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## The Zheng Masters and Early Ming Figure-and-Horse Painting

Hou-mei Sung

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Scholars of Chinese painting are increasingly aware of the early Ming gap in the history of Chinese painting.<sup>1</sup> The lack of information on the early Ming painters' biographies and paintings remains as a major obstacle in reconstructing the history of this important period. My past research on the early Ming painters' biographies and paintings shed new light on many dramatic changes in the organization and ranking system of the Ming Painting Academy and revealed a new mapping of Ming painting history.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I will introduce new findings of my recent research on the biographies of three generations of the little known Zheng masters from Fujian, including Zheng Kegang 鄭克剛, Zheng Kejing 鄭克敬, Zheng Shimin 鄭時敏, and Zheng Wenying 鄭文英.<sup>3</sup> The Zheng masters, serving as leading masters of the figure-and-horse (*renma* 人馬) theme both inside and outside the early Ming court, elevated this discipline to new heights. Although only one signed work by Zheng Wenying survives today, the distinctive and highly advanced style of this work provides us not only a new perspective of early Ming figure-and-horse painting, but also important clues for identifying other works by or associated with the Zheng family painters. I suspect many of these have been misattributed to other known painters.

### Zheng Kegang (circa 1343–after 1427)

The Zheng family came from Longjiang 龍江 (Fuqing 福清) in Fujian 福建. The entire family's painting career can be traced back to Zheng Kegang, who had received a classical

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1. Richard Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and the Zhe School* (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1993), 1–53.

2. For the early Ming scholar painters in Nanking and how they played an important role as the precursors of the Wu School, see Hou-mei Sung, "Wang Fu and the Formation of the Wu School" (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, January 1984). For early court Ming painters' reconstructed biographies and organization, see Hou-mei Sung, *The Unknown World of the Ming Court Painters: The Ming Painting Academy* 日近清光 (Taipei: The Liberal Arts Press, 2006).

3. Biographical information on the Zheng masters are very scarce, see Mu Yiqin 穆益勤, *Mingdai yuanti zhepai shiliao* 明代院體浙派史料, (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1985).

Confucian education, but chose to live as a painter recluse during the late Yuan era (1279–1368). Information about Kegang is found in both *Minshu* 閩書 and *Fujian tongzhi* 福建通志:

Zheng Kegang is known for his horse painting in the style of Han Gan 韓幹 and Zhao Zhongmu 趙仲穆. He was summoned to the court in the Xuande era 宣德 (1426–1435) and awarded with an imperial painting.<sup>4</sup>

My further research reveals that in the early Ming, Kegang, also known as *Baiyun Shanren* 白雲山人 (or the Mountain Hermit of White Cloud), was a highly respected scholar recluse and an accomplished painter (circa 1350s–after 1427) in Fujian. Judging from the inscriptions on his works by his native friends, including Huang Zhencheng 黃鎮成, Gao Bing 高棅 (1350–1423), and Wang Gong 王恭, Kegang was known for both scholarly subjects of landscapes including “old trees and rocks,” as well as highly disciplined professional figure-and-horse depictions.<sup>5</sup> His reputation led him to be summoned to the Xuande court. Zheng must have impressed the emperor with his skills, since he was offered a position at court. Kegang declined, however, because of his advanced age. The emperor granted his wish and sent him home with the special gift of an imperial painting. The Kegang’s age can be estimated based on an inscription by Gao Bing on Kegang’s *Old Trees, Bamboo, and Rock*. Since Gao mentions here that Kegang was already eighty when he painted this work, and since Gao died in 1423, two years before the Xuande reign, it is possible to establish that Kegang was at least eighty-three when he was summoned to the Xuande court.<sup>6</sup> Based on this calculation, it is possible to estimate the date of Kegang’s birth to 1343 and his death to after 1426. Kegang’s imperial summons and his decline to serve in court were also mentioned by Wang Gong, who wrote the following poem inscription on Kegang’s *Yunquan qingyin* 雲泉清隱 (*A Quiet Retreat amidst Clouds and Mountain Streams*):

The Daoist recluse (Kegang) truly understands the affairs of the “mountains and forests.” He became more interested in painting as he grew older and refused to stay inside the imperial gate after receiving an honorable feast. How could he not return and deny his intention to be with the “clouds and streams?”<sup>7</sup>

Little information is available about the style of Kegang’s horse painting. Gao Bing, a native friend of Kegang, compared him to the Tang (618–906) masters of Cao Ba 曹霸 and Han Gan after seeing Kegang’s horse painting in the collection of Wang Boyuan 王伯泉 (Guangwen 廣文). Gao wrote the following inscription:

4. See *Jiangle xianzhi* 將樂縣志 (Wanli edition 萬曆), *juan* 9 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1990), 27–8 and *Fuzhou fuzhi* 福州府志 (Qing edition), *juan* 65 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1990), 3.

5. See Huang Zhencheng 黃鎮成, *Qiusheng ji* 秋聲集 (Collection of Autumn Sounds), *juan* 3 (*Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書 edition), 12; Gao Bing 高棅, *Xiaotaiji* 嘯台集, *juan* 12 (*Siku Quanshu* edition), 132–3; and Wang Gong 王恭, *Wang Dianji shi* 王典籍詩, *juan* 2 (*Siku Quanshu* edition), 33.

6. Gao Bing, *juan* 5, 49; For Gao Bing’s biography, see *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* 明人傳記資料索引 (Dictionary of Ming Biographies) (Taipei: National Central Library, 1965), 390.

7. Wang Gong, 33.

In the ancient time, General Cao (Ba) was the best known master of horse painting. In the Kaiyuan era, who became known for this great art? The one who truly mastered this art was Han Gan. After a thousand years, a true successor appeared in Zheng Baoyun (Kegang). Baiyun's horses exhausted all the animal's appearances. His achievement was no less great than that of Cao and his followers. Whether it's the legendary steed Green Ears (Luer 綠驂) or the legendary bay, Hualiu 驊騮, he (Kegang) was able to capture all their true spirits.<sup>8</sup> His paintings would make both Fanggao 方皋 (Jiu Fanggao 九方皋) and Bole 伯樂 envious and wishful. How magnificent is this recent work (by Kegang) of two horses! Even with their gold saddles removed, who dares to ride them? The official groom stands by idly. It must have been a blessed time when the horses were granted imperial baths.<sup>9</sup>

Although Gao praised Zheng as the true successor of the great Tang horse painting master Han Gan, Zheng's style most likely showed a closer relationship to the styles of the more recent Yuan masters. As pointed out in the gazetteers of Fujian, Zheng's horse painting style was derived from both Han Gan and Zhao Yong, son of the best known Yuan dynasty horse painter, Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫. While Han Gan epitomized the more classical Tang horse painting tradition, the two Zhao masters represented the rising trend of a more personal expression in both brushwork and symbolic contents. Therefore, it is only natural that in the early Ming era Zheng's own individual horse painting style was inspired also by these more recent leading masters.

Zheng Kegang would probably have remained in obscurity if not for his son Shimin and grandson Kang 鄭康, who both served in the Ming court as figure-and-horse painters. More importantly, a single painting by another of his grandsons, Zheng Wenying (Fig. 1),<sup>10</sup> provides us a key to the Zheng family style, which once dominated the figure-and-horse painting in the Ming court.

Zheng Kejing (circa 1345–late 1420s)



Fig. 1. Zhen Wenying, *Landscape with Figures and Horses*, hanging scroll, Hashimoto Collection

8. Luer and Hualiu are both legendary Tang imperial horses.

9. See Gao Bing, *juan* 12, 132–3.

10. The painting is in the collection of Shoto Museum of Art. For discussion of this painting, see Hou-mei Sung, *Decoded Messages: The Symbolic Language of Chinese Animal Painting* (New Haven: Yale University, 2009), 195–6.



Zheng Kejing, also known as Zheng Lu 鄭祿 (circa 1345–late 1420s), was the younger brother of Kegang and uncle of Shimin. In the Hongwu era 洪武 (1368–1398), Kejing served first as an Assistant Instructor in the Confucian School (*Ruxue xundao* 儒學訓導) of the Yanping 延平 (Fujian) Prefecture and later, as an Investigating Censor (*Jiancha yushi* 監察御史). Although briefly mentioned as a painter of the *gumu zhushi* 古木竹石 theme (old trees, bamboo, and rocks), Kejing was better known as a scholar official with a special reputation for filial piety as demonstrated through the following anecdote:

Upon Kejing's return from an official trip, Emperor Hongwu (1328–1398; r. 1368–1398) honored him with an imperial banquet and Zheng did not eat anything. When the emperor learned of this and questioned him, Kejing replied that the day was the anniversary of his father's death and therefore he would refrain from drinking wine and eating meat. The emperor told Kejing: "Even an official would not dare to refuse the offerings from his superior, let alone the imperial banquet from the ruler." Kejing replied: "Your subject has learned that one starts the relationship with his father before that with a ruler." The emperor was pleased with his reply and since then Kejing's reputation as a righteous Confucian scholar spread even further. Later, the Hongwu emperor honored Kejing with the imperial name of *Gongzheng* 公正 (Just and Impartial).<sup>11</sup>

Thus, Kejing's distinguished career as a respected court official ultimately overshadowed his achievement as a painter. However, as discussed shortly, his son, Zheng Wenying, inherited the Zheng family's painting studio and also became a notable professional painter.

According to *Minghualu* 明畫錄, a painter named Zheng Kexiu 鄭克修 from Qingjiang 清江 was also known as a figure-and-horse master. However, with no further information on his dates or biography, it is impossible to confirm if he was related to Zheng Kegang and Zheng Kejing.<sup>12</sup>

### Zheng Shimin (early 1370s–early 1430s)

Zheng Shimin was briefly mentioned in *Fujian tongzhi* and *Jiangle xianzhi* 將樂縣志 as a well-known painter of Fujian and was summoned to the court in the Xuande era. *Jiangle xianzhi* also mentioned that Shimin was the oldest son of Zheng Kejing. Further research, however, confirmed that Shimin was actually the son of Kegang, not Kejing.<sup>13</sup>

11. For Zheng Kejing's biographical information, see *Jiangle xian zhi* 將樂縣志, *juan* 9 (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, Wanli edition, 1585), 27 and Zhang Xuan 張萱, *Xiyuan wenjianlu* 西園聞見錄, *juan* 1 (*Mingdai zhuanji congkan* 明代傳記叢刊 edition), 17.

12. See Xu Xin 徐沁, *Minghualu* 明畫錄, *juan* 1 (Taipei: Wenshizhe Chubanshe, 1974), 13 and *Zhongguo huajia renming dacidian* 中國畫家人名大辭典 (Chinese Artist Names Dictionary) (Shanghai: Shen Zhou guo guang she, 1987), 1384.

13. See note 5

The most reliable and important biographical information for Zheng Shimin and his family comes from the epitaph of Zheng Fu 鄭福 (1369–1445) written by Lin Wen 林文 (1390–1476).<sup>14</sup> According to this epitaph, Zheng Fu was the older sister of Shimin and daughter of Kegang. Here, Lin also mentions that Shimin was summoned to the court in the Xuande era and Fu was the one who performed the filial duty by remaining at home and taking care of their parents, Shimin's son, Kang, and her other young nephews.

Shimin's initial service in the Xuande court was most likely linked to Kegang's summons at the beginning of the Xuande era. When Kegang declined the imperial offer to serve as a court painter, he most likely recommended that his oldest son, Shimin, also an accomplished painter of figure-and-horse painting, serve in his place. After entering the Xuande court, Shimin must have won favorable imperial patronage in the Xuande court because he served for many years, starting from the position of *Jinyiwei Zhenfu* 錦衣衛鎮撫 (Battalion Judge of the Embroidered-Uniform Guard Unit, 6b) to the higher rank of *Jinyiwei Qianhu* 錦衣衛千戶 (Battalion Commander, 5a). Later he even gained an inheritable status for his son Zheng Kang. Based on this epitaph and Zheng Fu's dates, it is also possible to estimate Shimin's life span as between the 1370s and 1430s.

Like his uncle Kejing, Shimin was also known for his exceptional filial piety. While serving in court, Shimin met a prominent official, who, despite frequently thinking and even dreaming of his elderly mother, kept putting off the trip to visit her. Upon his return from a bereavement leave, Shimin visited the official and left him a painting of a daylily, the flower symbolizing mother's love in China, on which he wrote the poem:

It has been so long since I visited the "Hall of Daylilies," only because my official duties set us apart like rivers and streams.  
Don't say that the son has frequently dreamed of his mother, since the mother has far more dreams of her missing son.<sup>15</sup>

The official was so moved by this that he immediately departed home to visit his mother. After Shimin died in Beijing, his son, Kang, inherited his position and continued to serve in court as a *Jinyiwei zhenfu*.

### Zheng Wenying (1390s–1450s)

Zheng Wenying was the nephew of Shimin and grandson of Kegang. Although some considered Wenying a court painter, I do not believe that he ever served in the Ming court. In keeping with the traditional Chinese custom and Ming court rule, upon Shimin's death, his oldest son Zheng Kang was entitled to inherit Shimin's position in court, as evidenced by the epitaph of Zheng Fu. Based on the dates of Fu and estimated dates of

14. See Lin Wen 林文, *Danxuangao* 淡軒稿, juan 9 (Ming edition), National Central Library, Taipei, 25–7.

15. See *Fujian Tongzhi* 福建通志 quoted by Mu Yiqin, 38.

Kegang and Shimin, it is possible to project that Zheng Kang was closer in age to Wenying but slightly younger. So, Wenying, the son of Shimin's younger brother and a truly talented painter in his own right, took over the family's painting business at home in Fujian. This is evidenced by Wenying's single surviving work, *Landscape with Figures and Horses* (Fig. 1) in the Hashimoto collection. Here, Wenying's inscription reads: “宣德九年寅月寫於壽椿草堂鄭文英” (Zheng Wenying painted in *Shouchun caotang* in the first month of the ninth year of Xuande [1434]). I believe that *Shouchun caotang* is the Zheng family's painting studio where all the Zheng masters studied and worked. The studio name, *Shouchun* (or Longevity of the *chun* 椿 tree), is especially meaningful to the Zheng family. Since the *chun* tree (*Toona sinensis* or *Cedrela sinensis*) symbolized fatherhood in the Ming era, the studio is apparently dedicated to a father of the Zheng family.<sup>16</sup> This is not surprising considering the Zheng family's singular reputation for the Confucian virtue of filial piety, as evidenced by previously cited stories associated with Kejing, Shiming, and Fu. Thus, this family studio was likely dedicated to Zheng Kegang, the first painter recognized by the Ming court who brought initial honor to the family. In addition to naming the *Shouchun* studio in his inscription, Wenying also depicted the leaning *chun* tree, the namesake of the family studio, in the foreground of the painting. The tree clearly has special significance to the family and was likely planted on one of Kegang's birthdays to wish him longevity.

The departing scene depicted in Wenying's painting may also have special significance and refer to a memorable event. In 1434, when Wenying painted this, he was nearly forty and a fully established painter. His uncle Shimin was in his sixties. According to Shimin's sister, their parents died in close succession of one another and Shimin himself also died in Beijing shortly after the parents' deaths.<sup>17</sup> The painting's somber and sorrowful mood is enhanced by the endless meandering river banks and extending horizon. Therefore, I believe the painting was likely depicting Shimin and his return to Beijing after visiting home in mourning.<sup>18</sup>

In this painting, Wenying depicted an elderly official preparing to leave home for a long journey. The official, half concealed by the slanting tree trunk next to a riverbank in the foreground, appears to be walking toward a saddled horse. To his left, two servants are busily preparing for the trip; one attends to the horse while the other carries a package. Another young attendant standing next to the horse is carrying a bottle and a scroll. Running toward the departing group, a young boy looks back and calls excitedly to someone. The family dog has also come to join the excitement. The tender new leaves,

16. In China, the *chun* and *xuan* trees, both considered trees of longevity, became the symbolic references to the longevity of father and mother respectively. Thus the term “*chunxuan*” refers to parents. The term was used as early as the Yuan dynasty, see *chunxuan* in *Zhongwen dacidian* 中文大辭典, vol. 5 (Taipei: Chinese Cultural University, 1990), 300.

17. See Lin Wen, 25–7.

18. In an earlier research, I have discussed this painting as likely an early example *Congma xingchun* 驄馬行春 (A Congma's Spring Journey), a theme created in the Ming dynasty to compliment the Investigating Censors (*Jiancha yushi* 監察御史). This was based on the fact that Wenying's great uncle, Kejing, once served as an Investigating Censor in the Hongwu era and his duty included an annual surveillance tour to inspect the regional governments. However, after further consideration of the date of this work, I believe the featured figure is more likely Shimin rather than Kejing.



sprouting grass, distant green hills, and gently wrinkled surface of the river all suggest a fine spring morning. The sweeping landscape combined with skillfully drawn figures, including a detailed horse and dog, all demonstrate that Wenying was a highly trained painter of a wide range of disciplines. By juxtaposing the figures in a smaller scale against an open and expansive horizon, the artist successfully captured not only the narrative details, but also the poignant mood of the farewell scene.

Here, Wenying's elegant and sophisticated landscape style, characterized by his steady, well-controlled brushwork, the refined shapes and textures, and subtle colors distinctly portend the styles of the forthcoming Wu school masters, including Wen Zhengming 文徵明, Lu Zhi 陸治, and Qiu Ying 仇英 (1494–1552). With this single surviving work, Wenying provides us a key missing link between the little known early Ming Minzhe 閩浙 regional styles and the mid-Ming Wu school painting.<sup>19</sup>

A distinctive feature of Wenying's landscape is the continuous recession to a distant horizon, which occupies almost two-thirds of the upper vertical space. The echoing layers of river banks dotted with delicately rendered trees and winding streams ultimately unfolding into a distant horizon elicits an intense feeling of yearning and nostalgia. This intimate and reflective mood clearly reveals Wenying's deep attachment for his family and home.

Wenying's carefully composed landscape and sensitive portrayal of the figures, horse, and other motifs emphasize the reciprocal relationships of this natural setting, a thoughtful and discerning quality that has seldom been associated with painters in the Ming court.

Although Wenying did not himself serve in court, his extant painting dated to 1434 provides us important clues to traits of the Zheng family's figure-and-horse painting style. Considering the continuous lineage and dominant influences of the Zheng masters both inside and outside of the Ming court, I believe many masterpieces by the Zheng masters still exist today, erroneously attributed to earlier or more famous painters. In the following discussion, I will focus on five paintings that show a close and direct relationship to the extant Zheng Wenying work in both design and style. All five, I believe, are either works by one of the Zheng masters or faithful copies modeled on their original designs. Without further evidence it is no longer possible to identify the individual styles of the Zheng masters, however, these five paintings all exemplify the shared disciplines, values, and aesthetic style of the Zheng family.

1) Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (1082–1135; r. 1100–1126), *Shiba xueshitu* 十八學士圖 (Eighteen Scholars), National Palace Museum, Taipei (Figs. 2 and 3)

19. Hou-mei Sung, "From the Min-Che Tradition to the Che School, Part I: The Late Yuan Min-Che Tradition (Chang Shun-tzu and Ch'en Shu-ch'i)" and *National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1989), 1 and Hou-mei Sung, "Part II: Precursors of the Che School (Hsieh Huan and Tai Chin)" *National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (1989), 127.

