

Crossing Borders

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**Crossing Borders:
Sinology in Translation Studies**

EDITED BY

T. H. Barrett

and

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翻譯研究中心
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Crossing Borders: Sinology in Translation Studies

Edited by T. H. Barrett and Lawrence Wang-chi Wong

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Contents

Acknowledgements	ix
Introduction T. H. BARRETT	xi
Conflicting Interpretations on the <i>Collected Statutes of the Ming Dynasty</i> : The Debate between Navarrete and Brancati on the Ritual to Confucius in Canton in 1668 Thierry MEYNARD	1
Beijing as a Missionary Translation Center in the Eighteenth Century Eugenio MENEGON	37
Thomas Manning (1772–1840): Spiritual Intuitions and Sinological Visions in the Case of an English Eccentric Edward WEECH	75
Learning and Outcomes in Early Anglophone Sinological Translation: The Case of Thomas Manning (1772–1840) T. H. BARRETT	99
Two Cousins: Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat's and Stanislas Julien's Translations of <i>Yu jiao li</i> Roland ALTENBURGER	145
Sinologists as Diplomatic Translators: Robert Thom (1807–1846) in the First Opium War and His Translation of the Supplementary Treaty (Treaty of the Bogue), 1843 Lawrence Wang-chi WONG	181

When Sinology Encountered Ethnology: S. Wells Williams' Translation of Chinese Death Rituals in <i>Jiali Tieshi Jicheng</i> Siyang SHUAI	213
The First Translations of Daoist Religious Texts Benjamin PENNY	239
Literary Translation and Sinological Knowledge: The Case of Herbert Allen Giles' (1845–1935) <i>Gems of Chinese Literature</i> (1884) Lingjie JI	265
A Literary Experiment of “Mahayana Christianity”: On Timothy Richard's English Translation of <i>Xiyouji</i> Xiaofang WU	297
Widow as Trustee: George Jamieson's Translation of Qing Widow “Inheritance Rights” Rui LIU	341
Translations of Chinese Fiction in Italy at the End of the Nineteenth Century Alessandra BREZZI	363
“Naxiology” and Translation in the Works of Joseph Rock Duncan POUPARD	395
Forging a New Epistemology about Philosophy and Science: Joseph Needham's Translation of Zhu Xi's Concept of <i>Li</i> 理 I-Hsin CHEN	429
Appendix: Sinology in Japan and the Translation of Chinese Texts Joshua FOGEL	457
Contributors	475

Beijing as a Missionary Translation Center in the Eighteenth Century

Eugenio MENEGON

Introduction

Recent scholarship focusing on the Qing foundational period and the reigns of the three great emperors of the eighteenth century, Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong, has revisited and reframed some of our past views on court life and the relationship between Manchus and Han within the imperial institutions. My current book project, “Daily Life and Networks of Power in Qing Beijing: Europeans at the Imperial Court in the Long Eighteenth Century,” is inspired by that scholarship, but also proposes to shift the focus away from the blinding light of the emperor and his autocratic gravitational power, to cast a closer gaze upon the satellites in court life, their existence in the shadows, and the dynamics of daily life at court and in the capital, using research models developed by practitioners of court studies in an array of European and Asian contexts.

Reports in Western languages penned by Catholic missionaries (Jesuits and Propaganda Fide priests) stationed at the imperial court as artists, scientists, and technicians offer an entry into the courtly underworld of Beijing in the long eighteenth century. In order to sustain their presence in Beijing and protect their provincial missions, Europeans working at the court relied on the interplay among factions, joining existing networks connected to individual patrons and institutions (especially within the Astronomical Directorate and the Imperial Household Bureau and its workshops). The effectiveness of the missionaries as political operators hinged on the historical constellation of the early and mid-Qing periods, when closeness to the Inner Court mattered more than it would in later

times of declining dynastic initiative. From the margins of the palace world occupied by Europeans we can thus get a glimpse of the inner fabric of court life, including the milieu of palace personnel (e.g. eunuchs; artisans; domestics; imperial bodyguards). The European testimony reveals how the Qing court functioned not only as an extension of the imperial will, but also as the site of less structured and recognizable power transactions among historical actors pursuing diverse political, cultural and economic interests, within the palace and in the city of Beijing and its hinterland. By gathering and interpreting empirical data on the informal dynamics of court life, and the daily politics and economics of missionary lives, I wish to contribute to a better understanding of Qing political culture and of Sino-Western relations.

This essay is part of my broader exploration of the European's life and experience in Qing Beijing. Our volume's topic is "Crossing Borders: Sinology in Translation Studies" and our ambition is to "examine the close relationship between translation studies and Sinology to gain greater insights into *how Chinese works were transmitted across cultural and linguistic borders by Sinologists through translation.*" In this contribution I aim to briefly reconstruct the "materiality" of a broadly conceived "missionary translation project" in Qing Beijing, as part of the daily activities and the long-term goals of Beijing's Europeans, including an examination of lesser-known actors and their networks, types of raw materials used, location of activities, transportation and circulation of written materials, and economic factors aiding or hindering the enterprise. In doing so, I wish to historically contextualize the development of this transnational initiative, bridging the Qing court, native scholarly circles, and European counterparts in Rome, Paris, London, Lisbon, St. Petersburg and Berlin, and explain in a preliminary fashion the multiple reasons that motivated it.

I will first offer a survey of the role of the missionaries in Beijing, and how they logistically sustained their enterprise there. I will then quickly shift to the domain of translation and consider what were the necessary material elements to support translation in the phase of the nascent "Sinology" in Qing Beijing, through books and libraries within the missionary residences (the "Four Churches"), and acquisition via the local

book market and acquaintances. I will next briefly examine the intellectual elements necessary for translation, relying on recent scholarship about the French Jesuits at the Northern Church (Beitang), and consider the linguistic competence of the translators, their intellectual interests, and the interests of the intended readership of their translations in Europe. As a contrast, I will offer a case study based on my primary research: the translation work of a Propaganda missionary in Beijing, whose work was never published, but nevertheless circulated in unexpected ways. In my conclusion, I will offer a brief and preliminary assessment of this translation enterprise in Beijing.

Catholic Missionaries in Beijing and the Logistics of Their Enterprise

Soon after 1644, the superiors of the Chinese Catholic mission recognized the Manchu victory and the need to join the new regime in order to survive. In return for their technical-scientific services and their political loyalty, missionaries directly received the protection of the Qing court. A new phase in the history of Chinese Catholicism and Sino-Western relations began after 1644, thanks, in particular, to the scientific role of the German Jesuit astronomer Adam Schall von Bell (1591–1666) and his collaborators in Beijing. If in the late Ming scientific exchanges had occurred mainly through the intermediation of the Chinese intellectual elite (the literati, or *shidafu* 士大夫), mostly based in Jiangnan, and only indirectly through the imperial court, with the advent of the Qing empire the Jesuits became an integral part of the imperial bureaucracy in the capital. Through their scientific role, they could participate in court life, act as important diplomatic intermediaries between the Qing and European powers, and play a leading role in providing information to the Qing government on European politics and culture, and vice versa, in some cases acting as translators, interpreters, and negotiators. These roles offered them a stable base in China and some influence deriving from imperial patronage, but also strongly linked them to the new Manchu power, at the expense of significant contacts with literati outside the capital.

