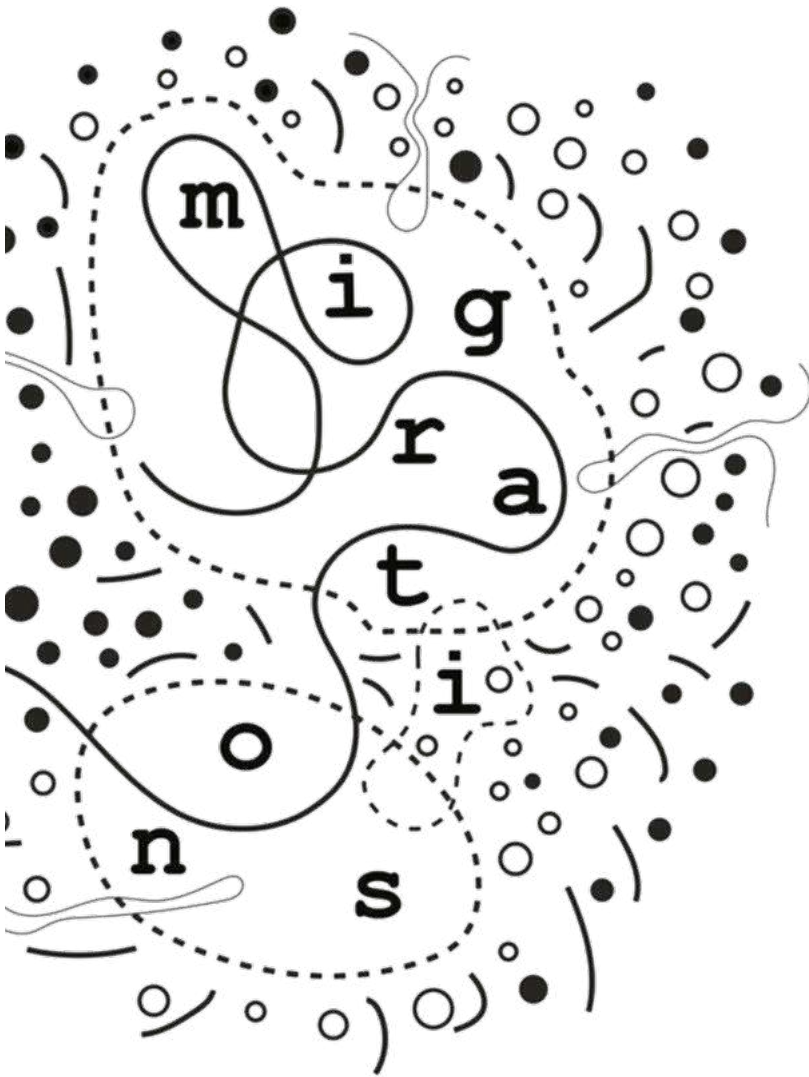


Missions as Contact Zones

Session 6



Session 6

Missions and Missionaries in the Early Modern World: Colonial and Global Art Histories

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Introduction

In the early modern world, missions and missionaries played a key role in the migration of objects, materials, and technologies between (and within) the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Europe.¹ European engravings, paintings, sculptures, and other decorative objects entered Spanish America through missionaries traveling from Italy, Germany, Flanders, and Spain. Yet Spanish American missions were more than recipients of European visual traditions—many of them were also important artistic centers and distribution sites, permitting the development of complex exchange networks. Some missionaries were trained artists or architects, introducing new aesthetic vocabularies and building technologies, while others established workshops for the instruction of indigenous artists and the incorporation of native knowledge. Extant visual objects, structures, and archival texts still attest to the exchange and interplay of peoples, materials, and ideas that resulted in a vibrant and generative early modern environment.

The Mission at Maynas

In 1707, the Jesuit cartographer Samuel Fritz and Juan de Narváez, a member of the Society of Jesus who was skilled in the art of copper engraving, printed a map depicting the Amazon River. The map demonstrates the territorial dominion that the Jesuit Province of Quito had

attained over the region, while emphasizing the imposition of *policía*, or Christian civility, in what was known as the mission of Maynas. Thus, the map depicts the innumerable *reducciones* that were established along the rivers. At the bottom of the image, a stone slab provides detailed information about this territory. An indigenous figure, his head adorned with feathers but wearing a tunic and a Christian cross around his neck, directs the spectator's attention to the written text. The inscription describes the course of the river, the plants, and trees from the region, and provides a list of Jesuit martyrs who offered their lives doing apostolic work (the sites where their martyrdom had taken place is marked with a cross on the map). Interestingly, in noting some of the useful natural resources from the Amazon, such as cocoa, sarsaparilla, different types of woods, and bark for making pigments, the inscription also underscores the knowledge and technologies that the missionaries had learned from indigenous peoples.

The mission of Maynas in the Amazon region comprised over one hundred *reducciones*, or indigenous towns. Established by Jesuit missionaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the mission was headed by the Jesuit College in Quito. Although remains of the colonial settlements are scarce, detailed descriptions of their art and architecture have been preserved in the writings of missionaries. One of the most comprehensive accounts of this mission was written by Manuel Uriarte in Ravenna, Italy, the author's home after the Jesuit expulsion of 1767.²

Uriarte conducted missionary work in various *reducciones* of the Amazonian basin. Remarkably, the discussion of his order's apostolic work emphasizes the material and visual culture of the missionary project. Thus, his account is filled with references to artisans (European, Creole, and indigenous) who participated in the building of churches. He also gives detailed information about the paintings, sculptures, and engravings that adorned church walls and altarpieces. Most astonishing, Uriarte explains the innovative use of local materials and pigments.

Uriarte spent many years in the *reducción* of San Joaquín de Omaguas, an important town in Maynas and the center of missionary activity in the region. In his description of this settlement, he begins by noting the area's cultural diversity, a mixture resulting from the forced relocation of various indigenous nations. Each indigenous nation had specialized

knowledge in a distinct trade. Recognizing the variety of proficiencies, Uriarte stressed the fact that indigenous artists excelled in the production of textiles and ceramics, as well as in carpentry and wood carving, skills that could clearly serve Christian purposes.

With regard to the church of San Joaquín, Uriarte states that the main altarpiece was built by George Winterer, a Jesuit from the Tyrol. Winterer first participated in the remodeling of the Jesuit church in Quito, before traveling to Maynas. According to Uriarte, the magnificent altarpiece of the church of La Compañía (Quito), carved in wood and adorned with Solomonic columns, served as a model for the smaller *retablo* in San Joaquín, which was painted and adorned with silver leaf. Other artisans continued Winterer's work in Omaguas. Among them were Spanish, Creole, and Portuguese carpenters, sculptors and painters. Particularly intriguing is the fact that Uriarte recognizes the work of indigenous artists, including sculptors and wood turners who carved religious statues and made the *retablos* (or altarpieces). Javier Tyri and Bartolo Yurimagua are just two of the names presented in this primary text that have been ignored by traditional historiography.

Missions received supplies of textiles and tools from the nearby towns of Lamas and Moyobamba. References to the "socorro" or "material aid" from Quito are also frequent. Tools, needles and garments, as well as devotional objects such as crosses and rosaries, were included in the "socorro" from the Jesuit College. So, too, were materials for the adornment of churches. Thus, Uriarte notes that he had requested small books with silver leaves that were used to embellish the altarpieces in the church of San Joaquín. Statues and paintings, some of them carved or painted by renowned Quiteño artists, were also sent as precious gifts to the missions. San Joaquín received, for example, a small statue of the Presentation of the Virgin dressed in rich garments and adorned with jewelry. European images also arrived, such as a sculpture of the Virgin of the Rosary and another of the Omaguas' patron saint, St. Joachim. Mention is also made of a small sculpture of the Immaculate Conception, carved in ivory, perhaps imported from Europe or Asia.

Uriarte continually writes about arches, vaults and columns, which were used in the building of churches. Particularly interesting is the

innovative use of local materials. Although Uriarte does not necessarily state it, it is obvious that this involved the learning of local building technologies. Walls were built with “*tapia francesa*” and “*bahareque*,” construction techniques that combined branches or reed and clay, a practice employed in other Jesuit missions (as in Paraguay). Repeatedly, the author mentions the use of *achua*, a type of palm tree that was employed for making columns and arches. Finally, builders sought to reproduce the appearance of European churches. Using mineral pigments made of colored earth, and “*leche de palo*,” the resin of a local tree, artists simulated the appearance of jasper and marble.

Uriarte’s account is revealing of the importance of Jesuit missions in the Amazon for the study of both colonial and global art history in the early modern period. Such missions were instrumental in the spiritual and territorial conquest of the frontier, assuring forced acculturation and relocation of indigenous populations. While they guaranteed the migration of European artists and art objects, materials, technologies and styles, missionaries also depended on the appropriation of local materials, knowledges and technologies. But what we find especially relevant about missionary art and architecture (and the mission of Maynas is an example of this) is that it redirects our attention from the main artistic centers (such as Mexico City, Lima, Cuzco and Quito) to the margins of the Spanish empire, as well as to cultural exchange networks and circuits, both regional and global.

The Early Mexican Mission and Pedro de Gante

The celebrated Franciscan missionary, Peter of Ghent (Pedro de Gante), arrived in Mexico as the Aztec capital was still smoldering from Spain’s catastrophic military assault.³ Arriving in Texcoco in 1523, Gante asked the indigenous prince, Ixtlilxochitl, for furnishings and tapestries; he then used these items to setup “an altar, on which he placed an image of Our Lady and a small crucifix.” That evening, the source continues, he led the first vesper service in Texcoco.⁴ If true, this would be the first instance that the Flemish missionary allowed for the blending of European imports and indigenous materials for the staging of Christian performance. Only a few years later, Gante established San José de los Naturales, a church, conversion center, and indigenous art school all in one. Standing adjacent to the Franciscan

monastery in Mexico City, the foundation equipped New Spain's churches and chapels with diverse images of Christ, the saints, and the Virgin Mary.

Gante is linked to some of the most remarkable early Franciscan achievements following the fall of Tenochtitlan, including the production of pictographic, Nahuatl, and trilingual catechisms. More than any other early mendicant in the sixteenth century, he is credited with fomenting a dynamic visual culture. Not surprisingly, then, his connection to specific pictorial objects (whether real or assumed) is frequently stressed. It is taken for granted that one of his own indigenous students, an anonymous artist, crafted the feathered Mass of Saint Gregory (1539) now held in the Musée des Amériques in Auch France. Commissioned by the Nahua noble Diego de Alvarado Huanitzin, nephew and son-in-law to Moctezuma II, we know the exquisite object was intended as a gift for Pope Paul III. Another former student, the Nahua artist Marcos Aquino, supplied the Chapel of San José with a new altar and, more significantly, completed a Marian painting rendered on cactus fiber for the nascent hermitage in Tepeyac; the work became the most celebrated miraculous icon in the Americas. Another former, the famous Diego Valadés, went on to produce and publish *Rhetorica Christiana* (Perugia, 1579), a lavishly illustrated monumental treatise that highlights the order's missionary strategies and achievements in New Spain. The publication appeared several years after Gante's death, but perhaps it is *the* work—with its didactic engravings rendered in a manner so evocative of the sixteenth-century Franciscan tradition—that most closely reflects the Fleming's philosophical and aesthetic ethos.

Feathered artworks, miraculous Marian paintings rendered on maguey fibers, and finely drawn copper engravings—the breadth of objects directly or indirectly connected to Gante is impressive indeed. Yet despite his status as the founder of the viceroyalty's earliest and most important art school prior to the Royal Art Academy of San Carlos, Gante appears in the surviving material corpus only as a specter. We think we see him in every painting or featherwork produced in sixteenth-century Mexico City, but his signature evades us. Even more fascinating, this propensity to envision him everywhere is not entirely ours. By the late seventeenth century, his name was attached to a variety of objects in search of legitimate pedigrees. One of the most unusual is the Virgin of Tepepan, an alabaster Marian sculpture

from the area surrounding Xochimilco (southern edge of modern-day Mexico City). Franciscan friar and chronicler, Agustín de Vetancurt (1697), claimed the painted alabaster sculpture was fashioned after the Virgin of Remedios and installed in the Franciscan monastery in Mexico City by Gante himself. It was then taken to Xochimilco “because at that time there was a shortage of images.” Thereafter, according to the author, the object was installed in the church at Tepepan. The Jesuit Francisco de Florencia (ca. 1695) is even more direct: Gante wanted to replicate the miraculous Remedios sculpture and specifically chose the quarried stone for the task. The Tepepan sculpture was then taken to San José de los Naturales “where it stood for a long time in the church’s chapel.” Florencia explicitly links this location and duration to the presence of Gante, “who at that time labored in that convent.” The Jesuit implies that it was only after the death of Gante that the image journeyed to Xochimilco—“for reasons unknown”—until finally arriving in Tepepan where “it extinguished the false adoration [practiced by] some Indians who were vehemently venerating two idols.” In Florencia, the unusual alabaster icon becomes an avatar for the Flemish friar, battling idols well past the sixteenth-century Franciscan “Golden Age.” Needless to say, not a single sixteenth-century source ties Gante to the sculpture at Tepepan. Nevertheless, the *need* to make that connection was real, a desire confirmed by text and image. An eighteenth-century portrait of Gante kept in the National History Museum in Chapultepec (Mexico City) has the educator proudly standing beside a writing desk that sustains the (now dressed) Tepepan sculpture.

The surviving visual corpus speaks to the rich breadth of materials and objects that were fashioned in the indigenous art school founded by the Franciscan lay brother Gante. The center was home to international mendicants and imported visual models but was clearly not limited by these prototypes. San José became a generative complex for creative thought and visual production and quickly gained the status of artistic epicenter both during and after the lifetime of its founder. Seventeenth-century histories attest to the school’s vibrancy and often lend prestige to individual objects; but in their effort to authenticate and fortify, the late colonial sources might also compel us to recklessly trust in the ghost of Gante.

By way of conclusion

The migration of persons, objects, concepts, materials, and technologies is inherent to missionary art and culture, as attested by the examples from Maynas and New Spain. This is also noted in the essays that follow, which underscore the need to understand missionary culture in a global context. Problematizing cultural and artistic transfer, these studies encourage us to think beyond the dissemination of European knowledge and artistic models while recognizing multi-directional motion and itineraries. Authors, too, reflect on conceptual approaches to the study of missionary art and culture, bearing in mind the difference between accommodation, acculturation and inculturation. Comparative discussions also stress the need to contextualize adaptation, borrowing and innovation. This permits us to understand variances between artworks that developed either in response to isolation or when enduring persecution, as well as distinctions between colonial and non-colonial contexts. Calling attention to issues of identity, the missions themselves are presented as sites for cultural and artistic exchange.

Endnotes

1. Literature regarding missions and missionary art in the Americas is extensive. A very short sample includes Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America 1542-1773* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: 2001); Clara Bargellini, "El arte de las misiones del norte de la Nueva España, 1600-1821: Cicatrices de la fe", *Revista de la Universidad de México* 66 (2009): 43-48; Ramón Gutiérrez, "Propuestas urbanísticas de los sistemas misionales de los jesuitas", *Un reino en la Frontera: Las misiones jesuitas en la América colonial* (Quito: Abya Yala, 2000), 173-184; Ramón Gutiérrez, "Las misiones circulares de los jesuitas en Chiloé. Apuntes para una historia singular de la evangelización", *Apuntes* 20, 1: 159-167; Renata María de Almeida Martins, "Uma cartela multicolor: objetos, praticas artísticas dos indígenas e intercambios culturais nas Missoes jesuíticas da Amazonia colonial", *Caiana* 8 (2016): 70-84; Pedro Querejazu, *Las misiones jesuíticas de Chiquitos* (La Paz: Fundación BHN, 1995); Adolfo Luis Ribera, *La pintura en las misiones jesuíticas de guaraníes* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de historia argentina y americana, 1980).
2. Manuel J. Uriarte, *Diario de un misionero de Maynas* (Quito: Abya-Yala, 2021). Uriarte (1720-1801) was born in Spain. He travelled to Napo in 1750, where he remained until the Jesuit expulsion. He provides the most detailed account of the material and visual culture of the Jesuit missions in Maynas.

3. Pedro de Gante was born in Flanders, joined the Franciscan Order as a lay brother, and arrived in Mexico-Tenochtitlan in 1523 (preceding the “Franciscan Twelve” by six months).
4. Gante’s make-shift altar is described by Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl (“Thirteenth Relation”), a governor of Texcoco and direct descendent of Texcoco’s pre-Hispanic ruler. See *The Native Conquistador. Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s Account of the Conquest of New Spain*, eds. and trans. Amber Brian, Bradley Benton, and Pablo García Loaeza (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2015).