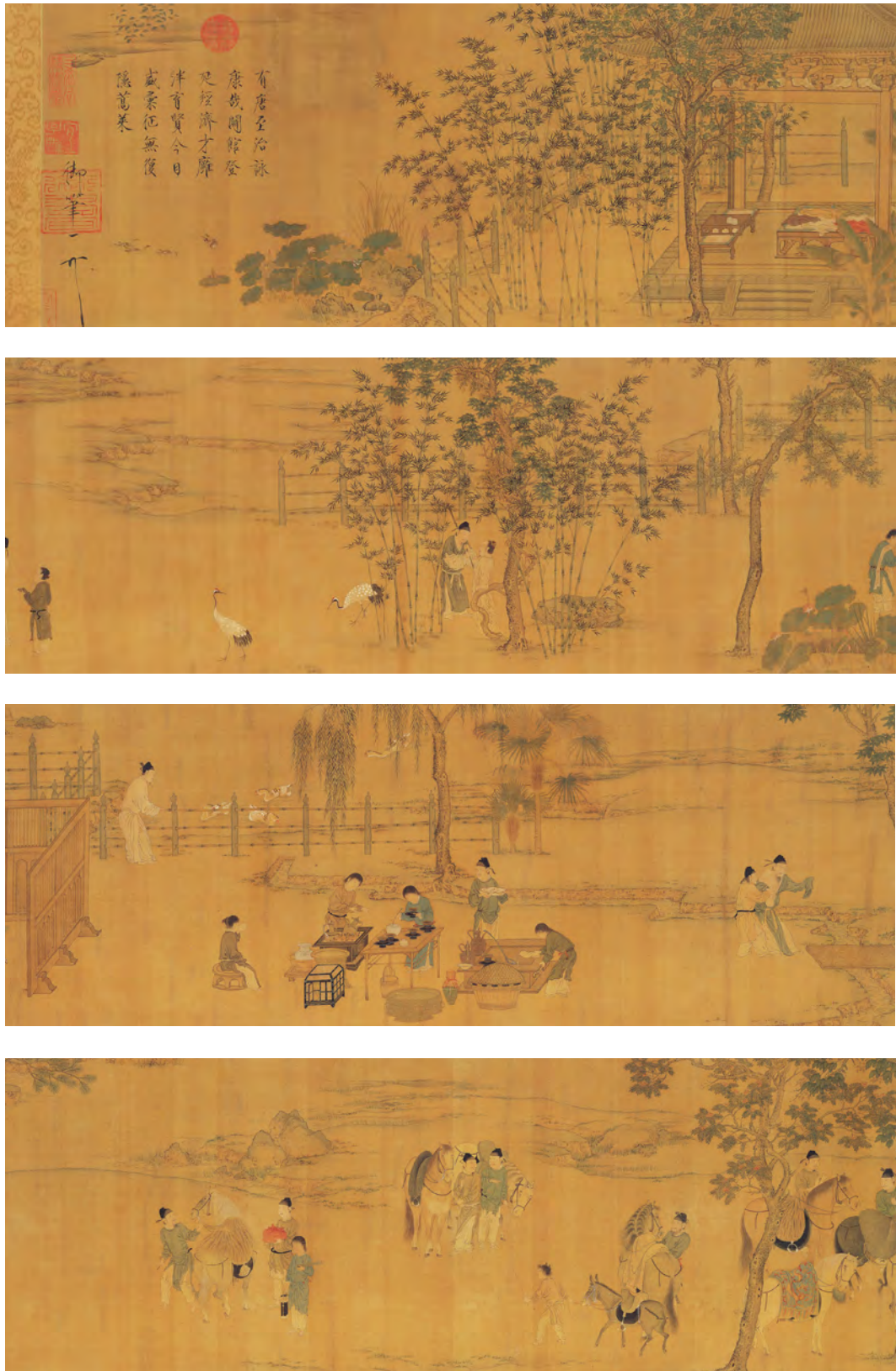


Fig. 2. Emperor Huizong, Song Huizong shiba xueshiu (*Eighteen Scholars by Huizong*), handscroll, National Palace Museum, Taipei (Taipei One)







## Sung, The Zheng Masters and Early Ming Figure-and-Horse Painting



Fig. 3. Emperor Huizong, Song Huizong hua Tang shiba xueshitu (Eighteen Tang Dynasty Scholars by Huizong), handscroll, National Palace Museum, Taipei (Taipei Two)







Fig. 4. Liu Songnian (attr.), *Portrayal of an Historical Episode*, handscroll, Toledo Museum of Art





*Eighteen Scholars* (*Shiba xueshitu*)<sup>20</sup> is a long handscroll depicting a group of officials gathering in a large and elegant garden. It exists in two nearly identical versions in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, and both are attributed to Huizong. One is titled 宋徽宗十八學士圖 (*Eighteen Scholars by Huizong*) and the other, 宋徽宗畫唐十八學士圖 (*Eighteen Tang Dynasty Scholars by Huizong*).<sup>21</sup> There are at least six additional paintings closely linked to the Taipei paintings with either identical or overlapping designs. The two Taipei versions, one superior in quality to the other, share not only the same design, but also three Song inscriptions, including a poem by Huizong written directly on the painting and two additional inscriptions by Huizong and his minister, Cai Jing 蔡京 (1046–1126) on attached paper.<sup>22</sup> Both Taipei versions were recorded in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) imperial catalogue *Shiqu baoji* 石渠寶笈, but only one of them includes Emperor Qianlong's 乾隆 (1711–1799; r. 1735–1796) inscription.<sup>23</sup> To differentiate the two in the following discussion, the one without Qianlong's inscription will be identified as *Taipei One* (Fig. 2) and the one with the inscription, *Taipei Two* (Fig. 3). The other six versions, which vary in title, attributions, length, and descriptive details are: *Chunyantu* 春宴圖 (The Spring Gathering), attributed to an anonymous Song painter, in the Palace Museum, Beijing;<sup>24</sup> *Portrayal of an Historical Episode*, attributed to Liu Songnian 劉松年, in the Toledo Museum of Art (Fig. 4);<sup>25</sup> *Wenren yahuitu* 文人雅會圖, attributed to Qiu Ying in the Houzhenshangzhai 後真賞齋 collection;<sup>26</sup> *Renwu* 人物 (Figures), attributed to Qiu Ying, in the former Zhang Congyu 張蔥玉 collection;<sup>27</sup> and two scrolls of *Eighteen Scholars*, one attributed to Emperor Huizong, the other to Qian Xuan 錢選 in the Freer and Sackler Galleries.<sup>28</sup>

The creation of such a monumental work, with elaborate composition and numerous narrative details, demands a fully established artist with a wide range of skills in the diverse disciplines of figure, landscape, horse, animal, flower-and-bird, furniture, and architectural painting. The painting was likely commissioned for a special occasion or celebration and since then received recognition, as evidenced by the numerous copies and imitations made in the following Ming and Qing dynasties. A careful review of all seven paintings reveals that the two Taipei scrolls with shared design likely served as the models for the rest. Thus,

20. *Eighteen Scholars* refers to the elite advisor panel of the Li Shimin 李世民 (later Emperor Taizong 太宗 598–649; r. 626–649) when he was the Prince of Qin.

21. Both versions of this painting is reproduced in *Gugong shuhua tulu* 故宮書畫圖錄, vol. 15 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1990), 351–64.

22. According to *Gugong shuhua tulu*, Huizong's inscription listing the names of the eighteen scholars on *Taipei One* was written on paper, but this inscription by Huizong on *Taipei Two* was written on silk.

23. See *Gugong shuhua tulu*, 351–64.

24. See *Zhongguo huihua quanji* 中國繪畫全集, vol. 5 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1999), pl. 116–22.

25. For reproduction of this painting, see Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬, *Chūgoku kaiga sōgō zuroku* 中國繪畫總合圖錄 (*Comprehensive Illustrated Catalogue of Chinese Painting*), vol. 1, (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1982), A7-001.

26. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, S1-018.

27. See Zhang Congyu 張蔥玉, *Yunhuizhai cang Tangsong yilai minghuaqi* 韻輝齋藏唐宋以來名畫集 (Shanghai, Shenji keluo ban yinshuashe, 1947), pl. 62–75.

28. Both scrolls in the Freer and Sackler galleries show a much later style and are likely copies made after the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

in the following discussion, I will focus on *Taipei One* only.

*Taipei One* depicts a sumptuous garden party set against a continuous landscape setting. The long handscroll provides us a rare glimpse into the extravagant entertainments afforded by the elite court officials. The artist appeared to have planned his elaborate composition in four sections with each division suggested by tall trees or architectural elements and each section distinguished by unique designated activities. The first section originates outside the garden gate, where a large gathering of valets and attendants are tending the horses and donkey of the guests. A few officials have wandered outside the gate. One is sitting on the ground playing a game of dice with two young attendants, while another, with his chest exposed, is watching from behind. A third attendant has just walked out the gate and is loosening his belt to relax. The eleven horses and one donkey are all skillfully portrayed in meticulous detail. The artist has paid careful attention to not only the animal's characteristic appearances, colors, and stances, but also their associated equipment, including saddles, coverings, stirrups, and reins.

The second section features more officials in various stages of intoxication scattered in the garden — resting, stretching, writing poems, dancing, and watching geese swimming in the pond. Also included here is a group of servants preparing and heating the drinks. A young girl is seen resting on a stool and drinking tea. An L-shaped wooden screen marks the beginning of the next section featuring musical entertainment and a feast. Here, a six-musician band is sitting on a mat and playing traditional Chinese musical instruments including a zither, lute (*pipa*), harp, reed pipe (*sheng*), and flute. Next to this group is the banquet scene, where nine officials are seated at a large table covered in food and drink. The scroll ends with the final section, where the open horizon leads to a bamboo-shaded pavilion. Here, three more officials are found roaming and enjoying the company of two cranes and a pet eagle.

The first mention of the Taipei scrolls was made by Zhan Jingfeng 詹景鳳 (1532–1602). In his *Dongtu xuanlanbian* 東圖玄覽編 (prefaced in 1591), Zhan described a long handscroll entitled *Eighteen Scholars* (*Shiba xueshi*) and an identical but slightly inferior copy. The handscroll Zhan examined was a pawned item originally belonging to Han Jijiu 祭酒 (Libationer).<sup>29</sup> Zhan was deeply impressed by the artist's exceptional skills in the wide range of subjects depicted and as such, provided a detailed narrative about the painting, referencing the length, materials, total number of figures, distinct brush techniques utilized in painting the bamboo and rock textures, and the elegant coloring. Zhan then described the two inscriptions attached to the painting, one by Huizong listing the names of the eighteen scholars, and the other by Cai Jing. Zhan also mentioned the duplicate version with identical inscriptions by Huizong and Cai Jing but of lesser quality, which was then part of the collection of a Mr. Wang. All of Zhan's descriptions are concordant with the two

29. See Zhan Jingfeng 詹景鳳, *Dongtu xuanlanbian* 東圖玄覽編 in *Meishu congkan* 美術叢刊, juan 1 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 183–184.



Taipei scrolls, except for his total figure count, which is one less than the 69 found in the Taipei scroll. But this discrepancy could easily be accounted for by missing a barely visible figure behind a horse.

Yet it is significant to note that despite this detailed account, Zhan specifically did not mention the inscription bearing the signed poem and seals of Huizong found directly on the painting itself, positioned on the blank silk of the lake at the end of the scroll. Thus, it seems clear that when Zhan examined the Taipei scrolls, the extra Huizong inscriptions had not yet been added. This also explains why Zhan listed the painting as an anonymous (*wumingshi* 無名氏) work. Zhan even expressed his frustration at not being able to identify such a remarkable painter. Although Zhan did speculate that it could be a masterpiece commissioned by Huizong and painted by one of his court painters based on the attached Song inscriptions, he seemed to harbor some doubts about the Song date. Since he reached the conclusion of the Song date only because the painting demonstrated a superior quality unmatched by the more recent works of the Ming. Zhan further speculated that neither of the two leading figure masters of his time, Du Jin 杜堇 and Zhou Chen 周臣 (1460–1535), could have done this because Du was not as highly skilled and Chou was not as elegant.

Also supporting the delayed addition of the imperial poem and seals is the discrepancy in the calligraphy and writing style when compared with Huizong's established works. The same applies to the attached inscriptions by Huizong and Cai Jing. However, the Huizong attribution was apparently accepted by Bian Yongyu 卞永譽 (1645–1712) when he recorded this work in his *Shigutang shuhuahuikao* 式古堂書畫彙考, since he listed the painting as *Emperor Huizong's Eighteen Scholars* 宋徽廟御筆十八學士圖并題長卷.<sup>30</sup>

The initial depiction of the eighteen scholars can be traced back to the Tang dynasty, when Li Shimin 李世民 (598–649, later Emperor Taizong 太宗, reigned 626–649) commissioned the *Qinfu shiba xueshitu* 秦府十八學士圖 (Portraits of the Eighteen Scholars in the Qin Principedom) by Yan Liben 閻立本 (circa 600–674). The Tang works, however, consisted of the individual portraits of the Eighteen Scholars.<sup>31</sup> It was only after the Ming dynasty that *Eighteen Scholars* emerged in a long handscroll format with a continuous narrative design.

The emerging popularity of *Eighteen Scholars* (also known as *Dengyingtu* 登瀛圖) in the early Ming is understandable, since during these constructive years, rulers had a great

30. Bian Yongyu 卞永譽, *Shigutang shuhua huikao* 式古堂書畫彙考, juan 11 (Taipei: Zheng zhong shuju, 1958), 418–9.

31. The Eighteen Scholars refer to Du Ruhui 杜如晦, Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, Yu Zhining 于志寧, Su Shichang 蘇世長, Xue Shou 薛收, Chu Liang 褚亮, Yao Silian 姚思廉, Lu Deming 陸德明, Kong Yingda 孔穎達, Li Xuandao 李玄道, Li Shousu 李守素, Yu Shinan 虞世南, Cai Yungong 蔡允恭, Yan Xiangshi 顏相時, Xu Jingzong 許敬宗, Xue Yuanjing 薛元敬, Gai Wenda 蓋文達, and Su Xun 蘇勗, who formed the elite advisor panel of Li Shimin (later Emperor Taizong, reigned 626–649) when he was Prince Qin before he became the emperor of the Tang dynasty (618–960). In the Tang dynasty, both Emperor Taizong and Xuanzong had designated “Eighteen Scholars” and made their portraits. See “Shiba xueshi” in *Zhongwen dacidian*, vol. 2, 157–8.

need to recruit talented and capable officials to serve in the new government. What better way to promote this political message than referencing the historical Eighteen Scholars, the elite advisory panel of Li Shimin, exemplary ruler of Chinese history? However, instead of following the Tang tradition of commemorating the eighteen scholars through their collective portraits, Ming painters tended to focus their depictions on the scholars' pursuit of the "four arts" of *qin-qi-shu-hua* 琴棋書畫 (zither, chess, calligraphy, and painting). This is best evidenced by Huang Runyu's 黃潤玉 (1389–1477) essay, *Dengyingtuji* (Introduction of *Dengyingtu*). According to Huang, this painting by Wang Gong was composed of the four scenes of *qin-qi-shu-hua*. Two Hongwu officials, Chen Mo 陳謨 (active in the early Hongwu era) and Zheng Zhen 鄭真 (1320s–after 1387), also documented a handscroll titled *Shiba xueshi dengyingtu* 十八學士登瀛圖 and, both described the highlighted four activities.<sup>32</sup> Zheng Zhen even pointed out the political implications of Eighteen Scholars by drawing a parallel between the Eighteen Scholars of the early Tang and the elite officials of the Hongwu court.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to the activities of the four arts, Ming artists also added drinking and feasting to the Eighteen Scholars depiction, as evidenced by the *Shiba xueshi yintu* 十八學士飲圖 (*A Drinking Party of the Eighteen Scholars*) documented by Liu Song 劉崧 (1321–1381). Liu gave a vivid account of the painting:

Among the scholars portrayed here, some are seated and exchanging greetings with others indicating preservation of respectful conduct in the early stages of drinking. Some are bending their heads together while talking and laughing and appear to be in a joyful mood. A few are pulling up their sleeves and raising their cups to drink, already lost in a disinhibited state. Some are singing or tapping with the beats (of the music), using sound to express their emotions. There are also those playing flutes, the lute, and other instruments to join in the music. Those resting or sitting all display various degrees of intoxication. Some have risen from their chairs and are pictured dancing with abandon. Others need support to get up and appear to be near collapse. Some, supported on both sides, are walking with their heels lifted above the ground, and some march ahead recklessly unaware of danger. Some, realizing it's time to go home, are riding on horses with candles...<sup>34</sup>

Liu also pointed out that such depiction of the Eighteen Scholars' indulgence in heavy drinking and partying was a totally inappropriate reference to the admirable elite Tang officials. How could the Emperor Taizong have entrusted the country's affairs to this ragtag group, who appeared so indecent in the painting? Liu concluded that the painting was

32. See Chen Mo 陳謨, *Haisangji* 海桑集, juan 9 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu, 1972), 33–4 and Zheng Zhen 鄭真, *Yingyang waishiji* 滎陽外史集, juan 50 (*Siku Quanshu* edition), 12–3.

33. Zheng Zhen, 12–3.

34. See Liu Song 劉崧, *Chaweng wenji* 槎翁文集, juan 12, National Central Library, Taipei, 20–1.

likely designed as a warning against heavy drinking.

*Taipei One* appears to have incorporated all the activities associated with the Ming trend of depicting Eighteen Scholars, including drinking, feasting, playing music and chess, writing calligraphy and painting. However, as Huang Runyu pointed out in *Dengyingtuji*, in spite of the new Ming design featuring the scholars' four activities, the meaning of the painting remains the same. Huang even commented: "Wouldn't a depiction of the twenty-eight *Shujishi* 庶吉士 (Elite Metropolitan Graduates) in the Hanlin Academy of our Yongle 永樂 court be far better than that of elite group of the Tang?"<sup>35</sup> The *Shujishi* was created by the Yongle emperor (1360–1424; r. 1402–1424) in 1404, when he selected a group of outstanding *Jinshi* 進士 (Metropolitan Graduates) to serve in the Hanlin Academy 翰林. They were retained with special honors and for future appointments. The group, originally twenty-eight was later increased to twenty-nine.<sup>36</sup>

It is remarkable that Huang Runyu drew a parallel between the Eighteen Scholars of the Tang and the *Shujishi* in the Hanlin academy of the Yongle reign, since I believe that *Taipei One* is in fact depicting a gathering of the *Shujishi* rather than the Eighteen Scholars.

First of all, *Taipei One* cannot be depicting the Eighteen Scholars because the total number of scholar officials depicted exceeds eighteen.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the casual nature of the gathering, including the emphasis on the relaxing and entertaining activities of eating, drinking, listening to music, and game playing in a garden setting are all discordant with the formal didactic depiction of the Eighteen Scholars.

Connecting *Taipei One* to the depiction of a gathering of the *Shujishi* of the Yongle court is a painting recorded by Chen Jingzong 陳敬宗 (1377–1459) called *Yanjitu* 燕集圖 (A Pleasure Gathering). According to Chen, this painting, commissioned by Duan Min 段民 (1370s–1434), was a duplicate of an earlier version commissioned by Yang Mian 楊勉 (1370s–1425) to commemorate the enjoyable time the *Shujishi* spent together in the Yongle court. Yang Mian, Duan Min, Chen Jingzong were all members of this elite group.

35. Huang Runyu 黃潤玉, *Nanshan huangxiansheng jiacangji* 南山黃先生家傳集, juan 42, National Central Library, Taipei, 6–8.

36. The original number of the elite group of *Shujishi* in the Hanlin Academy was twenty-eight referring to the twenty-eight mansions (or *su*), which are the latitudes the Moon crosses during its monthly journey around Earth and serve as a way to track the Moon's progress. Ancient Chinese astronomers divided the sky elliptical into four regions with each assigned a mysterious animal (Azure Dragon in the east, Black Tortoise in the north, White Tiger in the west, and Vermilion Bird in the south). Each region contains seven mansions, making a total of twenty-eight mansions. The original twenty eight members are: Zeng Qi 曾榮, Zhou Shu 周述, Zhou Mengjian 周孟簡, Luo Rujing 羅汝敬, Liu Ziqin 劉子欽, Yang Xiang 楊相, Wang Zhi 汪直, Yu Xuekui 余學夔, Wang Xun 王訓, Peng Ruqi 彭汝器, Li Shimian 李時勉, Zhang Pu 章朴, Lu Han 盧翰, Yu Ding 余鼎, Xiong Zhi 熊直, Wang Dao 王道, Yang Mian 楊勉, Zhang Chang 章敞, Ni Weizhe 倪維哲, Chen Jingzong 陳敬宗, Yuan Tianlu 袁添祥, Wu Shen 吾紳, Chai Guangjing 柴廣敬, Shen Sheng 沈昇, Wang Ying 王英, Wang Zhi 王直, Tang Liu 湯流, and Duan Min 段民. The added member is Zhou Zhen 周枕 (1381–1453).

37. The writer's count of the total number of scholar officials in *Taipei One* is twenty-six. However, several of the figures are hard to identify because they are only partially revealed or not easily identifiable.

Yang asked Zeng Qi 曾榮 (1372–1432), also a member, to write an introduction for the painting. In 1433 (eighth year of Xuande), twenty-nine years after the formation of the group, Duan Min lamenting the death of Yang and Zeng and those who left the court, and commissioned this *Yanjitu* to celebrate their twenty-ninth anniversary. At the same time, Duan wrote another introduction, made a copy of Zeng's introduction essay, and added them both to the original scroll painting. For the newly commissioned work, Duan asked Chen Jingzong, also a former member, to write a long inscription following Chen's copy of Zeng's original introduction. Duan also asked Wu Na (1372–1457), a close associate of the group, to write a preface for the new painting.<sup>38</sup>

The activities and entertainments enjoyed by the large group of scholars in the garden fit exactly the theme and intent of the well documented *Yanjitu*. As Duan's introduction pointed out, after selecting the elite scholars from the *Jinshi* group, the Yongle emperor provided them with generous provisions and even favored them with the pleasure of leisurely outings. Eventually, these scholars all went on to become the most highly accomplished court officials. According to Chen Jingzong, the depiction of the scholars' enjoyable gathering in Duan's painting was not so much to highlight the pleasure the group indulged in as to serve as a reminder of Emperor Yongle's dedication to the education and cultural cultivation of his talented scholar officials.