Beijing's Catholic community saw its glorious peak during the Kangxi reign, a period of expansion for the China missions, culminating in the year 1700. In 1668, just after the end of the major suppression of Christianity in the so-called Calendar Case led by Yang Guangxian (1597–1669), the Jesuit superior Antoine Thomas (1644–1709), perhaps a tad too enthusiastically, declared that there were around 10,000 Christians in Beijing, including a number of Christian eunuchs in the palace, and several sympathetic officials and imperial princes.¹

By 1700, the three main Jesuit churches of Beijing, and the buildings surrounding them, became the physical spatial cores of the Catholic community in the capital. By the 1730s, a fourth small church, built by the papal mission of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, hereafter, Propaganda), intruded upon the Jesuit monopoly. All these churches, especially the larger Jesuit ones, functioned not only as religious sites, but also as logistical bases for the Jesuit and Propaganda missions in northern China. They contained the residences of the foreign missionaries, and of some Chinese priests as well; were the homes of impressive European and Chinese book collections; housed the xylographic blocks of Catholic catechisms and occasionally small printing presses; contained pharmacies and gardens for medicinal plants; were surrounded by stables for donkeys and horses, and pens for domestic animals; accommodated, temporarily or permanently, artisanal workshops for scientific observation and experiments, glass making, painting, engineering, clock making, and so on. In other words,

1 All translations are by the author, unless otherwise noted. ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* 150, f. 134v: “nunc in hac Urbe circiter 10 millia Christianorum numerantur”; cf. Joseph Dehergne, “La mission de Pékin à la veille de la condamnation des rites” [The Peking mission on the eve of the condemnation of the Chinese Rites], *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 9.2 (1953), pp. 91–108; “La mission de Pékin vers 1700. Étude de géographie missionnaire” [The Peking mission around 1700. Study in missionary geography], *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 22 (1953), pp. 314–338; “La mission de Pékin vers 1700. Addenda” [The Peking mission around 1700. Addenda], *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 24 (1955), pp. 291–294.

these churches became multi-functional centers of European religious and secular knowledge, which needed to be translated for a Chinese audience.²

The Source of Translation: Books in Beijing

Since the very beginning of the mission, the Jesuits understood the importance of secular learning to gain an intellectual foothold in China, and engaged Chinese literati with their translations of European texts on sciences, philosophy, morality and religion. The indispensable element in that strategy was the book. This strategy took two forms: first, the gathering of European books in libraries, to be used as references and sources of scientific knowledge; second, the translation of those European books into Chinese, and occasionally Manchu, and their printing and circulation. Books could travel where people could not, and since Ricci's times in the late Ming, the Jesuits engaged in the "apostolate of the press" as a way to both evangelize and spread European secular knowledge far and wide. In this enterprise, they were assisted by an enormous and vivacious domestic book market in China, and the ease of xylographic reproduction of texts.

After the establishment of the Qing dynasty, the court missionaries in Beijing became an important European scholarly cluster at the service of the Qing government. Much of the Jesuit scientific expertise was concentrated in the Astronomical Directorate, and compilations of Chinese-language calendrical compendia required a good reference library with astronomical and mathematical treatises and tables. This points to the centrality of libraries in the enterprise of translation. In recent years,

2 I explore these spatial and logistical dimensions of Catholic Beijing in "An Invisible City: Urban Life and Networks of European Missionaries and Christian Converts in Qing Beijing," in *From Rome to Beijing: Sacred Spaces in Dialogue*, ed. Daniel Greenberg and Yoko Hara (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). See also Lianming Wang, *Jesuitenerbe in Peking: Sakralbauten und Transkulturelle Räume, 1600–1800* [Heritage of the Jesuits in Peking: Religious buildings and transcultural spaces, 1600–1800] (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2019), especially chapter 3; Alan Richard Sweeten, *China's Old Churches: The History, Architecture, and Legacy of Catholic Sacred Structures in Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei Province* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).

Noël Golvers has worked to reconstruct in unprecedented detail what he calls “libraries of Western learning for China.” As he mentions, “the most substantial Jesuit libraries in China—outside Macau—were founded in Peking,” and for that reason he dedicates much space to their history.³ I will summarize here some of his findings.

The Jesuit College, the residence originally established by Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in 1601 near the Xuanwu gate and the headquarters of the Portuguese Vice-Province of China, contained the largest European book collection in Beijing. The initially small complex was enlarged by Ricci’s successors and elevated to the rank of College, a special status within the Society of Jesus reserved for major establishments, which could legally be supported with financial endowments, something normal residences could not. Initially known in Chinese as the “Western Church” (*Xitang* 西堂), it was called the “Southern Church” (*Nantang* 南堂) after the founding of the Propaganda Church in the 1730s, which in turn took the name *Xitang* in local parlance. The large, tall church building of the Nantang was surrounded by a residence that included a sizable library. The library occupied the oldest part of the complex, the original chapel Ricci adapted from an existing building in the late Ming period. By the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century, this hall had been lined all around its four walls with armoires for books, with an open central space for tables to read, write, and study. Portraits of famous Beijing Fathers, made at the order of Kangxi, as well as eulogies of the dead missionaries who had lived in the complex, hung on the walls. The library in the eighteenth century probably contained between 4,000 and 5,000 volumes, gathered over many years by individual Jesuits and by the mission procurators residing in Europe, or those procurators who had journeyed from China to Europe to raise funds and recruit men, chiefly among them Nicolas Trigault (1577–1628). During the eighteenth century, books were also shipped directly from Europe. The Portuguese King João V (reign 1706–1750), for example, supported

3 Noël Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China: Circulation of Western Books between Europe and China in the Jesuit Mission (ca. 1650–ca. 1750)* (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2012–2015), vol. 2, p. 97.

book purchases across Europe, which reached China by sea via Lisbon and Ostend in the Low Countries. The St. Petersburg Imperial Academy in Russia sent its publications (books and journals) through the auspices of German and Portuguese scholars based there. Other benefactors also sent volumes. Most holdings consisted of European books, but there were also Chinese books, as well as the Jesuit China Vice-Province's Archives, with many manuscripts both in Chinese and European languages.⁴

A second, much smaller "Portuguese" collection was held in the "Eastern Church" (*Dongtang* 東堂), first built in 1655, and officially called after its reconstruction in 1692 "Residence of St. Joseph." This residence was convenient to reach Christians in that part of the city, but was also close to the Astronomical Observatory, where some Jesuits worked. The residence contained a pharmacy laboratory, and in all likelihood books on medicine and pharmacopeia, as well as on astronomy. It also had its own archive of manuscripts.⁵

The third library was located in the French residence of the Holy Savior, more commonly known as the Northern Church (*Beitang* 北堂), built on land donated by the Kangxi Emperor within the Imperial City (*Huangcheng* 皇城) in 1702. Sources speak of two separate collections of Chinese and European books, and a small collection attached to a "museum" or "cabinet" of mathematical instruments. This residence even maintained a special and sizable endowment to pay for library upkeep and acquisitions of Chinese books in Beijing. The core of the collection was made up of books brought by the Jesuit "Royal Mathematicians" who arrived from France in the 1680s, by some of the approximately 300 European volumes and at least some of 1,200 Chinese-style books collected by Jean François Foucquet (1665–1741) in China (initially kept in his own *cubiculum* or cell in Beijing, and later partly shipped to Europe, after Foucquet's return there), and by publications sent over the years from Europe for scientific research, to stay abreast of theological controversies on the Chinese Rites. The Korean diplomatic envoy Yi Kiji (or Lee Gi-ji

4 Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China*, vol. 2, pp. 100–168.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 169–177.

李器之, 1690–1722), described his 1720 visit to this library, under the guidance of Fr. Dominique Parennin (1665–1741), a famous translator of Manchu. Yi mentioned the presence of 10,000 leather-bound volumes (*juan*), a generic stock number which probably indicates just several thousand Western-style books. Parennin illustrated to him the contents of a three-volume *Materia Medica*, an unsurprising choice since that Jesuit is known for his Manchu translation of a treatise on anatomy. According to a 1732 list by Antoine Gaubil (1689–1759), the Beitang collection at the time comprised periodicals (especially scientific), *Jesuitica*, edifying books, books on science and technology, travelogues, atlases, books of etchings and religious images, canon law, church and secular history, theology, scriptural commentaries, some Church Fathers, linguistic works and dictionaries. Additions continued into the late eighteenth century, and a shipment of books by the French Minister Henri Léonard Jean Baptiste Bertin (1720–1792) in 1774 to Fr. Jean Joseph Marie Amiot (1718–1793) at the Beitang, for example, included titles on botany, pharmacopeia, medicine and chemistry.⁶

6 Joseph Dehergne, “La bibliothèque des Jésuites français de Pékin au premier tiers du XVIIIe siècle,” [The library of the French Jesuits of Peking in the first third of the 18th century], *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* 56, no. 1 (1969), pp. 125–150; Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China*, vol. 2, pp. 178–249; on the library endowment, see Dehergne, “Les biens de la maison française de Pékin en 1776–1778” [The properties of Peking’s French residence in 1776–1778], *Monumenta Serica* 20 (1961), p. 249; on the Chinese books, see Ad Dudink, “The Chinese Christian Books of the Former Beitang Library [北堂 (Beijing)],” *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* 26 (2004), pp. 46–59; on Foucquet’s books, see Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China*, vol. 2, pp. 192–194 and Nicolas Standaert, “Jesuit Accounts of Chinese History and Chronology and Their Chinese Sources,” *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 35 (2012), pp. 11–88; Gaubil’s list in Dehergne, “La bibliothèque des Jésuites français de Pékin au premier tiers du XVIIIe siècle,” and Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China*, vol. 2, pp. 199–204; on the Korean envoy’s visit, see Lim Jongtae, “‘Postponed Reciprocity’: How Did a Korean Traveler Portray His Encounter with the Westerners in Early Eighteenth-Century Beijing?” *Horizons: Seoul Journal of Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2010), pp. 183–184, and Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China*, vol. 2, pp. 194–195; Bertin’s books sent to Amiot listed in Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China*, vol. 2, pp. 214–217. Original Korean source: Yi I-myōng 李頤命, *Sojae chip* 疎齋集 [The complete works