Ad Tartaros:

Latin Christian Missions to Mongol East Asia, c. 1300

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ABSTRACT

Beginning from a stone identified as the 1332 tombstone of the Franciscan friar Andrea of Perugia, Bishop of Quanzhou, this essay is a study of the visual culture associated with the early Christian missions in Mongol Yuan China. Recent work on missions as contact zones stresses their role as centers of cultural exchange, while the art of Yuan China is often presented as uniquely open to imported influences and forms. There are distinctive issues in exploring the early Latin missions as contact spaces, including that so little survives. Yet they were important in the self-presentation of the trecento Franciscan Order in Italy, and the limited evidence suggests their role as spaces of artistic and cultural encounter.

KEYWORDS

Andrew of Perugia; Bible of Marco Polo; Yuan China; Artistic Exchange; Franciscan Order.

In 1946, a stone was discovered near the old city walls in Quanzhou. At the top was a relief scene with two flying angels in flowing robes, their hands stretched out to hold a large lotus flower. The base of a cross was still visible within the lotus, but the angels had been defaced, and the stone had been broken at both its top and bottom edge, destroying the rest of the cross. The imagery of divine flying figures flanking sacred symbols is ancient, and images of apsaras holding lotuses can be widely found in medieval Buddhism.¹ But the iconography of angels flanking a cross on a lotus is associated with the Church of the East, sometimes called the Nestorian Church, which is recorded in southern China as early as the Tang Dynasty (618-907). In Quanzhou, there are other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century tombstones with similar imagery, clearly linked to the Church of the East.

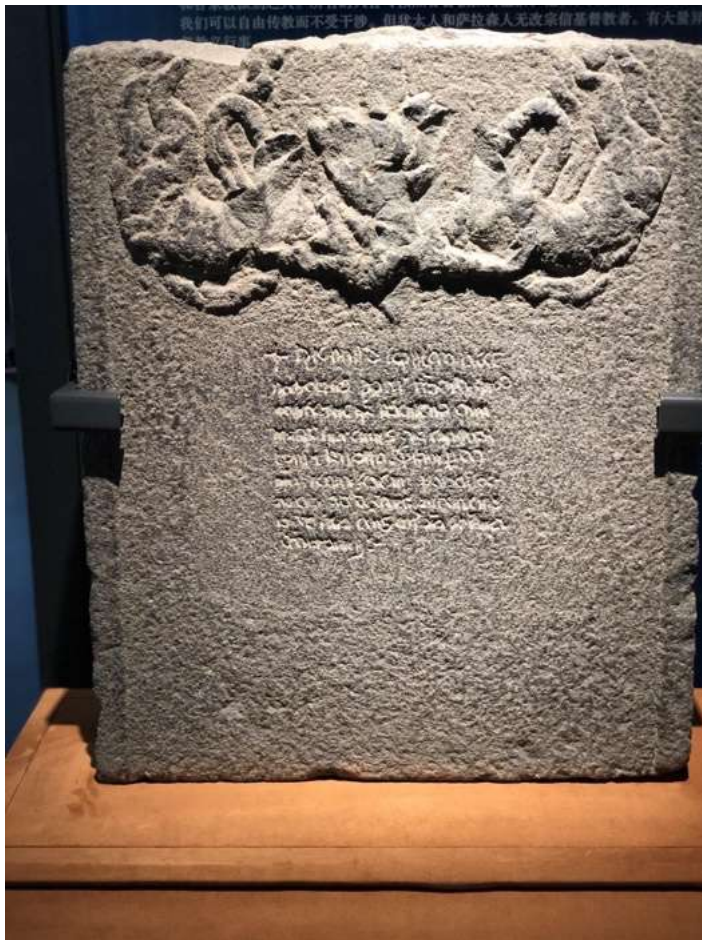


Fig. 1. Tombstone identified as that of Andrew of Perugia, Bishop of Zayton. c. 1332. 54 x 45 cm. Maritime Museum, Quanzhou, mus. 139.

Below the relief with the angels was an inscription, fitted somewhat awkwardly into the centre of the space. The small and uneven characters were very difficult to read, but in 1954 a British scholar proposed that the writing was not in Syriac, the language of the Church of the East, but in Latin, and that it copied a fourteenth-century European merchant hand. The following transcription was given:

† *Hic* (in P F S) *sepultus* est
 Andreas Perusinus (de
 votus ep. Cayton.....
ordinis (fratrum
 min.)
(Jesus Christi) Apostolus

(in mense)
 M (cccxx)xii +²

With the inscription deciphered in this way, the stone emerged as the memorial of a fourteenth-century Italian Franciscan friar, Andrea da Perugia, known as Andrew of Perugia in English. From 1322 until his death, Andrew was the Latin Christian Bishop of Quanzhou, a city known as Zayton or Zaitun from its Persian and Arabic name. With this identification, the Quanzhou stone became a testament to Latin Christian activity in China in the years around 1300, long before the better-known sixteenth-century arrival of the Jesuits and other Catholic orders. This medieval mission in East Asia is also recorded by surviving documents, including a number of letters, written by the missionaries themselves and sent back to Europe to report on their work and to ask for news and support from home.³ This missionary activity followed the uniting of much of the Asian landmass under the linked states of the Mongol Empire, all subject at least notionally to the Great Khan of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty.

The visual culture associated with this mission in Yuan China is the focus of this short essay.⁴ The research here was first presented in the CIHA session “Missions as Contact Zones.” The concept of “contact zones” derives from the foundational work of Mary Louise Pratt, who defined them as:

“social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.”⁵ Pratt drew her primary examples from the Spanish colonial Viceroyalty of Peru, and her model has been particularly influential in studies of European missions of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries in colonial contexts.⁶

The potential interest of framing the medieval Latin Christian missions as contact zones is clear. As the Europeans spread into Central and Eastern Asia, they moved into regions that had been essentially unknown to medieval Europe before the Mongol rise. They encountered new peoples, languages, and cultures, and very different cultural and artistic models, presumably requiring new visual and social strategies to enable communication and interaction. At the same time, these missions were distinctive in fundamental ways from later models: they were never part of a colonial or military mission, they remained small and scattered, and they lasted only about fifty years, from roughly the mid-1290s to the 1340s. They also present specific challenges of evidence and analysis, as so little artistic and material culture survives to examine them. The Quanzhou stone is itself a cautionary example, as we will see.

In Latin Christian Europe (as in many places), the sudden Mongol rise from the early thirteenth century was framed in apocalyptic terms.⁷ Initially, some writers identified the unknown horsemen attacking Muslim kingdoms with the followers of Prester John, a legendary Christian ruler said to live in the extreme east or northeast of the world. Very quickly, however, the invaders were compared instead with the forces of Antichrist. Among the many ethnicities of the Mongol forces was a group called the Tatars; in Europe they became Tartars, linking them to Tartaros, the netherworld of antiquity.

At its fullest extent in the later thirteenth century, the linked states of the Mongol Empire stretched from Korea to the Black Sea. These vast spaces were divided into four khanates; in three of them, the ruling elites would eventually adopt Islam, while the Yuan dynasty embraced Buddhism. But the

Mongols were ethnically and religiously diverse, and initially respectful of all religions. The recently created Dominican and especially Franciscan Order took the lead in the mission into Mongol Asia, setting up in port cities with foreign communities (Quanzhou, Yangzhou) and in the major political centres (Hangzhou, Beijing). By 1300, there were Latin Christian missions in all parts of the Mongol Empire except the Chagadai Khanate of Central Asia. Under a Franciscan called Giovanni da Montecorvino, Dadu (ie Beijing), the capital of the Great Khan of Yuan China, became the first archbishopric of the Asian missions in 1307.⁸ There were two Latin churches in the city by this time, one of them big enough to hold 200 people and close enough to the imperial palace, according to Montecorvino, for the Khan to hear the three bells and the singing of the Mass.⁹

Much recent literature on the art of Mongol Yuan China explores it as cosmopolitan and culturally diverse, shaped by many different resident foreign communities and by intense and ongoing contact with other regions of the Mongol Empire.¹⁰ For instance, when a new ceremonial building, the Cloud Platform (or Terrace), was put up from 1342 at Juyong Pass, north of Dadu, it had sutras transcribed in six different scripts (to render Sanskrit, Tibetan, Mongolian, Uighur, Tangut, and Mandarin Chinese); a further inscription marking the construction and dedication used all the same languages except for Sanskrit.¹¹ For this reason alone, we would expect the art and churches of the Latin mission to be spaces of contact and encounter: they were located in the most important cities of a vastly multiethnic empire.

They also served diverse and polyglot congregations. Most Christians in Mongol China, including some significant figures among the Mongols themselves, were members of the Church of the East: the mother of the first Yuan emperor Khubilai Khan (ob. 1294) was one. Soon after John of Montecorvino's arrival in 1296, he made a major convert of the Öngüt king called *Kuolijisi* in Chinese sources (possibly for the Syriac name Giwardis), closely related by marriage to Khubilai. According to Montecorvino, "King George" had granted the Latin Christians a church in his capital, and even had his own son baptized with the name John, after Montecorvino himself. With the ruler's early death his subjects reverted to the Church of the East, and

Montecorvino was unable to reclaim what was lost.¹² But there were other Christian congregations, including Armenians, Alans, and other Syriac Christians from Western Asia, who seem to have embraced the friars. In Quanzhou, it was an unnamed Armenian woman who paid for the Franciscan church.

Unfortunately, no church or building surviving from the Latin missions has yet been found. Some were presumably claimed for other religions with the rise and fall of local and imperial favour. In 1311, for instance, the Yuan literati painter and bureaucrat Zhao Mengfu, acting as imperial administrator, oversaw the transfer of two disputed buildings in Zhenjiang (near Yangzhou) from Christians (most likely Nestorian) to Buddhists.¹³ Other sites, including what were identified as possible traces of the church in King George's capital in what is now the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia, have disappeared in the last century.¹⁴



Fig. 2. Paris. Traveling Bible known as the Bible of Marco Polo. c. 1240. Ink on parchment, 11.5 by 7.5 cm. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Pluteo 3, capsule 1.

The single medieval book that can be tied to the Chinese missions gives an impression of limited resources. It is a small manuscript Bible, produced in Paris around 1230-40, and now in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence.¹⁵ This is one of many such pocket-sized Bibles created in Paris for the mendicant friars and meant to be carried in travel; this version of the Bible text can be associated with the University of Paris from after about 1225. The book is damaged, but originally it had approximately 500 folios, of which 343 remain. This was a serviceable, working object: the whole manuscript was written by the same hand, two columns per page, and only the first letter of each Bible book was given a basic filigree decoration.

This Bible was brought to Florence in 1685 by Father Philippe Couplet, who gave it to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Couplet was Procurator of the Jesuits in China at that time, and in a note that is still kept with the book, he stated that it had come from the region of Nanjing. The manuscript had been carefully hidden and preserved by a single Chinese family for four centuries, remaining as a local record of the Latin missions of the Yuan Mongol period. It would have been carried to southern China as the personal Bible of a Latin missionary friar. The book also testifies to reuse: there are marginal annotations in several different hands, suggesting, like the date of production, that the friar who took it to China was not its first or only owner.

The sense of limited resources that this Bible evokes echoes what we know of the missions in general. In 1306 the friars in Beijing had only a breviary and a missal: in one of his two letters on the mission, John of Montecorvino begged for a gradual, legends of the saints, and choir books to be sent so they could be copied. The Dadu masses were sung by boys and young men that Montecorvino had bought to raise in the faith: few Latin missionaries ever even reached China. In 1307, six newly consecrated suffragan bishops set out from Avignon toward Beijing, but three died along the way, and the other three may have arrived as late as 1313 to celebrate Montecorvino's investiture as archbishop.

One of the three was Andrew of Perugia, later Bishop of Quanzhou. Given the limited evidence, the tombstone identified as his monument (fig 1)

is therefore extremely precious. It certainly supports a reading of the Latin missions as spaces of exchange for both visual and written languages.¹⁶ As far as can be determined in its broken state, its shape was similar to memorial tombstones for other “imported” religions with older roots in southeastern China, notably Islam and Nestorian Christianity. Its relief adopted an existing iconography associated with Christians, although a different sect (the Church of the East), and this in turn was drawn from much older imagery shared with Buddhists and others. This made the meaning of the monument potentially intelligible to both the local carvers charged to make it from local stone, and to local viewers who might then see it. At the same time, the Latin inscription and foreign script were reminders of the otherness of Andrea da Perugia and his mission, and would have been unintelligible to local people except as signs of alterity.

But the identification presents problems. The scholars who first worked to decipher the inscription on the tombstone were working from poor photographs made from enlargements of small and grainy originals taken by the Quanzhou scholar Wu Wenliang. In the transcription, the words in italics were considered secure readings, those in plain type had been agreed upon by at least two scholars, and any words in brackets - that is, most of the inscription - were “mere guesses based upon one or two letters and a certain amount of space.” Many specialists were sceptical about the link to Andrew of Perugia, and recent research remains cautious.¹⁷ A larger flattened area around the rather small inscription may suggest it was not the original or the intended text. In a further complication, at least one scholar has suggested that the stone now displayed in Quanzhou may be a copy of the one recorded in 1946, and the whereabouts of the original unknown.¹⁸

There are also difficulties with another object sometimes associated with these missions: a porcelain vase now in Dublin.¹⁹ It dates from the early fourteenth century, and the ceramic type is known as *qingbai* ware from its bluishgreen-white glaze. It is the oldest intact porcelain object known to have reached Europe, where, as we know from two eighteenth-century drawings, it was converted into a ewer with the addition of a metal handle and spout.



Fig. 3. Jingdezhen. *Qingbai* vase known as the *Fonthill Vase*. Early fourteenth-century. Porcelain, h. 28 cm. National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, DC 1882.3941.

The vase was thought to have reached Europe through embassies around the Dadu mission. After Giovanni da Montecorvino's death sometime around 1328, the Beijing see sat vacant for many years. Finally, at the repeated request of local Alan Christians, an embassy was sent from the Yuan court to the Pope to ask, among other things, for a replacement priest to serve the church. A delegation to Beijing left Avignon in 1338, carrying treasures including rock crystal objects from Venice. When they finally arrived in Dadu in 1342, the Yuan court seems to have been more interested in a horse sent as a gift than in the people and objects from the far west of the world: a number of years ago, Eugene Wang examined the lack of representation of them in Chinese sources, concluding that the arrival of foreigners had long been so common at Chinese courts, even before the Yuan Dynasty, that this latest group did not raise any particular interest.²⁰

The metalwork on the Dublin vase had heraldry and mottos associated with the royal houses of Hungary and Anjou, and it was once thought to have reached Louis of Hungary with the Chinese delegation. It has now been established that the heraldry and mottos on the mountings were those of Margaret of Durazzo, Regent of Naples, sometime after 1386. This later dating weakens the link to the Beijing missions, although it is worth noting that when the *qingbai* vase reached the Naples court, it was clearly recognized as a treasure and framed for a new context and display.

Despite the limited material evidence, it is clear that the missions left their mark in the public sphere of fourteenth-century Italy. To reach Yuan China, friars passed by land and sea through Muslim polities. As Mongol state control began to fail in the early fourteenth century, these journeys became potentially more dangerous; a small number of friars were killed for their faith. The Franciscans in particular created spaces and images to celebrate these deaths. In the most notable case, in 1321, three friars, Thomas of Tolentino, James of Padua, and Peter of Siena, were killed with their interpreter, a lay-brother named Demetrius (Georgian or possibly Armenian). They were bound for the missions in Yuan China, but were forced ashore at Thane, near modern Mumbai, where they were housed with some Christians of the Church of the East. When the wife of the household denounced her

husband to the local judge, she called the friars as witnesses. They were asked to give their opinion about Muhammad, condemned for slandering Islam, and subjected to various tortures by the local ruler before being beheaded. Later the ruler and his entire family were put to death by for their acts.



Fig. 4. *Frescoes of the Martyrs of Thane.* Circa 1350. Nave, San Fermo Maggiore, Verona.

The stories of these deaths were once painted across two bays of the nave in San Fermo Maggiore in Verona, though only three scenes now remain (fig. 3). At the top left, the friars appear to the corrupt ruler in a dream, warning of his evil end. Beside this scene, he is sentenced by the emperor, who then oversees his hanging and dismemberment with all his male kin.²¹ The Thane events were also painted in the cloister of San Francesco in Siena, now lost but known from descriptions, and quite possibly in other Franciscan houses, including for instance at Tolentino, where a chapel to Thomas is recorded from the end of the fourteenth century. The events at Thane overlapped with the mission into Asia of another Franciscan, Odoric of Pordenone (Odorico da Pordenone).²² Around 1322 or 1323, Odoric had followed the friars on their route toward China. At Thane he collected their

remains, bringing them for reburial at Andrew of Perugia's community in Quanzhou. In Udine, now in the Civic Museum, there are fragmented scenes from a fifteenth-century cycle that present these events; again, there are likely to have been other representations.²³

Images like those at San Fermo Maggiore might seem most striking for their *lack* of any exoticizing reference, but their goal was to fit the new encounters in Asia into existing Christian narratives of mission and martyrdom—to frame the foreign and unknown through familiar models. Yet, and to conclude, there is some evidence to think that cultural contact, and some mutual intelligibility, could and did exist around the Latin missions.