Unfortunately, Chen did not mention the painter's name, but the depiction of such a large group of highly esteemed scholar officials and their leisurely activities granted through imperial privilege is not a task for an average painter. It demands a full range of professional skills in capturing not only the participants' personalities and their lively activities, but also in detailing the aesthetics and relationships of their surroundings.

Stylistically, *Taipei One* displays characteristics more consistent with the style of the Ming rather than the Song, as evidenced by the fixed horizon, consistent spatial recession, larger figures, and more flattened patterning in depicting the trees and plants. The same applies to the techniques used in defining the figures' facial features, costumes, birds and horses. Despite the different format, *Taipei One's* direct relationship with Zheng Wenying's 1434 painting is also evident. *Yanjitu*, commissioned one year earlier in 1433, shares with Wenying's work many distinctive motifs and designs. Other than the old official behind the tree, the whole departing scene of four figures, a horse, and a dog in Wenying's work are duplicated in *Taipei One* and *Two*, with only the minor change of moving the running boy farther to the right in the handscrolls. The two paintings also share the same motifs, designs, and brush techniques in depicting the background landscape. Even Wenying's predilection for an expansion of "level distance" for an extended horizon, which further developed into a more expressive personal idiom in his Hashimoto work, is found repeatedly in the Taipei scroll. It is typical for artists to reuse motifs or designs they created

38. See Chen Jingzong, "Ba Yanjitu hou 跋燕集圖後 (Inscription for Introduction on Yanjitu)," in *Danran jushiji 澹然居士集*, juan 6 (Jiajing edition 嘉靖), 11–12 and Wu Na 吳納, *Sian wencui 思菴文萃*, juan 6 (1739 edition), 11–13.



in their own previous works. Further evidence that Zheng was the original creator of *Taipei One* includes the matching brushwork and techniques used to define the forms and textures of the rocks, tree trunks, patterns of clustered leaves, and animals. Perhaps the most remarkable details, however, are the identical design and arrangements of the leaning *chun* tree on the edge of the diagonally aligned riverbank. Even the two patches of reeds nearby are rendered in a similar manner.

Also supporting Zheng Wenying as creator of Duan's *Yanjitu* is the date of the painting. In the year 1433, the Zheng masters were at the peak of their painting careers. Shimin was serving in court and Wenying was in charge of the family's painting studio in Fujian. Also, the painting's subject demands an artist specialized in figure-and-horses, and undoubtedly the best-known contemporary artists of that subject were the Zheng masters. Duan, who commissioned the painting, was serving after 1430 (Xuande fifth year) in the Nanjing court. Since Shimin was serving in the Xuande court in Beijing, Duan's natural choice would have been Wenying in Fujian.

Based on the above discussion, I believe *Taipei One* is likely the *Yanjitu* commissioned by Duan (Fig. 2) and *Taipei Two*, a faithful copy made by a highly skilled Ming painter (Fig. 3). These two paintings soon became models for many later painters, as evidenced by the numerous recorded and extant works.<sup>39</sup>

2) Emperor Huizong, *Wenhuitu* 文會圖 (A Literary Gathering), the National Palace Museum, Taipei (Fig. 5)

This painting also exists in multiple versions, including two in the National Palace Museum Taipei. Although the two versions share the same title and design, only one is attributed to Emperor Huizong (Fig. 5), the other to an anonymous Tang dynasty painter (Fig. 6).<sup>40</sup> Once again, the version attributed to Huizong is equipped with poem inscriptions by both the Song emperor and his minister Cai Jing. While this rare combination inspired a scholar to write about a possible dialogue between the two,<sup>41</sup> I believe both of the alleged Song inscriptions were later additions. Even more revealing is the fact that the Huizong poem on the upper right corner of this painting is identical to the alleged Huizong poem following the Eighteen Scholars' names on the two Taipei scrolls (Figs. 2 and 3). The repeated use of the same poorly composed poem and the fictitious teaming up of Huizong and Cai Jing also point to the tactics of the same forger(s) to improperly create a Huizong attribution, likely around the same time. Thus, *Wenhuitu*, like *Taipei One* and *Taipei Two*,

39. According to Ling Zhanchu's description, Qiu Ying's *Tangxian yanjituji* 唐賢燕集圖 has an almost identical design as *Taipei One* and *Two*, see Ling Zhanchu 凌湛初, *Shenjiaoguan bizouji* 申椒館敝帚集, *juan 2* (Beijing: Zhonghua quanguotu shuguan wenxian suo weifu zhi zhong xin, 1999), 15–20.

40. See *Gugong shuhua tulu*, vol. 1, 43–4 and 297–8.

41. See I Lo-fen, “衣若芬,「昏君」與「奸臣」的對話——談宋徽宗「文會圖」題詩 (Dialogue Between the 'Fatuous Emperor' and the 'Treacherous Minister': Song Hui Zong's 'Literary Gathering' Painting (Wen-hui Tu) and its Poetic Inscriptions),” *Literature and Philosophy* 文史哲 no. 8 (June 2006), 253–78.



Fig. 5. Emperor Huizong, *Wenhuitu*, hanging scroll, National Palace Museum, Taipei



Fig. 6. Unknown Tang Artist (attr.), *Wenhuitu*, hanging scroll, National Palace Museum, Taipei



was likely also initially created by one of the Zheng masters but suffered the same fate of being divested of its original attributions.

One can easily recognize the banquet scene featured here as identical in design to the same scene highlighted in the *Eighteen Scholars* (Taipei One, Fig. 2). The artist only modified the design by moving the group of attendants preparing food and drink from the right side of the table in *Eighteen Scholars*, to the bottom in order to accommodate the hanging scroll format. Judging from the close relationship and overlapping design and style between *A Literary Gathering* and *Eighteen Scholars*, I believe *A Literary Gathering*, its original title unknown, was also initially created by one of the Zheng masters. It was common practice for Ming court painters to reuse important designs they created in multiple subsequent works. Under close examination, the Huizong version shows a direct and close relationship to the figure and landscape style of the Taipei One version of *Eighteen Scholars*. The attribution to Huizong most likely occurred in the late sixteenth century, when the Zheng masters, like most early Ming court painters, were obliterated from Chinese painting history. It is also interesting that both of these paintings shared the same fate of being fabricated as Huizong's works around the same time and likely by the same hands. Further evidence linking this painting to one of the Zheng masters is the presence of the old, leaning *chun* tree, the familiar crest of the Zheng family studio, which figures prominently in the center of the painting.

Although it is not possible to identify which of the Zheng masters created the *Wenhuitu*, it is evident that many of the innovative designs created by the Zheng masters soon became models for many later figure masters, including Qiu Ying.<sup>42</sup>



Fig. 7. Emperor Huizong (attr.), *Tingqintu* (*Listening to the Qin*), hanging scroll, the Palace Museum, Beijing

42. It is not clear if Qiu Ying's recorded *Tangxian yanjituji* was the same painting by Qiu Ying entitled *Renwu* (Figures) published in Zhang Congyu's catalogue. But as a figure-and-horse painter and only about three decades younger, Qiu Ying must have been familiar and studied paintings by the Zheng masters, who were dominant leading masters of the subject.

3) Emperor Huizong (attr.), *Tingqintu* 聽琴圖 (*Listening to the Qin*), the Palace Museum Beijing (Fig. 7)

This painting, also attributed to Huizong, portrays a *qin* 琴 (seven-stringed zither) concert in a garden, where a brown-robed scholar is playing the zither under a tall pine with two scholar officials seated in front of him listening intently. An elegantly arranged flower pot sits on a scholar's rock in front of the three figures. Despite their spatial separation with each seated on a cushioned rock forming a triangle with the musician in the center, and their different colored robes, they are united by the shared harmonious music as all are deeply absorbed in their euphoric state.

The attribution to Huizong is based on the title *Tingqintu*, written in Huizong's "slender gold" calligraphy on the upper right and the imperial mark and seal on the lower left. This attribution is further enhanced with a poem by Cai Jing at the top of the painting. So far, this attribution has not been challenged. While some have suggested that the zither player is Emperor Huizong himself,<sup>43</sup> another scholar believed that the two Song inscriptions implied some kind of dialogue between the emperor and his minister.<sup>44</sup> However, I believe that both the Song date and the attribution are highly questionable. Not only are Huizong's title and Cai's poem inscription placed in very awkward positions, both inscriptions demonstrate inferior quality and suggest a significantly later calligraphy and poetry style.<sup>45</sup> More interestingly, the calligraphic styles of both appear almost identical to the fabricated writings of the same Huizong-Cai Jing combination found on *Wenhuitu* and *Eighteen Scholars*. In other words, it is most likely that the attributions of Huizong to these three works were fabricated around the same time and that the alleged Song writings created by the same team. After a careful study, I am convinced that this painting is yet another masterpiece originally created by one of the Zheng masters.

As discussed above, the Zheng masters were celebrated for their unrivaled skills and talents in creating innovative designs of sensitive narration and subtle moods. Here, once more, one finds the distinctive Zheng family aptitudes at work. The numerous characteristics of the Zheng family lineage can also be detected through the shared approach in design and brush technique. A close comparison with *A Literary Gathering* shows great similarity between the two in the thoughtful positioning of figures in different angles, in defining the figures' facial features – the slender, intelligent eyes, the refined soft shading of the eyebrows, the similar combination of the mustache and beards, and the subtle contrasts of colors and textures. Also shared with *A Literary Gathering* and the *Eighteen Scholars* are the same skills and techniques used in depicting the furniture. A notable detail is the frequent

43. See Yang Xin 楊新, *Yangxin meishu lunwenji* 楊新美術論文集 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 1994), 243-4.

44. I Lo-fen, 253-78.

45. Both the title written by Huizong and the poem inscription by Cai Jing are positioned too low with Cai's poem almost touching the top of the pine tree. Furthermore, it is inappropriate to have the imperial title positioned lower than the Minister Cai's inscription.

depiction of animal skin cushions, which can also be found on the back of the horse in Zheng Wenying's, *Landscape with Figures and Horses* (Fig. 1) and *Eighteen Scholars*.

Also found here is the Zheng masters' tendency to highlight a distinctive tree in their figure depiction. The featured tree here is a tall pine with its trunk elegantly encircled by a blossoming vine. Its exaggerated size easily reminds us of the similarly scaled tree in *Wenhuitu*. Additionally, both the pine and the young bamboo stationed in the background demonstrate the same overall structural shapes and carefully delineated leaves as similar trees from the *Eighteen Scholars*.

4) Anonymous, Yuan dynasty, *Simatu* 飼馬圖 (*Feeding Horses*), the National Museum of China (Fig. 8)



Fig. 8. Unknown Yuan Artist, *Simatu* (*Feeding Horses*), hanging scroll, The National Art Museum of China

*Feeding Horses* (*Simatu*), formerly in the collection of Deng Tuo 鄧拓 (circa 1911–1966), is now listed as an anonymous Yuan dynasty painting in The National Art Museum of China (*Zhongguo Meishuguan* 中國美術館).<sup>46</sup> This hanging scroll depicts five horses and two figures under a tall tree. Four of the horses are gathered around a trough. The black and white horses on the left are bending to eat while the other two, both tethered to the trough, are nuzzling each other's necks. All five are carefully differentiated from one another by their facial features, the subtle colors and textures of their skin and hair, and their distinctive poses and attitudes. The horses' realistic and precise anatomy is an indication of the artist's professional discipline in horse painting.

Compared with Zheng Wenying's Hashimoto work, *Feeding Horses* depicts a closer, more intimate scene, however, the two paintings share many similar techniques and stylistic features. In both paintings, the artist focuses on a narrative and the subtle mood of an official's departure by dividing his figures into two groups facing each other on either sides of the foreground. The deliberate distinction of social status, achieved by setting the senior official apart from his subordinates, the reserved space between them, and their contrasting postures and attitudes, clearly reveals the artists' strong faith in Confucian ethics and social hierarchy, for which the Zheng family is best known.

46. See *Gems of Chinese Fine Arts* (*Iyuan Tuoying*) no. 82 (1986), 1.



Figures in both paintings are depicted with slightly elongated bodies, small feet, and mild and calm facial expressions. Even though it is difficult to compare the horses due to the diminutive scale of the horse in Wenying's work, it is still possible to see that both illustrations were painted by someone specialized in capturing a variety of horse poses. Despite the small size of Wenying's horse in his Hashimoto work, it is portrayed from the most challenging angle – a foreshortened view from the back while the horses' head is turning toward the groom on the left. The same pose is found in *Feeding Horses*, in which the artist demonstrates the same confidence by rendering the five horses in completely different poses and dispositions. Also shared by the two paintings is the distinctive illustration of the horses' facial features, including the dotting of the pupils and exceptional definition of the horses' eyes.

An even more interesting and personal link between *Feeding Horses* and Wenying's Hashimoto work, which points to one of the Zheng masters as its creator, is the large leaning *chun* tree on the lower right. The *chun* tree, which was the namesake of the Zheng family studio and also appears in Wenying's 1434 work on the lower right, was a quintessential landmark at the Zheng residence. The tree's special significance to the Zheng family is clearly tied to their renowned virtue of filial piety. As such, its repeated appearances in paintings by the Zheng masters is not surprising.

Although the painting is currently entitled *Feeding Horses* (*Simatu*), the principle focus is clearly not on the feeding horses around the trough, but rather on the carefully staged scene in the foreground, where a red-robed official stands in a dignified manner with a wooden staff on the left with a blue-robed groom accompanied by a whitish and spotted horse tethered to the *chun* tree. The respectful manner of the groom, the reserved space surrounding the official, and the leaning tree, all direct our attention to the official. In the Ming era, court painters created a series of new themes centering on the symbolic reference of *wuma* 五馬 (five horses) to the *taishou* 太守 (Prefect Governor). The theme is designed to convey specific didactic messages to glorify and encourage district officials. The association was first established in the Han dynasty (221 BCE–220 CE), when an extra horse was offered to the *taishou* in addition to the four horses normally allotted to them for the official carriage. The extra horse was designated for the *taishou*'s spring surveillance tour. Since then, the *taishou* has been nicknamed *wuma daifu* 五馬大夫 (or the Official of Five Horses). Judging from the highlighted official wearing a red robe, the total of five horses, and the groom accompanied by one horse ready for departure, this painting is clearly depicting one of the *Wuma* themes, most likely *Wuma xingchun* 五馬行春 (*The Five Horses' Spring Tour*) or *Wuma rongren* 五馬榮任 (*The Honorable Assignment of the Five Horses*). Both themes became popular in the mid-fifteenth century, when the Zheng masters served as leading painters in court.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the unique designs and distinct style strongly suggest that this work was painted by one of the Zheng masters.

47. For discussion of the *Wuma* theme, see Sung (2009), 190–206.



Fig. 9. Unknown Artist, *Xiangmatu* (Judging Horses), hanging scroll, former collection of Wang Chi-ch'ian

5) Anonymous, *Xiangmatu* 相馬圖 (*Judging Horses*), former collection of Wang Chi-ch'ian (Fig. 9)

This painting depicts an official on the left and two embracing horses under a *wutong* 梧桐 tree on the right. Formerly in the collection of Wang Chi-ch'ian 王己千, the painting's current location is unknown. Although this painting contains no signature or artist's seal, it was listed as a Yuan painting and has sometimes been attributed to Zhao Mengfu.<sup>48</sup> But I believe that the painting is an early Ming work and, once again, likely by one of the Zheng masters. This is evidenced by the similarity in design and style in depicting the various figure-and-horse motifs between this painting and *Feeding Horses*. The red-robed official holding a wooden staff appears almost identical in both countenance and pose to the one in *Feeding Horses*. The two nuzzling horses under the tree in *Judging Horses* also find their parallel in the two horses in front of the trough in *Feeding Horses*.

Like *Feeding Horses*, the title of this painting seems misguided. The red-robed official, standing in the same dignified manner like his counterpart in *Feeding Horse*, is more likely contemplating his pending official tour than concentrating on judging the horses. Although it is not easy to confidently determine the exact subject since the painting appears to have suffered some trimming, the painting is likely depicting one of the Ming themes associated with the touring censors.<sup>49</sup>

48. The painting is published in *Garland of Chinese Paintings*, vol 2 (Hong Kong: Cafa Co, 1967), pl. 9.

49. See Sung (2009), 190–206.



Fig. 10. Hu Cong, *Liuyin shuangjun* (Two Horses Under a Willow), the Palace Museum, Beijing



As leaders of figure-and-horse painting in the Ming court, the Zheng masters had many followers, including Hu Cong 胡聰. Suffering a similar fate as the Zheng masters, Hu was not listed in any Ming painting records. But the survival of his single signed work, *Liuyin shuangjun* 柳蔭雙駿 (*Two Horses under a Willow*), in the Palace Museum, Beijing (Fig. 10) saved him from total oblivion. On this painting, Hu's official signature: 武英殿東皋胡聰寫 (Painted by Hu Cong from Donggao in the Wuying Hall) clearly states that he was a court painter serving in the Wuying Hall.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, the precise dates of Hu and his exact position remain unknown.<sup>51</sup> After further investigation, I have discovered new information indicating that Hu first entered the court in 1471 during the Chenghua reign 成化(1465–1487) when he replaced his father, Hu Gang 胡剛, a *Zhihuiqianshi* 指揮簽事 (Assistant Commander, 4a) of the *Fujunqianwei* 府軍前衛 (Front Guard of the Garrison Militia).<sup>52</sup>

As discussed in an earlier publication, *Fujunqianwei* was an imperial guard unit evolved from the youth army (*Youjun* 幼軍) first established in 1412 by the Yongle emperor to educate the young Zhu Zhanji 朱瞻基 (future Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 1399–1435; r. 1425–1435) who was then the imperial Grandson-heir.<sup>53</sup> Xuanzong must have enjoyed this experience since he also employed the youth army for his own heir apparent, Zhu Qizhen 朱祁鎮 (future Emperor Yingzong 英宗 1427–1464; r. 1449–1457) in 1433.<sup>54</sup> Many members of the youth army later enjoyed special privileges and some even became members of the Painting Academy. This new information not only confirms my long standing suspicion of a direct relationship between the original youth army and the Painting Academy of Xuande, but also Hu's individual timeline. Judging from Hu's simple signature on his Palace Museum work indicating only the Hall he served, he had not yet received any official rank when he painted this. Considering Hu's age and junior position in court, he most likely studied with the Zheng masters. Furthermore, Hu's two white official horses tethered to a blossoming plum tree is reminiscent of the scene typically depicted in *Congma xingchun* 驄馬行春 (A Congma's<sup>55</sup> *Spring Journey*), the theme created in the early Ming by the Zheng masters in order to compliment the Investigating Censors who toured various regions in the spring to inspect local governments.<sup>56</sup>

In conclusion, it is clear that for three generations the Zheng masters (Zheng Kegang, Zheng Shimin, Zheng Kang, and Zheng Wenying) excelled in figure and horse painting both inside and outside the Ming court. Through their continuous family lineage and their

50. For discussion of this painting by Hu Cong, see Sung (2009), 198–9.

51. See Li He, Michael Knight, et al., *Power and Glory: Court Arts of China's Ming Dynasty* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2008), 244. Hu Cong's dates was estimated as active between 1425 and 1525.

52. See *Mingshilu* 明實錄, *Xianzong shilu* 憲宗實錄, *juan* 99 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 1966), 12.

53. See Sung (2006)

54. See L. Carrington Goodrich, and Chaoying Fang, *Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368–1644* (New York: Columbia Press, 1976), 289.

55. *Congma* refers to a fine horse of a bluish-white color.

56. See Sung (2009), 192–200.

accumulated talents, they created numerous new themes and designs, which influenced and inspired many later painters. Even after the heavy prejudice of late Ming obliterated their true identity and misattributed most of their original works, it is still possible to trace some of the themes and designs that they created. The three generation of Zheng masters represented the strength of professional painters recruited to the early Xuande court before the infiltration of the military artisans changed the makeup of the Ming Painting Academy.