A fourth small collection of books, on which we know so far very little, was that in the residences of the Propaganda Fide in Haidian and the post-1730s Xitang, near the Xizhi Gate 西直門. Several Propaganda's books we know about (mainly theology, devotion, mathematics and the applied arts) had been left behind in Beijing by the papal legates who visited the Kangxi court—especially Carlo Ambrogio Mezzabarba (1685–1741) in 1720—but also separately brought or acquired by the secular priest Matteo Ripa (1682–1746), the Lazarist Teodorico Pedrini (1671–1746), and their successors.⁷

These collections formed the basis for the scholarly work of the Beijing missionaries from 1600 to the early nineteenth century, including translation work from European languages into Chinese and Manchu, and from Chinese and Manchu into European languages. While we know quite a bit about the acquisition of European books for these collections from Golvers' research, we know much less about the way Chinese and Manchu books were acquired by the missionaries in Beijing for their collections and translation work. In fact, discussion of the geographical location of the Nantang within the city of Beijing, and of the probable acquisition methods for Chinese books of the Beijing missionaries, help us further understand the missionary translation context. The Nantang

of Mr. Sojae], kwon 19, “Yö söyang-in So Lim Tae Chinhyön” 與西洋人蘇林戴進賢 [A letter to the Westerners Soares and Kögler], *Database of Korean Classics* (<http://db.itkc.or.kr>).

7 Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China*, vol. 2, pp. 308–309; Golvers, “Western Books for China: How Did the Jesuits in the China Mission (17th and 18th Century) Acquire Their Books, and What Was the Role of Their ‘Book Agents’ in Europe,” in *Leibniz and the European Encounter with China: 300 Years of “Discours sur la Théologie Naturelle des Chinois* [Discourse on the natural theology of the Chinese],” ed. Li Wenchao 李文潮 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017), pp. 147–166. I have found scattered references to Beijing's Propaganda books in the Propaganda Fide Archives. For example, in a letter by Giordano, we read that Pedrini denied him the use of the books left by Mezzabarba; see APF, SOCP, vol. 36 (1732–34), f. 483r: “[Pedrini] took away all the books left here by Monsignor Mezzabarba, leaving us two [Propaganda missionaries Giordano and Castorano] without even one, in spite of all our supplications; and this was for me the greatest pain, since in these countries every book is a treasure for us, so as not to remain deadened in idleness.”

complex was very close both to the Xuanwu gate 宣武門 and to one of the major commercial avenues intersecting the entire walled city, Xidan 西單. The quarter just south of the Xuanwu gate, moreover, became after 1648 one of the most populated of the Chinese Outer City, particularly well-liked by Han elites. Many literati and officials lived there, and several important regional guilds, where provincial candidates for the exams could receive support and hospitality while in the capital, had their headquarters there as well. That neighborhood was known at the time as *Xuannan shixiang* 宣南士鄉, i.e., “the village of the literati south of the Xuanwu gate,” and was strategically located close to the important book market of Liulichang 琉璃廠 (lit. “The Tile Factory”), a road still today dotted with bookstores, print shops, and antiquarian stores. Literati lived also further south, in the vicinity of Nan Hengjie 南橫街 (the Southern Transversal Road).⁸ Whether by chance or design, therefore, the Jesuit Xuanwu gate residence occupied an important and vital spot in the capital, being located not only at a crucial intersection in the Inner City—close to the imperial and bureaucratic power, near the offices of the Astronomical Directorate, and embedded in Manchu banner society—but also merely steps away from the largest concentration of Han literati and officials and the best book market in the Outer City.⁹

We also learn from materials connected to the French Jesuits at the Beitang that Chinese books could be ordered and purchased from local booksellers in Beijing. A manuscript titled “Book list from Mr. Hu’s bookshop ‘Hall of the Achievements across Generations’ at Xiheyuan” among Jean François Foucquet’s papers, for example, refers to a bookseller

8 Luca Gabbiani, *Pékin à l'ombre du Mandat Céleste. Vie quotidienne et gouvernement urbain sous la dynastie Qing (1644–1911)* [Peking in the shadow of the Celestial Mandate. Daily life and urban governance under the Qing dynasty (1644–1911)] (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales–EHESS, 2011), sub Xuanwu; Wang, *Jesuitenerbe in Peking*, chapter 3; cf. also Hou, Renzhi 侯仁之 and Yue Shengyang 岳升陽, *Beijing Xuannan lishi dituji* 北京宣南歷史地圖集 [Historical maps of the Xuannan district of Beijing] (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2009).

9 See Menegon, “An Invisible City: Urban Life and Networks of European Missionaries and Christian Converts in Qing Beijing.”

located near Qianmen 前門, in central Beijing.¹⁰ Foucquet also compiled accounting lists for book purchases in Beijing in 1711, including commentaries on the classics and works on the *Yijing*. Eventually, some of these books were used by Foucquet in his writings, and a number of them were deposited at the Propaganda Library and are today in the Vatican Library.¹¹ While Confucian classics and commentaries, as well as Chinese lexicographies and linguistic works, could be purchased in regular bookstores, some items produced by the Imperial Printing Workshops were much rarer, usually not for sale, and had to be procured through acquaintances. For example, we read in a letter by the Franciscan Antonio Sacconi (1741–1785) in 1775 to his superior in Rome, Mgr. Stefano Borgia (1731–1804), Secretary of Propaganda Fide, a famous bibliophile and orientalist collector, that it had been impossible for the Chinese priest Pius Liu to find in Beijing a copy of a book authored by order of the Qianlong Emperor “on the origins of the Manchus” (not the *Manzhou yuanliu kao* 滿洲源流考, published only after 1777; perhaps some other text?), and that Manchu-language books could not be sold or bought except by Manchus themselves, and could not be legally sent outside the country.¹² More well-connected and knowledgeable court missionaries, however, could overcome these obstacles, possibly obtaining the books through courtly connections. In 1778, for example, the ex-Jesuit Louis Poirot (1735–1813; an “ex” Jesuit, as the Society had been disbanded in 1773 in Europe, and 1775 in China), wrote to Propaganda that in order to ingratiate himself with Bertin, then Minister of Louis XVI, he had sent him in Paris an Italian translation and

10 “Xiheyang Shiyetang Hu shi shupu shudan 西河沿世業堂胡氏書舖書單” [Book list from Mr. Hu’s bookshop ‘Hall of the Achievements across Generations’ at Xiheyang (near the Qianmen gate)], in BAV, *Borgia cinese* 357.1, ms., 20 fols.; cf. Nicolas Standaert, “Jean-François Foucquet’s Contribution to the Establishment of Chinese Book Collections in European Libraries: Circulation of Chinese Books,” *Monumenta Serica* 63, no. 2 (2015), pp. 361–424.

11 Standaert, “Jean-François Foucquet’s Contribution to the Establishment of Chinese Book Collections in European Libraries: Circulation of Chinese Books,” pp. 363–367.

12 APF, SOCP vol. 61 (1777–1779), Antonio Maria Sacconi di Osimo to Propaganda Fide Secretary [Stefano Borgia], Quang-ping-fu, Pecheli [Guangping 廣平 Prefecture, Bei Zhili], 9 September 1775, f. 356v.

actual copies of the Chinese and Manchu imperial editions of Kangxi's *Aphorisms from the Familiar Instructions* (*Shengzu Ren huangdi tingxun geyan* 聖祖仁皇帝庭訓格言).¹³

In sum, court missionaries in the capital had at their disposal collections of European, Chinese and Manchu books, either accumulated over generations in their libraries, or obtained through purchase or acquaintances in Beijing. This was the “material” and logistical basis for their translation enterprise, which will be discussed below through some examples.

