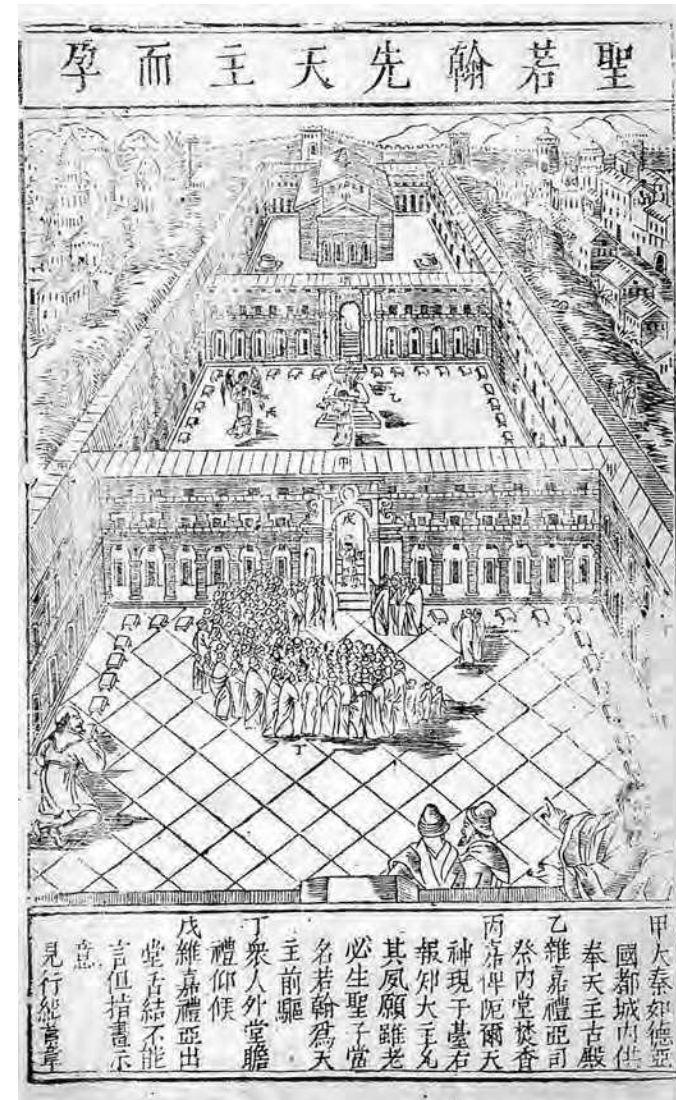


Fig. 5
Sheng yuehan xian tianzhu er yun 聖若翰先天主而孕 (*John the Baptist was born prior to the birth of the Lord of Heaven*), Giulio Aleni (1582-1649), wood carving, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

³⁶ This woodcut's composition was based on Jerome Nadal's (1507-1580) *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (*Illustrations of the Gospel Stories*) (1593), p.19 "Dominica X post Pentecost (...)" (10th Sunday after Pentecost). (Aoki et al., 1995, p. 74)

of 28 drawings. (Nie, 2008, p. 218–222) One such example, based on the spatial arrangement of Attiret's painting, was the model for an engraving entitled *Kaiyan chenggong zhu jiangshi* 凱宴成功諸將士 (*Victory Banquet for Meritorious Officers and Soldiers*) (Fig. 7), a ritual banquet in front of the Hall of Purple Light (*Ziguang ge* 紫光閣).

Castiglione and Attiret died in 1766 and 1768, respectively, not long after they had completed the drawings. At the same time similar drawings circulated in and outside the court. For instance, Xu Yang's *Pingding liang jinchuan zhantu ce* 平定兩金川戰圖冊 (*Quelling the Rebellion in two Jinchuan Regions*), dated after 1776, depicts a scene with exactly the same composition. (Nie, 1999, p. 267, fig. 69.16) I believe, the anonymous artist of the Paris painting had seen either Attiret's *Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees*, drawings made for it or those used for producing engravings during the 1760s. Therefore, he must have been very close to the European artists who resided at the Beitang, probably a Chinese servant at the Beitang or people like Liu Zhou 劉舟³⁷ (?) who had close friendships with missionaries.