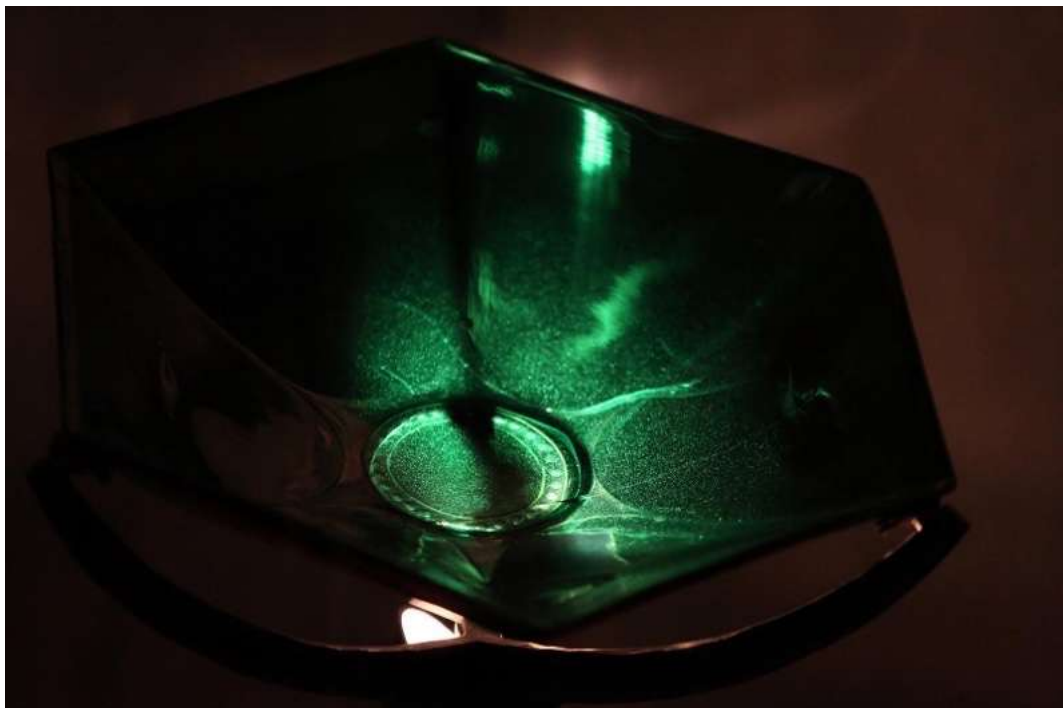


Fig. 5. Eastern Mesopotamia. *Sacro Catino*. Greatest width c. 40 cm. 1st century CE? Genoa, Museo del Tesoro di San Lorenzo.

Most basically, in his short letters, John of Montecorvino's descriptions of the Dadu mission suggest a polysemic space. The cross on the church was red, an auspicious color locally; further, he had six images made with scenes

from the Old and New Testament, labelled in Latin, Persian (a mercantile *lingua franca* among other things) and what he called “Tatar,” presumably either the Mongol of the court or a Turkic language, like Uighur, used by the Mongol elites. Though the images may have been painted in the church, it is possible that they were done on cloth for use in public preaching and as the friars moved. This too would have been meaningful in both local and Latin visual terms. Cloth images associated with the Church of the East and Buddhist thangkas were a local precedent, but images on cloth are also recorded in trecento Franciscan communities in the regions around Venice and elsewhere.²⁴

Though the friars often cast the larger and established Church of the East as adversaries, there is at least one object, not normally linked to the mission *ad tartaros*, that underlines how much common ground there was between them, in both cultic and aesthetic terms. It is a large green glass dish in Genoa, known as the *sacro catino*, studied and restored in 2016.²⁵ Its intense green color comes from the presence of iron in the raw materials, and also, more unusually, from copper, possibly introduced by melting bronze into the mixture as it was repeatedly poured into a large mould and left to cool. Both the production technique and the chemical composition of the glass link it to eastern Mesopotamia, but the date of manufacture remains uncertain. It may have been made as early as the first or second century CE.²⁶

In the Middle Ages, however, the green dish in Genoa was linked directly to Christ’s own institution of Christian mission. Rather than glass, it was said to be made from a single giant emerald, and to have been used at the Last Supper before being carried into Europe after the 1099 seizure of Jerusalem in the first Crusade. This story is recorded by an eye-witness in 1287, who described it as:

a six-sided paten, made of emerald, and the people there told (us) that it was this paten from which our Lord ate the Passover with His disciples, and that it was brought there when Jerusalem was captured.²⁷

Like the Bible now in Florence, the *qingbai* in Dublin, or the Quanzhou stone, the *catino* has moved and changed identities repeatedly over its long life. It has no direct link to Yuan China, where glass was in any case rare. Yet this 1287 account was originally written in Persian and translated in the early fourteenth century into Syriac; the writer was a monk of the Church of the East called Rabban Bar Sauma, and he had come to Genoa from Dadu, the Yuan capital. Bar Sauma was probably an ethnic Uighur with family roots in Central Asia ('Rabban' means master or teacher). He was in Genoa because, having travelled west from Beijing with a companion, he had been sent as an envoy to the Pope and Christian Europe on behalf of the Mongol ruler of Persia and Western Asia, the Ilkhan Arghun. As an honored guest, he was shown the *sacro catino*, and he clearly valued it both for its precious materials and as a relic just as any local Christian might have done.

With Bar Sauma standing before the *catino*, we also come full circle, since his embassy to the pope was a direct spur for the China missions. When Giovanni da Montecorvino left Europe to reach Yuan Dadu, he carried letters from Pope Nicholas IV to the Ilkhan and to the Patriarch of the Church of the East, Bar Sauma's own disciple and friend.²⁸

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Endnotes

1. This research has been drawn from my Australian Research Council Discovery Project (2019-2022), "Eurasian exchange and artistic change in Italy, c. 1250-1450."
 2. John Foster, "Crosses from the Walls of Zaitun," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (April 1954): 17-20.
 3. The basic source is *Sinica franciscana. Itinera et relationes Fratrum Minorum saeculi XIII et XIV*, vol. 1, ed. Anastatius van den Wyngaert (Florence (Ad claras aquas): Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1929). See also Thomas Tanase, "*Jusqu'aux limites du monde.*" *La papauté et la mission franciscaine, de l'Asie de Marco Polo à l'Amérique de Christophe Colomb* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2013), and for English translations of key texts: Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
 4. The fundamental study is Lauren Arnold, *Princely Gifts and Papal Treasures: The Franciscan Mission to China and its Influence on the Art of the West 1250-1350* (San Francisco: Desiderata Press, 1999). On Quanzhou, there is now also Roxann Prazniak, *Sudden Appearances: The Mongol Turn in Commerce, Belief, and Art* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 199-221 and nts. Liu Shiqiu (an author in this volume) is currently completing a PhD at the University of Melbourne that will include the Quanzhou material.
 5. Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991): 34.
 6. Norbert Hintersteiner et al., "Mission Studies in Contact Zones," *Mission Studies* 38 (2021): 1-4; see also the essays in Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *A Companion to the Early Modern Catholic Global Missions* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).
 7. For an overview: Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West 1221-1410* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005).
 8. In 1318 a second archbishopric was created at Soltaniyeh, recently made the capital of the Persian Ilkhanate; another see emerged beyond the Mongol-ruled states, in Kollam (Quilon, India, where the friars often landed and embarked) in 1330.
 9. Montecorvino wrote three letters that survive. Two of these, from 1306, concern the Dadu mission and are the major source on it. For translations: Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, 224-31.
 10. To cite only recent work in English: *The World of Khubilai Khan*, eds. James C.Y. Watts et al (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010); Jennifer Purtle, "The Far Side: Expatriate Medieval Art and Its Languages in Sino-Mongol China," in *Confronting the Borders of Medieval Art*, eds. Jill Caskey et al (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 167-97; Shane McCausland, *The Mongol Century: Visual Cultures of Yuan China, 1271-1368* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015).
 11. McCausland, *The Mongol Century*, 29-31.
 12. Tjalling H.F. Halbertsma, *Early Christian Remains of Inner Mongolia: Discovery, Reconstruction, and Appropriation* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 38-46.
 13. Arnold, *Princely Gifts*, 76, who also notes (137-9) that a church near Nanjing may have been incorporated into the monastery complex and tomb of the first Ming emperor as Wuliang Hall at Linggu (Spirit Valley) Temple. This suggestion is not accepted for instance by Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2019), 221-3.
 14. Halbertsma, *Early Christian Remains*, 135-44 and 251-70.
 15. *In via in saecula. La Bibbia di Marco Polo tra Europa e Cina* (Rome: Treccani, 2012).
 16. For a development of this reading, Purtle, "The Far Side," 184-9.
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17. Foster, "Crosses from the Walls," 18, who also noted the doubts expressed by the sinologist A.J. Moule: "Conjecture, even if based on wishful thinking, is a most legitimate and valuable thing, so long as it is not put down as fact; but I cannot get even as far as conjecture." Lieu et al., *Medieval Christian and Manichean Remains*, 130, noted the difficulties of reading the inscription as now displayed, and simply reproduced Foster's transcription.
18. Iain Gardner, Samuel Lieu, and Ken Parry, eds. *From Palmrya to Zayton: Epigraphy and Iconography* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 226.
19. Zsombor Jékely, "The Budapest Drawing of the Fonthill Vase," *Ars Decorativa* 34 (2020): 7-17. It is often called the Fonthill (or Fonthill-Gaignières) vase from its provenance in these eighteenth and nineteenth century collections.
20. Eugene Wang, "Why Was There No Chinese Painting of Marco Polo? The Vexed Art of Intimacy," in *The Itineraries of Art: Topographies of Artistic Mobility in Europe and Asia*, eds. Karin Gludovatz, Juliane Noth, Joachim Ree. 85-105. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015.
21. Louise Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 46-50, who notes that there are further fragments beyond an inserted sixteenth-century chapel, possibly from earlier scenes in the same cycle: a bearded and haloed friar, a figure with his hands tied before him, and traces of a throne. For this cycle and those discussed below, see: Anne Dunlop, "Mongol Eurasia in the Trecento Veneto," *Convivium* 7.1, (2020): 122-4.
22. The critical edition is Odorico da Pordenone, *Relatio de mirabilibus orientalium tatarorum*, ed. Annalia Marchisio (Florence: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2016); see also *Sinica franciscana*, 381-495.
23. For detailed images of the cycle and a series of studies, see now Cesare Scaloni, ed. *San Francesco di Udine. Un monumento da salvare e riscoprire*, vol. 1 (Udine: Gaspari, 2020).
24. Purtle, "The Far Side," 192-3.
25. Marco Verità et al., "The Sacro Catino in Genoa," *Journal of Glass Studies* 60, (2018): 115-28.
26. Ingeborg Krüger, "Zu einigen großen Smaragden aus Glas," *Journal of Glass Studies* 53, (2011): 118.
27. Pier Giorgio Borbone, "A 13th-Century Journey from China to Europe. The 'Story of Mar Yahballaha and Rabban Sauma,'" *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* 31, (2008): 231.
28. Halbertsma, *Early Christian Remains*, 43-4.

From Cartography to Christian Iconography: Giulio Aleni's Cosmological Images and Jesuit Science in 17th-Century China

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to examine the process of Giulio Aleni's (1582–1649) construction of his system of cosmological images from cartography to iconography and to discuss how his works coordinated with previous and contemporary Jesuit publications. It will analyze how Jesuit world maps paved the way for the Chinese audience's understanding of the Christian visual arts, grasp the differences between Aleni's cosmology and other cosmological theories in late Ming China, and interpret the symbolic meaning of the world picture Aleni portrayed in his works. Taking Aleni as an example, this project intends to re-examine the introduction of European cosmology and worldview through Jesuit visual devices from the perspectives of art history and science history.

KEYWORDS

Jesuits; World Map; Cosmology; Scientific Imagery; Early Modern China

The Icon of Tianzhu and the Cosmos in Aleni's *Jingjie*

Aleni was the founder of the Catholic Church in Fujian Province. Like his predecessors and contemporaries, he was a missionary-scholar who published a series of Christian and scholarly treatises, among which the most important one might be his illustrated treatise of Gospel stories titled *Tianzhu jiangsheng chuxiang jingjie* ("Scriptural Explanations on the Incarnation of the Lord of Heaven with Selected Illustrations," 1637, hereafter cited as *Jingjie*), an adaptation of Jérôme Nadal's (1507–1580) *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (1593, hereafter cited as *EHI*).

Although Christian visual arts produced in China were not unprecedented before the production of Aleni's *Jingjie*, it is still the first treatise published in China which functioned as the equivalent of the Gospels.¹ The term "Tianzhu" in the title, which literally means the Lord of Heaven, is the Chinese translation of Deus or God, or his incarnate hypostasis, Jesus Christ. When Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) referred to "Deus" as "Tianzhu" in his translation of the Ten Commandments and in his catechism *Tianzhu shiyi* ("The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven," c. 1607), he intended to help Chinese people better understand the Christian faith and underline the supremacy, omnipresence, and omnipotence of God through the appropriation of their worship of Heaven.²

The image on the frontispiece of *Jingjie*, entitled *Tianzhu jiangsheng shengxiang* ("The Sacred Image of the Incarnation of the Lord of Heaven," Image 1), is a woodcut replica of Hieronymus Wierix's (1548–1624) engraving of the Salvator Mundi.³ It indicates a half-length bust of Tianzhu facing the spectator, with his right hand making a gesture of blessing and his left hand resting on a globus cruciger, a traditional symbol of authority, which depicts a pattern of the cosmos. This woodcut indeed can be recognized as an icon of the Salvator Mundi according to its attributes, but the poem under it identifies the person in the woodcut as the creator and ruler of heaven, earth, humans, and everything else in the world, and emphasizes his omnipotence and transcendence beyond space and time.⁴



Fig. 1. *Tianzhu jiangsheng shengxiang*, In Giulio Aleni, *Jingjie*, 1637, woodcut, folio 4 recto, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, UK. Photograph by the author, credit to Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, UK.

This poem was originally an independent work written by the Chinese convert Xu Leshan (1548–1627). By appropriating it to annotate this icon of Tianzhu, Aleni attenuated the eschatological implication of the icon and induced the audience to understand Tianzhu from the perspective of

creationism. Therefore, the orb with a cosmos pattern becomes the metaphor of the world created and ruled by Tianzhu. The essential knowledge for the Chinese spectator to understand the metaphor, namely the heaven and earth are spherical, as they are represented in the orb, is already implied in Jesuit world maps published previously.

The New Knowledge of Heaven and Earth in Jesuit World Maps

Aleni first visualized the knowledge of spherical earth in his world map *Wanguo quantu* (“The Completed Map of Ten Thousand Countries,” 1620, Image 2), which is adapted from Ricci’s famous 1602 world map *Kunyu wanguo quantu* (“The Completed Terrestrial Map of Ten Thousand Countries”). However, this knowledge is incompatible with the traditional Chinese cosmology Tian Yuan Di Fang (“Round Sky and Square Earth”).

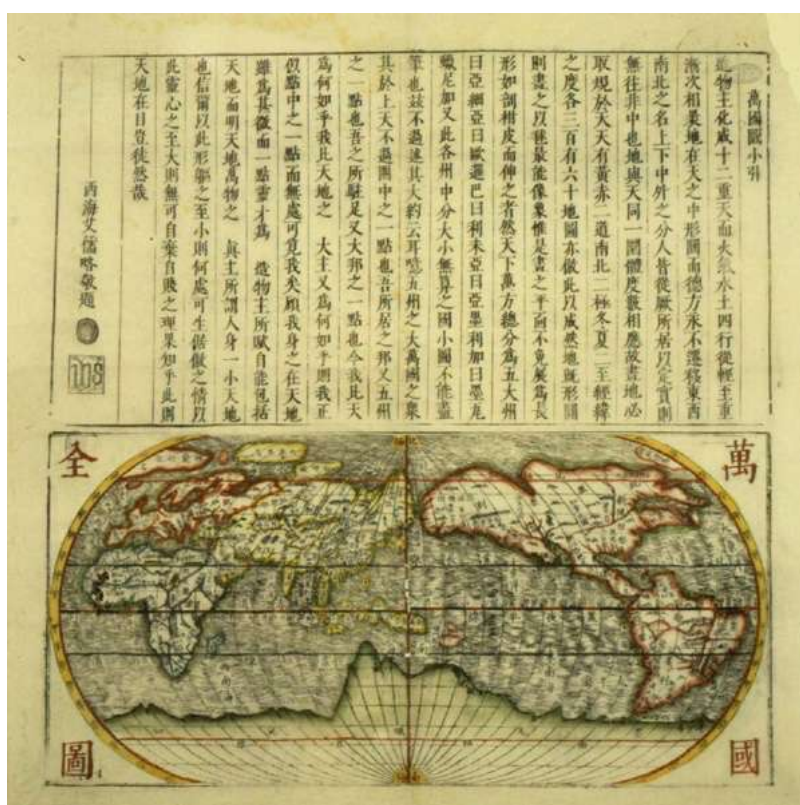


Fig. 2. Giulio Aleni, *Wanguo quantu*, 1620, woodcut on colored paper, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City.