Translating in Beijing for Europe and for China

In her recent study on the eighteenth-century French Jesuit translators in China, Wu Huiyi highlights the importance of “reconstituting the process of the act of translation, including the contingent elements of the circumstances that have made the translation what it is.” For example, she asks: “Is the translator alone in his room? Does he seek the help of a Chinese? Does he go out in nature to search for plants when reading a Chinese herbarium? To whom is his translation directed?”¹⁴ Wu's analysis of the linguistic education of the French Jesuits, back home and after arriving in China, and her close examination of the corpus translated into French from Chinese by François Xavier Dentrecolles (1664–1741), are illuminating and methodologically insightful. I will not rehearse here all her complex arguments, which I will employ myself whenever useful.

13 APF, SOCP, vol. 62 (1780–1781), Poirot to Propaganda Fide, 4 November 1778, 39r: “I engaged in the labor of translating from Chinese and Manchu the book of the *Family Instructions of the Kangxi Emperor* to his sons, and I sent [Bertin] a copy”; on this translation and the actual imperial edition used by Poirot, see Eugenio Menegon, “Kangxi and Tomás Pereira's Beard. An Account from *Sublime Familiar Instructions*, in Chinese and Manchu with Three European Versions,” *Chinese Heritage Quarterly* 25 (March 2011).

14 Huiyi Wu, *Traduire la Chine au XVIIIe siècle. Les jésuites traducteurs de textes chinois et le renouvellement des connaissances européennes sur la Chine (1687–ca. 1740)* [Translating China in the 18th century. The Jesuits as translators of Chinese texts and the renewal of European knowledge on China (1687–ca.1740)] (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017), pp. 52–53.

Rather, I will herewith limit my focus on Beijing alone (the heart of my own current research) as a locus of translation activities, and try to relate that activity to the special roles of the court missionaries.¹⁵

Linguistic Competence at the Palace

The first element to consider when researching translation activities among the Europeans in Beijing is their linguistic competence. An anonymous Latin document preserved in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus (ARSI), datable to the mid to late 1720s, and titled by a later hand “Evaluation of the French Fathers in the Palace of Beijing” (“Iudicium de PP Gallis in Palatio Pekini”), offers us a window into the question of linguistic level. The manuscript contains a list of the main “court missionaries” of the day, including in fact not only French Fathers, but also some important members of the Portuguese Jesuit Vice-Province (see my transcription and translation in Appendix).¹⁶

The “evaluation” being made there, probably by a superior in China for communication to the General in Rome, was about the skills of the Jesuits at the imperial palace, and generally in Beijing. The major gauges of accomplishment were (1) success in “matters of the palace” (political-social networking and scientific-artistic labor); (2) pastoral work in the local Christian community; and, above all, (3) linguistic abilities. I will here concentrate on this third aspect.¹⁷ For several entries, the knowledge or lack

15 Dentrecolles himself lived several years in the Chinese provinces (especially Jiangxi), before moving to Beijing where he spent the last twenty-two years of his life (1719–1741) at the Beitang.

16 The document is preserved in ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* 184, f. 20r. All italics in the quotations from this manuscript are mine.

17 Golvers has also considered the separate issue of language interference and hybridization among the China missionaries, deriving from their European multi-lingual background within an environment dominated by Chinese and Manchu. See Noël Golvers, “‘Sprachnot’ as Part of the Existential Situation of European Jesuit Missionaries in China (17th–18th Cent.),” in *Chinese Missionary Linguistics*, ed. Davor Antonucci and Pieter Ackerman (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2017), pp. 93–107.

of knowledge of the Manchu language is prominently highlighted: “does not know any Manchu”; “has been studying Manchu for some time”; “understands enough Manchu.” The same is noted about *spoken* Chinese language (i.e. either *guanhua* 官話 or possibly the patois of Beijing): “gifted with a moderately good facility in *speaking* Chinese”; “*speaks* Chinese well enough”; or “not gifted with facility in Chinese.” In the case of the prominent scientist and Director of the Astronomical Directorate, Fr. Ignaz Kögler (1680–1746), the note said: “His great intellectual gifts have never been transformed into equivalent Chinese gifts, because he is not very adept at *speaking* in Chinese and has a speech impediment; [thus] he can do little without the help of an assistant and interpreter.” Only one of the Jesuits, Dominique Parennin, was hailed as a linguistic genius:

Fr. Parennin has a marvelous dexterity in dealing with [all] matters, and has an *incredible facility in speaking both Chinese and Manchu*. He is known, appreciated, and esteemed by the emperor, the princes, and the officials. Whatever is left of our religion in Beijing and Canton exists thanks to the labor, the writings, and the zeal of Fr. Parennin. He is here universally considered the pillar of the mission and of the Europeans. For the last year he has been mostly writing many texts in Manchu about [our] religion for the Manchus, and with abundant fruits.¹⁸

This situation was confirmed by the aforementioned Korean visitor Yi Kiji in 1720, who met some of the same missionaries in the list (Bouvet, Regis, and Dentrecolles). The communication through his Korean interpreter soon became difficult, and Yi commented that “the Chinese of these Westerners is rather imperfect, and we could not understand many things” (*Xiyangren Hanyu shen juyu, duo wei xiao* 西洋人漢語甚齟齬，多未曉).¹⁹ This, of course was mainly a question of *spoken* Chinese and *oral* communication. As noted by Wu Huiyi, many linguistic materials developed in the first century of missionary presence in China to learn the

¹⁸ ARSI, *Japonica Sinica* 184, f. 20r.

¹⁹ Yi Kiji as cited in Wu, *Traduire la Chine au XVIIIe siècle*, pp. 124–125.

language were concerned with daily language and pastoral duties, and were very practical in contents (word lists, vocabularies, grammars, conversation dialogues).²⁰ On the other hand, we also know that the first couple of generation of Jesuits, following the examples of Ruggieri and especially Ricci, were equally interested in reading the Confucian classics, starting from the Four Books, a typical pedagogical path for Chinese students as well. The French Jesuit savant Prémare, in fact, criticized the approach followed by his contemporary missionaries in the eighteenth century in learning Chinese:

To the missionaries who have but just arrived nothing seems more desirable than to get possession of a dictionary, as if there were no other way of learning the language. Accordingly, they spend their time in carefully copying out the various lexicons they meet with, which would be more advantageously devoted to reading and committing to memory the Four Classics.²¹

Evolution of the Translation Projects in Beijing: The French Jesuits

Written translation was a different matter, and we know that these and other Jesuits were all engaged in complex translation projects from Chinese into French. This started with a period of exploration of important concepts in the Chinese Rites Controversy (1690s–1700), went through a period of high-pitched debate around the time of the visit of Papal Legate Charles Maillard de Tournon (1668–1710) to the Qing Court (1700–1707), and evolved into a third period (1717–1720) of publications about and translations of the *Yijing* by the group of “Figurists” among the French

20 Wu, *Traduire la Chine au XVIIIe siècle*, pp. 126–127.

21 Joseph Henri de Prémare, *The Notitia Linguae Sinicae of Premare*, tran. J. G. Bridgman (Canton: The Office of Chinese Repository, 1847), p. vii; cf. Knud Lundbaek, *Joseph de Prémare (1666–1736)—Chinese Philology and Figurism* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1991), p. 70.

Jesuits. Later on, until the end of the century, the missionaries engaged in translation in the fields of Sinology, history, economic, arts and sciences, eschewing openly theological and religious works.²²

Beijing was not the only place where these research and translation activities were happening, as some of the French Jesuits lived in provincial missions, and in fact, the capital was less hospitable to the theologically suspect Figurist ideas and the study of the *Yijing* initiated by Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730). But because of the direct engagement of the Kangxi Emperor in the 1710s in theological discussions with the Jesuits and the Roman authorities, the capital remained an important hub of translation and controversy. While the few French Jesuits in the provinces suffered the consequences of popular opposition to the new ritual prohibitions issued by Rome against the Chinese Rites, in Beijing the French Jesuit scholars continued their activities in a sort of “ivory tower” environment, relying on their well-endowed library, and producing hundreds of pages of translations and studies on Chinese philosophy, Confucianism, Manchu grammar, numismatics, mathematics, and so on. This enterprise was in part an engagement with European debates on the universal value of Christianity, and it fueled the disputes between deists and atheists, resulting in polemical positions against the Church among enlightened thinkers, an outcome obviously unintended by the Jesuits. The culmination of this process was the publication in Paris of Du Halde’s *Description de la Chine* [Description of China] (1735), a collection where many translations by the Beijing Fathers were included, sometimes in hastily edited form.²³

After 1720, the issues of the Chinese Rites became less important, following the failure of the Mezzabarba legation and the death of Kangxi

22 Wu, *Traduire la Chine au XVIIIe siècle*, Chapter 2, “Traduire à l’âge des controverses” [Translate in the age of controversies].