The early and mid-Ming court painters, who revived many traditional Chinese painting subjects and further developed them to new heights, played an important role in setting new trends for later Chinese painting. Despite this critical contribution, most of them are poorly represented in current Chinese painting history. Through this reconstruction of the Zheng masters' biographies and formerly misattributed paintings, I hope to fill this gap and reduce at least some of the distortion and confusion surrounding this inspirational family.

## Global Capitalism and Local Artistic Taste in Late Imperial/Early Modern China, 1600-1800

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Western theorists have accepted the almost unrestrained inflation of “capitalism” as an explanatory concept in economic history since Karl Marx pioneered the use of “capital” to describe the increasing velocity of exchange that allegedly pushed early modern Europe to the forefront of the global economy.<sup>1</sup> Those who marveled at the rise of imperialism in association with capitalism typically subsumed the economic roles of China, India, and the Ottomans to bit players in the fairy tale “rise of the West” after 1500. The traditional economies of Asia by comparison were the “backward” sisters of development. Their “de-industrialization” provided the raw materials for the nineteenth century industrial revolution in Europe, which sat atop the global marketplace like an alleged goliath after 1800. European pundits, of whom Marx was one of the leading voices, proudly proclaimed the superiority of their ways of life, society, politics, and, most of all, economy. What Marx yearned for was socialism, not capitalism.<sup>2</sup>

If we “do the numbers” and “localize the global,” however, this version of a bloated “capitalism” with Europe as its hub does not hold up to careful scrutiny. Moreover, if we follow the flow of “money” between 1500 and 1800, we find instead that its initial velocity was centered in the entrepôts of India, China, and the Ottomans. “Redistributing” early modern global dynamics to their “local” components, allows us to recognize the important East Asian networks that helped form the global (Latour, 2005, 173-218). Europeans produced little that Asians might buy before 1800, and the global economy to that point amounted to the de facto transfer of New World silver and gold to the Asian economies

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1. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-17, makes the point that sociologists usually mistake “society” as a singular cause for actions when “it” is more properly evaluated as the product of numerous social exchanges between actors and networks. Similarly, we can say that European “capitalism” was more a consequence of a plethora of historical associations than a singular cause of later economic events. The inflation of a concept includes its entification and mystification.

2. Karl Marx, *Dispatches from the New York Tribune* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 3-47 and 212-258, and Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 69-113.



to pay for their commodities. The prodigious sale of porcelain, silk, lacquer ware, and tea to “East India” companies in London, Amsterdam, Paris, Lisbon, Rome, and Madrid via Barcelona and Seville empowered the silver ages of Japan and China, for example.<sup>3</sup>

The differential in scale of economies between Asia vis-à-vis Europe carried over to population differentials. Spain had a largely agrarian population of three million in 1600, while France’s population in 1800 was about 30 million, exceptionally large by European standards. Ming China during the silver age had at least 150 million people, some say as many as 250 million. By 1800, Chinese population was at least 300 million. Uncountable India was much closer to China in population than to France. The smaller Tokugawa Japan (1600-1858) was comparable to France and had 30 million people by 1700 before entering a still poorly understood period of demographic “stagnation” in the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

These differentials in scale mean that even if Asia lacked “capitalism,” it monopolized most of the “money” flowing through the arteries and veins of the early modern global economy. If the truth be told, moreover, China experienced a massive print revolution during the Song dynasty (960-1280), including printing money, four centuries before Europe. The print revolution climaxed during the Ming silver age, but massive inflation caused by the uncontrolled printing of money under the Mongols made printed paper money suspect as specie by the end of the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368).<sup>5</sup>

If we now, with hindsight, recognize these historical realities, we should no longer allow the inflated concept of “capitalism” to trump the underinflated concept of “monies” in Asia. Rather than let the tail continue to wag the dog (by itself capitalism as a “Western” concept does not trump the “Oriental” accumulation of money), we should right the course and see that the Asian global economy was the indispensable precursor to and prerequisite for the European version of the nineteenth century. Asian “money” penetrated the world’s markets long before the concept of “capitalism” remade the world in its European image. Rather than the “me toos” of the early modern world, China, Japan, and India were by 1600 its essential motors and the engines that made Europeans rethink their own political, social, and cultural values informing their economies.

The ideological rationalization of wealth occurred first in China, for instance. There the long term transformation of the god of wealth from a malevolent devil wreaking havoc among the people to a charitable deity who would answer the prayers of educated

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3. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 173-218.

4. Fabian Drixler, *Mabiki: Infanticide and Population Growth in Eastern Japan, 1660-1950* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013).

5. Joseph McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 43-81, and Su Yongqiang 蘇勇強, *Bei-Song shuji kanke yu guwen yundong* 北宋書籍刊刻與古文運動 (Northern Song book printing and the ancient-style prose movement) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2010).

commoners for economic prosperity occurred.<sup>6</sup> In recent discussion of China's transition to modernity, for example, scholars have still tended to under-theorize China's role in the rise of modern economic growth via international trade and commerce. They mention the Qing network of tollhouses before 1800 and treaty ports after 1842 (van de Ven, 2014), but like John Fairbank and others they continue to underestimate the step-by-step growth of generally peaceful if contested global trade in East China Sea waters, beginning with the eighteenth century Canton trading system.

The Chinese treaty ports that were forced open after the Opium War (1839-1842) thus represented a second stage of development, after what Paul Van Dyke calls the "collapse" of the Canton System. Describing the "Canton System," Van Dyke stresses that the system depended on Canton's customs procedures by which "China opens its doors to the world" in the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The late nineteenth century Maritime Customs Service System should be connected to its two institutional predecessors, if we are to obtain a full understanding of the global interactions that the world went through from 1750 to 1950.

Van de Ven gives us a lively and germane account of the last century of China's trading and customs institutions after 1850, but that is not when the processes of global commercialization became legalized and institutionalized enough to replace the great pirate fleets and marauders, first the Japanese "wako" in East and Southeast Asian waters after 1550, and then their European counterparts after 1600. By relying on what he calls late nineteenth century industrialized "modernity" to describe the growth of "underdevelopment" in Qing China, van de Ven remains uninterested in unravelling the "deep pockets" of India and China during the early modern "silver age," which have been painstakingly reconstructed over the last decade by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Richard von Glahn, R. Bin Wong, Tim Brook, and Kenneth Pomeranz, among others.<sup>8</sup>

That said, however, Asians did not articulate a concept of "capitalism" per se, but their economic activities evolved from the vibrant growth of layers of cities, towns, and villages tied to regional and international hierarchies of trade within a huge domestic agrarian system. These Asian urban economies were dwarfed by their own vast agrarian sectors, but the ports of China and India in turn dwarfed their European counterparts, where large cities were fed by ever smaller agrarian populations. Over the long run, rising standards of living based on windfall profits from the New World motivated Europeans to trade with and profit from Asia, while Asians unwittingly faced the unprecedented conundrum that rising levels of population would outpace agrarian productivity and drive down living standards. Europeans per capita had more wealth by 1800, what we call "modern economic

6. Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

7. Paul Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005).

8. Hans van de Ven, *Breaking with the Past: The Maritime Customs Service and the Global Origins of Modernity in China* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2014).

development” today, but they always trailed the aggregate productivity of Asia.<sup>9</sup>

Below, I explore an example of a much needed reversal of perspective from the “global” back to the “local,” and then back again. When we look at the global economy in light of Asian local history, we recognize that the velocity of money was redirected in cultural terms via the commoditization of daily life. Chinese, Japanese, and Indians first invented this translation of economic into cultural “capital” for economies of scale. We will explore how silver as “money” during the seventeenth century transition affected Ming dynasty literati taste and Confucian values. The global market place fueled local cultural changes that empowered local classicists in China to move in new and unprecedented directions. Money increasingly “talked” for the many. For some, however, it still “swore.”

### Late Ming Classicism in the Context of Commercial Expansion

Both officials and literati concerned themselves with the technical facets of maintaining the late Ming agrarian economy. The latter drew its strength from the productivity of an integrated river-canal-lake system and land-commodity-labor taxes collected from private farms in over 1300 counties where about 90% of China’s population of approximately 150-250 million people lived in 1600. Since 1381, the government had classified the entire population into social and economic categories to determine taxes and measure access to the civil and military examinations. Revised in 1391, this massive undertaking aimed at measuring the economic resources under Ming control, equalizing the distribution of the land tax (paid in kind), and obtaining fair labor services from all households.

Echoing the ancient classical models in the *Rituals of Zhou*, a text that imperial reformers since antiquity appealed to for contemporary guidance, these classifications, such as households of farmers 農戶, commoners 平民戶, military men 軍戶, artisans 手工業戶, and merchants 商戶, reflected the initial status of each family in early Ming society and how much labor service they had to provide. The government assigned each household category with a specific labor service it had to perform for the bureaucracy, and these tasks were organized according to village-family 村家 units of 110 households (*lijia* 里甲) in each community.<sup>10</sup>

A merchant household was expected to supply merchandise or goods on demand; a military family had to provide at least two soldiers for service; an artisan household provided one worker for imperial workshops. The land registers were supposed to be revised every ten years, and each family was required to perform its labor service in perpetuity.

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9. See E. L. Jones, *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* (Second edition. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1987); G. William Skinner, *Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China* (Tucson, AR: AAS reprint series, 1974), and Albert Feuerwerker, ed., *Chinese Social and Economic History from the Song to 1900* (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1982).

10. James T. C. Liu, *Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih (1021-1086) and His New Policies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University East Asian Studies, 1959), 1-10.



The wide gap between the theory and practice of Ming tax collection, however, greatly diminished government control of the economy by the sixteenth century. When regional markets gradually turned to a silver currency for large transactions out of the direct control of the government and to pay for land and labor taxes, this confirmed the dynasty's weakened hold over its agrarian tax resources.<sup>11</sup>

Geared to a village commodity economy circa 1400, the Ming tax system became increasingly obsolete as population rose from 65/100 to 150/250 million and the economy became more commercialized. The Ming economy was further transformed by an agrarian revolution in which cotton displaced rice production in southern coastal provinces and the influx of Japanese and New World silver monetarized the sixteenth century economy in unprecedented ways. Ming Chinese unwittingly faced a global marketplace in contrast to Song regional concerns. By the 1570s, the Ming government had bowed to the inevitable and through the Single Whip Reforms 一條鞭法 commuted the land tax and service labor systems into a single monetary payment in silver. China's demand for silver remained central to the world economy until about 1750.<sup>12</sup>

Wang Yangming's 王陽明 (1472-1529) claim that the principles of things existed in the mind 心即理 accordingly, occurred at a time when literati views of the economy, commodities, and objects and their significance were changing. As China's population grew from approximately 65/100 to 150/250 million between 1450 and 1600, the reach of the relatively static imperial bureaucracy declined. Similarly, anxious Ming literati wondered if the Cheng-Zhu classical orthodoxy 程朱理學 could still represent universal principles of knowledge at a time when domestic goods and things were financially converted into objects of wealth paid for by using imported silver. Ming literati such as Yuan Huang 袁黃 (1533-1606) worked out the tensions between morality and affluence by creating a new moral calculus for measuring private wealth by keeping track of good and bad deeds in "ledgers of merit and demerit" 功過格.<sup>13</sup>

Although literati after Wang Yangming still placed human understanding within a classical theory of knowledge, the quantity and exchange velocity of things in the marketplace had multiplied exponentially. Ming elites were living through a decisive shift away from the traditional ideals of sagehood, morality, and frugality. Within an inter-

11. Mi Chu Wiens, "Changes in the Fiscal and Rural Control Systems in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *Ming Studies* 3 (1976): 53-69, and Dennis Flynn, and Arturo Giráldez, "Cycles of Silver: Global Economic Unity through the Mid-Eighteenth Century," *Journal of World History* 13, 2 (2002): 391-427.

12. Ming economic developments were also based in part on the Tang-Song economic revolution, and the traditional trading and tax system of the early empires. Compare Edward Farmer, "Social Regulations of the First Ming Emperor," in Kwang-Ching Liu, ed., *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 116-123 and Ray Huang, *Taxation and Government Finance in Sixteenth-Century China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 1-6.

13. Cynthia Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 17-27; Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991), 141-165, and Tim Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 129-138, de-prioritize Zhu Xi's and Wang Yangming's influence during the late Ming.



Fig. 1. *Broadly Examining Antiquities* (Bogu tu 博古圖). The National Palace Museum collection.

regional market economy of exceptional scope and magnitude, gentry and merchant elites transmuted the impartial investigation of things for moral cultivation into the consumption of objects for emotional health and satisfaction. Ming painters presented the contemporary fondness for and connoisseurship of antiquities as a genre known as *Broadly Examining Antiquities* (*Bogu tu* 博古圖; Fig 1). The paintings valorized the literatus as a collector of exquisite things<sup>14</sup>

Late Ming antiquarianism in particular drew its strength from the economic prosperity that pervaded the Yangzi delta. There and elsewhere merchants and literati used their increased financial resources to compete for status through conspicuous consumption. Merchants and literati on their travels searched for ancient works of art, early manuscripts, rare editions, and magnificent ceramics. They paid extravagant sums when they found what they wanted. The rise in value of ancient arts and crafts also touched off increased production of imitations, fakes, and forgeries of ancient bronzes, jades, and ceramics. Late Ming antiquarians with their fixation on possessing things challenged the principled ideals of both Cheng-Zhu 程朱學 learning and Yangming 陽明學 revisionism. For the latter, the former had focused on things too much.<sup>15</sup>

Wang Yangming rejected the Song Cheng-Zhu theory of knowledge because he thought its epistemology that all things were knowable in light of principles was naive. He rerouted the Cheng-Zhu agenda and reduced all things in the perceptible world to the unified field of the mind's awareness, where all principles ultimately resided. Wang noted: "Seeking principles in myriad affairs and things is like saying that one should seek the principle of filial piety in one's parents" (夫求理於事事物物者，如求孝之理於其親之謂也).<sup>16</sup>

Things in themselves were banal for Wang and his followers, who demoted the value of things out there precisely when man-made commodities of value proliferated in the marketplace. Wang Yangming's turn from things to the mind in part refuted the inroads made by connoisseurship 世俗者 and commoditization 物品商品化 among Ming literati. Purists like Wang still sought enlightenment, but they no longer located true principles in the vulgar connoisseur's world of objects and wealth.<sup>17</sup>

Late Ming commercial expansion built on the dramatic monetarization of the Chinese economy during the Silver Age of 1550-1650 and unleashed the commoditization of things

14. Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 91-115, and Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, 190-228.

15. Li Yu-min, ed., *Through the Prism of the Past: Antiquarian Trends in Chinese Art of the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2003). See also Wu Jen-Shu 巫仁恕, "Wan Ming de lüyou huodong yu xiaofei wenhua: yi Jiangnan wei taolun zhongxin 晚明的旅遊活動與消費文化：以江南為討論中心" *Jindai shi yanjiu suo jikan* 近代史研究所集刊 No. 41 (September 2003): 87-141.

16. Wang, Yangming 王陽明, *Wang Wencheng quanshu* 王文成全書 (Taipei: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1983), 2.9a.

17. Craig Clunas, "Jade Carvers and Their Customers in Ming China," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 50 (1985-1986): 69-85.

into objects of desire and affection. After the Ming state commuted village and town labor tax services into cash levies, for example, the imperial court and its bureaucracy lost control of its land and labor resources. In effect, during Wang Yangming's time a decisive shift from a predominantly subsistence livelihood based on a huge agrarian economy to a steadily expanding market economy occurred, which was linked to internal and external networks of provincial, regional, and international trade.<sup>18</sup>

The increase in internal (between town and village) and external (between provinces) trading links stimulated an escalation in commerce, especially merchant travels and resources. Since late medieval times, the imperial state had provided a shipping infrastructure via the Grand Canal, bridges, and roads for grain tax purposes, which had linked north China and the Yellow River to the Yangzi delta, the granary of the empire since medieval times. The delta was then linked via the Yangzi to its vast middle and upper reaches.

This infrastructure fueled a revolution in domestic cotton production and clothing after 1400 whereby almost all commoners in China by 1600 wore winter garments made from cotton rather than the hemp or flax linens of Song times. Diversification of crops and stress on sericulture and cotton paralleled sophisticated rice transplantation techniques in the middle Yangzi, which increasingly replaced the lower Yangzi region, Wang Yangming's home region, as the rice granary of the empire. Production of sugar and other cash crops, which traded as commodities in exchange for rice from new areas, which now had rice surpluses, made up for the rice deficits in the more handicraft oriented Yangzi delta.<sup>19</sup>

Specialized towns emerged in which the cultivation of commercial crops such as cotton and silk replaced rice land. In Shandong and Henan, hired northern laborers also grew cotton that was shipped to the Yangzi delta for weaving. Dual-cropping of summer rice and winter wheat had long been common in the south. In this commercialized environment the cultivation and manufacture of cotton and silk using multiple-spindle spinning machines tended to become separate operations with an accompanying division of labor. Local commodity production in the Yangzi delta, for instance, shifted from traditional household handicrafts in the early Ming to merchant-oriented production in family workshops.<sup>20</sup>

18. Francesca Bray, *Technology and Society in Ming China (1368-1644)* (Washington, DC: American Historical Association, 2001), and Mark Elvin, "Skills and Resources in Late Traditional China," in Elvin, ed., *Another History: Essays on China From a European Perspective* (Canberra: Wild Peony, 1996), 73.

19. See Craig Dietrich, "Cotton Culture and Manufacture in Early Modern China," in W. E. Willmont, ed., *Economic Organization in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), Nishijima, Sadao 西嶋定生, "The Formation of the Early Chinese Cotton Industry," translated by Linda Grove, in Grove and Christian Daniels, eds., *State and Society in China: Japanese Perspectives on Ming-Qing Social and Economic History* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1984), 17-77, and Tanaka Masatoshi 田中正俊, "Rural Handicraft in Jiangnan in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," translated by Linda Grove, in Grove and Christian Daniels, eds., *State and Society in China: Japanese Perspectives on Ming-Qing Social and Economic History* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1984), 79-100.

20. Shigeta Atsushi, "The Origins and Structure of Gentry Rule," translated by Linda Grove, in Grove and Christian Daniels, eds., *State and Society in China: Japanese Perspectives on Ming-Qing Social and Economic History* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1984), 335-385.



Silk, cotton, and rice markets furthered the commercialization of the rural village economy and spurred trading links with towns and cities. Improved seeds, changing crop rotations, and new cash crops such as maize, peanuts, and sweet potatoes from the New World, produced a doubling of grain yields as a complement to the extension of cultivated acreage from 1500 to 1800. Commercialized handicraft production meant that changes in the rural economy produced corresponding changes in the social order for both men and women. Differentiation between urban centers and rural production in village households made peasant producers dependent on market forces and merchant middlemen.<sup>21</sup>

Until the Ming dynasty, it was generally true that “men till while women weave.” Silk production, that is, spinning, weaving, and raising silkworms, was handled by women who used family looms. By the sixteenth century, however, when taxes were increasingly monetarized, men and women began contributing equally to rural labor in south China. The shift in sericulture from a local, household industry to a new interregional product changed the longstanding gender division of labor. Men now worked at the loom in urban or suburban family workshops, while rural women still produced the cocoons for thread.<sup>22</sup>

For elite consumers, Ming cotton and silk production translated into commoditized fashion, which Tim Brook perceptively notes “traveled through the social structure just as it did through the marketing structure.” Fashionable women, whether wives or courtesans, preferred Suzhou 蘇州 cotton embroideries or Huzhou 湖州 silk brocades, which simultaneously affirmed their modesty (by covering the body) but also enhanced their stylishness (through design). Maids and concubines quickly emulated their masters’ tastes. Rather than affirm the occasional warning about luxurious living or Wang Yangming’s renewed call for moral cultivation, most Ming elites became agents for the transmission of extravagance through style. Purists criticized the affinity they perceived between literati collectors of antiquities and the predilection of their wives and families for silks and furs.<sup>23</sup>

Retreat of the dynasty from direct involvement in village affairs also magnified the role of gentrified elites as landlords in late imperial politics and society. Under the umbrella of the central government, gentry and merchants in the Yangzi delta and elsewhere diversified their hold on local power via profiteering based on land rent and commercial enterprises. As state influence lessened, local public health matters evolved under the umbrella of gentry philanthropy and local literati physicians. Such elites also monopolized positions in the imperial bureaucracy by translating their economic and social power into cultural and educational advantages that enabled mainly the sons of gentry and merchants to pass the

21. Mi Chu Wiens, “Cotton Textile Production and Rural Social Transformation in Early Modern China,” *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* 7, 2 (1974): 515-534.