Though very similar, the command of European painting techniques namely light and shade and the treatment of figures, distinguishes the earlier hybridized models from the Paris painting. In the latter scene, the intense contrast of light and dark, which contributes sculpturally to the mass and volume of the figures, appears technically undeveloped. Observing some of the figures' caps, one recognises that light comes from both sides, which contradicts that of architecture which is lit by a single source from the top left. The fact that he simply focused on giving volume to single figures while neglecting the organic relation between them, suggests that different people perhaps painted the figures and the architecture.

Furthermore, the figures in the Paris painting bear little resemblance to those of the contemporary court style of painting, which always showed excellent attention to detail and materiality as seen in the court works referred to above.³⁸ Regarding the Paris painting, the final point to note is that the painter used many other pictorial sources from early Qing narrative paintings for his depiction of figures, such as Wang Hui's *Emperor Kangxi Going on an Inspection Tour to the South* (Fig. 2), in which the figures and costumes are purely imaginative. For instance, in its tenth volume, there are essentially no clear differences between the real officials, merchants and other common people. Most of them,

³⁷ Liu Zhou was a Chinese horticulturist who had a close friendship with Cibot.

³⁸ This was also the reason for the phenomenon where European court artists were commonly asked to paint the faces of figures; as in the case of *Wanfa guiyi tu*, in which Sichelbarth painted only the faces.

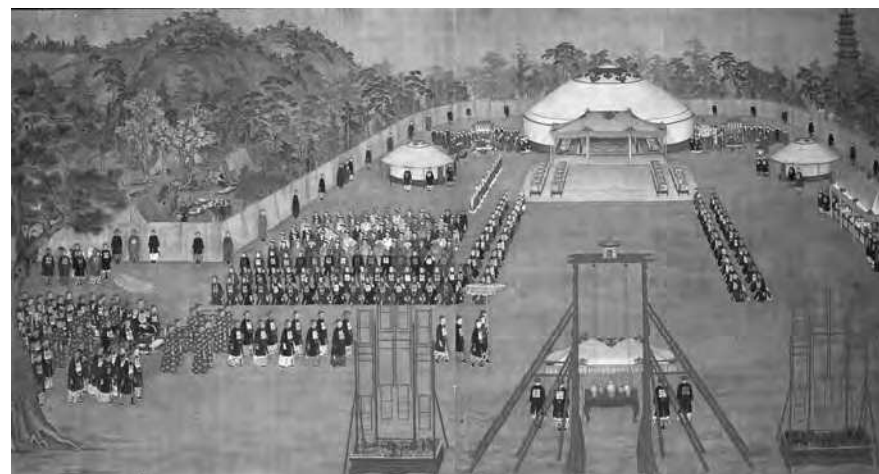


Fig. 6
Wanshuyuan ciyan tu 萬樹園賜宴圖 [Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees], Jean-Denis Attiret (1702-1768), Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766) and others, hanging scroll, colour on silk, 1755, 221.2 by 419.6 cm, Palace Museum Beijing.

Fig. 7
Kaiyan chenggong zhu jiangshi 凱宴成功諸將士 [Victory Banquet for Meritorious 6and Soldiers], Jean-Denis Attiret (1701-1768) and others, copper plate engraving, 51.4 by 89.5 cm, sketches made between 1762 and 1765.

even children, wear official caps. This phenomenon can also be observed in a number of contemporary or even later narrative works like Xu Yang's *Qianlong nanxun tu juan* 乾隆南巡圖卷 (*The Qianlong Emperor's Inspection Tour of the South*) (1764–1769). This also explains why the musicians and other participants depicted in the Paris painting are wearing official caps and some of them official robes – it is because the figures are purely imaginary. This would also explain the mystery of the strange visitors wearing wide-brimmed hats.