23 Wu, *Traduire la Chine au XVIIIe siècle*, Chapter 3, “La traduction comme refutation” [Translation as refutation]; on the polemical undercurrent in the *Description*, see Isabelle Landry-Deron, *La preuve par la Chine: La “Description” de J. B. du Halde, jésuite, 1735* [Proving it through China: The “description” by the Jesuit J. B. du Halde, 1735] (Paris: Éditions de l’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2002), especially her trailblazing chapter on the French Jesuits’ translations of Chinese sources.

in 1722. The new course taken by Yongzheng, with the prohibition of Catholicism in 1724 and the exile of most missionaries in the provinces to Canton in 1724, followed soon after by their expulsion to Macao in 1732, and the papal interdiction to discuss the Chinese Rites in 1742, changed the context for translation. The missionaries in Beijing increasingly felt forced to remain silent on controversial religious issues, and this gave them freedom to pursue research and translation of scientific, historical and ethnographic materials, in tune with the academic interests of European lay scholars (chronology, religions, and the general vogue for everything Chinese, later called *chinoiserie*) and with Europe's practical interests in certain domains like medicine, botany, mineralogy, and chemistry. Once again, this was an "ivory tower" project of translation of Chinese sources, an armchair, bookish enterprise conducted in the relative quiet of the Beijing residences and over the pages of Chinese, Manchu and European books, since by now missionaries were no longer openly allowed to roam the provinces and conduct direct observations there.²⁴ The French Jesuits in Beijing (Parennin, Régis, Prémare, de Mailla, de la Charme, Gaubil and Amiot) authored numerous works on Chinese chronology and history between the late 1720s and the late 1760s. Some remained manuscript, but several eventually were published and reached a larger erudite public in France and elsewhere, for example, within the anthology of Du Halde, *Description de la Chine* (1735), or as self-standing publications, like the gigantic rendition (thirteen volumes) by Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla (1669–1748) of the Chinese and Manchu versions of the historical work *Tongjian gangmu* 通鑑綱目 [A complete mirror of history], a translation accomplished in the 1740s, but published only in the 1770s under the title *Histoire générale de la Chine, ou Annales de cet Empire*,

24 Wu, *Traduire la Chine au XVIIIe siècle*, Chapter 4, "Curiosité et utilité: Traduire les animaux, les plantes, les minéraux et les 'arts'" [Curiosity and usefulness: Translating animals, plants, minerals and 'arts']. On the missionary translation of Chinese histories, based on Ming and early Qing historical compendia known as *gangjian* (綱鑑), see Standaert, "Jesuit Accounts of Chinese History and Chronology and Their Chinese Sources"; Standaert, *The Intercultural Weaving of Historical Text: Chinese and European Stories about Emperor Ku and His Concubines* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

traduites du Tong-Kien-Kang-Mou [General history of China, or annals of this empire, translated from the *Tongjian gangmu*] (1777–1785).²⁵

We now need to return to Wu Huiyi's provocative questions: "Is the translator alone in his room? Does he seek the help of a Chinese? Does he go out in nature to search for plants when reading a Chinese herbarium? To whom is his translation directed?" While scholarship in recent decades has uncovered the intended and unintended readership of the Jesuit translations in Europe, and to an extent shown that translations of Chinese sources—rather than experimental science—determined the contents of the intercultural exchange (what I have called an "ivory-tower" and "bookish" form of translation), we still are mainly in the dark about the collaboration between Jesuits and Chinese scholars, especially in Beijing. Was the translator alone in his room? We do know that often Chinese and Manchu scholars were consulted on specific problems and were asked about the best books to buy for a project. But their names, with few exceptions, remain unknown. More research might possibly reveal more, but it is unlikely.²⁶

25 Standaert, "Jesuit Accounts of Chinese History and Chronology," pp. 116–163; see Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise, enrichie des cartes générales et particulières de ces pays, de la carte générale & des cartes particulières du Thibet, & de la Corée, & ornée d'un grand nombre de figures et de vignettes gravées en taille-douce* [Geographic, historical, chronological, political, physical description of the Chinese empire and Chinese Tartary, enriched with general and specific maps of these countries, and with a general map and specific maps of Tibet and Korea, and embellished with a large number of figures and illustrations printed with copperplates] (Paris: P.G. Lemercier, 1735), 4 vols; Joseph-Marie-Anne de Moyriac de Mailla, *Histoire générale de la Chine, ou Annales de cet Empire, traduites du Tong-Kien-Kang-Mou* (Paris: Chez Pierre & Clousier, 1777–1785), 13 vols.

26 For example, see Alexander Statman, "A Forgotten Friendship: How a French Missionary and a Manchu Prince Studied Electricity and Ballooning in Late Eighteenth Century Beijing," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 46 (2017), pp. 119–212, for a recent treatment of the special scholarly friendship between the Jesuit Amiot and the Manchu prince Hongwu 弘晬 in Beijing.

The Propaganda Missionaries in Beijing: Translation in a Different Milieu

So far, relying on recent admirable scholarship, I have reviewed the translation accomplishment of the Jesuits, focusing on the French Beitang community, and neglecting the Portuguese Vice-Province, which deserves some specific work in the future. In this section, rather, I want to focus on a specific and limited case study, based on my recent research in the archives of the Propaganda Fide mission in Beijing, preserved in copious quantity at the Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples, or *de Propaganda Fide*, in Rome.

A general point first. Most of the translation work by the French Jesuits was intended for publication. However, many eighteenth-century translations are to be found in archives all over Europe only in manuscript form, and not always because the writer could not reach an editor and publisher. Many of these translations were never intended for public consumption, and were produced to inform the Church authorities on current events in China, or to expound on matters related to the Chinese Rites, to censor Christian text in Chinese, or to offer materials for missionaries back in Europe preparing to leave for China.

The Propaganda Fide Archives preserve a number of Chinese materials in the original language, often accompanied by translations in Italian.²⁷ Several Roman collections also contain similar materials related to the Propaganda mission, and are relevant to our topic. As I mentioned, these materials were not intended for publication, but as “intelligence” and internal bureaucratic reporting for Church authorities. Propaganda missionaries were scattered in missions across the Qing empire, and a small but influential cluster of them resided in Beijing. In general, these missionaries had a rather practical approach to the Chinese language:

²⁷ An annotated catalogue of the Propaganda Fide archival materials in Chinese, compiled by Adrian Dudink, edited by Emanuele Raini and Giuseppe Zhao Hongtao, and with a historical introduction by Eugenio Menegon, is in preparation at the Center for Chinese Studies of the Pontifical Urbanian University in Rome.

they learned to speak the local patois, in order to function as pastors or technical personnel at court, but only rarely attained the level of mastery of the written language the Jesuits possessed.

An exception was the Austrian Discalced Carmelite of the Propaganda Mission, Josef Maria Pruggmayr di S. Teresa (Na Yongfu 那永福, 1713–1791), who lived in Beijing for over forty years during the Qianlong period, and has left numerous letters and reports in the Propaganda Archives.²⁸ Pruggmayr habitually lived in Haidian, the village outside Beijing close to the Yuanmingyuan suburban palace, the main residence for the Qianlong Emperor nine months out of twelve. Pruggmayr taught for some time music at court, but for most of his long life engaged in pastoral work in Beijing and its hinterland, was vice-procurator of Propaganda, and had an excellent command of the spoken Beijing patois. Here I will briefly refer to two works related to the enterprise of translation from the Chinese language that he produced while in Beijing. The first is a large Italian-Chinese vocabulary (548 folios), compiled for the Propaganda library in Rome between the late 1760s and the mid-1780s, and today preserved in the Vatican Library.²⁹ The second is the partial Latin translation of a philosophical-religious work in Chinese by the French Jesuit Alexandre de la Charme (1695–1767; Chinese name Sun Zhang 孫璋), entitled *Xingli zhenquan* 性理真詮 (Elucidating the true meaning of nature and principle, six *juan*), published by the Beitang in Beijing in 1753.

Pruggmayr's Vocabulary belongs to the tradition of practical tools for learning spoken Chinese that Prémare criticized. Pruggmayr had probably already started work on the "Vocabulario" in 1767. While most of the text had been completed by 1770, a final and corrected copy to be sent to

28 On Pruggmayr see, e.g., Fortunato Margiotti, "La Confraternita del Carmine in Cina (1728–1838)" [The Virgin of Mount Carmel Confraternity in China (1728–1838)], *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 14 (1963), pp. 91–154; Óscar Ignacio Aparicio Ahedo, "Un carmelita descalzo misionero en China (1745–1791)" [Josef Maria Pruggmayr a Sancta Theresia, a Discalced Carmelite in China (1745–1791)], *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia* 27 (2018), pp. 351–376.