22. Shih Min-hsiung, *The Silk Industry in Ch'ing China*, translated by E-tu Zen Sun (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1976), 9-28, and Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Later Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

23. Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, 219-222, and Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 153-158.

empire-wide civil examinations.<sup>24</sup>

Expansion of the internal economy matched growth in foreign trade. The spice trade with Southeast Asia, for instance, doubled in the sixteenth century, and Ming China increasingly imported hardwoods from Southeast Asia for furniture, palaces and temples. The Ming and Qing dynasties exported teas to Central Asia in exchange for horses until the eighteenth century. In addition to large profits from cotton goods in the domestic market, Chinese became the world's largest exporter of manufactured goods, tea, silks, and ceramics. Production costs were kept low due to low overhead and a surplus of labor. Efficient agriculture also kept food prices low.<sup>25</sup>

Early Ming porcelain was manufactured primarily for the domestic market, principally at kilns 窑 in Zhejiang (Longquan 龍泉), Jiangsu (Yixing 宜興), Fujian (Dehua 德化), and Jiangxi (Jingdezhen 景德鎮) provinces. Merchants linked the pottery kilns to their imperial and literati consumers. Traders translated the external demands of the market to the local producers. Later in the dynasty the Ming exported porcelain to Japan and Southeast and South Asia. The Dutch East India Company handled some six million pieces in the seventeenth century, but this number represented only about 16% of Ming ceramic exports. Yixing's and Jingdezhen's landlocked factories were linked via lakes and rivers in the lower and middle Yangzi region to southeastern ports such as Xiamen, Fuzhou, and Guangzhou and from there to the Indian Ocean trade and Islamic markets. The *blanc-de-Chine* 德化白瓷 styles developed at Dehua were for a time extremely popular in seventeenth century Europe and exported in large quantities at the nearby port of Quanzhou.<sup>26</sup>

The largest pottery factories at Jingdezhen, for example, followed the usual imperial pattern for operating such enterprises, which involved state supervision of merchant activities (*guandu shangban* 官督商辦). The enterprises were based on the labor of hundreds of artisans who produced the "Mohammedan blue" 穆罕默德藍 and polychrome ware in the "five colors" (*benjarong*) manufactured for Siam for which the Ming became famous. Imperial taste and literati connoisseurship deflected the technical discourses of the producers into a sublime discussion of porcelain aesthetics for consumers. With the fall of the Ming, imperial purchases declined, but Jingdezhen revived and remained the major domestic and international producer of porcelain in China until 1800.<sup>27</sup>

24. Angela Leung, "Organized Medicine in Ming-Ch'ing China," *Late Imperial China* 8, 1 (1987): 134-166.

25. Francesca Bray, *Technology and Society in Ming China (1368-1644)* (Washington, DC: American Historical Association 2001), 2-6, and Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 108-117.

26. John Ayers, and Rose Kerr, *Blanc De Chine: Porcelain from Dehua* (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 2002), and Ho Chuimei, "The Ceramic Trade in Asia, 1602-82," in A. J. H. Latham, and Heita Kawakatsu, eds., *Japanese Industrialization and the Asian Economy* (London: Routledge, 1994), 39.

27. Craig Clunas, "The Cost of Ceramics and the Cost of Collecting Ceramics in the Ming Period," *Bulletin of the Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong* 8 (1986-1988): 47-53.

After 1750, Europe gained access to the technical secrets that had made China the leader in pottery-making and ceramic ware for centuries. Many aspects of Ming technologies, including ceramic ware, were included by Song Yingxing 宋應星 (1587-1666?) in his late Ming *Creation of All Things Under Heaven* (*Tiangong kaiwu* 天工開物), for example. Because Song described processes that were government monopolies, however, his work was not widely available during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), even though it now constitutes our major source for Ming and Qing technologies and handicrafts<sup>28</sup>.

The proliferation of books and manuals during the late Ming led to the printing of numerous encyclopedias (*leishu* 類書, lit., “classified digests” 匯編). Encyclopedias functioned as repositories and manuals of popular knowledge during the late Ming, in addition to serving as scholarly compendiums for students preparing for the imperial examinations. From this environment of readily available reference books, practical manuals, and popular compendiums of knowledge, emerged a book-oriented atmosphere conducive to the development of scholarship and the practical arts.<sup>29</sup>

For instance, the “Street of the Glazed Tile Factory” (*Liuli chang* 琉璃廠), located in the southern, Han Chinese city inside Beijing, originally a factory site, by the eighteenth century was the major book emporium and center for antiques in Qing China. The Street Factory reached its height as a book market during the Qianlong era, 1736-1795. Because it was located close to the Hanlin Academy, the emporium was a gathering spot for intellectuals, scholars, and degree candidates who came to Beijing. Its cultural atmosphere stressed the value of rare works and ancient artifacts, promoted the exchange of books, and stimulated scholarship during the eighteenth century. Books and manuscripts of all kinds moved freely between Beijing and the main book markets in the Yangzi delta and southeast China.

In addition, the printing of “daily use” encyclopedias (*riyong leishu* 日用類書) in the 1590s was emblematic of a widening publishing world that appealed to the lesser lights of late Ming society, namely, merchants, artisans, and licentiates (*shengyuan* 生員, i.e., those only licensed to take higher examinations). Presented as repositories of useful information for daily life, popular encyclopedias provided non-elites with a wide choice of subjects dealing with medical prescriptions, divination formulas, ancient lore, astrology, geomantic almanacs, calligraphy, etc. Unlike reference books for elites that focused primarily on the civil examinations, elite family ritual, and classical learning, many late Ming encyclopedias included information on travel and lodging useful to merchants. Such attention to the

28. Michael Dillon, “Jingdezhen as a Ming Industrial Center,” *Ming Studies* 6 (Spring 1978): 37-44, and Song Yingxing. *T'ien-kung k'ai-wu: Chinese Industry in the Seventeenth Century*, translated by E-tu Zen Shun and Shiou-chuan Sun (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1966).

29. *Leishu* usually presented verbatim quotations rather than summaries of accepted knowledge. See Michael Loewe, *The Origin and Development of Chinese Encyclopedias* (London: China Society Occasional Paper 25) (1987), and Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, “Confucianism and Popular Education Works,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1970), 331-341.

practical needs of non-elites in provinces such as Fujian meant that compilers and printers were no longer limited to orthodox topics. They could present the material aspects of normal life in rich detail for a broad audience of new readers.<sup>30</sup>

Building on a new realism that also informed late Ming fiction, ribald novels such as *The Plum in the Golden Vase* (*Jin Ping Mei* 金瓶梅) presented protagonists who owned drugstores, for example. Composed by an author who was writing as daily use encyclopedias proliferated, the book, circulating as a manuscript in the late 1590s, presented an inventory of things, money, objects, collectables, events, and skills that ranged from medical potions for enhancing sexual prowess to elaborating food at banquets, drinking games, and popular jokes. The fictional contents of the novel enlivened but also mirrored the categories and contents of the narrative-less encyclopedias. The latter was where authors got their detailed information about popular songs and daily life experiences, which they emplotted in the new realism of the time. In this publishing environment, novels and encyclopedias represented different aspects of a burgeoning commercial environment that was reaching non-traditional audiences.<sup>31</sup>

While the late Ming novel often made officials the villains, the more mundane practical encyclopedia leveled the field to include low-brow interests alongside elite tastes and conventions. Such trends challenge our image of Ming learning. Was Wang Yangming learning really representative of late Ming literati? The appearance of many practical compendia on things, affairs, and phenomena, which flowered into an eruption of daily use encyclopedias in the 1590s, contrasted sharply with the high-minded claims of the Yangming schoolmen that the principles of all things were already in the mind.

Yangming idealism was more a reaction to than an obstacle for the collection and investigation of things of cultural cum financial value. Wang's high-brow idealism represented a classical rejoinder to the widespread low-brow commoditization of things during the late Ming. Many other works predated, led up to, or paralleled the late Ming encyclopedias. They also enunciated the problem of knowledge in light of the investigation of things as a textual inventory of objects.<sup>32</sup>

The increasing market for published works during the late Ming represented a time of

30. Wang, Cheng-hua 王正華, "Shenghuo, zhishi yu wenhua shangpin: wan Ming Fujian ban 'riyong leishu' yu qi shuhua men" 生活、知識與文化商品: 晚明福建版日用類書與其書畫門, *Jindai shi yanjiu suo jikan* 近代史研究所季刊 No. 41 (September, 2003): 1-83.

31. Wei, Shang, "Jin Ping Mei Cihua and Late Ming Print Culture," in Judith Zeitlin and Lydia Liu, eds., *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan* (Cambridge: Harvard Asian Monograph Series, 2003), 187-231, and Wei Shang, "The Making of the Everyday World: Jin Ping Mei and Encyclopedias for Daily Use," in David Wang and Shang Wei, eds., *Dynastic Decline and Cultural Innovation: From the Late Ming to the Late Qing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 63-92.

32. Irene Bloom, "On the 'Abstraction' of Ming Thought: Some Concrete Evidence from the Philosophy of Lo Ch'in-shun," in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Bloom, eds., *Principle and Practicality: Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1979), 106.



expanding classical and popular literacy. Late Ming followers of Cheng-Zhu learning in turn superficially blamed the crisis of knowledge on Wang Yangming's misplaced idealism rather than rampant connoisseurship. They reacted by stressing even more the concrete aspects of Zhu Xi's search for informing principles (*li* 理, i.e., "coherence") in the reality of the world (*qi* 氣). Literati authors also embodied the realm of *qi* in late Ming literature and poetry by instantiating it in human emotions (*qing* 清). At the same time, Wang Yangming radically prioritized the principles of things in the mind at the expense of the emotions.<sup>33</sup>

### Collecting and Classifying Things in Ming China on the Eve of Jesuit Contacts

By the time the Jesuits arrived in Ming China, many Han Chinese literati were debating an appropriate theory of knowledge. The debate often took the form of claims that morality (*zun dexing* 尊德性) took precedence over formal knowledge (*dao wenxue* 道問學) or vice versa. The focus of the debate in Ming China was on the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge (*gewu zhizhi* 格物致知). Ming literati invoked a sense of urgency in their encyclopedic efforts to reconstruct the textual lives of things at a time when the meaning and human significance of natural and manmade objects as commodities for the many betrayed the ideals of moral cultivation for the few.<sup>34</sup>

Jesuits tried to reshape this research agenda by mediating between what they thought was China and their West (*Taixi* 泰西, i.e., early modern Western Europe). They would add precision to the Chinese notion of investigating things and extending knowledge by exposing Ming literati to European classification schemes, forms of argument, and the organizational principles for all specialized knowledge, i.e., *scientia* 前現代科學. They never grasped, however, that what was happening in Ming China, namely the commoditization of things into objects of material value, was also sweeping through Western Europe. Mexican silver dollars coming to China were the first steps of disenchantment about the moral investigation of things for Chinese literati-merchants as it was for the early modern European bourgeoisie.<sup>35</sup>

### Ordering Antiquities and New Findings

The investigation of things was conceptually also applied to the collection, study, and classification of antiquities, as in Cao Zhao's 曹昭 (fl. 1387-99) *Key Issues in the Investigation of Antiquities* (*Gegu yaolun* 格古要論), which was published in the early Ming and enlarged several times. The work originally appeared circa 1387-1388 with important accounts of

33. Onozawa Seiichi 小野沢精一 et al., *Ki no shisō: Chūgoku ni okeru shizenkan to ningenkan no tenkai* 氣の思想: 中国における自然観と人間観の展開 (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1978), 473-489, and Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 68-112.

34. Nicholas Jardine, and Emma Spary, "The Natures of Cultural History," in Jardine, J. A. Secord, and Spary, eds., *Cultures of Natural History* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3-13.

35. Yü Ying-shih, "Some Preliminary Observations on the Rise of Ch'ing Confucian Intellectualism," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 11 (1975): 105-146.

ceramics and lacquer, as well as traditional subjects such as calligraphy, painting, zithers, stones, bronzes, and ink-slabs. It became an exemplar for late Ming antiquarians.<sup>36</sup>

The 1462 edition prepared by Wang Zuo 王佐 (palace graduate of 1427) was considerably enlarged and included findings prepared by several members of the official Ming dynasty naval expeditions led by Admiral Zheng He 鄭和 (1371-1433) to Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean from 1405 to 1433. Ma Huan's 馬歡 (fl. 1413-1451) *Captivating Views of the Ocean's Shores* (*Yingyai shenglan* 瀛涯勝覽; 1433), for example, had described the twenty countries the fleet visited and included detailed accounts of Yemeni towns such as Dhufar and Aden in southern Arabia.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to such descriptions, Wang Zuo was particularly interested in ancient bronzes, calligraphic specimens, and native curiosities. He also added native imperial seals, iron tallies, official costumes, and palace architecture to the collection. In his preface, Wang added: "Whenever you see an object, you must read all about it in the repertories, study its provenance, classify its quality, and judge its authenticity" 凡見一物，必遍閱圖譜，究其來歷，格其優劣，別其是否，而後已. Archaic looking fakes produced by clever craftsmen for the Ming market of cultural commodities posed significant financial dangers for literati.<sup>38</sup>

Unlike the impact sixteenth century oceanic discoveries allegedly had in early modern Europe, the new information the Zheng He fleets brought back to Ming China from Southeast and South Asia in the fifteenth century did not challenge the existing frameworks of orthodox knowledge. Donald Lach has argued, for instance, that the early modern European world "underwent a transformation in the sixteenth century which produced in observers a sense of mild shock, wary fascination, or deep wonderment." Lach acknowledges, however, that many scholars "remained oblivious to the rents in the curtain obscuring the East." Those who were alert to the new findings realized that neither classical nor Christian learning in Europe could encompass the latest information, unusual artifacts, and geographical discoveries, or duplicate the more advanced technical arts of India and China in textile manufacture and porcelain production.<sup>39</sup>

More recently, however, Michael Ryan, following Lucien Febvre, has argued that the newly discovered lands and new peoples registered little impact on the values, beliefs,

36. Percival, Sir David, trans., *Chinese Connoisseurship, the Ko Ku Yao Lun: The Essential Criteria of Antiquity*. (London: Faber, 1971), and Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 11-13.

37. Ma, Huan, *Ying-yai Sheng-lan* ("The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores" [1433], translated and edited by J. V. G. Mills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Extra Series No. XLII, 1970), 69-180.

38. See the "Preface" 序 to the *Gegu yaolun* 格古要論, 1a, entitled *Gegu lunyao* 格古論要, in Hu Wenhuan 胡文煥, comp., *Gezhi congshu* 格致叢書 (Hangzhou, 1590s edition; National Library [Taipei 台北], Rare Books Collection). Goodrich, L. Carrington et al., *Dictionary of Ming Biography* 明人物傳記辭典 (2 vols. NY: Columbia University Press, 1976), 1026-1027.

39. Donald Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe. Volume II. A Century of Wonder, Book 3* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 446-489 and 556-566.

and traditions of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europeans. We might add that the overwhelming intellectual influence in sixteenth century Europe came from classical Greek manuscripts sent to Europe from Constantinople in 1453 and not from oceanic voyages. Similarly, Ryan rejects Lach's view that new forms of cultural relativism emerged in Europe. Instead, Ryan has examined how these new worlds were incorporated into a European lexicon by asking how European contemporaries interpreted their world. Their use of categories such as ancient paganism as a trans-historical framework to classify the cultures of the new worlds enabled them to domesticate exotic peoples within the frame of Graeco-Roman pagan antiquity.<sup>40</sup>

Europeans understood other peoples in light of familiar genealogies, which minimized the impact of new worlds by conceptualizing new worlds within the terms of the old one. In 1669 John Webb (1611-1672) contended that after the biblical deluge Noah's son Sem and his people had entered China. Athanasius Kircher (1601-1680), a Jesuit scholar who thought China a derivative of Egypt, thought that Cham was the better choice. The Jesuits maintained that all people in the world descended from Noah's three sons (Sem, Cham, and Japheth). Europeans usually regarded Sem as the ancestor of Asian peoples. When Chinese converts translated the Jesuit argument that the earliest Chinese were of foreign origin, however, this provoked an attack by Jesuit critics in Qing court circles in 1664 and led to the martyrdom of the converts.

Ryan has contended that the new worlds were discovered by the Europeans, which implies some sort of ownership of their discovery. Later, however, literati in Ming China also discovered and incorporated the world of Europe introduced by the Jesuits. If the discovery of the new worlds in early modern Europe coincided with the recovery of the ancient pagan world, then an alternative, parallel, and contemporary assimilative process occurred that we can call the Chinese discovery of the West (*Taixi* 泰西), not to mention their discovery of China. Moreover, after the Jesuit arrival in Ming China, literati who welcomed them prepared parallel but opposite narratives to place "Western learning" within the boundaries of China's classical antiquity.<sup>41</sup>

A century prior to the Jesuit arrival, Ming literati had widely applied their paradigm for investigating things and extending knowledge. The approach had enough authority to allow the compilers of the *Key Issues in the Investigation of Antiquities* 格古要論, for instance, to domesticate the new materials brought by the Ming navy from the Indian Ocean within a traditional focus on encyclopedias and their already established range of classifications. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in China were certainly not "centuries of wonder."

40. Michael Ryan, "Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (1981): 519-527, Pamela Smith, and Paula Findlen, eds., *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe* (London and NY: Routledge, 2001), and Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1992), 148-157.

41. Ryan, "Assimilating New Worlds," 527-538, and D. E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 145.

Leaving out the “discovered” and their reception of their “discoverers,” however, leaves us with a one-sided historical narrative. Moreover, the Chinese had been learning about the Old World via Islam in Central Asia and Persia all along and had never experienced the isolation out of which Europeans broke.

Any claim that most Ming literati, when compared to their European contemporaries, engaged in a subjectivist and idealist discourse about things is off the mark. Indeed, Mark Elvin has misread his sources to contend that Wang Yangming and his sixteenth century followers led most Ming literati away from the precocious intellectual promise of objectivist science and natural studies in Song times. In Elvin’s dated but still re-published view, the pervasive influence of Wang Yangming was one of the three key factors (the others were: (1) filling in of the south China frontier; and (2) the closed door policy of the dynasty), which had doomed Ming China to failure in its global competition with early modern Europe.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, the popular encyclopedias outlined below make it clear that Ming compilers of encyclopedias never took literally Wang Yangming’s efforts to find the principles of bamboo through meditative techniques. We need to address the roots of these practical compendia of things, affairs, and phenomena, which were printed as a wide variety of “daily use” encyclopedias 日用類書 of the 1590s. They contrast sharply with the high-minded claims of the Yangming schoolmen that the principles of all things were “innate in the mind” 良知.<sup>43</sup>

### Collecting the Collectors

The Ming scholar-merchant and Hangzhou bookseller Hu Wenhuan 胡文煥 (fl. ca. 1596), like Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518-1593), prefigured the Sino-Jesuit dialogue concerning the investigation of things and European *scientia* in the early seventeenth century when he compiled and published his widely circulated *Collectanea for Investigating Things and Extending Knowledge* (Gezhi congshu 格致叢書) in the 1590s. This collection of books published as a set embodied a repository of classical, historical, institutional, medical, and technical works from antiquity to the present in China. The collectanea also contributed to the growing late Ming literature of material culture. Its wide dissemination in Ming-Qing China and Japan, in many editions from Hu Wenhuan’s Hangzhou and Nanjing print shops, marks it as a very influential and thus representative work. It did not have the scholarly pedigree of the *Systematic Materia Medica* (Bencao gangmu 本草綱目), but Hu’s *Collectanea* affords us a

42. Mark Elvin, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1973), 203-234, and Nathan Sivin, “Imperial China: Has Its Present Past a Future,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, 2 (December 1978): 449-480.

43. Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, “Confucianism and Popular Education Works,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1970), 331-341, Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 239-294, and Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Printers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th-17th centuries)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 234-239.



unique window onto more common divisions of knowledge among the *hoi polloi*. Hu had successfully commoditized classical learning in an age of Ming connoisseurship.<sup>44</sup>

Although provincial informants mentioned 200 sets of the *Collectanea* (格致叢書) in the 1780s, the compilers of the Qianlong Imperial Library catalog criticized its unevenness, looked down on Hu's profit oriented marketing of several editions, and only summarized its content in the official catalog. It was not included in the Library. Nevertheless, its extensive circulation in many published forms allows us to access a representative world of pre-Jesuit natural knowledge and lore. Analyzing its subject matter allows us to go beyond Borges' and Foucault's ahistorical musings about quaint Chinese encyclopedias. The *Collectanea for Investigating Things and Extending Knowledge* presented a cumulative account via a collection of books of all areas of knowledge important to a literati and *nouveau riches* audience before the Jesuits made their presence felt in Ming literati circles in South China after 1611.<sup>45</sup>

Because Hu Wenhuan also had wide-ranging interests in medicine and popular religion, some versions of the collectanea contained a broad range of illumination texts and esoteric writings, which I will discuss below. In addition to addressing the collectanea in light of its many variant editions, I will also analyze its initial, pre-Jesuit focus on early lexicons and natural histories, which overlapped with classical learning and natural studies during the late Ming. The smaller, more orthodox version of the collectanea thus parallels the distancing of the queer and supra-normal in some Song encyclopedias of the tenth century.<sup>46</sup>

For example, the Northern Song *Materials of the Taiping Xing Guo Era (976-983) for the Emperor to Read* (*Taiping yulan* 太平御覽) did not include unusual phenomena or paranormal novelties from medieval times. Moreover, the compilers declined to present grotesques, strange plants, animals and minerals, and odd countries that appeared in the *Expanded Records of the Taiping Xingguo Era* (*Taiping guangji* 太平廣記), which focused on popular religion.

