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Jesuit Mission and Submission: Qing Rulership and the Fate of Christianity in China, 1644–1735

Swen Litian, *East and West. Culture, Diplomacy and Interactions*, 9. Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2021. vii, 227 pp. Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. € 39 (HB). ISBN 978-90-04-44700-4

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of competitors. The inability to compete successfully may be at least as interesting and worth more historians' attention.

The Aura of Confucius is a model study of a single place and its sources, treated in depth and breadth. It brings fresh detail to the social history of the Lower Yangtze region and usefully expands the boundaries of conventional art history. By examining the difficulties in making Kongzhai flourish, Murray also makes significant additions to our increasing understanding of both Chinese institution-building and the complex afterlife of Master Kong.

Reflecting on Kongzhai's past in 2020, Julia Murray was not optimistic about its future. However, as James Robson noted in a book launch on April 22, 2022, one may not need to be so pessimistic. Today, far flimsier connections can and do undergird popular tourist destinations. The residences of famous families are safely promoted, newly wealthy patrons are anxious to create and demonstrate cultural and social status, and Confucius himself, while still something of a wild card, has again been taken up by the governing powers. Exciting research lies ahead. Stay tuned.

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SWEN LITIAN, *Jesuit Mission and Submission: Qing Rulership and the Fate of Christianity in China, 1644–1735*. East and West. Culture, Diplomacy and Interactions, 9. Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2021. vii, 227 pp. Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. € 39 (HB). ISBN 978-90-04-44700-4

The combination of striking success and dramatic failure of the Jesuit missionaries as advisors to the seventeenth and eighteenth century Chinese imperial court has long attracted the attention of historians. *Jesuit Mission and Submission* by Swen Litian 孫立天 represents the latest effort to explain the dynamics of this unique historical relationship. As a revision of his dissertation (2019) and as a first book, it is a very impressive effort. The most successful part of the book deals with Swen's attempt to show how the nature of the Beijing Jesuits' relationship to the imperial court changed at the time of the Ming–Qing transition.

Whereas the powerful Jesuit Adam Schall had joined the Manchu court in political fashion, the Jesuits Luigi Buglio and Gabriel de Magalhães had been forced to endure battlefield wounds from Manchu arrows in their roles as cannon-makers for the Ming defenders. They survived in 1647 by entering the Manchu banner system as slaves to Tong Tulai 佟圖賴 (d. 1658), the maternal grandfather of the Kangxi emperor, who treated them favorably. In 1655 they submitted their memorial to the Shunzhi emperor and were able to complete the building of St. Joseph's Church, the East Church, in Beijing while their rival Schall occupied the Nantang (South Church). A fundamental change in the nature of the Jesuits' patronage came with the Calendar Case (1664–1665) in which Schall was disgraced. The Jesuits realized that they needed to shift their focus from the Chinese literati to the Manchu ruling class.

Swen shows that the Kangxi emperor related to the Jesuits as missionaries not merely in the traditional Ming emperor–subject relationship, but also in the traditional Manchu master–slave relationship in which they were identified as the emperor’s *booï*, which the Jesuits translated with the Latin word *mancipia* (a slave who has been purchased). However, the term *booï* has less servile connotations than slave. Unlike “slave,” which in Chinese is translated as *nu* 奴, the Manchu term *booï* is expressed in Chinese in transliterated form as *baoyi* 包衣 (p. 9). Swen shows that unlike previous Chinese emperors, Manchu rulers relied on the Imperial Household Department (Neiwufu 內務府) to deal with their private lives, as well as the palace management and eunuchs under its control. The Imperial Household Department was not part of the imperial bureaucracy. It controlled the emperor’s private land, which amounted to 0.5% of all land in the empire, and the emperor’s private wealth, which was separate from the treasury managed by the Board of Revenue. Whereas previously the Board of Rites had registered and certified priests, now the Imperial Household Department began issuing the *piao* 票 (certification to reside in China). Consequently, the missionaries were under the direct patronage of the emperor and they entered the palace through a gate designated for the members of the Imperial Household Department.

Swen makes extensive and valuable use of Chinese documents and texts. Chapter 3 treats the involvement of Frs. Buglio, Magalhães, and Verbiest in court politics during the Calendar Dispute of 1669 which led to the Edict of Toleration of 1692. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the role played by the Jesuits in the Kangxi emperor’s handling of the Papal Legation to China of 1705 led by Tournon and the Papal Legation of 1720 led by Mezzabarba. Chapter 6, “The Yongzheng Emperor and Christian Missionaries” is one of the most insightful treatments available on the transition controversy at the time of the Kangxi emperor’s death. Swen persuasively argues, contrary to some recent scholars, that the Yongzheng emperor probably did usurp the throne (pp. 172–175).