The idea Tian Yuan Di Fang is embodied in the earliest and largest surviving colored Chinese world map *Da Ming Hunyi Tu* (“The Amalgamated Map of the Great Ming,” c. 1389, Image 3), in which the Ming Empire is in the center, which also indicates the center of earth and heaven. Its layout is portrayed as a square, suggesting order and civilization; by contrast, foreign countries in the West and the East are all small and in a state of disorder.⁵ In this kind of map, “China” or Zhongguo becomes what this title means: the Middle Kingdom. This contrast is especially true at the thought of the discriminatory title for the foreigners: Manyi (“Barbarians”). When Jesuits like Ricci and Aleni were recorded in Chinese documents, sometimes they were still given this title.⁶ The Northern Song scholar Shi Jie’s (1005–1045) words can further illustrate this thought: “The sky is above, and the ground is below; in the center of heaven and earth is the Middle Kingdom (i.e. China), and outside the center are barbarians of the four directions.”⁷ This statement indicates that premodern Chinese believed they are located in the center of the cosmos. In consideration of this idea, to convince the highly-proud Chinese people that the deity Tianzhu from the faraway Western civilization is the supreme master of the cosmos, Aleni had to break not only the cosmological idea of Tian Yuan Di Fang, but also the Sinocentric worldview. And his means is the world map.



Fig. 3. Anonymous cartographer(s), *Da Ming Hunyi Tu*, c. 1389, stiff silk, 347×453 cm, The First Historical Archives of China, Beijing, China.

The first illustration in Aleni's geographical treatise *Zhifang waiji* ("Unofficial Records of the Foreign Countries," 1623) is a reduced version of his world map *Wanguo quantu*, followed by the hemisphere maps of the northern and southern poles, which visually proves that earth is a sphere. Aleni also added two diagrams of solar and lunar eclipses to indicate the relative positions of earth, sun, and moon in the cosmos. Before these illustrations are two introductory articles by Aleni. The first one at the beginning demonstrates that Tianzhu is the creator of humankind and the cosmos.

The second is an introduction to the geographical information in the world map, which clearly states that: "Since earth is spherical, there is no place which cannot be the center (of earth)."⁸ The combination of image and text become a powerful proof of and challenge to the irrationality of Ming people's cosmological idea Tian Yuan Di Fang and Sinocentric worldview.⁹ The formula of Ricci's and Aleni's world maps derives from Abraham Ortelius's (1527–1598) oval projection in his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570).¹⁰ Both of their maps function as visual media to convey the European worldview, which is rational, scientific, universal, and Christian. By re-arranging China in the European-format world maps, Aleni was meant to assimilate China as a part of the world picture established by the Europeans.

The preface to his *Wanguo quantu* can be regarded as a miniature of his geographical treatise *Zhifang waiji*, in which Aleni briefly introduced how Tianzhu created the twelve layers of the spherical cosmos, and then further emphasized the idea of spherical earth composed of five continents (i.e. Asia, Europe, Africa, America and Magallanica).¹¹ This statement presents a profile of the geocentric model in the Aristotelian-Scholastic cosmology and the European worldview in the Age of Discovery, and attributes everything in the cosmos to the Creator, which is the identity of Tianzhu that Aleni demonstrated with the icon on the frontispiece of *Jingjie*. Thus, his world map not only paved the way for the Chinese audience's understanding of Christian visual art, but also challenged the Chinese people's Sinocentrism and conventional cosmological thought.

Cosmological Theories in the Late Ming Dynasty

Aleni's emphasis on Tianzhu's identity as the Creator reflects the paramount problem in the early phase of the Jesuit China missions of the existence of an omnipotent deity, namely Tianzhu, the creator and ruler of the cosmos, that the Jesuits were attempting to prove. However, Neo-Confucianism, the orthodox philosophy and ideology of the late Ming Dynasty, rejected the existence of anthropomorphic deities and other kinds of mysticism, supernaturalism, and irrational elements in religions, cosmology, and metaphysics.¹² The late-Ming Chinese scholars argued that the reason for the inchoation and evolution of the cosmos is rooted in everything itself rather than ruled by a supreme deity.¹³

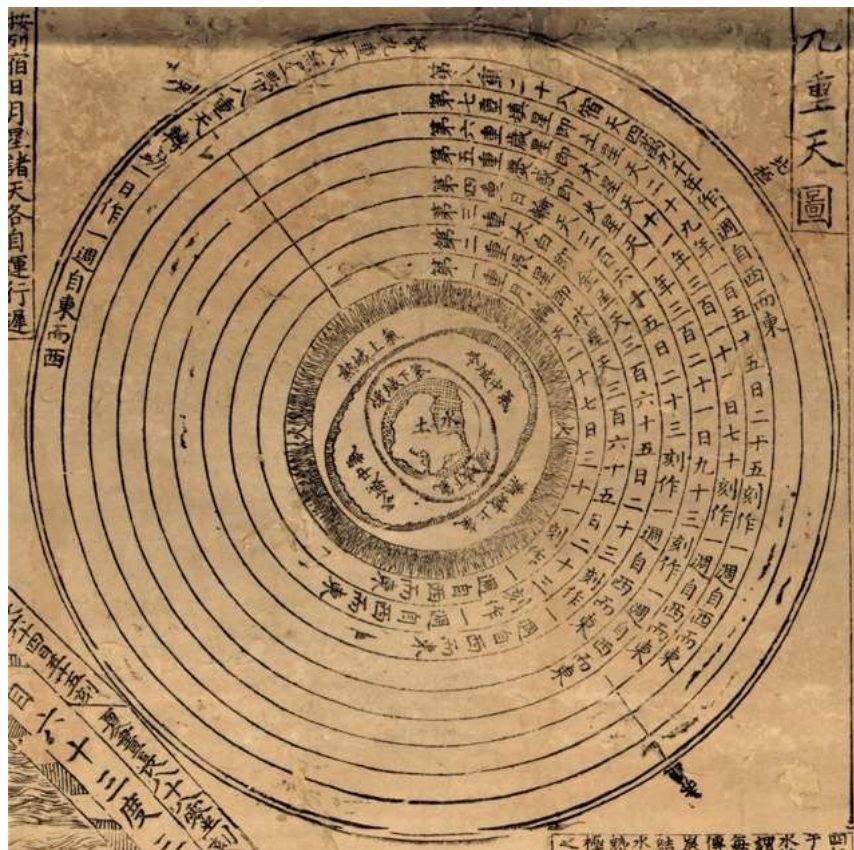


Fig. 4. *Jiuchong tian tu*, in Matteo Ricci, *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, 1602, woodcut, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., USA

Under this circumstance, in his catechism *Wanwu zhenyuan* (“The True Origin of Ten Thousand Things,” 1628), Aleni also introduced the geocentric model in the Aristotelian-Scholastic cosmology in order to refute the Neo-Confucian cosmology, and used Thomas Aquinas’s (1225–1274) “*Quinque viæ*” to prove the existence of Tianzhu.¹⁴ His cosmology is stemmed from the Jesuit principal astronomer Christopher Clavius (1538–1612), whose cosmological theory is a revision of Johannes de Sacrobosco’s (c. 1195–c. 1256) theory. The impact of Clavius’s cosmological theory on the China-based Jesuits is evident in their visualizations of the cosmos, exemplified by Ricci’s *Jiuchong tian tu* (“Diagram of the Nine Layers of Heaven,” Image 4), which is a combination of two diagrams in Clavius’s commentary on Sacrobosco’s *De sphaera mundi* (c. 1230).¹⁵

Aleni witnessed an unprecedented calendric-astronomical reform in the Ming Dynasty. During the reign of the Wanli Emperor (1573–1620, r. 1573–1620), several major astronomical prediction mistakes and the expansion of calendar error ushered Chinese astronomy and calendar towards a crisis.¹⁶ In 1611, under the advice of the officials of the Board of Rites, represented by the famous convert Xu Guangqi (1562–1633), the Ming Empire decided to carry out a calendric-astronomical reform by absorbing European astronomical science.

The core astronomical consultants of this reform are the Jesuits Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1591–1666), Giacomo Rho (1593–27 April 1638) and Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688), all of whom were deeply affected by Tycho Brahe’s (1546–1601) astronomical observations and cosmological theory.¹⁷ With their efforts, the Tyconic system, a geoheliocentric model, replaced the Ptolemaic system and Chinese traditional cosmological theories as the Ming Empire official explanation of the structure of the cosmos. When Aleni published his *Jingjie*, the orthodox status of the Tyconic system has been demonstrated in *Chongzhen lishu* (“The Chongzhen Almanac”), the collective title for the Western astronomical and mathematical works translated during this reform.

It seems that the reform did not affect Aleni’s cosmological theory, which is still based upon the Ptolemaic system. Nevertheless, Aleni should be

very familiar with this reform and the astronomical achievements at that time, since his mathematical treatise *Jihe yaofa* (“The Key Theories of Geometry,” 1628) was included in *Chongzhen Lishu* and he was still teaching European astronomy to the local lay believers in Fujian, even though he was immersed in missionary works during the period of this reform.¹⁸ According to a story recorded in the Jesuit biographical treatise *Kouduo richao* (“The Daily Record of Oral Instructions,” 1630–1640), a Chinese lay believer used to hold an armillary sphere and asked Aleni and his colleague Andrius Rudamina (1594–1632) about astronomy, and Rudamina explained to him the structure of the cosmos based on the Tychonic system rather than the Ptolemaic system:

The Sun has two types of rotation, one is auto-rotation on its own celestial layer, and another is rotation driven by the Primum Mobile. Its auto-rotation is from the West to the East, [...], one round per year. The rotation driven by the Primum Mobile is from the East to the West, [...], one round per day.¹⁹

This episode also reflects the cosmological debate in the Catholic Church: because of the Galileo Affair, the Roman Catholic Church issued a ban against Copernicanism in 1616. For the Jesuits in China, it has become their duty to fight against the heliocentric model and defend the special status of earth in the cosmos.²⁰ However, for the science-driven Jesuits working for the reform at the court, the Ptolemaic system is no longer fit for purpose as the weapon to retort the Copernicanism, as this century-old geocentric model has already been questioned by many European astronomers. Compared with the Ptolemaic and Copernican systems, astronomical observations based upon Brahe’s geoheliocentric model can give the most accurate data at that time.²¹ Therefore, the Tychonic system became an ideal replacement for the Ptolemaic system: it could balance Heliocentrism and geocentrism on both the religious and scientific levels.

Aleni’s insistence on the Ptolemaic system in his religious works can be explained from the perspective of pragmatism. As an indispensable attribute of Tianzhu’s identity as the Creator and supreme master of the cosmos, Aleni had to maintain the conventional geocentric pattern of the

cosmos in *Jingjie* to convey the symbolic meaning of the icon. With a glance to the function of his *Jingjie* as the visual device to evangelize the Chinese people, especially the illiterates, Aleni should avoid any potential risks that may cause the bewilderment of the Christian faith among them. This can explain why Aleni did not mention in his treatises the Tychonic system nor disproving the Ptolemaic system, and just adopted the pattern of the cosmos in Wierix's engraving instead of portraying a more accurate cosmological diagram. As a pragmatist, Aleni in his works presents the most “appropriate” cosmology, instead of the most “accurate” one.²²

The Symbolic Meaning of Aleni's Cosmological Images

The icon on the frontispiece depicts the juxtaposition of Tianzhu and the cosmos. This image appears once again in the last illustration of *Jingjie*, which is entitled *Madonna Coronated and Sitting Above All Angels and Saints* (Image 5).

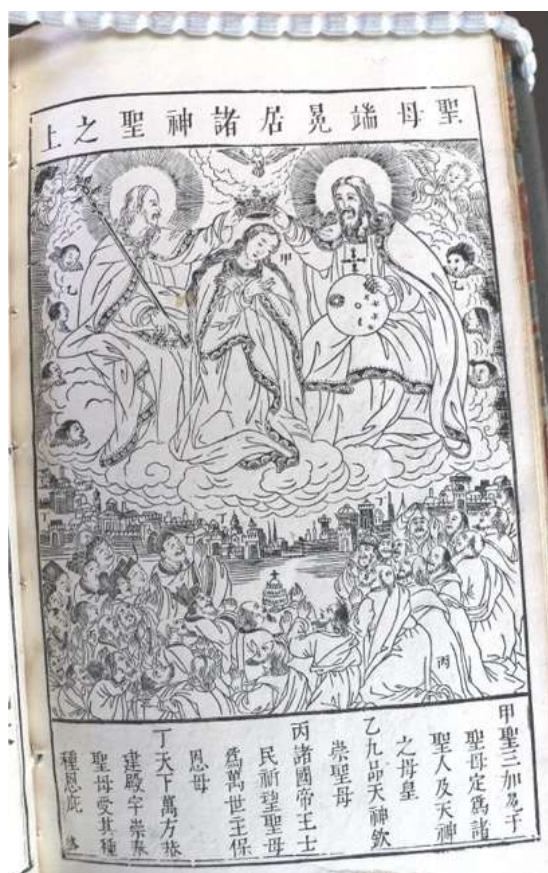


Fig. 5. *Madonna Coronated and Sitting Above All Angels and Saints*, In Giulio Aleni, *Jingjie*, 1637, woodcut, folio 19 verso, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, UK. Photograph by the author, credit to Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, UK.

According to Aleni's annotations, this illustration can be divided into four sections, containing "St Trinity coronates Madonna as the Empress of All Saints and Angels," surrounded by "The angels of nine hierarchies worshipping Madonna," beneath are "Monarchs and citizens of all countries praying Madonna becoming the Heavenly Protector Mother of all ages," behind are "People of all directions in the world building temples to worship Madonna and receiving her benediction."²³ The icon on the frontispiece, namely Tianzhu holding the celestial orb, is portrayed on the top right of the illustration as a constituent of the first section.

Despite the large adaptation on the lower half of the illustration, it is still possible to recognize that this illustration, especially the top half, is derived from the last engraving of Nadal's *EHI*. Aleni omitted the middle part of the original engraving depicting the Assumption of the Virgin, and added a group of Chinese lay believers, including the Ming Emperor, elites, and ordinary people, worshipping the coronation of the Virgin. In this woodcut, the Chinese believers on the left and the European believers on the right become the personification of the encounter between the Eastern and the Western civilizations.

The East and the West have encountered in Aleni's world map *Wanguo quantu*, in which he disproves China's Sinocentrism based on the cosmological idea Tian Yuan Di Fang to demonstrate Tianzhu's supreme status. This theological implication used to be covered up by the practical function of the world map as a geographical material, and now it is visually revealed in the woodcut.²⁴ By picturing the monarchs of the East and the West worshipping Madonna and Tianzhu, Aleni underlined the equality between the two civilizations, and made the originally non-Christian country, China, Christianized. In the preface to his world map, Aleni, after pointing out that Tianzhu is the Creator, has demonstrated the tininess of individuals and earthly countries in front of the supreme power of Tianzhu.²⁵ The last illustration of his *Jingjie* is therefore a visual supplement to the statement in his world map, and claims that, even for a powerful person like the Ming Emperor, who is regarded as "Tianzi" ("the Son of Heaven"), he still needed to worship Tianzhu, the Lord of Heaven.

However, in this illustration, the Chinese believers and their Western counterparts are separated from Tianzhu by the clouds in the middle, which symbolizes the borderline between the earthly and heavenly worlds.²⁶ As Aleni states at the end of the preface to his world map, although the physical bodies of humans are minuscule compared with heaven and earth, the souls, as the endowments from Tianzhu, are so great that can comprehend the cosmos and understand Tianzhu; we human beings, as the beings created and endowed by Tianzhu, should not be arrogant nor self-contemptuous, because we are inherently linked with Tianzhu.²⁷ Whereas the physical association between humans and Tianzhu in the illustration is blocked by the clouds, humans' worship and prayer can make them linked with Tianzhu on spiritual level.