The taxonomy informing the *Materials of the Taiping Era* was more representative of high-brow literati tastes, which were reproduced in the Song genre of jottings (*biji* 筆記).

44. See Wang Baoping 王寶平, "Mindai no kakushoka Ko Bunkan ni kan suru kōsatsu" 明代の刻書家胡文煥に関する考察, *Kyūko* 汲古 36 (1999): 47-57, and Wang Baoping 王寶平, "Ribei Hu Wenhuan congshu jingyan lu" 日本胡文煥叢書經眼錄 in Lu Jian 陸堅 and Wang Yong 王勇, eds., *Zhongguo dianji zai Riben de liuchuan yu yingxiang* 中國典籍在日本的流播與影響 (Hangzhou: Hangzhou daxue chubanshe, 1990), 322-347, and Benjamin Elman, *From Philosophy To Philology: Social and Intellectual Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Second edition. Los Angeles: UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series, 2001), 190-191.

45. Wu Weizu 吳慰祖, compiler, *Siku caijin shumu* 四庫採進書目 (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1960), 81, and Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 34, 37-38, 118.

46. Although Matteo Ricci passed through Hangzhou in 1598-1599, not until 1611, with the arrival of three Jesuits at the invitation of a Hangzhou literatus did Hangzhou become a Jesuit center for Christianity. See David Mungello, *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 3 and 15-18, and Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matteo Ricci: 1583-1610*, translated into Latin by Father Nichola Trigault and into English by Louis J. Gallagher, S.J. (NY: Random House, 1953), passim.

The latter were generally about fictional, historical, or textual material that was preserved by their authors as odd notes. Earlier interests encompassing natural phenomena and supernormal topics in jottings had waned. Thereafter, most jottings were about recollections of court events, celebrated fellow officials, and experiences in the civil service.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, even though the *Expanded Records* was less consonant with orthodox encyclopedias, its contents were representative of lower-brow literati and echoed the nourishing of life (*yangsheng* 養生) traditions that permeated popular religion and medical discussions on prolonging life and achieving immortality. This dual track of Song encyclopedias was never mutually exclusive, however, and the creative tension between them continued in later Ming collections of books published as a set, such as Hu Wenhuan's *Collectanea*.<sup>48</sup>

### The Life of a Late Ming Scholar-Printer-Collector

We glean from Hu's many prefaces to the works he collated a sense of his life and work as a scholar-printer. His grandfather and father were both Hangzhou collectors and printers, and many of Hu Wenhuan's reprints came from his family's cultural traditions. Between 1592 and 1597, Hu wrote some 49 prefaces for works he compiled and published. Hu and his staff assembled some 500 works in his Hangzhou and Nanjing print shops, which made their way, selectively, into the enlarged versions of the *Collectanea for Investigating Things and Extending Knowledge* 格致叢書 and other collectanea that Hu printed.

Hu Wenhuan had several colleagues who shared his bookman's interests and helped compile his works. In addition to collation, they provided prefaces and encomia in Hu Wenhuan's series. One of them, Zhang Lun 張倫, was also the teacher in the Hu 胡 family school, which indicates that he was well versed in classical learning and that like Hu he was a licentiate 生員 who had not advanced further on the examination ladder. Another, Chen Bangtai 陳邦泰 helped in printing the books. Hu's family printing shop in Hangzhou became known as the "Hu-Chen Great Print Shop" 胡陳大印刷書坊, which suggests Chen's importance to the enterprise.<sup>49</sup>

Hu himself was a Nanjing imperial school student, who likely had purchased his licentiate status to enable him to compete in local qualifying examinations. Like Li Shizhen,

47. John Haeger, "The Significance of Confusion: The Origins of the *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88, 3 (1968): 401-410. See also Y. W. Ma, "Pi-chi," in William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 1986), 650-652, and Peter Bol, "A Literati Miscellany and Sung Intellectual History: The Case of Chang Lei's 張耒 *Ming-tao tsa-chih* 明道雜誌," *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 25 (1995): 121-151.

48. Fu, Daiwie, "A Contextual and Taxonomic Study of the 'Divine Marvels' and 'Strange Occurrences' in the *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談," *Chinese Science* 11 (1993-1994): 3-35. See "Shen Kua," in Sivin, *Science in Ancient China* (Great Yarmouth: Variorum, 1995), III.995, III, 10, and Kirkland, Russell, "A World in Balance: Holistic Synthesis in the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi*," *Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies* 23 (1993): 43-70.

49. Wang Baoping, "Mindai no kakushoka Ko Bunkan, 1999: 47-57.

then, Hu Wenhuan had attained a high level of classical literacy and literary ability, but also never attained a higher provincial or metropolitan degree. By the late Ming, of the 50,000 candidates empire-wide competing triennially for some 1,200 provincial degrees, fewer than three per cent would succeed. Because few like Hu Wenhuan ever became provincial graduates, the Ming dynasty required licentiates to keep taking biennial renewal examinations to maintain their special legal status. Like most such students, Hu did not attend his assigned school. The rolls of local official schools increasingly were filled with candidates who had repeatedly failed higher examinations and had nowhere else to go.<sup>50</sup>

Hu used two studio names, one known as the “Hall of Writings Brought Together” (Wenhui tang 文會堂) in Hangzhou and the other called the “Office of Thoughts of Retirement” (Sichun guan 思淳館) in Nanjing. His other sobriquets, such as “Penetrating the Arcane” (Dongxuan 洞玄), also suggest his sympathies with the esotericism associated with popular religion. As the southern capital of the Ming, Nanjing was an important publishing center in the Yangzi delta, along with Hangzhou and Suzhou. Consequently, Hu also relied on the Nanjing book market for many of his editions, although they were mainly published in Hangzhou. Hu’s range of focus, from orthodox classical texts to esoteric medical writings on nourishing life (*yangsheng* 養生), were tied to his examination studies and his weak health as a youth.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to books and texts, Hu Wenhuan also collected antiques and musical instruments. He was interested in tea as a cultural phenomenon, as well as wines and perfumes. The financial benefits from his printing enterprise, based on selling many different series of his printed works or individual volumes from the collection, enabled Hu to maintain the life style of a literati scholar with wide cultural interests even though he had failed to gain an official appointment. By the late Ming, merchant and literati collectors like the Hu family grew and diversified. Hu Wenhuan finally received an appointment in 1613 and served as a low-level county official in Hunan province, first as a magistrate’s aide, and then as an administrative clerk. While Wenhuan was away, the Hu publishing enterprise diminished.

In sum, then, Hu was a merchant-scholar of wide-ranging literati interests, and the large scale collectanea that he compiled, collated, and printed before 1613 preserved many rare texts for his Ming contemporaries, though his editions were later criticized for their poor quality.<sup>52</sup>

50. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 646 and 661-665.

51. Wang Baoping, 1999, 53-56.

52. Wang Baoping, 1999, 52-55. See also Chum Shum, comp. *An Annotated Catalog of Chinese Rare Books in the Harvard-Yenching Library* (Shanghai: Cishu chubanshe, 1998), Vol. 1. 312 (#054), 339 (#0588 and 0590), which includes individually sold volumes of the *Gezhi congshu*.

## Collecting Things in Texts

The proliferation of late Ming daily-use encyclopedias--many of which Hu Wenhuan's *Collectanea* prominent contained--reflected a widening audience for information about things, phenomena, and affairs of all sorts. The accruing knowledge of things and affairs among Ming scholars was still subsumed within the moral and philosophical frameworks that informed the orthodox literati classification of the natural world and drew on the classical repertoires of knowledge outlined above. These repertoires notably included medieval masters of esoterica such as Zhang Hua 張華, who were central to the late imperial definition of a cumulative knowledge of things and phenomena. Although the classical lexicons and natural histories were the beginning points, the knowledge in ancient canonical texts and their commentaries were insufficient.

Literati deployed things in encyclopedias and the collectanea by presenting chronological or topical presentations of past glosses about them. Things, events, and anomalies were displayed textually and sometimes pictorially. In time, words as glosses, that is, the textual lives of things, took precedence over any analysis of the things signified. As a result, natural studies became a venue for Chinese textual scholars who were fascinated with the etymologies of the words. Sages had created such words to encompass phenomena. Hence, they were also important as a genealogy of items in the classics. Unlike early modern European scientific culture, where natural history was increasingly displayed as concrete items in a museum, the array of entries about things included in Hu Wenhuan's collectanea of early lexicons and encyclopedias converted natural phenomena into words in a text that needed to be decoded primarily through the analysis of language.

Paula Findlen has described the new attitudes toward nature as a collectable entity and new techniques of investigation that informed natural history in early modern European scientific culture. The first science museums were repositories of technology, curiosities, and wonders that built on Pliny's encyclopedic definition of nature in his *Natural History* as everything that was worthy of memory. Europeans coped with the empirical explosion of materials that the wider dissemination of texts, increased travel, voyages of discovery, and more systematic forms of communication had made possible by establishing private museums, which became state sponsored institutions from the eighteenth century onward. Such museum collections became symbols of prestige and power, and collectors entertained the image of knowledge without end more widely in the seventeenth century.<sup>53</sup>

If we consider Paula Findlen's tripartite focus on the linguistic, philosophical, and social matrices that gave museums a precise intellectual and spatial configuration, the role of museums as a venue to experience nature, and the sociology of collecting and its cultural logic, then we can see that in late imperial China this sort of collecting and classifying

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53. Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 1-3, 94, 396 and 407.



knowledge about things occurred within the pages of collectanea and encyclopedias. Just as the museum was firmly set in the premodern European encyclopedic tradition of catalogs and the vocabulary of collecting, so the daily-use encyclopedias of the late Ming were sites of classically derived knowledge where individuals of privilege and learning earned the right to collect and classify the world. Others could participate in such collecting by visiting things in the texts that they purchased.

Hu Wenhuan's merchant-scholar-printer status in Hangzhou and Nanjing publishing circles allowed him to participate in high-brow activities at the same time that he published works for profit aimed at popular audiences. The first increased the classical prestige of his collecting and reprinting information from lexicons and natural histories. Hu elevated his own curiosity about things and phenomena to a virtue that was entirely appropriate for gentlemanly behavior. Likewise, Li Shizhen's much more analytic work on pharmacopoeia approximated the role of the collector of natural objects--or information about them--as parallel to the Learning of the Way scholar who investigated things, or someone who collected objects.<sup>54</sup>

If the museum became a site of encyclopedic dreams and humanist sociability in sixteenth century Europe, collecting information about things in the late Ming was not yet a prelude to display (in museums) or manipulation (in laboratories). Li Shizhen certainly shared the naturalist's agenda. Moreover, his pilgrimages to collect medicines and herbs were done through fieldwork and perusing texts. His natural studies remained focused on remedies. Secondly, he was fascinated with the etymologies of terms for living things, which could then be applied via the investigation of things to classify appropriate medicines. Ming collectors (such as Hu Wenhuan) of encyclopedias never expressed a penchant for purely experiential knowledge obtained in the laboratory, although medical men continued to produce empire-wide a rich plethora of medicines and accessories for traditional Chinese healing. Li Shizhen did so as well.<sup>55</sup>

In early modern Europe, gentlemen enriched their collecting experiences by increasing the presence of animal skeletons and fossils in the museum. The new culture of experiential demonstration transformed the museum into a site of medical knowledge, within which competition over the control of knowledge between apothecaries and physicians-professors ensued. Nevertheless, the modern category of natural science had no formal meaning for the European naturalist in the sixteenth century any more than it did in the late Ming. To compare the historical context for early modern scientific culture in Europe and natural knowledge in late Ming collectanea and encyclopedias, we need to problematize the

54. Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, 8, 15, 98, 121 and 293.

55. Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, 153-156 and 198-201, and Carla Nappi, *The Monkey and the Inkpot: Natural History and its Transformations in Early Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

historical teleologies that turn the past purely into prologue.<sup>56</sup>

Collecting as a research agenda rearranged the boundaries of natural studies in Europe, but the coexistence of the old and new, the occult and the demonstrable, in early natural history was as prevalent in Europe as in the late Ming. Even after the Jesuits arrived in Ming China, no one there or in Europe singled out and privileged natural science. Later in the seventeenth century, via Bacon, European scholar-gentlemen dismantled older forms of natural philosophy in favor of a new empiricism. Galileo, Descartes, and Newton transformed such high-minded empiricism into the concrete beginnings of physical science in Europe after the Jesuits arrived in China.

Efforts to normalize the “marvelous” in Ming China turned the collection of information about things into a form of classical knowledge gained through encyclopedic research, which defended itself using the rhetoric of orthodox moral cultivation, i.e., to investigate things and extend knowledge. Rather than microcosms of nature, collections of early lexicons and Ming encyclopedias created textual museums for their theater of marvels. Hu Wenhuan’s efforts in the 1590s to collect the collectors within a single collection of books published as a set was not unique. His economic resources allowed him to produce and publish several collectanea he deemed appropriate to place under the general heading of investigating things and extending knowledge (*gezhi*). His initial reconstruction of the ancient lexical texts allowed him to use them as an orthodox base for enlarged editions of his *Collectanea*, which included domains of knowledge that exceeded the boundaries of the official canon.

During the late Ming, conspicuous consumption based on global commerce vicariously impacted on literati life and elite taste in gardens, paintings, books, and antiquities. The expanding literati appetite for consumption carried over to the eighteenth century. The patrons of late Ming and early Qing garden estates, for example, lived in a world where silver from the New World was exchanged to pay for Chinese commodities, principally silk, porcelain, tea, and jade. The Ming economy was further transformed by an agrarian revolution in which cotton displaced rice production in southern coastal provinces and the influx of Japanese silver heightened the monetarization of the sixteenth century economy in unprecedented ways. Ming Chinese unwittingly faced a global marketplace. Their arts and letters would never be the same again.<sup>57</sup>

56. Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, 10, 18-27, 32, 46 and 398-405, and Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 1-5.

57. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, “Scratching the Surface: The impact of the Dutch on artistic and material culture in Taiwan and China,” in Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann & Michael North, eds., *Mediating Netherlandish Art and Material Culture in Asia* (Amsterdam: University Press, 2014), 205-238.

## A Microcosm of Early Globalization: The East Asian Porcelain in the Collection of August the Strong

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By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, several million pieces of East Asian porcelain had arrived in Europe. These examples of Chinese and Japanese porcelain had not only an enormous impact on European societies but can also be regarded as an early modern worldwide trade commodity. The macro-structures of this trade and the importance of the European trading companies have been studied for several decades.<sup>1</sup>

The research project “East Asian Porcelain and its importance on European culture” focuses on the Royal porcelain collection of Augustus the Strong. The existing c. 8,000 objects in the Porzellansammlung Dresden provide, in conjunction with the historical inventories, significant insights into the micro-structures of the global trade with porcelain at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For anyone interested in the impact of East Asia on European culture, the forming of encyclopaedic collections and the history of East Asian porcelain in the West, this project will be of invaluable importance. For the overall history of East Asian porcelain it additionally offers an in-depth survey of trade and taste of the period; it will provide a tool for more precise dating and will act as the primary reference guide to establish the authenticity of similar objects in other world collections. Moreover, a thorough evaluation of the unique surviving inventories will provide a new understanding of the role that East Asian porcelain played during the Proto-globalization era. Beside their mere functionality, these porcelain objects served as an exotic and luxury commodity which helped to shape the knowledge, comprehension and development of cultural and artistic exchange between China, Japan and Europe at that time.

This is the starting point for our current research project on these holdings, which

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1. Christiaan Jörg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1982); John Carswell et al., *Blue and White. Chinese Porcelain and Its Impact on the Western World* (Chicago: The Gallery, 1985). Stacey Pierson, *From Object to Concept, Global Consumption and the Transformation of Ming Porcelain* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013); Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, et al., *Circulations in the Global History of Art* (Farnham Surrey: Ashgate, 2015).

for the first time will offer a complete overview of the former Royal Porcelain Collection in relation to the original and unpublished 18th century inventories. The introductory sections of this paper will give a short overview about the historical importance of the collection; describe its holdings and historical documentation. The final part of this essay will focus on one research field of our current project and will discuss the possibility to analyze the representation of East Asian porcelain in Saxony based on one historical collection.

### I. East Asian Porcelain at the Saxon Court

The first Oriental porcelain objects came to Dresden as part of a gift from the Medici in 1590.<sup>2</sup> They were highly valued, as in other princely estates, as much for their rarity and exoticism as for their pure whiteness and translucency. From this original group of formerly fourteen pieces of Ming porcelain,<sup>3</sup> eight are still part of the porcelain collection displayed today at the Zwinger galleries (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> However, the arrival of this precious gift did not lead to any significant acquisitions of porcelain before the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>



Fig. 1. Medici gift, Chinese Ming dynasty porcelain, inv.nos. PO 3225, PO 3226, PO 3227, PO 3228, PO 3229, PO 3478, PO 3479, PO 3791, Porzellansammlung SKD, photo: Jürgen Lösel.

With the founding of the European East Indian companies—especially the Dutch

2. Eva Ströber, "Chinesisches Porzellan in der Dresdner Kunstkammer", in *Japanisches Palais zu Dresden. Die Königliche Porzellansammlung August des Starken*, ed. Ulrich Pietsch et al. (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2014), 21-30. The Medicis are acknowledged to have been the first to successfully produce a porcelain-like product at the short-lived factory opened in Florence in around 1575. Most of the approximately sixty known pieces are decorated in underglaze blue reflecting the influence of the Chinese porcelain in the Grand Ducal collections.
3. Ibid., 21-22. The fourteen porcelains from the Medici collection remained in the electoral Kunstkammer in Dresden until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and were not part of the furnishings of the Japanese Palace, a clear sign of the special recognition accorded to this early porcelain tribute.
4. The Zwinger with its pavilions, galleries and gardens is an important Baroque building. The name "Zwinger" is a term used in military architecture and is a reference to the building's original position in front of the defensive wall around the city. However, even in August the Strong's time the Zwinger did not have the function of a fortification. Its courtyard was a garden and orangery—a venue for court festivities, and its buildings already housed the electoral art collections and the library. The galleries with their balustrades, statues and vases constitute a Baroque Gesamtkunstwerk in which architecture and sculpture are inextricably bound together. The Porcelain collection has been accommodated in the Zwinger since 1962. SKD. "Zwinger and Semper Building." Accessed July 14, 2016. <http://www.skd.museum/en/museums-institutions/zwinger-with-semperbau>.
5. Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, "Porcelain and Prestige, Princely Gifts and White gold from Meissen", in *Fragile Diplomacy, Meissen Porcelain for European Courts ca. 1710-63*, ed. Maureen Cassidy-Geiger (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 3. Another significant and substantial diplomatic offering of such rare and fragile objects from one ruler to another took place in 1686. Upon the arrival of the embassy of Siam at Versailles, Louis XIV (1638-1715) was offered a gift of 1500 pieces of Chinese porcelain.



VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) in 1602—the rapid increase in the quantity of imported Asian porcelain to Europe shifted the focus of porcelain displays from single pieces to whole garniture sets and compositions of different wares. Porcelain objects left the cabinets and showcases of “curiosity rooms” and became part of another type of room, where they were displayed on tables, shelves, consoles and chimneys, often combined with lacquer and soapstone. Porcelain rooms were installed and found from Constantinople to Sweden, from Russia to England. Yet, in Northern Europe those types of rooms were mainly influenced by the display schemes developed in the Netherlands.<sup>6</sup>

Eventually, by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century splendid displays of Oriental porcelain had become part of the decorative scheme of great houses and palaces in Europe. Significantly women played an important role in the development of rooms specially designated for the housing and display of porcelain collections.<sup>7</sup> These dedicated rooms were indicative of the competitive taste and imagination among aristocratic ladies of the era. At the time when sumptuous holdings of Oriental porcelain had become a frequent feature at European courts, this eventually led to the rise of porcelain cabinets into an “indispensable hallmark of courtly prestige”.<sup>8</sup> As mentioned above this development began in the Netherlands and was promoted and spread by the female members of the House of Orange throughout Europe. However, only from 1690 onwards did men gradually begin to set up their own porcelain cabinets.<sup>9</sup>

The first porcelain cabinet in a German palace was established in 1663 by Louise Henrietta von Brandenburg in her palace at Oranienburg.<sup>10</sup> Her son Frederick III<sup>11</sup> who had initially adopted the female fashion for small porcelain rooms, yet started to convert not only their architectural space and size but also their meaning to enforce his political and

6. Samuel Wittwer, “Fragile Splendour and Political Representation, Baroque Porcelain Rooms in Prussia and Saxony as Meaningful Treasures” in *Handbook of the International Ceramics Fair and Seminar London*, ed. Brian and Anna Haughton (London: 2004), 36.