Conclusion

The famous work discussed here is a rare colored-painting on Chinese silk produced by a Chinese painter or painters after the 1760s and is the only known example of a narrative painting with a religious theme that originated outside the court. As a *tieluo*-painting (painted panel) used for interior decoration, it portrays the final procession of the Feast of Sacred Heart held in the courtyard of the French North Church (the Beitang) in Beijing.

As an *etic* viewer, its painter(s) did not just simply apply his or their own visual perspective, stemming from early pictorial sources, but also combined European techniques and visual vocabularies in re-constructing the ceremonial events. Compositionally and artistically, the painting is very close to those narrative paintings of the court in which European court artists were also involved. Hence, undoubtedly it serves as a vivid example of the artistic interaction between the court and the Catholic Church in 18th century Beijing.

Bibliography

- AOKI, S. 青木茂 and Kobayashi H. 小林宏光 (1995) "'*Chūgoku no yōfuga*' ten: *Minmatsu kara Shin jidai no kaiga, hanga, sashiebon*" 「中国の洋風画」展：明末から清時代の絵画・版画・挿絵本 [Exhibition on Chinese Western-Style Paintings: Paintings, Woodblock Prints and Illustrated Books from the Late Ming and Qing Dynasties], Machida-shi (Tokyo), Machida Shiritsu Kokusai Hanga Bijutsukan.
- BARNHART, R. M. (1997/1998) "Dong Qichang and Western Learning: A Hypothesis in Honor of James Cahill", in *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 50, p. 7–16.
- BORNET, P. (1945) "Les anciennes églises de Pékin: notes d'histoire", in *Bulletin Catholique de Pékin* (BCP), N° 379, p.118–132.
- BORNET, P. (1945) "Les anciennes églises de Pékin: notes d'histoire, Le Pei-t'ang 北堂", in *Bulletin Catholique de Pékin* (BCP), n° 380, p. 172–187.
- BORNET, P. (1945) "Les anciennes églises de Pékin: notes d'histoire, Le Pei-t'ang 北堂", in *Bulletin Catholique de Pékin* (BCP), n° 381, p. 239–251.
- BUCHBERGER, M. (1932) *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 4 vol., Freiburg/i.B., Herder.
- CAHILL, J. (1982) *The Compelling Image: Nature and Style in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Painting*, Cambridge/ Mass., Harvard University Press.
- CORSI, E. (1997) "Late Baroque Painting in China Prior to the Arrival of Matteo Ripa, Giovanni Gherardini and the Perspective Painting Called Xianfa", in Fatica M. and D'Arelli F. (eds) *La missione cattolica in Cina tra i secoli XVIII – XIX: Matteo Ripa e il collegio dei cinesi*, Napoli, Istituto universitario orientale, p. 103–122, fig. 1–11.
- CORSI, E. (2005) "'Jesuit Perspective' at the Qing Court: Chinese Painter, Italian Technique and the 'Science of Vision'", in Wu Xiaoxin (ed.) *Encounters and Dialogues: Changing Perspectives on Chinese-Western Exchanges from the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, Sankt Augustin, Monumenta Serica Institute, p. 239–262.
- CORSI, E. (2010) "Pozzo's Treatise as a Workshop for the Construction of a Sacred Catholic Space in Beijing", in Bösel, R. and Insolera, L.S. (eds), *Artifici della Metafora: Saggi su Andrea Pozzo*, Roma, Artemide, p. 233–243.
- CURTIS, E. B. (2011) "A Plan of the Emperor's Glasswork", in *Arts asiatiques*, vol. 51, p. 81–90.
- DASH, B. L. (2008) "A Visionary Acquisition: The Yudin Collection at the Library of Congress", in *Slavic & East European Information Resources*, vol. 9, n° 2, p. 92–114.
- DEHERGNE, J. (1973) *Répertoire des jésuites de Chine de 1552 à 1800* (Bibliotheca Institutii Historici S.I., vol. 37), Paris, Letouzey & Ané.
- DE MAILLA, J. (1719) *Shengti ren'aijing guitiao* 聖體仁愛經規條 [Exercises and Regulations on the Congregation of Saint Sacrement], Département des manuscrits, Chinois 7293, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
- DE MAILLA, J. (1744) *Shengxin guicheng* 聖心規程 [The Regulations of the Sacred Heart of Jesus], Département des manuscrits, Chinois 7442, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.
- DE ROCHEMENTEIX (1915) *Joseph Amiot et les derniers suivantes de la Mission Française à Pékin (1750–1795)*, Paris, Alphonse Picard et Fils.
- GARRET, V. M. (2007) *Chinese Dress: from the Qing dynasty to the Present*, Tokyo, Ruland.
- GOLVERS, N. (1993) *The 'Astronomia Europea' of Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J. (Dillingen, 1687), text, translation, notes and commentaries* [Monumenta Serica, vol. 28], Nettetal, Steyler Verl.
- GOLVERS, N. (2012) (in press) "Textual and Visual Sources on Catholic Churches in Peking in the 17th —19th Century", in *The 11th International Verbiest Symposium: History of the Church in China*, Leuven, Belgium, 4–7 September 2012.
- GUILLÉN-NUÑEZ, C. (2010) "Matteo Ricci, the Nantang, and the Introduction of Roman