In order to demonstrate the power of prayer and worship, Aleni depicts the lay believers having a "Vision" of the heavenly world and seeing the scene of the Coronation of the Virgin in person. Madonna in this woodcut is depicted as the Powerful Queen of Heaven, a characterization of the Virgin emphasized in the Catholic Church after the Council of Trent (1545–1563).²⁸ The emphasis on the worship of the Virgin in the Society of Jesus can be traced back to Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), who used to have a Vision of the Virgin holding the Child in her arms.²⁹ The China-based Jesuits also kept propagandizing the worship of the Virgin among the Chinese people, but this also encouraged some Chinese believers to misunderstand the God in the Christian faith as a woman.³⁰ While depicting the scene of the Virgin being coronated by St Trinity as the Queen of Heaven, Aleni clarified that the power of the Virgin comes not from herself but from Tianzhu. The supreme status of Tianzhu in the Christian hierarchical system is further stressed by the pattern of the cosmos in his celestial orb, which the original engraving does not include. With the added pattern, Aleni claims that Tianzhu is the ruler of heaven and earth on the physical and religious levels, which echoes the cosmological statement in his catechism.³¹

Contents of the illustration from top to bottom, containing Tianzhu, the crown, the Virgin as the Queen of Heaven, the Papal tiara, and the lay believers of the East and the West, function as a visual guide to tell the

audience of *Jingjie* how Tianzhu's benediction transmits from the heavenly world to the earthly world. At the same time, it also instructs the lay believers the correct way to receive the benediction from Tianzhu and understand him, which is to worship and pray to Tianzhu and the Virgin as the Queen of Heaven under the witness and the guidance of the Catholic Church.

Conclusion

From cartography to Christian iconography, Aleni reconfigured a system of cosmological images by adapting previous well-known Jesuit visual sources to his own missionary work and the sociocultural context of the Ming Empire so as to stress the omnipotence and supremacy of Tianzhu and evangelize his Chinese audience through the visualizations of the Christian cosmos. This marked the beginning of a global cosmological imagery. Evident in his cosmological images, his theological imperatives distinguish his strategy from that of his collaborators in the service of the court and at work on the calendric-astronomical reform of the Ming Empire. The different ways in which the European cosmological theories were visualized in subsequent publications also reveal the constant interaction between religion and science in the Jesuit China missions.

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3. Paul Rheinbay, "Nadal's Religious Iconography Reinterpreted by Aleni for China," in *Scholar from the West: Giulio Aleni S.J. (1582–1649) and the Dialogue between Christianity and China*, ed. Tiziana Lippiello and Roman Malek (Brescia: Fondazione civiltà bresciana; Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute, 1997), 323–34.
4. For the full translation of the poem, see Sun, "Presentations of Jesus Christ from Ricci to Aleni," 480–81.
5. Wang Qianjin, Hu Qisong and Liu Ruofang, "A Study of *Da ming hunyi tu*," in *Ancient Chinese Atlas: Ming Dynasty*, ed. Cao Wanru, Zheng Xihuang, etc. (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 1994), 5–27.
6. Jacques Gernet, *Chine et Christianisme: La Première Confrontation*, trans. Geng Sheng (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2013), 163–64.
7. Translated by the author. For the original text, see Shi Jie, *The Collection of the Works by Mr. Shi of Zulai*, Vol. 10 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984), 116.
8. Translated by the author. For the original text, see Giulio Aleni, *Zhifang wajiji*, in *The Collection of Giulio Aleni's Chinese Works (Collated and Punctuated Edition)*, collated and punctuated by Ye Nong (Macao: Macao Culture and Art Association, 2012), 12.
9. Event though, sinocentrism was still an important national character of China until the nineteenth century, and the impact of Jesuit world maps on Chinese cartography was very limited; see Richard J. Smith, *Mapping China and Managing the World: Culture, Cartography and Cosmology in Late Imperial Times* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2013), 62–75.
10. Peter Van der Krogt, "The Theatrum Orbis Terrarum: The First Atlas?," in *Abraham Ortelius and the First Atlas: Essays Commemorating the Quadricentennial of his Death 1598-1998*, ed. Marcel van den Broecke, Peter van der Krogt and Peter Meurer (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1998), 60.
11. Giulio Aleni, *Wanguo quantu*, in *The Collection of Giulio Aleni's Chinese Works (Collated and Punctuated Edition)*, collated and punctuated by Ye Nong (Macao: Macao Culture and Art Association, 2012), 3.
12. The relationship between Neo-Confucianism and Chinese religions is very complicated. See Siu-chi Huang, *Essentials of Neo-Confucianism: Eight Major Philosophers of the Song and Ming Periods* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 5.
13. Zhiming Song and Deyuan Huang, "Achievements, Predicaments and Trend of Moral

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 16. Benjamin A. Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 73–76.
 17. Elman, *On Their Own Terms*, 83–84.
 18. Aleni’s *Jihe yaofa* was more influential than Ricci and Xu’s translation of Euclid’s (fl. 300 BC) *Elements* in the seventeenth century. See Elman, *On Their Own Terms*, 98.
 19. Translated by the author. For the original text, see Giulio Aleni, etc., *Kouduo richao*, in *The Collection of Giulio Aleni's Chinese Works (Collated and Punctuated Edition)*, collated and punctuated by Ye Nong (Macao: Macao Culture and Art Association, 2012), 406.
 20. For the impact of the Galileo Affair on Chinese astronomy, see Nathan Sivin, “Copernicus in China,” in *Science in Ancient China: Researches and Reflections*, vol. 4, ed. Nathan Sivin (Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1995), 14–16.
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 22. This proselytizing strategy was established by Ricci. See Yu Liu, “The Intricacies of Accommodation: The Proselytizing Strategy of Matteo Ricci,” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Dec., 2008): 465–87.
 23. Translated by the author. For the original text, see Giulio Aleni, *Tianzhu jiangsheng chuxiang jingjie*, in *The Collection of Giulio Aleni's Chinese Works (Collated and Punctuated Edition)*, collated and punctuated by Ye Nong (Macao: Macao Culture and Art Association, 2012): 356.
 24. Although some Chinese scholar-officials had realized the missionary purpose in Jesuit world maps, they were more interested in the new method for picturing the world and the foreign worldview behind it. See David Emil Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800* (Lanham [etc.]: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009): 38–53.
 25. Aleni, *Wanguo quantu*, 3.
 26. For the symbolic meaning of clouds in religious art, see Hubert Damisch, *Théorie du nuage. Pour une histoire de la peinture*, trans. Dong Qiang (Nanjing: Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House, 2014), 159–204.
 27. Aleni, *Wanguo quantu*, 3. For the full translation of this paragraph, see Hui-hung Chen, “The Human Body as a Universe: Understanding Heaven by Visualization and Sensibility in Jesuit Cartography in China,” *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 93, No. 3 (Jul., 2007): 518.
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 30. Many Chinese people also misunderstood the Virgin as a variant of Guanyin, the Chinese transformation of Avalokiteśvara; see Jeremy Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 24–31.
 31. Aleni, *Wanwu zhenyuan*, 185.

Missions of Gold and Purity: Migrating Images from Portugal to America (XVII-XVIII centuries)

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ABSTRACT

Portuguese agents in Bahia, Brazil, in 1500. Important discoveries led to an intense gold rush from the Atlantic coast inland to Minas Gerais.

This paper concerns ideas about purity, mental images, and visual images that migrated to Minas Gerais in the "mission" that encompassed material gain (through precious metals and stones), the Christianization of this society, and the development of urban settlements with countless altars, fostered by different groups. Unlike other missionary efforts in Christianity, this one seldom had access to printed images and books since typography was forbidden in Portuguese America.

I am interested in specific notions of purity that encompass the alleged value of human beings and nature in several aspects, such as the appraisal of metals ("white gold" as opposed to "black gold") and genealogical lineage. These became associated with Mary's privilege of an Immaculate Conception without the stain of sin. I endeavor to explain aesthetic practices, visual appearances, and functions of a few objects of visual culture in this realm.

KEYWORDS

Catholicism; Imperialism; Goldrush; Colonial Brazil; the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary

One can hardly overestimate the importance of the late seventeenth-century discovery of gold, silver and precious stones in Minas Gerais, which became the most important region of the Portuguese Empire. From 1700, Brazil took the place that formerly belonged to Mexico and Peru as providers of precious metals: throughout the eighteenth century, over 800 tons of pure gold were exported from Portuguese America towards Europe¹. This goldrush "mission" carried political, economic, ethnic and cultural ideologies that – in just a few decades – transformed not only border regions but, moreover, the geopolitical migrations of the Atlantic.

Mission in Minas became a vehicle of formal and informal migration. A different configuration of Catholicism emerged, centered in parishes in villages and chapels that congregated lay associations such as confraternities, guilds, and third Orders. In Minas, the Crown forbade the presence of monasteries and convents – the main artistic centers in cities by the coast – since these had a fiscal exemption.

The main patron saint of 74 parishes of the colonial period in Minas (over 20%) was Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, or simply *Imaculada*². No other region in Brazil had a similar percentage of parishes dedicated to her³. Minas became the center of an immaculist cult in Brazil, incomparable to other inland regions that also developed in the eighteenth century, such as Goiás and Mato Grosso. Each parish had several ornate altars with wooden sculptures, including the most special one of the patron saint upon the main altar. The foundation of a parish – and also of its fraternities – depended not only on catholic clergy but also on royal permission and approval. Patronage of the arts depended, therefore, on royal donations as well as on the local community.

Society in Minas also presented gender and ethnic features that became more evident there than in social contexts by the Atlantic coast. Women were scarce in the early years of mining and eventually there was a predominance of "black" and mulatto women, both slaves and emancipated slaves⁴. "White" women were rare. Minas Gerais, the most populated captaincy in Brazil (20,5% of colonial society), witnessed one of the highest rates of "black" and mixed-race individuals. "White" individuals ranked only

22,1% of the population of Minas in 1776, and 25,5% in 1821⁵. Other social traits in Minas stand out as singularities in the first captaincy founded in geographic isolation from the Atlantic coast: the prevalence of families with an absent father figure (who was often involved in mining), urban life⁶⁶⁶ with accelerated migrations. Consequences of the gold rush included the Crown's heavy taxation on mineral extractions, poverty, prostitution, and riots (the Emboabas war in 1707-09 and in 1720, revolts in Pitangui and in the capital, Vila Rica). In this scenario, both the Church and the Crown promoted Marian devotion as a vehicle to foster obedience towards both institutions, ideally within families perpetuating Portuguese culture (and not only single "black" or mulatto mothers with the undesired offspring of their forced prostitution as slaves)⁷.

King John V (1659-1750) nourished a personal devotion regarding the Immaculate Conception that informed his patronage of the arts and of new foundations, such as that of the Royal Academy of History in Portugal. In the 1720's, many churches dedicated to the *Imaculada* were raised to the status of parishes in Portuguese America. Many books focusing on Mary's Conception and family — sermons, above all — were also published at this time. These tendencies reflected John V's recommendation in 1717 that the liturgical feast of the *Imaculada* (8 December) be celebrated with even greater solemnity and ostentation. He commissioned a "huge silver-gilt" life-size statue of the *Imaculada* for the patriarchal church in Lisbon, made in "*puro argento dorato*" by artists in Rome⁸.

Royal devotion perpetuated King John IV's attitude as "faithful vassal" and "protector" of the Immaculate Conception. John IV (1604 -1656) proclaimed her to become the Patron of the Kingdom, its domains and the monarchy since 1646. He commissioned a coin in gold and silver with the name *Conceição*, portraying on one side the crown, arms and the cross⁹. The other side of the coin presents the *Imaculada* with six biblical allegories. This iconographic type is known as the *Tota Pulchra*, emphasizing visually the link between beauty and purity (or absence of the stain of sin, as in the Song of Songs, 4,4). She is crowned with stars and steps on a crescent moon, elements from the iconography of the Woman clothed in sun of the

Apocalypse (Revelations, 12). The serpent below the moon leaves no doubt that this is the one who defeats sin and its agents (Gen. 3,15).

This coin may have circulated in Portuguese America. Unlike other lightweight artistic objects that did circulate – prints and drawings I found in archives – the coin has a special proposal associating its form, function and material. The ideal form of the circle – as seen in hosts and even in catholic architecture – shapes the most valued metal, associated not only with Christ as light of the world but, moreover, with His mother's purity of sins. Behaving as a vassal, John IV used these gold coins to pay a tribute to a sculpture portraying Mary as Queen in his family chapel in Vila Viçosa⁹. The names of the King and the Kingdom inscribed on the coin are associated with the heavenly Queen, often described as the feminine counterpart of the monarch. Mary's mother Anne also was compared to a coin, as we will soon see.

Gold was a major object of desire for many who traveled to Minas and the clergy associated it with the Virgin Mary – and her image – in two important metaphors. Mary's queenship allowed for promises of concessions of gold to those who were "truly devoted" to her¹¹. These concessions could be mediated by an image of the Immaculate Conception in the church of Our Lady of Carmel (Ribeirão do Carmo, currently named Mariana), which was commissioned by its "noble" confraternity, probably composed of "white" men¹². Surely, this promise meant to encourage the visitation and cult of this sculpture.

Furthermore, because of her divine maternity, Mary's body is itself identified as the *locus* of mineral riches¹³. We have already encountered examples of two Portuguese kings commissioning images of her in gold and silver. Unlike medieval sculptures that opened as golden shrines in which the Trinity lay¹⁴, *Mary is a mine*, in which God Himself lay hidden for nine months¹⁵.

Gold mines were associated with the wombs of Mary and her mother Anne. In Spain, Anne was the patron saint of miners because she also hid gold in her womb, as the mines themselves¹⁶. This gold could easily be related to the daughter's title invoking her "Immaculate Conception", since no other name evoked so closely Mary "hiding" as a fetus. In Minas Gerais, Anne

became the second most important female saint (after her daughter)¹⁷.

Portuguese preachers compared Saint Anne to "the treasure hidden in the fields" (Matthew 13) in their sermons¹⁸. This parable about the man who found the treasure would most likely be very eloquent in Minas Gerais, corresponding to the dream of many men. Even priests sought mineral treasures there. The exegesis of Matthew 13 became a metaphor for associating the purest of women with the most valued metal, as in the *Conceição* coin.

In Lisbon, the mint workers (*moedeiros*) dedicated a liturgical feast to Anne every year, and this custom was adopted also in Salvador, the first capital city of Portuguese America. Sermons preached in cathedrals in both cities draw on the same analogy between Anne and the treasure. Priests in Brazil received and transmitted ideas that circulated in Portugal, even before they were printed¹⁹. Anne is exalted as "the most precious coin, the purest and finest" that, having been minted with the "image" of "our Divine King" was "transformed and transfigured into this same image"²⁰. Anne and Mary were also portrayed with the host, the "holiest of Sacraments" that the mother holds in an ostensory: the body of Christ is visually linked to his female ancestors²¹.

Preachers Anna compared more often to the *field* that withheld the treasure (rather than the treasure itself). Her womb is similar to this field wherein "purity is a hidden treasure"²². Anne is also compared to some biblical attributes her daughter is associated with, in Marian iconography and liturgy. Anne is the "mysterious Arch that carried Mary, vase of gold"²³.

A rare manuscript witnesses that these ideas printed overseas were also part of the catholic culture in Brazil. The author is Rosa Maria Egipcíaca da Vera Cruz (1719- after 1765), a slave who was born in Nigeria and lived in Minas Gerais. When emancipated from slavery and the life of prostitution associated with it, she converted to Catholicism and bequeathed the first manuscript written by a former slave in Brazil. Rosa created a rosary for saint Anne²⁴. According to one of the 15 mysteries of this rosary, Anne was acknowledged by the Fathers of the Church, the Patriarchs and Prophets as "the safe in which the most High placed the treasure of supreme purity,

without mixture nor stain, the intact Virgin"²⁵. Rosa's religious experiences combine sophisticated theological ideas, popular notions and visions in which the image and its prototype are intertwined, typical of baroque culture in Europe.

In Minas Gerais, several men also came to associate gold with Mary's Conception. Some miners built chapels dedicated to the *Imaculada* as ex-votos in thanksgiving for finding gold²⁶. The attitude of these men – similar to that of Rosa – witnesses the reception of ideas and gestures that originated in the Iberian Peninsula and were adopted in Brazil, concerning both a spiritual mission as an economic one, intertwined in the social history of images. We have come full circle: as in the case of the *Conceição* coin, golden sculptures and gilded places of worship are offered to the Heavenly Queen, owner and dispenser of mineral riches, herself made of gold.