29 BAV, *Borgia cinese* 407.

Rome was ready only in 1784.³⁰ Thus, Pruggmayr possibly spent a total of seventeen years to compile it and copy it for future missionaries in Beijing, in at least two copies. The best copy was eventually sent to Propaganda in Rome in the late 1780s and became part of the Congregation's library collection. That final version, today in the collection of the Vatican Apostolic Library, contains around 55,000 Italian entries, around fifty entries per page, two columns per page, extracted from the famous vocabulary of the Italian language *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (Vocabulary of the Crusca Academicians, probably the fourth augmented Florence edition of 1729–1738, in six volumes; the first edition was printed in Venice in 1612). Each Italian word is followed by Chinese corresponding expressions in northern Mandarin Romanization (without any Chinese characters), and the marking of the five tones; often entire sentences in Romanized Chinese and Italian are given to illustrate usage. The codex does not have a title page. A "Preface" in two folios, in the handwriting of Pruggmayr, but not signed or dated, is titled "Avvertimenti agli Studenti della Lingua Mandarina, che vorranno impararla su questo Vocabolario" ("Notices for the students of the Mandarin language, who want to learn it on the basis of this Vocabulary"). The "Avvertimenti" include an explanation of the five accents/tones (*accento/tuono* [sic]), and how they are represented; a note on the pronunciation of Beijing and Northern China (*parti boreali*); a caveat that the Romanization is adapted to the Italian language, and advice for French or Portuguese readers on how to pronounce using the Italian system; finally, a note explaining that Italian synonyms are cross-referenced, to avoid repeating their translation.³¹

30 APF, SOCP, vol. 56 (1770–71), f. 34v; APF, *Procura Cina*, box 17, Pruggmayr to Procurator Emiliano Palladini, 3 August 1770, f. 2v; APF, SOCP, vol. 64 (1785–86), f. 511r.

31 The Preface states: "Since this vocabulary is Italian-Chinese, and especially composed for Italian missionaries, I estimated that I must also use Italian spellings to write Chinese words. Thus, an Italian, reading the Chinese words written in this vocabulary, must read and pronounce them like he would pronounce similar Italian words while reading an Italian book." ("Questo vocabolario essendo Italiano-Cinese e propriamente composto per i missionari italiani, ho stimato di dover parimente servirmi della ortografia italiana, per scrivere le parole cinesi; onde l'Italiano leggendo le parole cinesi

Pruggmayr considered his “Vocabolario” or, as he also calls it in his letters, *Calepino Italiano Cinese*, as a work of love.³² He spent almost two decades compiling it, while fighting his superiors in Macao on the necessity for it—especially Procurator Emiliano Palladini (1733–1793), who doubted its utility. We learn from his letters some details on the material history of the manuscript, which illuminates how translation depended on more than the translator’s brain alone. The missionary asked the procurator to purchase high-quality European paper through the foreign merchants of Canton, so that he could copy his draft for the library in Rome. He explained that “Chinese paper is very fragile, and the vocabulary is a kind of book that is used all the time, thus good and strong paper is needed, otherwise it will be easily ruined.” He also asked for European ink, as he found the Chinese one too light, and

scritte in questo vocabolario, deve leggere, e pronunciarle, come leggendo un libro italiano, pronunciarebbe simili parole italiane.”) An example of an entry: “Abbadessa [=Abbess]: sieù taó niù hoéi cjàm” [*xiūdào nǚ huìzhǎng* 修道女會長]. Pruggmayr’s system obviously uses different accents than those of today’s pinyin system.

32 APF, SOCP, vol. 63 (1782–1784), f. 224v. The term *calepino* referred to any lexicon or vocabulary, and derived from the name of the Italian lexicographer Ambrogio Calepino, author of one of the most famous and reprinted Latin dictionaries in Europe, first published in 1502. Pruggmayr himself, in many letters he sent from the city of Beijing to the Sacred Congregation, expressly talked about his Italian-Chinese vocabulary. For example, in a letter dated Beijing 17 September 1781 (APF, SOCP, vol. 62 (1780–1781), f. 646) he says: “This year I have finally completed, after thirteen years of labor, the Italian-Chinese Vocabulary” (“avendo in questo anno, con lavoro di 13 anni, finalmente finito il Vocabolario Italiano-Cinese”). Again, on 23 October 1784 he wrote to the Cardinal Prefect (APF, SOCP, vol. 64 (1785–86), f. 499v): “I never even wrote to the Congregation [of Propaganda about the idea] of printing the Vocabulary ... how voluminous would such *Calepino* become, since it already resulted in three large manuscript volumes, while being written only in European letters? In this Vocabulary of mine, on which I have labored more than thirteen years, are included all Italian verbs, and many other words from the latest edition of the Crusca Academy’s Vocabulary, with all their different meanings, and several examples and expressions” (“mai ho scritto niente all Sacra Congregazione per la stampa di tal Vocabolario ... quanto voluminoso riuscirebbe questo Calepino che scritto con sole lettere europee fa tre grandi volumi? ... In questo mio Vocabolario, in cui ho lavorato da 13 più anni, sono tutti i Verbi Italiani, e molti altri vocaboli dell’ultima Crusca, con tutti i loro diversi significati con varie frasi, e modi diversi di dire...”).

begged the procurator to pay for the expense, but, in case funding was an issue, he offered to cover the cost himself “for the common good of the missionaries and the Sacred Congregation.”³³ The existing copy is in fact written on high-quality, thick European paper, which has withstood the test of time remarkably well. The handwriting is consistent and the ink’s color black and defined, so much so that I suspect it is in fact Chinese ink (made of animal glue and soot), rather than European ink (eighteenth-century European iron gall ink was highly acidic, and usually turned reddish with time and sometimes corroded the surface of the pages).

The history of this vocabulary (which I am writing in full elsewhere)³⁴ shows how precious these lexicographic materials were in the eyes of contemporary Europeans. The copy reached the Procurator of Propaganda Fide Giovanni Battista Marchini (1757–1823) in Macao in 1790, the year before Pruggmayr’s death. By 1791 it had arrived at the Library of the Propaganda Congregation in Rome, where in fact it rested very little. In the Spring of 1792, Lord George Staunton (1737–1801), Secretary of the future Ambassador to China George Macartney (1737–1806), travelled to Italy to recruit for the embassy as teachers, translators and interpreters some Chinese priests from the Chinese College of Naples. While in Rome, Staunton met with Cardinal Leonardo Antonelli (1730–1811), Prefect of Propaganda, and visited the Propaganda Library. He was shown some manuscript Chinese dictionaries compiled by missionaries, including Pruggmayr’s, and asked to borrow them for his diplomatic mission to China. Thus, our manuscript vocabulary, by way of Britain, returned to China (probably even Beijing itself) by 1793. The young son of George

33 APF, *Procura Cina*, box 17, Giuseppe Maria a Sancta Theresia Pruggmayr to Emiliano Palladini, 3 August 1770 (received 28 October 1770), f. 2v.

34 Eugenio Menegon, “Shady Dealers, Deceptive Linguists, and Industrious Missionaries: The Incredible Journey of a Manuscript Vocabulary between Beijing and Rome, 1760s–1820s,” in *Empires et interprètes. Maîtriser les langues, apprivoiser le monde: dictionnaires et outils multilingues d’Asie orientale—Interpreting Empires. Mastering Languages, Taming the World: Dictionaries and Multilingual Lexicons in East Asia*, ed. Michela Bussotti, François Lachaud and Makino Motonori (Tokyo-Paris: Toyo Bunko & École française d’Extrême-Orient, forthcoming).