7. Cordula Bischoff, “Women Collectors and the Rise of the Porcelain Cabinet”, in *Chinese and Japanese porcelain for the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. Jan van Campen et al. (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 2014), 171-191.

8. *Ibid.*, 175.

9. *Ibid.*, 183. The first men who created their own porcelain rooms were princes of the Catholic Church and other unmarried men such as Prince Eugene of Savoy.

10. *Ibid.*, 177. In 1667, just a few years after the completion of the building, the Electress died, and in the 1680s and 1690s her third son and successor as ruler, elector Frederick III, later King Frederick I of Prussia, had the existing structure converted into a memorial for his mother.

See also: Gabriele Riehmann-Wöhlbrandt “Der Porzellanbesitz der Landgräfin Maria Amalie, Zur Rolle der Damen beim Entstehen der landgräflichen Porzellansammlung”, in *Porzellan aus China und Japan, die Porzellangalerie der Landgrafen von Hessen-Kassel*, ed. Ulrich Schmidt (Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 1990), 51-63. Another important collection was acquired by the Countess (Landgräfin) Amalie Elisabeth von Hessen-Kassel (1602-1661); on her death she left over 1000 pieces of porcelain which she had mostly inherited by her mother, a princess of Nassau-Orange. Her successor, Countess Maria Amalie had amassed more than 2,600 pieces by her death in 1711, and had used them to furnish some small rooms and a state-kitchen.

11. Frederick III (1657-1740) became Frederick I in 1701, King of Prussia. He was married to the Princess of Hannover, Sophie Charlotte, sister to the future King George I of England, (1660-1727).

dynastic claims.<sup>12</sup> These Prussian rooms broke entirely with the Dutch scheme of a simply fashionable and decorative purpose. For example at Oranienburg porcelain became an integral feature of the architecture enforced by ceilings painted with intricate iconographical programs.<sup>13</sup> Thus the Prussian court played an important role in altering the meaning of porcelain displays, which replaced the Dutch mode and was especially influential for the course of porcelain presentations at the Saxon court.<sup>14</sup>

It is likely that cabinets equipped with porcelain were also common at the Saxon court in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. As Augustus the Strong lived separately from his wife,<sup>15</sup> it was his task to take care of the furnishings of the royal apartments. Possessed of a legendary “maladie de porcelaine,”<sup>16</sup> Augustus the Strong not only used his political influence but immense financial resources to amass the best items of porcelain that were available in Europe. In general the King did not acquire single pieces or small quantities, but rather whole collections through the offices his ministers,<sup>17</sup> from several dealers, his interior designer and *Ordonneur du cabinet* Peter Robert Tapelli Count Lagnasco (1664-1742), the Polish Voivode Stanisław Chomętowski or even from his ex-mistress Countess Teschen (1680-1743). His visits to Austria, Italy, Spain and France as part of his grand tour in 1687 laid presumably the groundwork for his life-long interest in decorative and fine arts. He was especially impressed by a pavilion made out of white and blue Delft-style ceramic tiles from

12. Wittwer, *Fragile Splendour and Political Representation, Baroque Porcelain Rooms in Prussia and Saxony as Meaningful Treasures*, 37. Frederik had inherited Oranienburg Palace from his mother, Luise Henriette of Nassau-Orange and added four wings to the original rather small house turning it into a porcelain palace. In any of the rooms of his apartments the overdoors and chimney pieces were decorated in Dutch style with wucai, blanc de Chine, blue and white porcelain, fayences and red stoneware and earthenware. The castles of Caputh and Charlottenburg also contained porcelain rooms and were subsequently enlarged.

13. *Ibid.*, 40. In 1702, shortly after the coronation, Frederik started pursuing a claim which is known today as “Oranische Erbschaft” (heritage of house of Orange). Unlike his father who for political reason could not claim the inheritance of his wife’s mother, Amalie von Solms, Frederik insisted of being as much a descendant of his grandmother as king William of England. The quarrel was to go on until the middle of the 18th century, although Frederik had started to seize his rightful possessions and occupy estates in the Netherlands as early as 1702. Enormous amounts of porcelain were brought to Prussia during that time, such as from castles of Honselaarsdijk near The Hague, which were used to furnish his palaces.

14. Samuel Wittwer, “Liason Fragiles, Exchanges of Gifts between Saxony and Prussia in the Early Eighteenth Century”, in *Fragile Diplomacy, Meissen Porcelain for European Courts ca. 1710-63*, ed. Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 87. Within the Holy Roman Empire in the eighteenth century, Saxony and the neighbouring state of Brandenburg had an especially close, intertwined relationship, as e.g. both families engaged in acquiring royal status. Once that status was achieved, Frederik and Augustus needed to justify their new positions in Europe. An important aspect of this was to make their new role visible by creating the greatest splendour, by using iconographical symbols and by the organisation of their courts. Visits, legations, and political agreements were the most important elements in their exchanges, with frequent cross-fertilization between these fields.

15. Cordula Bischoff, “Die Bedeutung des Japanischen Palais. Die Porzellansammlungspolitik der Sächsischen Kurfürst-Könige”, in *Japanisches Palais zu Dresden. Die Königliche Porzellansammlung August des Starken*, ed. Ulrich Pietsch et al. (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2014), 288. Augustus the Strong converted to Catholicism in 1697 which was not approved by his wife Christiane Eberhardine, who lived most of the time of the year separate from her husband in Torgau.

16. Eva Ströber, *La maladie de porcelaine, ostasiatisches Porzellan aus der Sammlung August des Starken* (Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 2001), 9. On 22 May, 1726, Augustus the Strong wrote in French the following to his Prime Minister Count Fleming (1670-1733): “Ne scavez (sic) vous pas qu’il est des orangers comme des porcelaines, que ceux qui on une fois la maladie des uns et des autres ne trouvent jamais qu’ils en ayant assez et que plus qu’ils en veulent avoir.”

17. Flemming, Jakob Heinrich Graf von (1677-1728); Raschke, Hans Friedrich Wilhelm (1704-1761); Rechenberg, Johann Georg von (1660-1721); Manteuffel, Ernst Christoph (1676-1749); Wackerbart, August Christoph Graf von (1662-1734).

French manufactures, the so called Trianon de Porcelain in Versailles.<sup>18</sup> Another crucial visit in Prussia that had deeply impressed him took place 1709 during the *Dreikönigstreffen* (meeting of the three kings).<sup>19</sup> On that occasion he was shown around, visiting Caputh, Charlottenburg and Oranienburg and seeing indeed those three important Prussian porcelain rooms. As Augustus the Strong succeeded his brother as elector of Saxony it was his lavish court and grand architectural projects that helped Dresden rise to both political and artistic prominence, and his unwavering patronage of the arts helped the city become a European centre of Baroque splendor. Moreover, it was Augustus the Strong's passion for porcelain that made Saxony the birthplace of European porcelain.<sup>20</sup> In 1708 the alchemist Johann Friedrich Böttger (1682-1719) was finally able to discover a formula to create European hard paste porcelain together with the acclaimed scholar Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus (1651-1708).<sup>21</sup> In 1710 the royal manufactory was officially founded within the walls of Albrechtsburg castle in the town of Meissen, fifteen miles upriver from the Saxon capital city of Dresden.

In 1717, Augustus the Strong acquired a small palace on the right bank of the Elbe River in Dresden, also known from c. 1719 as the Japanische Palais (Japanese Palace) (fig. 2).<sup>22</sup> In 1727 he enlarged the building into a four-wing palace, a modern royal residence, in juxtaposition to the Renaissance Schloss, and created what was essentially a "porcelain palace". What became known as the Japanese Palace housed Augustus's extensive collection of East Asian ceramics, lacquered furniture, wall hangings, and soap stone carvings along with the products of the porcelain factory in Meissen. Yet, the king had not started to acquire East Asian porcelain in substantial amounts before 1715, in a period when large and important collections of Chinese and Japanese porcelain had already been formed and when his Royal porcelain manufactory had already existed for five years. Within a decade Meissen had become the first commercially viable European factory to produce a type of high-fired porcelain that closely resembled the prototype of Chinese and Japanese wares. Thus during the first decades of the royal porcelain factory the king's unparalleled and constantly growing East Asian porcelain collection served not only as an inspiration but was also a constant force to match the quality of those coveted foreign items. At the time of his death in 1733 the king owned more than 26,800 examples of porcelain from China

18. Cordula Bischoff, *Women Collectors and the Rise of the Porcelain Cabinet* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 2014), 174.

19. Samuel Wittwer, "Liaison Fragiles, Exchanges of Gifts between Saxony and Prussia in the Early Eighteenth Century", 87. In 1709 King Frederik IV of Denmark (1671-1730) visited his nephew August II and subsequently accompanied him to Berlin to celebrate the alliance of the three states with Russia against Charles the XII (1682-1718) of Sweden.

20. While the Medicis are acknowledged to have been the first to successfully produce a porcelain-like product, a number of similar soft-paste porcelain emerged from French kilns in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, like porcelain de Valois (Sainte Porchaire-ware) and of Saint-Cloud and Rouen manufactories. Yet the first hard-paste porcelain was successfully fired at the court of Augustus the Strong. For more information see: Ulrich Pietsch et al., *Fascination of fragility, masterpieces of European porcelain* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 2010).

21. Böttger's success was just as much due to the talents and knowledge of the scientist Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus who visited ceramic industries in Italy, France and Holland. Ulrich Pietsch, "Tschirnhaus und das europäische Porzellan, in Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus (1651-1708), *Experiment mit dem Sonnenfeuer*, ed. Peter Plassmeyer et al. (Dresden: Bundesstaatliche Regierungveröffentlichung, 2001), 68-74.

22. From 1719 onwards, the Dutch Palace was referred to as the 'Japanese Palace', and has subsequently retained that name.

and Japan, as well as from the manufactory of Meissen.<sup>23</sup> Eventually, his ultimate plan of a splendid and unparalleled interior remained unfulfilled, and the project was abandoned. But yet the way in which Augustus the Strong had envisioned and enlarged the idea of porcelain displays of the highest quality were unique and unmatched by his European contemporaries. Long before the forming of systematic classifications of Chinese and Japanese ceramics had started to be formulated during the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the king had not only already allocated specific groups of porcelain in terms of their color schemes but also according to their shapes and forms. Until today his collection represents a treasure trove of shapes and forms which were exported, invented and ordered for a European market during 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century.



Fig. 2. *The Dutch Palace*. Christian Friedrich Boetius (1706–1782), after Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann (1662–1736), inv. no. B889,4/S.23, Kupferstich-Kabinett, SKD, photo: Elke Estel/Hans-Peter Klut.

## II. The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Inventories

Augustus the Strong's collection of Oriental porcelain was regarded as the largest in Europe during the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. By 1727 he had collected the enormous number of more than 24,500 pieces.<sup>24</sup> After Augustus' death in 1733 acquisitions of East Asian porcelain declined and further collecting activities were drastically reduced. Many pieces

23. This figure is based on the recent research project of the Porzellansammlung on the 1721-1727 inventory.

24. This figure is based on the recent research project of the Porzellansammlung on the 1721-1727 inventory.



from the collection were sold or got lost during the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> However, nearly 8,000 porcelain objects from the Royal collection mentioned in the original inventories can still be identified in the East Asian holdings of the porcelain collection in Dresden. Other pieces can be found in collections all over the world. It is especially the extensive documentation of the objects in the former Royal Holdings that makes the collection worldwide unique. All of the pieces that were on display in the Japanese palace were inventoried in one volume for the first time



Fig. 3. Underside of an Imari-style plate, Japan c. 1700–1720, inv.no PO 5710, Porzellansammlung, SKD, photo: Adrian Sauer.

between 1721 and 1727 (*INVENTARIUM über das Palais zu Alt-Dressden. Anno 1721*).<sup>26</sup> In addition, all pieces of furniture and porcelain were assigned an inventory number so that they could be easily identified in conjunction with the written entry in the inventory. The ciphers and inventory numbers that should categorize each piece were painted onto or incised into the porcelain body<sup>27</sup> and blackened (fig. 3). Thus it is still possible to identify each object in conjunction with the entry in the inventory. The entries give a short description of the objects, their size and sometimes even details about its original acquisition. The volume consisted of nearly 1,000 pages of which 884 have survived.

The parts of the inventories dealing with ceramics are divided into ten chapters with further subsections. Each chapter and its respective subsections start chronologically with number one “N 1”. In terms of measurements their height and diameter are also listed.

#### I. *Japanisch Porcelain* (Japanese Porcelain)

The first chapter deals with *Japanisch Porcelain* (Japanese Porcelain). All individual objects within this group were marked with a Greek cross (+). The inventory lists c. 6.884 pieces in this chapter. No distinction was made between China and Japan in this group,

25. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the porcelain collection was re-conceived under museological objectives and changing collecting strategies prompting the sale of large parts of the collection.

26. Archive Porzellansammlung (APS), Inventar Nr. 324. *Inventarium über das Palais zu Altdresden Anno 1721 (1721-1728)*. The earliest inventory book (*INVENTARIUM über das Palais zu Alt-Dressden. Anno 1721*) was carefully stored by Martin Teuffer who was in charge of the holdings at the Japanese palace from 1717 to 1763. However, with the relocation of parts of the holdings to the castle in 1750 the inventory got lost and was found during the early 20th by Ernst Zimmermann, director of the Porcelain Collection from 1912-1933.

27. Johann Daniel Springer, a Saxonian glasscutter, was responsible for the daunting task to cut the numbers and and respective ciphers into the porcelain body.

as both wares were deemed to resemble each other in their distinctive colour scheme of underglaze blue with iron red and gold overglaze decoration.

### II. *Krack=Porcelain/Alt Indianisch Porcelain* (Krack porcelain/Old Indian Porcelain)

This chapter in the inventory is designated to *Krack Porcelain*. It is not yet clear why the term *Krack* was used—which has no relation to the so-called Chinese blue and white *Kraak* porcelain—to classify a rather disparate group of objects (including numerous Japanese *Kakiemon* porcelain, *Dehua* ware and underglaze blue ware). From 1727 onwards the name *Krack* was changed into *Alt Indianisch* (old Indian). By 1727, Augustus the Strong had collected c. 1041 pieces of *Kraak* or *Alt Indianisch* porcelain. These pieces were marked with a square (□) to identify them.

### III. *Weiß Chinesisch* (White Chinese Porcelain)

The inventory lists c. 1.898 pieces of white porcelain, most of them from *Dehua* (Fujian Province). This porcelain was marked with a triangle (Δ). Over c. 400 pieces of this holding are still extant, making it even today one of the largest collections of this group outside China.<sup>28</sup>

### IV. *Grün Chinesisch Porcelain* (Green Chinese Porcelain)

This porcelain was marked with a bar (I). By 1727 Augustus the Strong was able to collect c. 2,891 pieces of porcelain with a dominant green colour scheme. Most of these wares can be characterized as *famille verte* porcelain.

### V. *Roth Chinesisch Porcelain* (Red Chinese Porcelain)

This group of porcelain was marked with an arrow (→) and consisted of c. 1,648 pieces.

### VI. *Blau und Weiß Ostindianisch Porcelain* (Blue-and-White East Indian porcelain)

This porcelain made up the largest group in the 1721-1727 inventory and listed c. 10,176 pieces. The Blue and White porcelain was marked with a zigzag band (vvv). Again, no distinction was made in the inventory of this group between Chinese and Japanese vessels.

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28. Eva Ströber, "Dehua porcelain in the Collection of Augustus the Strong in Dresden", in *Blanc de Chine, porcelain from Dehua*, ed. Rose Kerr et al. (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2002), 51-57.

VII. *Weiß Sächßisch Porcelain* (White Saxon Porcelain)

These groups of East Asian ceramics were followed by a description of Meissen porcelain and stoneware. Compared with the large amount of East Asian ceramics listed in the inventory this type of porcelain numbered only c. 1,521 pieces by 1727. The objects were marked with a letter **W**.

VIII. *Braun Sächsisch Porcelain* (Brown Saxonian Porcelain)

Although the pieces in this group were described as porcelain in the inventory, they are actually stoneware. The c. 245 pieces were marked with the letter **R**.

IX. *Terra Sigillata*

Yixing stoneware, vessels from Mexico as well as Bohemian red and white ware were assembled in this group, consisting of c. 404 items. These pieces did not receive a cipher, as they could easily be identified visually.

X. *Indianisch und sächsisch schwartz lacquirten Porcelain[s]* (Indian and Saxon black lacquered Porcelain)

Only c. 101 pieces, c. 73 made of stoneware and c. 28 East Asian porcelain objects were listed in this group. The pieces received a mark consisting of four points as symbol.

Each of the chapters mentioned above also included a number of sub-sections. Here, the porcelain was grouped in accordance with its function. Some chapters consisted of seven separate divisions covering everything from garniture sets to tableware.

In addition to the chapters dealing with ceramics there were sections focusing on various other objects that were on display in the Japanese palace. The historical inventory lists pieces of East Asian artwork, such as lacquer furniture, carved soapstone, as well as bed linen and curtains.

Large parts of the collection that had been bought after 1727/28 can be reconstructed by analyzing the inventories which were taken in 1770 and 1779.<sup>29</sup> Both catalogues, of which each consists of five volumes, document only those pieces of artwork that were still extant in the Japanese palace during the 1770/1779s. However, the total amount of the porcelain collection of Augustus the Strong can only approximately be reconstructed due to several dispersals.

29. Archiv Porzellansammlung (APS), Inventar Nr. 326, 328, 330, 332, 334. Inventarium vom kurfürstl. Sächsischen Japanischen Palais zu Neustadt bei Dresden, und zwar über die Bettmeisterei und anderen dergleichen Vorrat, 5 Bd., Dresden 1779.

One significant step in the research project is the ongoing comparison of the historical inventories with the extant porcelain objects in Dresden from the Royal collection of Augustus the Strong. Those parts of the historical holdings that are currently in the possession of other museums worldwide will also be identified. The outcome of this research will be assembled in a chart for the counting and the identification of the objects in connection with the historical inventories. In doing so, it will be possible to give an overview of all entries in each chapter of the historical inventories from 1721-1727 and 1779. This will allow us to compare the extant holdings with the historical number of pieces. Thus this listing will not only provide information for the identification and allocation of the holdings in connection with the historical inventories, but will furthermore also enable us to reconstruct the historical development of the collection.

### III. The Representation of East Asian Porcelain at the Japanese Palace in Dresden

The importance of Augustus' collection of East Asian porcelain, not only in regards to being a passionate lover and collector of those exotic objects but in terms of the development of his own porcelain ware and cunning marketing strategies, where the exceptional quality of the Meissen product was constantly compared to the East Asian prototype, became especially evident during the years between 1719 and 1728.

Due to a lack of plans and registers, the presentation of the porcelain display at the time of Augustus' acquisition of the Dutch Palace in spring of 1717 is unfortunately lost. Yet, with the comprehensive revision and cataloguing of the entire holdings in 1720, including his considerable Oriental collection of porcelain—which already consisted of more than 13,000 objects from China and Japan as opposed to the 600 or so stoneware and porcelain vessels from Meissen—the first inventory of what was already known as the *Japanese Palace* was taken in 1721.

Until 1730 eighteen rooms of the Japanese Palace were decorated in the *indianische Stil*—the so called 'Indian style', a generic term for East Asian artefacts—and were furnished with highly fashionable East Asian decorative arts.<sup>30</sup> The overall effect of each individual room was defined by a different colour scheme which corresponded to the grouping of the porcelain holdings in the inventories as classified by their dominant colour palette. The extant engraving from Daniel Marot (1661-1752)<sup>31</sup> of the porcelain and picture cabinet at Het Loo (1701/1702) gives a vivid idea of the well-considered and sophisticated

30. The following description of the display is based on the research conducted by Elisabeth Schwarm. See Schwarm, Elisabeth, "Die Bedeutung des Japanischen Palais. Die Porzellansammlungspolitik der Sächsischen Kurfürst-Könige", in *Japanisches Palais Präsentation der Porzellane in den Kabinetten des Palais. Besonderheiten und Merkmale der Augusteischen Sammlung*, ed. Ulrich Pietsch et al. (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2014), 112-130.