Endnotes

1. Cf. Jacques Marcadé "O quadro internacional e imperial" in Frédéric Mauro (Coord.) *O Império Luso-Brasileiro 1620-1750*, (Joel Serrão et A. H. de Oliveira Marques (Dir.) Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa, vol. 7 (Lisboa, Estampa, 1991), p.87.
2. Parishes in Minas elected 17 marian titles - and only 2 Christological titles - in a total of 33 patron saints.
3. Minas encompasses 19,4% of parishes dedicated to the Imaculada in Portuguese America. Even the oldest parish in Minas (Raposos) honored her as patron.
4. Cf. Luciano Figueredo, *O avesso da memória: cotidiano e trabalho da mulher em Minas Gerais no século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio/ Brasília, DF, Editora da Universidade de Brasília, 1993); Leila Mezan Algranti, *Honradas e devotas: mulheres da Colônia: condição feminina nos conventos e recolhimentos do Sudeste do Brasil, 1750-1822* (Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio/ Brasília, D.F., Editora da Universidade de Brasília, 1993); Paulo Amora *Rebelião das mulheres em Minas Gerais*. (Rio de Janeiro, GRD, 1968).
5. Cf. Dauril Alden "The population of Brazil in the late Eighteenth Century: a preliminary survey" in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XLIII (may 1963), pp.173-201, Kenneth R. Maxwell *Conflicts and Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal 1750-1808* London/ New York, Cambridge University Press, 1973, pp.263-266).
6. Cf. Guy Martinière, "A implantação das estruturas de Portugal na América (1620-1750)" in Frédéric Mauro (Coord.) *O Império Luso-Brasileiro 1620-1750*, p.186.
7. From 1719 to 1723, 90% of the children born in des Minas Gerais were considered "illegitimate": this situation emphasized the need for stable families. Jesus's parents and grandparents became models of the ideal stability for families. Cf. Laura de Mello e Souza *Desclassificados do Ouro. A pobreza mineira no século XVIII*. (Rio de Janeiro, Graal, 1982) and

the Thesis by Renato Pinto Venâncio (Université de Paris-Sorbonne).

8. Angela Delaforce, *Art and Patronage in Eighteenth-Century Portugal*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.428 (our emphasis), p.199-201. The church was destroyed in the 1755 earthquake.

9. Photos of the 1648 silver coin are available in these websites (access june 05, 2022):

10. Photos of the sculpture in Vila Viçosa are available in these websites (access june 05, 2022)

<https://ippem.pt/sobre-nos/>

11. A miner that was interrogated for acting in a forbidden area answered that "diamonds belonged to God alone" in order to justify himself (cf. L. de Mello e Souza, *op.cit.*, p.211). This statement serves as another example of ideas about divine ownership of mineral riches.

12. Cf. Agostinho de Santa Maria, *Frei. Santuario mariano, e historia das images milagrosas de nossa senhora, e das milagrosamente apparecidas*, (Lisboa, Antonio Pedrozo Galram, 1707-1723), vol. 10, p.251 (our emphasis).

13. Cf. A. de Santa Maria, *op.cit.*, vol.1, p.12 et vol. 2, p.127.

14. Photos of this type of sculpture are available in this website (access june 05, 2022):

15. Cf. A. de Santa Maria, *op.cit.*, vol.3, pp.4-5 (our emphasis).

16. Cf. Manuel Trens Maria. *Iconografia de la Virgen en el Arte Español* (Madrid, Ed. Plus Ultra, 1947).

17. In 1770, the governor of Sao Paulo promoted great public feast in honor of Saint Anne and in thanksgiving for the discovery of gold in Tibagi. Twelve years later Pius VI proclaimed saint Anne "patron and protector" of the bishopric of SP (she became the patron of the bishopric of Rio de Janeiro since 1759). Cf. Luiz Mott, Rosa Egipcíaca. *Uma santa africana no Brasil*. (Rio de Janeiro, Ed. Bertrand, 1993), p.502

18. Portuguese preachers claim the author of this exegesis to be John of Damascus (Sermon of the Virgin's Nativity). For Jorge de Carvalho, just as Jesus Christ is the "image" of God, Mary is a "copy of sainte Anne". One is the other's "portrait" (p.5-6).

Cf. Jorge de Carvalho *Sermão... em dia de Santa Anna, no Mosteiro de Santa Anna...* (Lisboa, Officina de Lourenço de Anveres, 1646), pp.1-20.

19. Frei Antonio de Santa Anna "Sermão II da gloriosa Senhora Santa Anna, Mãe da Mãe de Deos, e Avó de Jesu Christo, que se havia de pregar na Santa Sé Metropolitana de Lisboa Oriental na festa, que anualmente lhe fazem os seus devotos da Casa de Moeda, anno 1730" in *Sermões Varios*. This sermon was published in Lisbon in 1738 (pp.460-483).

20. Cf. João Alvares Soares, *Sermão da gloriosa S. Anna, Mãe de Maria SS. Senhora Nossa, na festa que lhe consagrão os Moedeiros na Cathedral da Cidade da Bahia* (Lisboa, Officina Augustinianna, 1733), pp.1-31.

21. A photo of this sculpture in the Parish dedicated to Santíssimo Sacramento e Sant'Ana, in Salvador, is available in this publication (access june 05, 2022):

<https://g1.globo.com/bahia/noticia/igreja-com-quase-300-anos-na-ba-e-reaberta-apos-11-anos-de-obras-de-restauracao.ghtml>

22. Cf. Jorge de Carvalho, *Sermão... em dia de Santa Anna...*, pp.5-6, 20. Furthermore, obedience is a "pearl", as saint Anne is compared to the sea.

23. Cf. Frei Francisco da Madre de Deus "Sermão da Senhora Santa Anna, Pregado no Real Convento da Madre de Deos" in *Sermões tome I* (1798), pp.228-256 (our emphasis). This sermon is based on Matthew 7: the tree that is known by its fruits.

"Ella he a mysteriosa Arca, que teve em si a Maria Santissima, urna de ouro, em que esteve nove meses encerrado o celeste manna Jesus Christo Bem nosso. Ela he a terra santa, em que nasceo a çarça sempre viva e viçosa de Maria, que teve em si o Homem Deos, sem perder o verdor de sua virgindade, e sem que se queimasse de modo algum o candido lirio da sua pureza. Ella he a mystica estrella de Jacob (...) nutrido as virtudes (...)" (p.253).

24. Cf. L. Mott, *op. cit.*, p.122, 496-497.

25. *Idem*, p.496-49 (our translation and emphasis).

26. "Antonio Dias was a rich and powerful man from the city of São Paulo"; he was one of the

first to arrive in these gold mines with his "many slaves, black individuals and indians". Cf. A. de Santa Maria, *op.cit.*, vol. 10, p.243 (our translation)." This parish is named Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception of Antonio Dias in Vila Rica do Ouro Preto (the first capital city of Minas).

Angels in the Clothes of Apsara: Study on the Angel Motif of the Tombstones at Quanzhou

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ABSTRACT

This paper will argue that paired angel motif found on Yuan-era Christian steles in Quanzhou was a new development through an exchange with Ilkhanate Persia. Although there was a Buddhist influence, the angel motif should not be regarded as a direct borrowing from the Buddhist apsara. The Christians of the Church of the East had given this motif their own meanings, and used it to symbolize their identity.

KEYWORDS

Paired Angels; Church of the East; Uighur; *Apsara*; Yuan China.

Introduction

When the Mongols conquered the prosperous lands of East Asia, not only did they bring slaughter and ‘barbarian’ rule, they also indirectly stimulated the encounters of different cultures, which resulted in some interesting forms of art. One of them, the angels on the Christian tombstones discovered in Quanzhou, a coastal city of China, will be the focus of this paper. On some of these Christian stones, there is a motif of two angels holding a cross on a lotus. The angels wear crowns, with plaited hair falling behind their ears. They also have the “cloud collar” (云肩 *yunjian*), a popular Yuan period (1271-1368) costume worn over the robe with four corners hanging down to the shoulders and chest. Ribbons flow around their bodies and their legs are obscured under the robes. Some angels depicted also have wings on their back and are flying among clouds.



Fig. 1. *Angels flanking a cross*, Yuan period, igneous rock, 75 × 28 cm, provided by Quanzhou Maritime Museum.

These stones have caught the attention of scholars ever since they were first discovered and published. Scholars have debated the origin of the angel motif and its meaning for Christians.¹ Previous study has argued this motif

originated from the Byzantine image of two flying deities carrying a wreath and may have come to China through Sogdian or Uighur influence with the early expansion of the Church of the East from the eighth to tenth century.² The presence of the Quanzhou ‘angels’ has encouraged some to speculate that this motif may have been passed down within China among the East Syrian Christians with a borrowing from Buddhist elements, but the lack of visual evidence between the Tang (618-907) and Yuan period makes this assumption doubtful.³ Further, the notable difference between the images of the two periods strengthens the questioning of whether they came from one single source.

This paper will continue the discussion initiated by previous studies on these angel images and will further discuss the possible factors affecting the iconography of the Quanzhou angels. It will examine materials in Ilkhanate Persia (1256-1335) and the channel for their transmission to Quanzhou.⁴ The aim of this paper is to propose that the transmission of this motif under the Mongols shows a complicated cultural fusion happening both in Ilkhanate Persia and Yuan China, and the motif symbolized a Christian interpretation for their own foreign identity in the Yuan society.⁵

The paired angels

The Church of the East (also sometimes called the Nestorian Church) was named ‘Jingjiao’ (景教 ‘the brilliant religion’) when it came to China around the seventh century. Although the new religion prospered for a while in the Chinese lands, it then seems to have disappeared from East Asian records until the resurgence with the coming of the Mongols.⁶ In the later period, a common motif used by these Christians is the so-called ‘cross-on-lotus’, a cross standing on a lotus flower with bifurcated arms or pearl-end arms of equal length, as shown on tomb steles discovered in Inner Mongolia.⁷

In China, the earliest appearance of the angel motif related to these Jingjiao Christians is discovered on a stone pillar of 829 in Luoyang.⁸ The Luoyang pillar contains two groups of angels flanking a cross, surrounded by floating ribbons, and flying over the clouds. They could be regarded as under the influence of the Tang *apsara* images, especially those in the Luoyang area.⁹



Fig. 2. Epitaph of a Christian, Yuan period, ceramic, 39 × 46.5 × 6 cm, Inner Mongolia Museum, photo taken by the author.

The same cross symbol was maintained on most of the Christian tombstones in Quanzhou with slight variation.¹⁰ Although the iconography on the Quanzhou stones shares a similar composition with the Luoyang pillar motif, by this later time, the angels have different costumes and headpieces.

Some have wings, and mostly they hold the base for the ‘cross-on-lotus’ instead of flanking it. They look like the *apsara* (Buddhist celestial beings) but are very different from the Tang examples.

The appearance of this motif in another area of the Mongol empire may reveal a possible contemporary influence for the Quanzhou motif in the iconography. An illustration of an ‘Enthronement’ scene from the Diez album in the Topkapi palace produced around 1300 shows a Mongol figure, above whom are three winged creatures.¹¹ These celestial beings, or angels, wear red cloaks over their shoulders and have pink wings folded behind them. They all wear crowns with water-drop-shaped ornaments.

In an illustrated version (dating to around 1300) of the book *Wonders of Creation*, written by the Muslim scholar Zakarīyā ibn Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī (c. 1203-83) (hereafter referred to as the London Qazwīnī), these angels appear again in an ‘Enthronement’ scene.¹² They are wearing long robes, decorated by golden strips on the arms and at the cuffs. One of the figures has Mongol-style plaited locks tied behind the ears. The three-peaked crown is a particular feature of these angels. The two figures hold a ribbon over the king’s head, and their legs are wrapped by the under-ropes to form a ‘fish-tail’ shape like the legs of the Quanzhou angels. A more comprehensive form appears in a manuscript of *Shahnama* dated 1341.¹³ In this ‘Enthronement’ scene, the two angels, holding onto the central object, wear crowns with curving patterns. The one on the left has the same hair plaits hanging over the ears, but their legs are now simplified into floating ribbons. The wings are open on the back of the angels with clear layers of feathers. In these two illustrations, there is the consistency of a symmetrical composition of two crowned angels holding a central object and the depiction of the obscured legs. It also seems that the images produced in the Ilkhanate offered flexibility in the depiction of wings, as some have them while others do not.

The Quanzhou images follow the same combination of elements. The ‘cross-on-lotus’ is now sitting on a base, hand-held by both angels who share the symmetrical composition, the crowns with curving patterns, plaits of hair behind the ears, and the wrapped, tail-shaped legs. There is also the same flexibility with the use of wings. In the basic components of the motif, they

nonetheless are closer to the Persian images than to the Tang Luoyang one. A further adaptation of the angels in China is demonstrated by the addition of a small cross on the crowns that appear on the steles both in Quanzhou and Yangzhou.¹⁴

Further evidence to link the Quanzhou images to Ilkhanate influence is the angel with four wings. It is not clear what filled the niche above the angel who is sitting in a frontal view, with a crown on his head.¹⁵ This angel wears a double-layered robe with a 'cloud collar' and holds a cross in his hands, sitting on clouds with ribbons floating behind him. The most noticeable thing is that the angel has four wings in two pairs.



Fig. 3. *Angel with four wings*, Yuan period, igneous rock, 53.5 × 50 cm, provided by Quanzhou Maritime Museum.

At present, there is little record about the division of angels in the Church of the East in medieval times. Fragmented manuscripts do not offer much information. It is again the London Qazwīnī that resonates most closely with the Quanzhou images. It includes three images of archangels, two of them in a seated position, all with multiple wings, wearing large three-peaked crowns. Further, the Angel of Death is depicted as standing with his four wings spread behind.¹⁶ The iconography of the Angel of Death possibly provided a prototype for the four-winged angel, as it is described as having “70,000 feet and four wings” and is called ‘Izra’īl (Azrael) as God’s agent to take the human spirit.¹⁷ This meaning could be suitable for a burial context, considering the four-winged angel is used on a tombstone at Quanzhou.

However, the artisans who made the stones in Quanzhou did not merely copy their Persian models. They added Chinese elements and adapted the angels into a visual format they were certainly familiar with. The wide-sleeved robe, the ‘cloud collar’, and the floating ribbons are all patterns native to the Chinese, being used on images for Buddhist monuments, such as the relief carvings on the pagodas in local temples; also, the seated angel is shown in a frontal view instead of at a three-quarter angle.¹⁸ These treatments in Quanzhou make it difficult to locate specific Western Asian influences that the makers might have absorbed.

Nonetheless, the Quanzhou angel motifs contain the most diverse elements, including crowns (with or without cross), plaited hair, wings (or without wings), floating ribbons, ‘cloud collars’, and obscured, tail-shaped legs. They have highlighted certain exotic details from the Persian motifs, including that both angels are holding the central object (the cross), wearing patterned crowns and that some have wings. The depiction of the open eyes with elongated corners also seems to copy Persian examples. As the Quanzhou images include the most abundant and diversified elements, it is likely that these images were produced later than those in Ilkhanate during the cultural translation of this motif from the West to the East when they absorbed elements both from Persian and local Buddhist images.

The interaction with Buddhist art

Going back to the first angel images discovered in China, on the Luoyang pillar, the paired angels flank the central cross on the lotus pedestal without holding onto it, while most of the Quanzhou images are holding the base for the cross. It is relevant to consider the winged form with the image of *Kalavinka*, a human-bird hybrid from Buddhist art.¹⁹ However, the specific pose of the paired angels holding onto the central object on the Quanzhou stones requires further search in Buddhist art.

An early example of such paired *apsaras* holding a central object appeared at the Tamamushi Shrine in Japan. In a panel showing the monks making offerings to Buddhist relics, a pair of *apsaras* float above, holding a small bowl with a lotus on top. Scholars believe this image presents an act of praise to Buddha.²⁰ This example is quite early as the shrine is regarded as produced around the late seventh century. A second example is closer to the Mongol period. In the murals of Mogao Cave 207 at Dunhuang, regarded as created during the Uighur period (mid- or late-ninth century), two *apsaras* wearing Central Asian style flower crowns hold a lotus-form bowl with flowers in it.²¹ Their legs are wrapped in robes with floating clouds and ribbons surrounding them. Although the basic form of the *apsara* with wrapped legs was preserved in Liao (907-1125) and Jin (1115-1234) relief images on several pagodas, none holds a central object even if they are in symmetrical pairs.²²

A connection with Uighur art could be found with the enthronement scenes from the Diez album mentioned above. It shares a similar depiction and composition with one of the fragments related to the Manichaeans discovered in Khocho. The fragment shows a central figure and a smaller attendant, accompanied by another winged figure wearing flower crowns of the Central Asian type.²³ Judging from the composition, there would have been another figure in the symmetrical position to form a pair.