- Catholic Church Architecture to Beijing”, in *Portrait of A Jesuit: Matteo Ricci (1552–1610)*, Macau, Macau Ricci Institute, 2010, p. 102–128.
- GUO, H. 郭花瑜 (2006) *Shilun yingshan wuding zhi yuanqi* 試論硬山屋頂之源起 [On the Origin of Yingshan-Roof], in *Architecture*, vol. 24, p. 95–96.
- HORNE, C.F. (1917) *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East* (Vol. XII, Medieval China), New York, Parke, Austin & Lipscomb.
- Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères* (1773), vol. 30, Paris, Chez Ruault.
- Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères* (1781), Nouvelle Édition, vol. 24, Paris, Chez J. G. Merigot.
- Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères* (1810), Nouvelle Édition, vol. 17, Toulouse, Chez.
- LEE K., HONG, N. and CHANG, S. (2003; repr. 2007) *Traditional Korean Costume*, Folkestone (Kent), Global Oriental.
- LEDDEROSE, L. (1985) *Palastmuseum Peking Schätze aus der Verbotenen Stadt*, Berlin, Berliner Festspiele Insel Verlag.
- LI, Y. 李玉珉 (2000) “*Dunhuang chuting de mile jingbian* 敦煌初唐的彌勒經變” [The Transformed Scriptures of Maitreya in the Early Tang Period], in *Journal of Buddhist Research Centre*, vol. 5, p. 203–230.
- LIANG, S. 梁思成 (2006) *Qingshi yingzao zeli* 清式營造則例 [Structural Regulations on Qing State Building Standards], Beijing, Tsinghua University Press, 2006.
- LIU, D. 卞生 (1992) *Zhongguo yueqi tujian* 中國樂器圖鑒 [Illustrated Handbook on Chinese Musical Instruments], Jinan/ Shandong, Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe.
- MILLWARD, J. A., DUNNELL, R. W., ELLIOTT, M. C., and FORÊT, P. (2004) *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of the Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, London, Routledge Curzon.
- MUNGELLO, D. (1999) *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800*, Lanham et al., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- NAKAGAWA, T. 中川忠英 (1799) *Shinzoku kibun* 清俗紀聞 [Reports on Customs of Qing], vol. 3, Tokyo, Nishinomiya Tasuke.
- NAQUIN, S. (2000) *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900*, Berkeley, University of California Press.
- NIE, C. 聶崇正 (1996) *Gongting yishu de guanghui: qingdai gongting huihua luncong* 宮廷藝術的光輝 – 清代宮廷繪畫論叢 [The Splendour of Court Art: Essays on Qing Court Paintings], Taipei, Dongda tushu gongsi.
- NIE, C. 聶崇正 (1999) *Qingdai gongting huihua* 清代宮廷繪畫 [Paintings by the Court Artists of the Qing Court], Shanghai, Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe.
- NIE, C. 聶崇正 (2008) *Qingong huihua yu “xihua dongjian”* 清宮繪畫與“西畫東漸” [The Painting of Qing Court and the Eastward Spread of ‘Western Painting’], Beijing, Zijincheng.