Staunton, Thomas (1781–1859), might have used the “Vocabulario” to learn spoken Chinese under the guidance of the Chinese interpreters, especially Giacomo Li Zibiao 李自標, the most accomplished as a guide and translator, who accompanied the English all the way to Beijing.³⁵ Famously, Thomas addressed the Qianlong Emperor in Chinese when paying respect to him in the well known audience at Chengde, and went on to become one of the first Sinologists and China hands in Britain, and a translator of the Qing code into English in 1810 (which was followed by an Italian edition in 1812).³⁶ The Vocabulario was returned to Rome as promised to Cardinal

35 On Li’s role as interpreter, see Michele Fatica, “Gli alunni del Collegium Sinicum di Napoli, la missione Macartney presso l’Imperatore Qianlong e la richiesta di libertà di culto per i cristiani cinesi (1792–1793)” [The pupils of the Chinese College of Naples, the Macartney embassy to the Qianlong Emperor, and the request of freedom of religion for Chinese Christians (1792–1793), in *Studi in onore di Lionello Lanciotti* [Studies in honor of Lionello Lanciotti], ed. S. M. Carletti, M. Sacchetti, e P. Santangelo, vol. 2 (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1996), pp. 525–565; Henrietta Harrison, “A Faithful Interpreter? Li Zibiao and the 1793 Macartney Embassy to China,” *The International History Review* 41, no. 5 (2019), pp. 1076–1091; Lawrence Wang-chi Wong 王宏志, “Jin erguo shichen zhi yi, yu renting yiren chuanjiao?: Ma-jia-er-ni shituan Qianlong zhi Yingguo wang di’erdao chiyu zhong de chuanjiao wenti 今爾國使臣之意·欲任聽夷人傳教?: 馬戛爾尼使團乾隆致英國王第二道敕諭中的傳教問題” [“Now your ambassador requests to allow the foreigners to preach freely?”: The preaching issue in Emperor Qianlong’s second letter to the British King in the Macartney Mission], *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 中國文化研究所學報 (*Journal of Chinese Studies*, Hong Kong) 71 (July 2020), pp. 47–68.

36 See Fatica, “Gli alunni del Collegium Sinicum di Napoli, la missione Macartney presso l’Imperatore Qianlong e la richiesta di libertà di culto per i cristiani cinesi (1792–1793)”; for the translated Qing code statutes in English, see Thomas Staunton, ed. and trans, *Ta Tsing Leu Lee; Being the Fundamental Laws, and a Selection from the Supplementary Statutes, of the Penal Code of China* (London: Strand, 1810); for the Italian translation, see Giorgio Tommaso Staunton, ed. and trans, *Ta-Tsing-Leu-Lee o sia Leggi fondamentali del Codice penale della China: stampato e promulgato a Pekin coll’autorità di tutti gl’Imperatori Ta-Tsing, della presente dinastia* (Italian version, 3 vols.) (Milan: dalla Stamperia di Giovanni Silvestri, 1812); cf. Guido Abbattista, “Chinese Law and Justice: George Thomas Staunton (1781–1859) and the European Discourses on China in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in *Law, Justice and Codification in Qing China. European and Chinese Perspectives. Essays in History and Comparative Law*, ed. Guido Abbattista (Trieste: EUT–Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2017), pp. 1–138.

Antonelli after the mission, but during the Napoleonic occupation of Rome, together with many other precious manuscripts, it was ransacked from Propaganda and ended up into private hands, eventually being purchased in 1811 by the Sinologist and lexicographer Antonio Montucci (1762–1829) in Berlin. After his retirement to Italy in 1825, Montucci sold his entire collection to the Holy See, and thus our tome returned back to its intended home, where it is still today, thus surviving twice the journey between China and Europe. We know from the Inventory of the Borgiano Museum (BAV, *Borgia latino* 767), where the vocabulary was first placed after its purchase in 1825, that Raffaele Umpierres (1788–?), a Propaganda priest, former procurator in Macao and first instructor of Chinese language at the missionary College of Propaganda in Rome, borrowed Pruggmayr's Vocabulary in the 1830s. An anonymous manuscript dictionary I examined, entitled "Dizionario Italiano e Cinese" (170 folios), kept in the Archives of Propaganda, seems to be an abridged copy of the "Vocabulario" penned in the early nineteenth century, probably by Umpierres for his courses and students.³⁷

The labors of our Beijing missionary on the dictionary in the 1770s were actually delayed by another task, which Pruggmayr would have rather avoided—the Latin translation of the Jesuit Alexandre de la Charme's *Xingli zhenquan* 性理真詮 [A true illustration of natural philosophy]. The Frenchman de la Charme (1695–1767), a long-time Beijing resident (1729–1767), published this long treatise in six *juan* in 1753 in the capital (a Chinese abridged version had been published in 1750, and was followed by a Manchu translation in 1757, translated in small part into German by Hans Conon von den Gabelentz in 1840) as an attempt to critique neo-Confucian philosophical concepts, and introduce Christianity as compatible with the ancient, pre-Song Confucian classics, following the model of Ricci's *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義). A few years later, de la Charme's publication attracted the attention of Propaganda's authorities, who asked its missionaries in China to examine

37 APF, SC, *Cina & Regni Adiacenti*, Miscellanea, vol. 15. This manuscript contains some of the same materials found in Pruggmayr's manuscript, including his "Avvertimenti."

the work for its orthodoxy. In 1769, Propaganda's Procurator Palladini in Macao commissioned Pruggmayr to procure a copy and translate the entire book into Latin, because, alone among the papal missionaries in the Qing capital, he had a good reading ability in literary Chinese. Pruggmayr obtained a copy from the French Jesuits at the Beitang, not without resistance, and sent it to Macao.³⁸ But he also objected to a full translation, as he observed that it was superfluous, and instead translated only one *juan* (which he calls "tome"), as we read below in a 1771 letter to Palladini:

Now I have to advise your Reverence that this Chinese book, which was denounced at the Sacred Congregation [of Propaganda], contains six tomes. The first five tomes attack the modern Chinese literati, and through the ancient [Confucian] classics show the falsity of the doctrine of the modern Chinese literati. In these five tomes there is no mention of Christianity, nor of God, and thus the accusations against this book cannot be contained therein. Thus, they must be in the sixth tome, which talks about God and the Christian Holy Law that we preach in China. Hence, I only translated tome 6, which is the only one which could deserve a critique. The other five tomes treat of purely Chinese philosophy, and not at all about the points of [Christian doctrine] criticized [in Rome]. Therefore, I did not translate those five tomes which only contain philosophical matters. [Those tomes], once translated into Latin, would never be understood by European philosophers. Anyway, to translate all those 5 tomes I would need two to three years.³⁹

The irritated Pruggmayr sent Palladini the original copy of his partial translation, while retaining only his minutes, and warning him that if the

38 This is possibly the copy held in BAV, *Borgia cinese* 362, printed in 1753 at the Shoushan Tang 首善堂 church near the Xi'an Gate 西安門, i.e. the Northern Church in the Imperial City; see Paul Pelliot, *Inventaire Sommaire des manuscrits et imprimés chinois de la Bibliothèque—A Posthumous Work by Paul Pelliot* (Kyoto: Istituto Italiano di Cultura—Scuola di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 1995), p. 37.

39 APF, *Procura Cina*, Box 17, Giuseppe Maria a Sancta Theresia Pruggmayr in Beijing to Emiliano Palladini, 2 October 1771, f. 1v.

parcel was lost, there would be no longer a full copy; however, so far, I have been unable to track it down. Pruggmayr's textual activities, anyway, show in a nutshell some of the translation outcomes possible for a Beijing missionary, and offer a window into the approach to "language-as-spoken," typical of missionaries in the field and especially of non-Jesuits, versus the more learned translation approach of the Jesuits, who were engaged in the study of the classics, in the composition of works in Chinese and Manchu, and in the translation of Chinese and Manchu texts, mainly into French. Pruggmayr's correspondence, in particular, offers a micro-historical and detailed behind-the-scene description of the politics of translation within the missionary community from the point of view of a non-Jesuit. Yet, albeit with many fewer resources than the Jesuits, he also benefited from a small library of Western and Chinese books (including, apparently, a copy of the *Vocabolario della Crusca*) from the flourishing local book market, and from scholarly networks in Beijing and abroad, all the way to Rome.

Conclusion

This essay is a preliminary attempt to understand the logistics of book circulation, the study of texts, and the process of European translation in Beijing, especially during the period of proscription of Christianity (1724–1848). Using primary published and archival sources, I have considered not only the better-known Jesuit mission, but also the small and relatively obscure mission of the Propaganda Fide Congregation, established under papal authority in the imperial capital in the 1710s.

Building upon recent research on China's missionary libraries, book circulation, and translation studies in the late imperial period by Noël Golvers, Nicolas Standaert, Isabelle Landry–Deron, Wu Huiyi and others, I have touched on some aspects of the "materiality" of the "missionary translation project" in Qing Beijing. By examining a less known actor like Pruggmayr and the networks he was enmeshed in, we could get glimpses of a missionary's material needs in producing translations, including access to Western and Chinese books, procurement of supplies, and footing of expenses. These elements help us further contextualize the enterprise of

European translation in Qing Beijing, beyond what we know of Jesuit labors in the capital.