When the Mongols conquered Central and West Asia, the Uighurs were living in the extended area across the Mongol steppe into northern China and their movement later across the Mongol empire could very well have extended across to West Asia.²⁴ Christianized Buddhist stories have included

Manichaean elements, and ‘Buddhist art’ in Ilkhanate manuscripts is also composed by elements possibly passed from the Uighur Tarim area, as the example shown above.²⁵ It could be inferred that Ilkhanate depictions of these figures came under Uighur Buddhist influences.²⁶

However, the crown with curving decorations for the angels in the manuscripts seems to be a new motif added by the Persians. Relief carvings on the walls in Konya, a city in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, show figures with a similar kind of crown. This was probably a Byzantine influence on Ilkhan art, as shown by an illustration of 1260 where the first Ilkhan ruler Hülegü (r.1256-1265) and his Christian wife Doquz Khatun wear similar crowns.²⁷ However, in Persia, this type of headwear seemed to indicate a celestial divinity rather than having a specific Christian meaning, since this same motif was applied to angels, celestial gods and kings.²⁸ The shared hair plaits on the Konya figures and the London Qazwīnī angels, similar to the Mongol hairstyle, also added an exotic nature for the images.

There are many reasons that such combined borrowings could have happened in Ilkhanate Persia. That the Ilkhan Mongols held an open attitude to other religions, and married women of different beliefs were acts greatly encouraging the patronage and social status of various religions.²⁹ Since West Asia was a meeting place for the Byzantine Church, the Church of the East and the Islamic schools, there was a great possibility that artisans who made the manuscripts in the Ilkhanate for their new Mongol patrons were familiar with iconographies from various art traditions and could choose from a large pool of different motifs for their artistic purposes.³⁰ The fact that a large Christian population was living and travelling between the Ilkhanate and the Crusader lands should also be considered as a possible influence on these visual choices.³¹ The movement of artisans under the Mongols also provided the platform for artistic exchange. The encounter of multiple religions and their art in the Ilkhanate could have generated this new form of angels.

The Quanzhou interpretation

Returning to the stones in Quanzhou, as the angel motif is largely linked to Christian communities of the Church of the East, it is necessary to know

where these Christians came from. The Christians in Quanzhou during the Yuan period included Uighurs, Mongols, and Tanguts, and the linguistic elements in the inscriptions indicate that they were from northern China: the Turkic language of the Uighur Christian community in Quanzhou shared similarity with that used in the North.³² The linguistic evidence suggests that these Quanzhou Christians during the Yuan came from the northern area through an overland route.

However, the visual evidence is not as persuasive. Only rare examples with the paired angel motif have been discovered north to the Yangzi River. A stele discovered in Almaliq shows paired angels flanking a cross, but the angels on this stone wear long, tight robes, flanking a cross on top of a central-recessed base.³³ Another Christian stele in Yangzhou also features paired angels but again they wear tight robes. The latter is possibly related to the Quanzhou images on a certain level as they share similar 'fish-tail' shaped legs and cross-topped crowns, but the similarity between the Quanzhou images and those in the Ilkhanate manuscripts is stronger. The connection with the Uighur communities in both geographic areas could be an important link. The transmission of Buddhist motifs through the Uighurs to West Asia, along with the Uighurs among Buddhist, Manichaean, and Christian communities, may have enabled the spread and acceptance of this Buddhist-Christian hybrid motif across the Eurasian empire.

As evidence from the North is limited, more visual materials would be helpful to check if a northern type of angel image existed. Based on what is presented here, it is suggested that the transmission of the angel motif was more likely through the sea route. Located in the southern coastal province of Fujian, Quanzhou was the most prosperous port city during the Yuan period. A superintendency for maritime trade was set up there as early as 1087, and under the Mongols, it remained the leading port in the South attracting global trade and merchants.³⁴ On route connected with the Gulf area, a large group of Persians resided in this commercial city of Yuan China, who also set up communities in Southeast Asia to form a commercial network, particularly along the coast of India and in hub ports such as Ma'bar.³⁵ Among these Persian communities, there were also traders belonging to the Church of the

East in Java and south Sumatra.³⁶ The Chinese recorded that native Christian merchants, presumably of the Turkic groups, were also among those who participated in foreign trade.³⁷

Apart from the merchants, there were also embassies between the Yuan and the Ilkhanate that passed through Quanzhou. One epitaph discovered in Quanzhou recorded a delegate traveling from Quanzhou to Hormuz in the early Dade period (possibly from 1297 to 1299), who returned to his home in Quanzhou and died in 1304.³⁸ As the delegate had brought back gifts given by Ilkhan Ghazan (1271-1304) himself, it must have been a high-level official embassy. During the time of the Quanzhou delegate's travel, the governor of Fujian, whose seat was in Quanzhou, was also a Mongol Christian.³⁹

These records prove that communications existed with the Ilkhanate both at commercial and official levels in which Christians were involved. Thus, it is very possible that a channel existed providing these Christians in Quanzhou with materials from Persia.

Then what promoted the Quanzhou Christians to choose the Persian image? In the local Quanzhou culture, there is no lack of Buddhist visual elements, and they were indeed used on objects for other religions.⁴⁰ However, the Christian community did not choose a local Buddhist *apsara* image as their Tang predecessors had done in Luoyang centuries earlier. The reason could only be that the Christians living in Yuan Quanzhou wanted to be distinguished from the local Buddhist believers and intentionally chose to use the new, imported images rather than those from the local culture. This Jingjiao interpretation had already been suggested by scholars studying the Luoyang pillar images, proposing that they were borrowing the *apsara* to create their own angels that were never used in a Buddhist context.⁴¹ It is possible to see how they interpreted the new motif along with the old ones, as the Jingjiao motif of the 'cross-on-lotus' is maintained and has replaced the central object in Persian models while the angels nearly all keep exotic crowns or wings. It is also possible that the celestial divinity in the Persian image appealed to these Yuan Christians when they allowed the addition of the 'cloud collar' to the angels since for cultures under Mongol influence, the 'cloud collar' also refers to divinity from heaven.⁴² The addition of a cross on

top of the angel's head on some stones further enhances the Christian interpretation. Through this combination, the angel motif at Quanzhou demonstrates a distinctively different symbolism from the Buddhist *apsara* and thus produces a strong foreign color for a Christian identity.

Conclusion

This paper has compared the angels on the Quanzhou stones with illustrations from Ilkhanate Persia and proposes that the Quanzhou images were developed based on Persian models. The shared Buddhist influence in both areas, the movement of the Uighurs under the Mongols, and an allowance for an adapted interpretation could have facilitated the transmission of the paired angel motif across the Mongol Empire. The deliberate choice of the exotic image and the meaning given by the Christians made this motif different from the Buddhist *apsara*, however similar they may look in form. By using this specific motif on their tombstones, the Christians were trying to express their unique identity among the many foreign communities living in Quanzhou. The imagery also testifies to the close communication and cultural fusions under Mongol rule through the maritime trade. Unless there are new discoveries of the same motif from Mongolia, this specific image in Quanzhou should be regarded as a renewed adaptation by the Jingjiao Christian community in Yuan China.

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The Global Lives of Emperor Qianlong's Battle Pictures in Eighteenth-Century China and Beyond

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ABSTRACT

Copperplate prints of battle scenes produced in eighteenth-century China are, in nature, material objects of transcultural significance. Circulated worldwide, they have continuously aroused scholarly attention in art history and Qing (1644-1912) studies. How was the copperplate printing technique, among other Western knowledge of image-making, introduced to and transformed in China from the seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries? This paper intends to investigate the global lives of these battle pictures, the agency of Jesuit missionaries, and a Suzhou-based Manchu official to shed light on our understanding of the migration of visual images and techniques from a transregional perspective. In addition to numerous copies of silk painting and copperplate engraving, a curious suite of carved lacquer panels depicting Qianlong's Taiwan Campaign, six of which belonged to the German Emperor Wilhelm II's collection, awaits further study. By delving into the circulation of these images across the Qing Empire and beyond, as well as the visual "migration" from copperplate etching to lacquer carving, I attempt to uncover the multifaceted meaning of the material objects shaped by various agents through cultural and technological exchanges within shifting historical contexts.

KEYWORDS

Jesuit China Mission; Qing Court; Emperor Qianlong; Carved Lacquer; Copperplate Engravings.

Introduction

The Qianlong emperor's (r. 1736-1795) rule in eighteenth-century China marked the apogee of the "High Qing," characterized in part by this Manchu ruler's victory in pacifying the northwestern and southwestern frontier regions. He commissioned a series of battle scenes and portraits of meritorious generals across different media to glorify the victorious campaigns and Manchu military prowess. Copperplate prints of battle scenes produced during the Qianlong reign are, in nature, migrated material objects of transcultural significance. Circulated worldwide, they have continuously aroused scholarly attention in the fields of art history and Qing studies. Previous studies of these images of war have focused on two perspectives: First, based on French sinologist Paul Pelliot's (1878-1945) ground-breaking work, scholars have continued to evaluate the role of the East Turkestan Campaign engravings within the framework of Sino-French artistic exchanges, as well as its technical and stylistic paradigm for all subsequent series, in light of a large pool of specimens discovered from public and private collections worldwide.¹ Second, scholars such as Ya-chen Ma have traced the visual lineage of Qianlong's etchings of battle scenes back to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) through the early Qing, revealing the way in which the Manchu subjectivity was represented through the appropriation of European visual culture.²

This article intends to highlight three aspects: agents, technology or knowledge, and the circulation of material objects. Qianlong's ambitious agenda involved different agents across geographical boundaries within the Qing Empire and beyond. On the other hand, the proliferation of images came hand in hand with the spread and evolution of technology and visual representations. This paper intends to investigate the global lives of these battle pictures as well as the agency of Jesuit missionaries and a Suzhou-based Manchu official to shed light on our understanding of the migration of visual images and techniques from a transregional perspective. In addition to numerous copies of album painting and copperplate engraving, a curious suite of carved lacquer panels depicting Qianlong's Taiwan Campaign (hereafter "Taiwan Campaign panels"), six of which belonged to the

German Emperor Wilhelm II's (Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Albert, 1859-1941) collection, awaits further study.³ By delving into the circulation of these images in the Qing Empire and beyond, as well as their visual “migration” from copperplate etching to lacquer carving, I attempt to reveal the multifaceted meaning of material objects shaped by various agents through cultural and technological exchanges within shifting historical contexts.

Jesuit China Missions and Copperplate Engraving

How was the technique of copperplate printing, among other Western knowledge of image-making, introduced to and transformed in China from the seventeenth through the long eighteenth centuries? Jesuit missionaries played a key role in the introduction of etchings – a legacy of China missions – in late imperial China, thus providing the foundation for Qianlong's commemorative images. In the early seventeenth century, the renowned Italian Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci (Li Madou, 1552-1610) brought to China some holy images, four of which were incorporated into an ink-stick catalogue, entitled *Ink Garden of the Cheng Family* (*Chengshi moyuan*), published by ink-maker and merchant Cheng Dayue (1549-1616?) from Xin'an (present-day Huizhou) (Figure 1). Although the originals Ricci brought no longer exist, these etchings from illustrated books circulated in Asia and served the Jesuit missions.

Ricci's Italian successor Giulio Aleni (Ai Rulüe, 1582-1649) took further advantage of such Jesuit visual pedagogy in his translation work to serve his China mission by utilizing woodblock print, a popular media that appealed to the local readership. Published around 1637, Aleni's book based on Nadal's *Evangelicae historiae imagines*, titled *Tianzhu jiangsheng yanxing jilue* or *Explanation of the Incarnation and Life of the Lord of Heaven*, was the first biography of Jesus written in Chinese.⁴



Fig. 1. Cheng Dayue, “Mary and Jesus” from *Ink Garden of the Cheng Family (Chengshi moyuan)*, early 17th century; woodblock print, 32×31cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

There are fifty-five illustrations throughout the book, which vividly introduce the story of Jesus. Considering Aleni’s China mission was mainly based in Fujian, this book was probably the work of woodblock carvers and publishers on the Southeastern Chinese coast. The illustrative images crafted with the Chinese hands hardly changed Nadal’s originals in terms of composition, although the former replaced the Latin texts with Chinese characters. However, the differences between woodblock carving and copperplate engraving in visual representation and underlying concepts are evident. The unified source of light emitted from the upper left in Nadal’s originals, which decides the direction of shades on the ground, disappears in the woodblock illustrations. In the iconic scene of the “Annunciation,” the distinct contrast between the dark interior household and bright outdoor environments vanished in the

woodcut. And judging from the deformed rooftop we can assume that the Chinese artisans clearly did not understand the visual theory of linear perspective derived from West Europe.

During the early Qing, the Kangxi emperor's (r. 1661-1722) curiosity and interest in Western knowledge led Jesuit missionaries, including Italian Jesuit Matteo Ripa (Ma Guoxian, 1692-1745), to play a more influential role in the imperial court. Ripa served the emperor with his skills by contributing to imperial projects of map-making and copperplate printing. His depiction of thirty-six views of the Summer Mountain Resort (Bishu shanzhuang), located in the river valley of Rehe (present-day Chengde), was integral to the cultural construction of a multifaceted Qing subjectivity, combined with Manchu, Chinese, and Western elements. The architectural complex was built in 1703. When the main construction was almost completed ten years later, Kangxi sent Chinese court painters and Ripa to depict the selected thirty-six scenic sites, accompanied by his imperial poems in Chinese and Manchu, respectively, and printed in album format.

Based on the woodblock print with Manchu texts of 1712, Ripa's experiment in etching (with Chinese texts) was completed a year later, in 1713 (Figure 2). Although scholars have pointed out that some scenes were executed by Ripa's Chinese students, the characteristic Western visual concept distinguishes them from woodblock counterparts given their treatment of shadows with meticulously incised ink lines.⁵ Ripa and his apprentices utilized the media and technique through arranging different shades of lines to create the illusive realism unmatched by woodcut. By contrast, the woodcut landscapes in ink display the brushwork reminiscent of the *Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting (Jieziyuan huapu)*, showing signs of the bond between traditional Chinese painting and the printing industry. While Aleni and Ricci's etchings reproduced in China stopped at Christian iconography, Ripa's innovative experimentation accommodated Western visual culture to Chinese landscape painting.

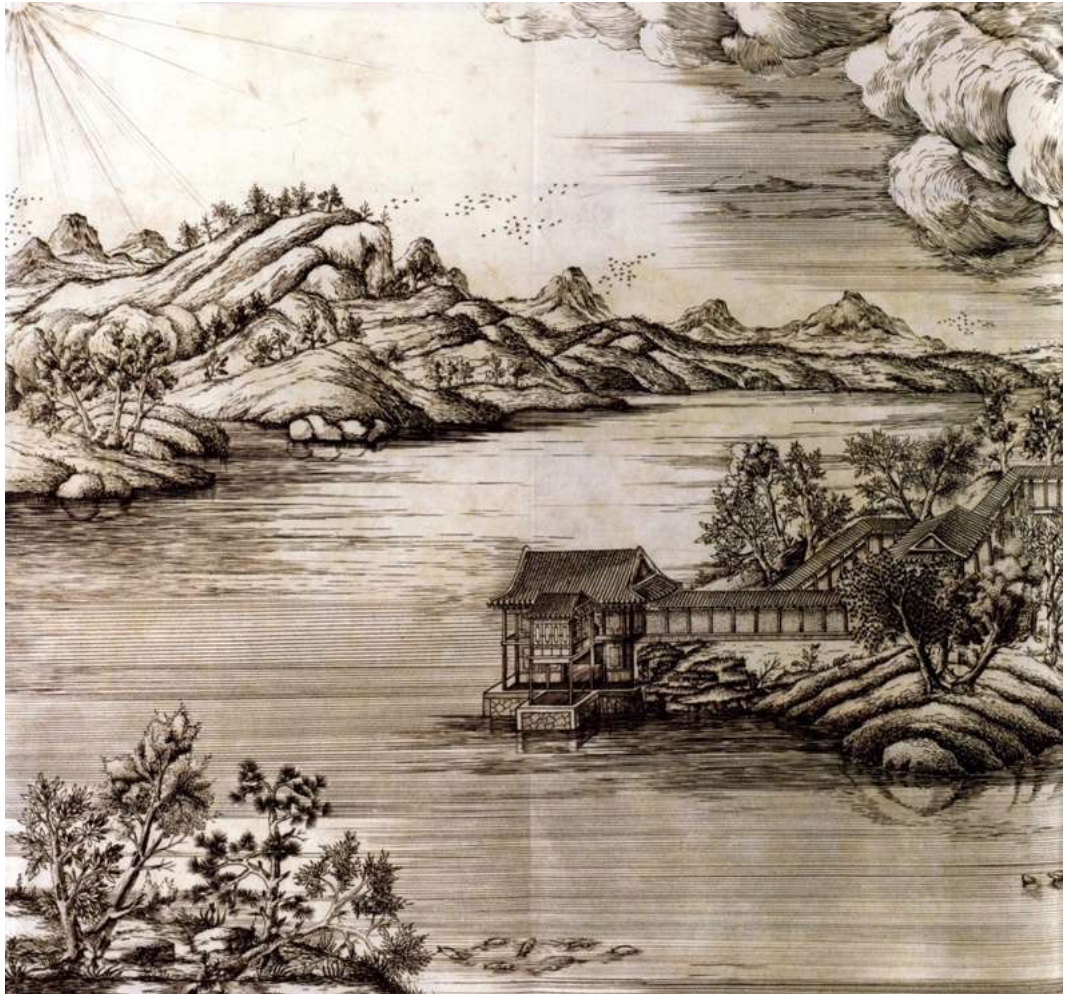


Fig. 2. Matteo Ripa, “Morning Glow on the Western Ridge (Xiling chenxia)” from *Illustrated Imperial Poetry on the Summer Mountain Resort*, circa 1713; copperplate print, 28×45cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Picturing Battle Scenes through Transcultural Exchanges

Qianlong’s conquest over the East Turkestan region occupied the paramount position in his self-claimed “Ten Great Campaigns (*shiquan wugong*)” and associated commemorative images. Though the making of the East Turkestan Campaign engravings was a labor-intensive and time-consuming project driven by the imperial agenda, it was the artistic collaboration between Jesuit painters and French artisans that materialized Qianlong’s vision. The drawings prepared by four painters – Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining,

1688-1766), Ignatius Sicklart, (Ai Qimeng, 1708-1780), Jean Denis Attiret (Wang Zhicheng, 1702-1768), and Joannes Damascenus Salusti (An Deyi, ?-1781) – were sent to Canton (Guangzhou) for shipment to France for engraving. In the next almost ten years, the Parisian artisans completed the engraving and printing and then sent the finished products back to Beijing.⁶ The collaborative process in printmaking was also evident in the inscriptions appended at the bottom of each scene, which show the identities of the four drafters from the Qing court (lower left), the atelier’s director Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1715-1790) (lower middle) and engravers (lower right) in Paris. Completed in 1779, this globalized project between Beijing and Paris made Qianlong’s kingship and visage known in Europe and comparable to Louis XV (1710-1774) of France.