- PFISTER, A. (1932–34) *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l’ancienne mission de Chine, 1552–1773*, Chang-hai (Shanghai), Imprimerie de la Mission catholique.
- ROWBOTHAM, A.H. (1966) *Missionary and Mandarin: the Jesuits at the Court of China*, New York, Russell & Russell.
- RZEPKOWSKI, H. (1998) “Der Beitrag von Johann Adam Schall von Bell zur einheimischen christlichen Kunst”, in Malek, R (ed), *Western Learning and Christianity in China. The Contribution and Impact of Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1592–1666)*, Nettetal, Sankt Augustin, vol. 2, p. 936, n.2.
- SÉGUY, M.-R. (1976) “A propos d’une peinture chionis du Cabinet des estampes à la Bibliothèque Nationale”, in *Gazette des beaux-arts* 88, p. 228–230.
- SCHÜLLER, S. (1940) *Die Geschichte der christlichen Kunst in China*, Berlin, Klinkhardt und Biermann Verlag.
- STANDAERT, N. (2008) *The Interweaving of Rituals: Funerals in the Cultural Exchange between China and Europe*, Seattle / London, University of Washington Press.
- WHITFIELD, R. (1972) “Che School Paintings in the British Museum”, in *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 114, p. 285–294.
- WHITFIELD, R., WHITFIELD, S. and AGNEW, N. (2000) *Cave Temple of Mogao: Art and History on the Silk Road*, Los Angeles, The Getty Conservation Institute.
- XU, L. (2004) *Die nestorianische Stele in Xi’an: Begegnung von Christentum und chinesisches Kultur*, Bonn, Verlag Norbert M. Borengässer.
- YANG, X. 楊熙 (2011) *Liang fu gongting huihua suojian jianzhu tuxiang biao xian bijiao yanjiu: jianlun gudai huihua zhong jianzhu tuxiang zuowei jianzhushi yanjiu cailiao de kexindu wenti* 兩幅宮廷繪畫所見建築圖像表現比較研究 – 兼論古代繪畫中建築圖像作為建築史研究材料的可信度問題 [A Comparative Research of Two Court Paintings on Graphic Representation of Architecture], in *Journal of National Museum of China*, vol.10, p. 104–120.
- YE, Q. 葉泉宏 (1991) *Mingdai qianqi zhonghang guojiao zhi yanjiu* 明代前期中韓國交之研究: 一三六八 – 一四八八 [Research on the Relationship between China and Korea during the Early Period of Ming: 1368–1488], Taipei, Taiwan shangwu.
- YU, S. 餘三樂 (2006) *Zhongxi wenhua jiaoliu de lishi jianzheng—mingmo qingchu beijing tianzhu jiaotang* 中西文化交流的歷史見證 – 明末清初北京天主教堂 [The Witness of the History of Sino-Western Cultural Exchange: The Catholic Churches in Beijing during the Late Ming and Early Qing Period], Guangdong, Guangdong renmin chubanshe.
- ZOU, H. (2011) *A Jesuit Garden in Beijing and Early Modern Chinese Culture*, West Lafayette, Purdue University Press.