Recent scholarship on multilingualism in the Qing empire offers yet another venue of inquiry that we could take. The dynasty needed to translate and print texts in the main languages of the far-flung imperial domains, including Chinese, Manchu, Mongol, Tibetan, and Uyghur. Today, the emerging field of Qing translation studies allows us to probe the intersection of Qing state-sponsored translation initiatives with parallel European efforts in the imperial capital. Western missionaries became proficient in more than Chinese alone, and were the transmitters of linguistic knowledge of Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan to Europe. The importance of the Jesuits in starting not only Sinology, but also Manchu and Inner Asian studies in Europe, is well known. Alexandre de la Charme—to mention a historical actor we have already met in this essay, for example—compiled a manuscript quadrilingual dictionary of Chinese, Mongol, Manchu and French in four volumes between 1758 and 1767, still preserved today in Beijing.⁴⁰

I hope that exploring translation as a daily activity and important cultural element of missionary and European experience in eighteenth-century Beijing will help illuminate unexpected aspects of the European networks at the Qing court. Yet, we should remain cognizant of the fact that the social, material, and mental worlds of Beijing's Europeans encompassed not only the imperial court, but also the city of Beijing and its multi-ethnic make-up, native scholarly circles, and the community of savants in Europe interested in translating China for their contemporaries.

⁴⁰ See Mårten Söderblom Saarela, *The Early Modern Travels of Manchu: A Script and Its Study in East Asia and Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020); Alexandre de la Charme, "Dictionnaire Francais-Chinois-Mongol-Mandchou" (法漢蒙滿詞典), 4 vols., 1758–1767, Rare Books Collection (from Beitang Library collection), National Library of China 國家圖書館, Beijing.

Appendix

“Evaluation of the French Fathers in the Palace of Peking” (“*Iudicium de PP Gallis in Palatio Pekini*”), ARSI, *Japanica Sinica* 184, f. 20r.

A superior of the mission in Beijing possibly compiled this document in the period 1722–1732. Given the position of the folio in the volume where it is preserved, and the chronological context of the Jesuits mentioned in it, the document should date to the mid-to-late 1720s. According to the document, for example, Bouvet, who died in 1730, was still alive at the time; and the reference to a Christian community still openly existing in Canton dates the document to a period before 1732, when Yongzheng ordered all missionaries expelled from Canton to Macao. Later on, a clerical hand added the title “*Iudicium de PP Gallis in Palatio Pekini*” [Evaluation of the French Fathers in the Palace of Peking] which actually does not fully reflect the contents, since the list also include Jesuits of the Portuguese Vice-Province, besides a few from the French mission. The transcription of the Latin manuscript (with some modifications for legibility) and the English translation from the Latin below are both mine. My gratitude goes to Prof. Claude Pavor SJ (Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College) for some linguistic corrections and suggestions, and Dr. Wu Huiyi for sharing her knowledge of the period and sources.

Latin Text

Iudicium de PP. Gallis in Palatio Pekini

PP. Dentrecolles et **de Rezende** nullum palatii rerum usum habent, cum Imperatoris servitio non sint additi, adjuvandis christianis utiliter et sancte incumbent. Huic operae et nos Sacerdotes incumbimus quantum patiuntur palatii negotia.

PP. Suarez et **Bouvet** rebus gestis illustres, nunc senectute fructi nihil firme possunt in palatio.

FF. Coadjutorum operas in palatio vix relligioni [sic] prodest, nisi habeant sacerdotem industrium interpretem.

P. Jacques parum adhuc in palatio cognitus; modicas admodum habet corporis vires. Nihil scit Tartarice, habitus mathematicus.

P. Andreas Pereyra parum adhuc in palatio cognitus, nihil scit Tartarice, habitus mathematicus.

P. Gaubil parum adhuc in palatio cognitus; ab aliquo tempore Tartaricae studet linguae; habitus mathematicus.

P. Fredelj [sic]. Nihil scit Tartarice, Sinice loquendi facilitate modica donatus, per se parum in palatio potest.

P. Selavisek [sic] Sinice sat bene loquitur, est musicus et mathematicus habitus, parum adhuc in palatio cognitus. Modicas habet corporis vires.

P. Kegler [sic] est Tribun. Mathematici praeses. In palatio cognitus quidem, sed quia ejus praeclare dotes in Sinicas dotes nondum fuere transformatae, quia parvam Sinice loquendi facilitatem est adeptus, quia habet linguam in sermone impeditam, parum potest nisi habeat adiutorem et interpretem. Cum factus est mandarinus; jussu Imperatoris datus est pro hoc negotio tractando adiutor et interpres P. Parennin.

P. Regis parva loquendi Sinice facilitate donatus. Vires corporis nullas fere habet, nihil firme nunc potest in palatio.

P. de Mailla Sinice facile loquitur; Tartarice intelligit satis, palatii rerum usum habet non contemnendum in palatio sat cognitus.

P. Parennin in negotiis tractandi dexteritatem miram, in loquendo Sinice et Tartarice facilitatem habet incredibilem. Imperatori, regulis, mandarinis cognitus, dilectus est et estimatus. Quas Pekini et Cantone relligio [sic] habet relliquias [sic], eae P. Parennin labori, scriptis et zelo dedentur. Uno omnium ore habetur hic Europaeorum et missionis columen. Ab uno imprimis anno multa Tartarice pro Tartaris de relligione [sic] scribit, idque magno cum fructu.

Translation

“Evaluation of the French Fathers in the Palace of Peking”⁴¹

Frs. **Dentrecolles** and **De Rezende** have no practice in courtly matters, and since they are not at the service of the emperor, they usefully and in a holy way apply themselves to helping Christians. To this work we [other] priests also attend, as much as the business of the palace allows.

Frs. **Suarez** and **Bouvet** are famous for what they accomplished [in the past], but because of their old age they cannot do anything steadfastly at the palace now.

The work at the palace by the **Brothers Coadjutors** is hardly useful for our religion, unless they have an energetic priest interpreter.

Fr. **Jacques** is little known in the palace; he is in moderately good health; does not know any Manchu, his occupation is mathematician.

Fr. **André Pereyra** is little known in the palace, does not know Manchu, his occupation is mathematician.

Fr. **Gaubil** is little known in the palace; he has been studying Manchu for some time; his occupation is mathematician.

Fr. **Fridelli** does not know Manchu, he is gifted with a moderately good facility in *speaking* Chinese, [but] he can accomplish little in the palace by himself.

Fr. **Slaviček** *speaks* Chinese well enough, his occupations are musician and mathematician; so far little known at the palace; he is in decent health.

Fr. **Kögler** is the President of the Mathematical Tribunal. He is somewhat known at the palace, but since his great intellectual gifts have never been transformed into equivalent Chinese gifts, because he is not very adept at *speaking* in Chinese and has a speech impediment, he can do little without the help of an assistant and interpreter. After he became a mandarin, Fr. Parnnin was ordered to be his assistant and interpreter in dealing with this occupation.

41 The list actually also includes members of the Portuguese Vice-Province. Italics in the translation are mine.

Fr. **Regis** is not gifted with facility in *speaking* Chinese, he is in rather poor health, and currently cannot accomplish anything substantial at the palace. Fr. **de Mailla** is fluent in *speaking* Chinese; he understands enough Manchu; his familiarity with the matters of the palace is not to be despised, and he is sufficiently known at the palace.

Fr. **Parennin** has a marvelous dexterity in dealing with [all] matters, and has an incredible facility in *speaking* both Chinese and Manchu. He is known, appreciated, and esteemed by the emperor, the princes, and the officials. Whatever is left of our religion in Beijing and Canton exists thanks to the labor, the writings, and the zeal of Fr. Parennin. He is here universally considered the pillar of the mission and of the Europeans. For the last year he has been mostly writing many texts in Manchu about [our] religion for the Manchus, and with abundant fruits.

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- APF: Archives of the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples, or *de Propaganda Fide*, Vatican City.
 - Series SOCP (= *Scritture originali della Congregazione Particolare dell'Indie Orientali e Cina*)
 - Series SC (= *Scritture riferite nei Congressi*), *Cina & Regni Adiacenti*
 - Series *Procura Cina* (in Macao, Canton and Hong Kong)
- ARSI: Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu - Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus, Rome.
 - Series *Japonica Sinica*
- BAV: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City.
 - Collection *Borgia cinese*
 - Collection *Borgia latino*
- NLC: National Library of China 國家圖書館, Beijing.
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