Fig. 3. Giuseppe Castiglione, “Storming of the Camp at Gädän-Ola” from the East Turkestan Campaign engraving, circa 1779; copperplate print, 58×94.7 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

Existing scholarship has elaborated on the Sino-West hybrid compared with their European counterparts. Special exhibitions on Qing court art also offer opportunities to examine those delicate shades of ink lines and appreciate their exquisite craftsmanship.⁷ For example, the horse

soldier holding a long spear in the scene “Storming of the Camp at Gädän-Ola” (Figure 3) portrays the meritorious Mongol general Ayuxi, based on his portrait by Castiglione after the victory of the East Turkestan Campaign in 1755.

Although the East Turkestan Campaign prints served as a paradigm for all the subsequent series in terms of technical parameters and stylistic feature, the localization of copperplate printmaking in the Qing court inevitably reduced the latter’s Western influence. After Jesuit lay brother Castiglione’s passing in 1766, this was particularly the case when all the procedures of drawing, engraving, and printing were executed in Beijing with no technical support or assistance from European artisans.

The Taiwan Campaign series was reduced to twelve battle and ritual scenes, as follows: (1) Lifting the Siege at Zhuluo; (2) Battle of Dapulin; (3) Conquer of Douliumen; (4) Conquer of Daliyi; (5) Battle of Jijipu; (6) Attack on the Mount Xiaobantian; (7) Capture of the Rebel Chief Lin Shuangwen; (8) Battle of Dawulong; (9) Battle of Fangliao; (10) Capture of Zhuang Datian; (11) Crossing the Ocean and Triumphant Return; (12) Victory Banquet.

The emperor’s conquest over Taiwan lasted for nearly one and a half years, from 1786 to early 1788.⁸ All the large silk paintings appended with imperial texts composed by Qianlong were completed by eight ethnic-Han Chinese painters, followed by the procedures of copperplate engraving and printing in the imperial workshops. In the eleventh scene “Crossing the Ocean and Triumphant Return,” the diagonal distribution of naval ships of the Qing army recalls a silk painting depicting the first Qing conquer of the Taiwan Islands during the Kangxi reign. This seems not a coincidence given that Qianlong perhaps followed his grandfather’s footsteps through displays of martial prowess in both actual action and image-making.

In addition to silk paintings and prints, a suite of twelve carved lacquer panels exemplified the transmedia proliferation of battle pictures. Measuring 72 centimeters in height and 108 centimeters in width, the panels apply polychrome lacquer carving with sandalwood frames inlaid with semi-precious stones in the form of *hulu* gourds and vines. From top to bottom, the lacquer layers varnished include red, yellow, and dark green,

representing (1) mountains, trees, architecture, figures; (2) diaper background; and (3) streams, ocean, and sky, respectively (Figure 4). As mentioned above, six of the eleven extant Taiwan Campaign panels are housed in the Museum Huis Doorn, Netherlands.⁹ They have drawn little attention due to the marginalized status of carved lacquer in Qing court art.



Fig. 4. “Lifting the Siege at Zhuluo” from the Taiwan Campaign panel suite, 1795; carved polychrome lacquer, 72×108cm. Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin.

Local Agency and Media Transfer in Suzhou

Drawing on textual sources from the *Compiled Archives of the Palace Board of Works under the Imperial Household Department (Qinggong Neiwufu Zaobanchu dang’an zonghui*, hereafter “DAZH”), this section investigates the production, technique, and media of the Taiwan Campaign panels and traces the circulation of images between the central and the local.¹⁰ Challenging the

preoccupation that these panels were imperially commissioned products, I instead propose that they embodied the active agency of a Manchu official as well as technological and material exchanges through the bureaucratic system between the court and Suzhou. The social life of copperplate engravings and this panel suite offers new insight into the role of high-ranking officials in Chinese material culture during the Qing dynasty.

After the completion of twelve battle scenes in album form by the tenth lunar month of 1789, the fifty-fourth year of Qianlong's reign, they were transferred from the Hall of Wish Fulfilling (Ruyiguan) to the Imperial Household Workshop for copperplate engraving by the court artisans. All the twelve copperplates were prepared successively from early 1790 through 1792. By the end of 1792, nearly two hundred printed copies were ready for distribution and circulation across the Qing Empire.¹¹ Following the paradigm of the East Turkestan and Jinchuan Campaigns series, the Taiwan Campaign engravings were sent to temporary and provincial palaces as well as bureaucratic mansions for storage and display.¹² According to a list of tribute gifts in early 1795 from DAZH, this set of lacquer panels was among the personal tributes of Qifeng'er, Governor of Jiangsu province.¹³

The bannerman official Qifeng'er had assumed charge of the Suzhou Weaving Department (Suzhou zhizaoshu) in the 1780s. His tribute gifts include several kinds of objects that represented Suzhou's exquisite craftsmanship (*Suzuo*), such as jade carving and lacquerware.¹⁴ Like his predecessor Sazai (?-1786), another bannerman who supervised the Suzhou Weaving Department at least twice between the 1750s and the 1770s, Qifeng'er also commissioned a special type of vermilion coreless lacquers in the shape of chrysanthemums as gifts for the emperor.¹⁵ Their similar official career in Suzhou and local resources exerted a great impact on their choices of commissioning local tributes and strategies to meet Qianlong's preference and taste. It is likely that after receiving the imperially bestowed engravings in early 1793, Qifeng'er commissioned artisans to produce the lacquer panels in Suzhou by appropriating the printed copy as a template, and then sent them to the court in early 1795 as part of his gifts dedicated to Qianlong.¹⁶

Since 1739, the making and repair of lacquerware – mostly carved lacquer – was largely assigned to the Suzhou Weaving Department. Established during the Ming dynasty, three weaving departments – at Suzhou and two other Jiangnan cities – were responsible for the production of various textiles, clothes, and robes mainly for the imperial court, accompanied by commissioned orders for other artifacts. Judging from their material practices, imperial orders along with approved models or sketches were issued from Beijing, samples or products then were transported from Suzhou back to the court via the Grand Canal.¹⁷

The decision to establish a new production system within the Jiangnan-based workshops encouraged technological exchanges and transmission of motifs between different media, such as hardwood, bamboo, ivory, and lacquer carving. Artisans from various ateliers were frequently exposed to each other's works and, as a result, the designs show signs of mutual inspiration. In particular, the three-dimensionality of lacquer motifs in relief carving suggests the close collaboration of artisans skilled in working with a broad range of materials, including hardwood, bamboo, jade, and ivory. The participation of ivory artisans in the making of carved lacquer in the early years of both the Yongzheng (r. 1722-1735) and Qianlong periods indeed supports the possibility. The meticulously combed seascape pattern surrounding dragons or fish on carved red lacquerware, for instance, was probably inspired by early Qing designs of ivory carving. Shared visual features also suggest that the imperial lacquerware with Qianlong's marks and these lacquer panels were in the hands of the same group of artisans in Suzhou.¹⁸

Afterlives in the Hall of Purple Splendor and Beyond

After the Taiwan Campaign panels were presented to the emperor, according to official records in the *Archives of Zhongnanhai* (*Zhongnanhai dang'an*, hereafter "ZNHD"), they were later transferred to the Hall of Purple Splendor (Ziguangge) to the west of the Forbidden City.¹⁹ Ma has revealed that Qianlong's battle scene prints and portraits of meritorious generals were collectively displayed and/or stored in the Hall of Purple Splendor, an

architecture complex renovated during the Qianlong reign.²⁰ Stored together with different formats of battle scenes and portraits in the same architectural space, the Taiwan Campaign panels were incorporated into the imperial holdings as part of Qianlong's commemorative images.²¹ Nevertheless, details of their production and their identity as personal gifts when entering the imperial court has been forgotten and lost in history, only can be pieced together with scattered records.



Fig. 5. Giuseppe Castiglione and Jean Denis Attiret, *Imperial Banquet at the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees (Wanshu yuan ciyan tu)*, 1754; colors on silk, 221.2×419.6 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing.

During the Qianlong period, imperial banquets that celebrated the victory of military campaigns and honored the returning generals and soldiers were usually held at the Hall of Purple Splendor. The emperor occasionally ordered court painters such as Giuseppe Castiglione to depict these banquet scenes, which feature the iconic two-story façade of the building. As two different banquet scenes show, one held in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees (Wanshu yuan) at the Mountain Resort in Chengde, while the other at the Hall of Purple Splendor in the last scene of the East Turkestan Campaign print, they share a nearly identical composition (Figure 5).²²

Despite the initial intent of documenting ritual events in these pictures, duplicating visual elements based on a modular system was adopted by court painters as well.

The afterlives of these battle pictures dispersed outside China in the early twentieth century makes ideal material to explore the collecting history of Chinese antiquities in the West. To date, a large proportion of these images in various formats can be found in Germany's public museums and private collections. Based on the inventories and archival records of the National Museums in Berlin, Nie Chongzheng is among the first who have connected the German occupation during the Boxer Rebellion with the looting of artifacts originally from the Hall of Purple Splendor. Based on Nie's observation, Ching-Ling Wang has listed a comprehensive pool of general portraits in German collections, which had originally been from the Hall of Purple Splendor.²³ In addition to the battle pictures found in Germany, six of the extant Taiwan Campaign panels entered the German emperor's collection, also due to the political turmoil of the Boxer Rebellion around 1900. They are housed in Wilhelm II's late resident, Huis Doorn, situated in Utrecht province of Netherlands, later transformed into a museum (Museum Huis Doorn) in 1956.

From 1900 to 1901, after the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion, the Eight-Nation Alliance brought 20,000 armed troops to China to defeat the Imperial Army. Of them, the German troop led by General Field Marshal Alfred von Waldersee (1832-1904) occupied the West Park (Xiyuan) or Zhongnanhai, where the Hall of Purple Splendor was situated. Their occupation resulted in plundering treasures of battle pictures from Qing China to Europe, especially Germany. As the German general von Waldersee recalled in his diary: "At these auctions you could buy anything that China produced – porcelains, cloisonnés, bronzes, red-lacquer wares, fur, silks (mostly in bale), embroideries, clocks, real pearls, precious stones, and various ornaments. ..."²⁴

In contrast to von Waldersee's hypocritical tone as an eyewitness vividly describing the American, British, and Russian troops plundering countless Chinese artifacts in Beijing, the German army was also involved in

the looting. One of the prime examples was the Ancient Observatory (*gu guanxiangtai*) in Beijing. The instruments that the German army obtained from the observatory were shipped to Potsdam as war trophies and Emperor Wilhelm II placed them in the gardens of his palaces there. Following Germany's defeat in World War I (1914-1918), under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, the instruments were to be returned to China; this happened in June 1920, and they arrived in Beijing in April 1921. In addition to the astronomical instruments, a huge silk painting fragment depicting the East Turkestan Campaign, still in the collection of the Museum of Ethnology (Museum für Völkerkunde) in Hamburg, was believed to have been looted during the Boxer Rebellion.²⁵ Many of those looted treasures were presented to Wilhelm II as booty, making their way into public museums such as the Asian Art Museum and Huis Doorn, while others private collections or auction houses.

The German defeat in World War I marked a watershed for Wilhelm II. His military advisors suggested he flee to the neutral Netherlands where he lived in Doorn until he died in 1941. It was said that more than 30,000 objects of his collection and property were transferred by train from the royal palaces in Potsdam and elsewhere in Germany to the Netherlands.²⁶ His residence and treasures in Doorn later turned into a national museum and collection. Hence the legacy of these battle pictures ironically witnessed the victory of the two once most powerful rulers across the Eurasian continent, the Manchu Qing emperor from the East and the last German emperor in the West.

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2. Ya-chen Ma, "War and Empire: Images of Battle during the Qianlong Reign," in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West*, 158-172; Ya-chen Ma, *Kehua zhanxun: Qingchao diguo wugong de wenhua jian'gou* (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2016).
3. In 2003, the special exhibition organized by Herbert Butz, then director of the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst (present-day Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) in Berlin, published a large quantities of artifacts, such as copper engravings and general portraits, originally from the Hall of Purple Splendor. See Herbert Butz ed., *Bilder für die "Halle des Purpurglanzes": chinesische*

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7. For the accompanying catalogue, see Florian Knothe, ed., *Imagining Qianlong: Louis XV's Chinese Emperor Tapestries and Battle Scene Prints at the Imperial Court in Beijing* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017).

8. For further details about Qianlong's Taiwan Campaign, see Chuang Chi-fa, *Qing Gaozong shiquan wugong yanjiu* (Taipei: Guoli Gugong bowuyuan, 1982).

9. I viewed the six panels from the Huis Doorn during my field trip to Germany in 2017, where they were temporarily transferred to the Museum of Asian Art in Berlin for repair and conservation at the time.

10. Most pivotal are records of the activities of various bureaus of the Palace Board of Works (Zaobanchu), the division of the Imperial Household Department (Neiwufu) responsible for the production of all material artifacts for the imperial court. Grouped under the heading "Yangxindian Neiwufu Zaobanchu gezuo chengzuo huoji Qingdang," these archives are kept in the First Historical Archives of China (Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan) in Beijing and they serve as primary sources of most significant scholarship used in establishing the timeline of developments of imperial artifacts made during the Qianlong reign. Archival records of the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods were compiled by the First Historical Archives of China and the Chinese University of Hong Kong in DAZH.

11. DAZH, vol. 50, 659-660.

12. Ma, *Kehua zhanxun*, 229-230.

13. DAZH, vol. 55, 744.

14. DAZH, vol. 55, 744.

15. DAZH, vol. 38, 703; vol. 38, 445.

16. In Qifeng'er's memorial, now in the First Archives of China, he expressed his gratitude for the imperial favor in early 1793, confirming that he, alongside other provincial governors and generals, was bestowed with ink rubbings of imperial poems and the Taiwan Campaign engravings. See also Zhenpeng Zhan, "Diguo jixun yu difang gongpin: Qianlong chao 'Pingding Taiwan desheng tu' diaoqi guaping kao," *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan*, no. 45 (2018): 212-213.

17. Zhenpeng Zhan, "Artisanal Luxury and Confucian Statecraft: The Afterlife of Ming Official Carved Lacquer at the Qianlong Court," *Late Imperial China* 42, no. 1 (June 2021): 62.

18. Zhan, "Diguo jixun yu difang gongpin," 219-220; Zhan, "Artisanal Luxury and Confucian Statecraft," 66-67.

19. ZNHD, vol. 23, 27.

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22. For a comparative study of these two banquet pictures, see Zhan, "Diguo jixun yu difang gongpin," 221.

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