However, apart from Chinese sources, Swen relies almost exclusively upon English-language sources. Consequently, the strengths of Swen’s book conversely define its limitations. These limitations appear, for example, in the section “The Cultural-Conflicts Paradigm and Its Problems” (pp. 4–7) where Swen demonstrates a lack of familiarity in both depth and breadth with the scholarship needed to comprehend the historical developments of cultural confluence between seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe and China. By comparison, a far more insightful treatment of this topic is found in Stefan Gaarsmand Jacobsen’s “Chinese Influences or Images? Fluctuating Histories of How Enlightenment Europe Read China,” *Journal of World History* 24 (2013): 623–660.

In a second interpretative limitation, Swen ties “the fate of Christianity in China, 1644–1735” too exclusively to the relations of the Jesuits at the Beijing court. This same misinterpretation causes Swen to exaggerate the effect of the Rites Controversy and leads to his overreliance on Kilian Stumpf’s *Acta Pekinensia*. This misinterpretation leads Swen in his postscript “The Rise and Fall of the Christian Mission” to make the dubious claim that “the Christian mission under the early Qing failed” (p. 197). Actually, he is confusing the Beijing Jesuit mission, which did fail, with the Christian mission in China, which continued as an underground church from 1724 until the mid-nineteenth century when it resurfaced, albeit under

colonialist dominance. Apart from these interpretative limitations, this is a perceptive first book by a talented young scholar.

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MARTIN GIMM, *P. Johann Adam Schall von Bell S.J. und die Geheimakten zum Gerichtsprozeß der Jahre 1664–1665 in China*. [Parallel title: 湯若望與清朝密本檔]. Sinologica Coloniensia, 37 Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021. 468 pp. Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. € 98 (HB). ISBN 978-3-447-11673-2

Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1592–1666) from Cologne is one of the best-known Jesuit missionaries in China, along with Matteo Ricci and Ferdinand Verbiest. Thanks to his good relationship with the young Emperor Shizu (Shunzhi), who addressed him confidentially as *mafa* (grandfather, elder gentleman), he rose in the hierarchy of officials to the first rank (which, however, did not include the corresponding executive powers) and thus attained the most influential position among all missionaries in the empire. His life and work have been known in detail for almost a century, after Schall's own *Historica narratio* of the China Mission was published in 1665,¹ especially through Alfons Vāth's excellent, well-documented biography,² which admittedly has hagiographic overtones, but this does not detract from its reliability. Schall played an important role in the reform of the Chinese calendar, which had already been initiated by his untimely deceased confrères Johannes Schreck (1576–1630) and Giacomo Rho (1593–1638).

Since in China Heaven enjoyed the highest reverence and the emperor ruled the empire by its mandate, astronomers and astrologers were very influential; they registered celestial phenomena and predicted eclipses, which, like other unusual phenomena, were considered unlucky; they signalled the displeasure of Heaven and could have an effect on the continuance of the dynasty. Schall himself was to experience the significance of such phenomena first-hand when earth tremors affected his trial.

¹ *Historica narratio, de initio et progressu missionis Societatis Iesu apud Chineses* (Viennae: M. Cosmerovius 1665. 269 pp.). An edition and translation of the manuscript was provided by Paul Bornet and Henri Bernard: *Relation historique*. Texte latin avec traduction française (Tientsin: Hautes Études, 1942, xvi, 462 pp.) A German translation was published under the title: *Geschichte der chinesischen Mission unter Leitung des Pater Johann Adam Schall, Priesters der Gesellschaft Jesu*. Aus dem Lateinischen übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen begleitet von Ig. Sch. von Mansegg (Wien: Mechitaristen-Congregations-Buchhandlung, 1834, 461 pp.). [The cover gives 1824, by mistake.]

² Alfons Vāth, unter Mitwirkung von Louis van Hée, *Johann Adam Schall von Bell S.J., Missionar in China, kaiserlicher Astronom und Ratgeber am Hof zu Peking 1592–1666, ein Lebens- und Zeitbild* (Köln: Bachem, 1933. xx, 380 pp.). An augmented reprint was published by Steyler Verlag (Nettetal) in 1991. The first Chinese translation was printed in Shanghai in 1942. – Another important work is: *Western Learning and Christianity in China: The Contribution and Impact of Johann Adam Schall von Bell S.J. (1592–1666)*. Ed. Roman Malek. Monumenta Serica Monograph Series, 35 (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1998), 2 vols.