31. Daniel Marot (1660-1756), a Huguenot, had been expelled from the French court, where he had been one of the most influential designers, following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Thus he started working for the house of Orange, where he developed a court style that combined French and Dutch influences and shaped the appearance of numerous buildings and their interior design like the Het Loo palace in Apeldoorn, Netherlands. See Cordula Bischoff, *Women Collectors and the Rise of the Porcelain Cabinet* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 2014), 177-179.



colourfulness of such chambers. The atmosphere was reinforced with Chinese or chinoise textiles and a painted décor which we may assume must have been similar at the Japanese Palace in Dresden.

The vestibule of the Japanese Palace, the first room of the building was furnished with numerous large and opulent garniture sets of the group *Japanisch Porcellain* (fig.4). Today these types of objects are classified as Japanese and Chinese Imari-style ware with their distinctive colour scheme of underglaze blue with iron red and gold overglaze decoration. The large number which the king had acquired by 1727, more than 6,800 objects, was an enormous financial undertaking if one takes into consideration the fact that Japanese porcelain was more costly than Chinese at that time. Today about 1,500 Japanese Imari pieces have been preserved at Dresden and among those, thirty large five-piece garniture sets are still recalling the flamboyant splendour at Augustus the Strong's porcelain palace.



Fig. 4. Imari-style seven piece garniture set, Japan c. 1700, inv.nos. PO 3805, PO 3404\_ PO 9085, PO 5800, PO 3405, PO 5799, PO 6031\_PO 6030, PO 3804, Porzellansammlung, SKD, photo: Juergen Loesel.

After leaving the vestibule, the rooms continued with: *Grün Chinesisch Porcelain*, Chinese wucai or famille verte porcelain, followed by red Chinese Porcelain.

The following corner chamber contained hundreds of pieces from the group of *Krack Porcelain* which also comprised the king's beloved polychrome Kakiemon-style pieces. This precious room displayed a selection of refined vessels and animal figures on brackets and shelves which were not only emphasised but multiplied by the mirror panels of the corner chamber which reflected their forms in manifold ways.



Fig. 5. Monumental vases, China c. 1662–1722, inv. nos. PO 1011, PO 1010, PO 9448\_PO1013, PO 9172, PO 1014\_PO 2064, PO 1017, PO 9130, Porzellansammlung, SKD, photo: Juergen Loesel.

Three rooms facing the park of the palace were sumptuously furnished with East Asian underglaze blue porcelain. Even with the holdings loss during the subsequent centuries the Chinese wares are still predominantly represented with more than 3,700 objects still extant. One reason for the sheer quantity at Dresden must have been their symbolic function as a representation of the king's status in competition with other European Royal collections. His unmatched assemblage of monumental vases is commemorated by the famous deal with Friedrich Wilhelm I. of Prussia (1688-1740) in 1717. The king-elect traded 151 Chinese underglaze blue porcelain vessels consisting of several large objects from the sizeable collection owned by the Prussian king for six hundred cavaliers from his own army; such was Augustus ardour for porcelain (fig. 5).<sup>32</sup>

The next corner chamber displayed once more Imari style wares. According to extant plans its interior design was inspired by the splendid displays of the porcelain chambers at Charlottenburg palace designed by the architect Eosander von Göthe (1669-1728) in 1706 who had worked at the Dresden court from 1720 onwards.

Before returning to the vestibule, two rooms displayed the king's fine holdings of more than 1,000 vessels and sculptures of Dehua ware against the background of lacquered walls, mirror panels and red silk wall coverings (fig. 6).

32. Ulrich Pietsch, "Porzellangeschenke in augusteischer Zeit", in *Japanisches Palais zu Dresden. Die Königliche Porzellansammlung August des Starken*, edited by Ulrich Pietsch and Cordula Bischoff (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2014), 43.

The nine room enfilade of the *piano nobile* was more restrained and showcased mostly Meissen porcelain and stoneware, yet some of the king's exquisite collection of black glazed Chinese porcelain (fig. 7) and Yixing ware (fig. 8) was also presented here

To complete the picture of Augustus' ambitious porcelain palace before its enlargement, no less than ten different spaces for *grand kitchens* were erected in the basement of the *corps de logis* in 1722/23—the grand kitchen of Amalienburg illustrates the character of those spaces which were often entirely decorated with faience tiles.<sup>33</sup> Beside vessels made from pewter or lacquer, the kitchen space housed an astonishing range of his East Asian collection. Again, each individual room was defined by a grouping of the porcelain objects according to their decorative colour scheme. Together with vessels in European shapes like ewers, beer mugs, jars and cruets, the kitchen space included one of the most luxurious services in the possession of the king. This splendid set comprising seventy-five pieces of Japanese



Fig. 6. *Dehua ware from the former Royal Porcelain collection, China, Porzellansammlung, SKD, photo: Juergen Loesel.*



Fig. 7. *Chinese vase set with mirror black glaze and gold painting, China 1662–1722, inv. nos. PO 3065, PO 3064, PO 3066, Porzellansammlung, SKD, photo: Juergen Loesel.*



Fig. 8. *Five-piece Yixing stoneware garniture set, China 1662–1722, inv.nos PO 3956, PO 3960, PO 3958, PO 3959, PO 3957, Porzellansammlung, SKD, photo: Juergen Loesel.*

33. In 1734 Elector Karl Albrecht (1697–1745) started to build Amalienburg at Nymphenburg (Munich), a small pleasure palace and hunting lodge for his wife, Maria Amalia (1701–1756), a daughter of Emperor Joseph I (1678–1711).



Imari ware which had been acquired in Paris in 1715 by Baron Raymond Le Plats for the Dresden court. A precious French silver mount united the otherwise disparate decor of the individual vessels which were used on several occasions by the king for the last course or for more informal dinners at his palace. Unfortunately none of the mounts have survived as they were removed during the Seven Year's War (1756-1763).<sup>34</sup>

With the successful production of Meissen ware by the end of 1720s and the enlargement of the Japanese palace into an unrivalled four wing porcelain castle entirely dedicated to the display of porcelain, the presentation of Meissen and East Asian porcelain was no longer perceived in conjunction as a visual expression of their equal parity in terms of quality and aesthetic appeal. Instead the East Asian porcelain was to be displayed on the ground floors while the Meissen ware was reserved for the state rooms and apartments on the main floor. This arrangement visually conveyed the triumph of the Saxonian commodity over the continuous predominance of the East Asian products that had controlled the European market for more than two centuries.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the great losses that the collection had to endure over the centuries, such as the comprehensive sales of duplicates of the 19<sup>th</sup> century or the dispersion of parts of the holdings during the Second World War, there is not only an excellent collection of Oriental porcelain preserved but a unique and yet unpublished historical documentation.

#### IV. Conclusion

From the several million pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain that reached Europe during the early 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century many were either destroyed or scattered from their original princely collections into a burgeoning global art market over time. On rare occasions we find both an extant historical documentation and a rich archive with a substantial and diverse collection still available in one place at Dresden. The inherent potential of such rich material can only be researched and thoroughly put into a local and yet global context with a versatile and international team of colleagues. To lay the grounds for such a joint venture all relevant inventory entries of our Asian collection have not only been transliterated but also translated into English and a large part has been matched with the extant Chinese and Japanese holdings—so far more than c. 7,400 items could be related. Of those, more than 4,500 vessels have already been professionally photographed. The results are stunning as not only a clearer picture of the allocated groups in the inventories, their forms and shapes emerges but also the knowledge about those objects and their intriguing trade networks can be further revealed.

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34. See Elisabeth Schwarm, "Einrichtung und Ausstattung der Prunkküchen im Jahr 1723", ed. Ulrich Pietsch et al. (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2014), 131-145.

35. For a discussion of the rivalry between Chinese and Meissen porcelain, see Julia Weber et al., *Meißener Porzellane mit Dekoren nach ostasiatischen Vorbildern* (München: Hirmer, 2013).



For example, we learn from several inventory entries that Augustus the Strong and his inventory scribes were indeed aware of the significance of the dragon in relation to the Chinese Emperor. One specific entry conveys in vivid detail “79. 2 very fine round slop bowls, on the outside of which the Chinese Emperor’s dragon crest and symbols are painted in green on a yellow ground, 3 in. deep and 6 in. in diam.”<sup>36</sup> (fig. 9a) One of these yellow-ground green-enamelled ‘dragon bowl with a Kangxi six-character mark with double circle, though partly damaged, has survived (fig. 9b). We also know from the inventory that the king took those two bowls as a model for his manufactory not only to copy them in Meissen porcelain but also to create his very own version. Yet the Meissen bowl still showed the yellow ground but had changed the motif of a Chinese dragon for a Saxonian-Polish coat of arms which is unfortunately not extant anymore.<sup>37</sup> As this example shows us, the king’s collecting strategies and motivations must have been driven by diverse reasons. Yet at the core this unique collection portrays the obvious and the more subtle exchanges between Asia and Europe manifested in such fascinating and intriguing objects.



Fig. 9a 9b. Bowl with a Kangxi six-character mark and double circle. China 1662–1722., inv.no. PO 9790, Porzellansammlung, SKD, photo: Adrian Sauer

36. Archiv Porzellansammlung (APS), Inventory No. 324, Inventarium über das Palais zu Alt=Dresden, Anno 1721, Grün Chinesisch Porcelain, in: Vol. 4, Nachträge, Cap. II, 783.

37. Archiv Porzellansammlung (APS), Inventar No. 327, 328 (vol.2), Inventarium vom chur-fürstl. sächsischenHolländischen Palais zu Neustadt bey Dresden und zwar über das sächsi. Porcelain, chapter b), Vergoldte und versilberte, auch sauber gemahlte Chocolate- und Coffée Tassen: „Drey gelbe Spühl Nöpfe mit dem chinesischen Wappen, 1 Stück inwendig mit vergoldten Zierathen, 3 Z. tief, 6 Z. in diam. No.101“.



## The Jesuit Painter and His Emperor: Some Comments Regarding Giuseppe Castiglione and the Qianlong Emperor\*

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To emphasise the military capacities of Qing government through propaganda art was central for the Qianlong Emperor's own image. Thus, after the annexation of Xinjiang and gaining control of Tibet, the intelligent monarch decided to consolidate his military celebrity by writing a *Report on the ten victories won* (1792), in which he called himself 'the Old Man of Ten Victories'<sup>1</sup>. In celebration of his military successes the Emperor composed poems, devised new triumph rituals and commissioned paintings of his battles as well as portraits of the heroes who had fought for the new era of peace. A ceremony taking place in Beijing April 1760 celebrated the two generals Chao-hui and Fu-te, and their portraits along depictions of their battles decorated the residence of the Tzu-kuang-ko<sup>2</sup>, where the Emperor received both the homage of all his subjects and of the European ambassadors<sup>3</sup>. In this way he followed historical precedents such as those of the Tang Taizong Emperor<sup>4</sup>. The Italian Jesuit Brother Giuseppe Castiglione (1688, Milano–1766, Beijing) was involved in this propaganda campaign as portraitist and as painter of battle scenes for the Tzu-kuang-ko. He was also the original designer (1765) of the engravings that replicated those painting to commemorate the expeditions against the Dzungars and the Muslims of eastern Turkestan<sup>5</sup>. He even trained about twenty Chinese

1. J.Waley-Cohen, "Commemorating War in Eighteenth-Century China", in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 30 Issue 4 (1996): 869; J.Waley-Cohen, "China and Western Technology in the Late Eighteenth Century", in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 98 Issue 4 (October 1993): 1542.

2. Ka Bo Tsang, "Portraits of Meritorious Officials: Eight Examples from the First Set Commissioned by the Qianlong Emperor", in *Arts Asiatiques* XLVII (1992):69-88; P.C. Perdue, *China marches West. The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005), 441-442.

3. C Beurdeley and M. Beurdeley, *Giuseppe Castiglione. A Jesuit Painter at the Court of the Chinese Emperors* (Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle, 1971), 79.

4. J. Waley-Cohen (1996), 891-896.

5. G.R.Loehr, *Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), pittore di corte di Ch'ien-Lung imperatore della Cina* (Roma: Ist. italiano per il medio ed estremo oriente, 1940), 34; C Beurdeley and M. Beurdeley, 79-89, 189; Ka Bo Tsang, 87; P.Torres, *Le batailles de l'empereur de Chine. La gloire de Qianlong célébrée par Louis XV, un commnde royale d'estampes* (Paris: Le Passage, 2009), 17-39.

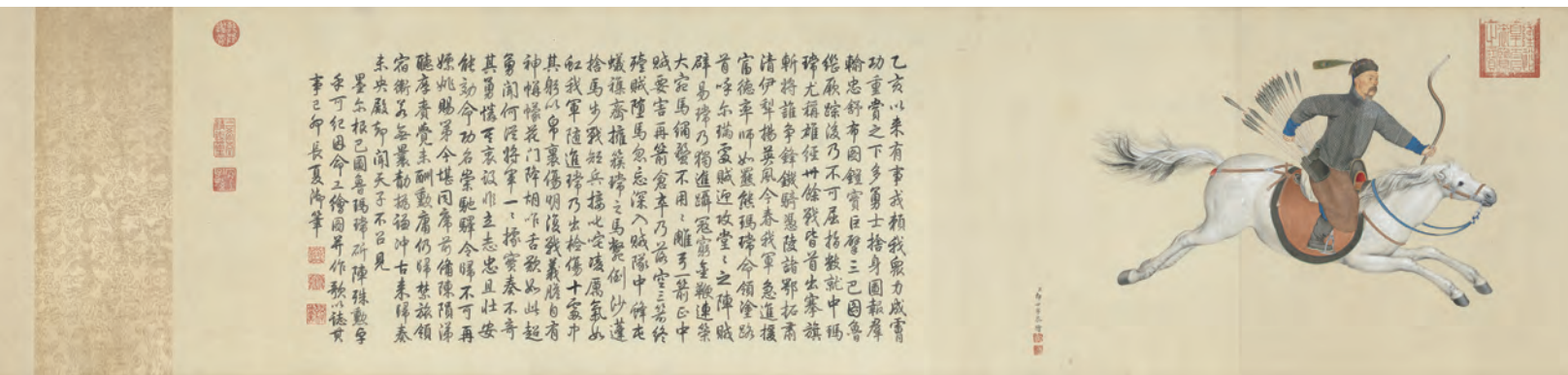


Fig. 1. Giuseppe Castiglione S.J., *Macang smites the enemy ranks*, 38.4 × 285.9 cm, color ink on silk, The National Palace Museum collection

assistants<sup>6</sup>, to work in that Western style that the Qianlong Emperor so much liked.

Then Giuseppe Castiglione's equestrian and military paintings or the engravings after his drawings function almost like snapshots of Manchu China wisely ruled by his patron and "friend": the Qianlong Emperor. In this respect they are comparable to the nineteenth-century "Chinese" photographs of John Thomson or of Felice Beato; they are visual testimonies copied directly from material reality of Qing China where the Italian Jesuit Castiglione operated. Let's compare his scroll<sup>7</sup> entitled *Macang smites the enemy ranks* (Fig. 1) with the frontispiece illustration of Martino Martini's *Regni Sinensis a Tartaris devastati enarratio* of 1661. For this book about the conquest of China by Manchu warriors, the Trento Jesuit Martini has chosen the opening image of a horseman (Fig. 2), who looks not so much a Tartar but more of a Turk; as trophies he carries severed heads with Turkish-looking hairstyles<sup>8</sup>. Instead *Macang smites the enemy ranks* serves as a *bona fide*



Fig. 2. Martino Martini S.J., Frontispiece illustration of *Regni Sinensis a Tartaris devastati enarratio*, Amsterdam 1661, private collection

6. Ka Bo Tsang, 88.

7. Wang Yao-ting, "New Visions at the Ch'ing Court: Giuseppe Castiglione and Western-Style Trends", in *New Visions at the Ch'ing Court: Giuseppe Castiglione and Western-Style Trends*, edited by Wang Yao-ting and Chen Yun Ru (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2007), 72-75 and 156.

8. F. Vossilla, "Il pittore venuto dall'Occidente del Mare e il suo imperatore", in *Giuseppe Castiglione Jesuit and Painter in the Celestial Empire*, edited by A. Andreini, F. Vossilla (Firenze: Comunità di San Leolino, 2015), 103 and 185.





visual equivalent of the words of the Qianlong Emperor on the very same scroll painted by Castiglione. The Qing Emperor was praising a hero of the punitive expedition against the Dzungar tribes. Macang is shown galloping on a white steed, clutching a quiver as he prepares to strike down an enemy, who is already pierced with two arrows. The face of the heroic captain, and the weapons and costumes of the two antagonists, are efficacious elements in a genuine visual narrative. In this sense Castiglione's work marks a definitive break with earlier images even produced for Jesuit literature.

In the engraving made after Castiglione's drawing of *The taking of the field of Geden Ayula* (Fig. 3), we are struck by the details of the trees and the clothing of the combatants, by the freshness with which the Jesuit has delineated the features of the horses and the countenances of the soldiers, by the composition's illusion of breadth (stretching towards a horizon of hills and low mountains in the distance), and lastly by the brilliant narrating of



Fig. 3. Jean Philippe Le Bas after a drawing of Giuseppe Castiglione S.J., *The taking of the field of Geden Ayula*, 1769, copper engraving, The National Palace Museum collection

a scene that is not only of war, but possesses the quality of a testimony. This and the other illustrations of victories in the Turkistan have rightly been compared to the maps of the Celestial Kingdom which the Jesuits made, also to demonstrate the power of the Manchu rulers<sup>9</sup>.

However, very few people today- by looking at Castiglione's court paintings and designs for Qianlong- remember that he was a Jesuit missionary, and that he had been working also for the Kangxi and the Yongzheng Emperors. Yet, since Brother Coadjutor Giuseppe Castiglione spent half a century in far away China<sup>10</sup>, we can easily imagine the strength of his commitment to the Catholic faith. His religious paintings for China are now lost, including a Beijing chapel for the Manchurian prince Shuerchen decorated with oil paintings (a *Trinity*, a *Madonna*, a *Saint Joseph*), and a figure of *Christ* sent from Beijing to Mary-Anne, Queen of Portugal<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, we know nothing precise about his artistic training in Italy before his departure for Portugal and Asia as a young Jesuit. Yet we can assume he was up-to-date about recent artistic trends sponsored by the Society of Jesus Curia Generalizia. In a letter from Beijing of 14<sup>th</sup>. October 1729, addressed to Father General Michelangelo Tamburini S.J. in Rome, Castiglione makes a specific reference to the painter Andrea Pozzo S.J., who died in 1709 but was still highly celebrated. Brother Coadjutor Pozzo was the artist and the theorist that Brother Coadjutor Castiglione had taken as a model for his own work as a missionary painter in Beijing, notwithstanding the typical modesty with which Giuseppe wrote, "Although I, poor and useless, as I am, cannot be a dignified disciple of that Brother"<sup>12</sup>.

At the beginning of the XVIII century in the Celestial Empire there were almost 300,000 Christians, mostly merchants, artisans, farmers and fishermen, and yet the Society of Jesus missionaries had aimed mainly to convert the upper classes<sup>13</sup>. Nonetheless, the situation of the neophytes at court was not helped by the international conflict between the Jesuits and the missionaries of other religious orders (mostly Franciscan and Dominicans), the Vatican and the court of Beijing all involved as they were in what was known as

9. P.C. Perdue, 442.

10. G.R. Loehr, "Missionary Artists at the Manchu Court", *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* Vol. 34 (1962-1963): 51-67; Yang Boda, "Castiglione at the Qing Court -An important Artistic Contribution", *Oriental Arts*, vol. 19, n.11 (November 1988): 44-51. M. Musillo, "Reconciling Two Careers: The Jesuit Memoir of Giuseppe Castiglione Lay Brother and Qing Imperial Painter", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 42 no. 1: 45-59; F.Vossilla and Zhang Zheng Ying, "Giuseppe Castiglione, painter in the Heavenly Kingdom", in *Nella lingua dell'altro. Lang Shining New media art exhibition Giuseppe Castiglione gesuita e pittore in Cina (1715-1766)* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2015), 124-153; J.Graham S.J., *Feeling like Giuseppe Castiglione S.J.*, in *Giuseppe Castiglione Jesuit and Painter in the Celestial Empire*, 93-98.

11. C Beurdeley and M. Beurdeley, 94 and 105; E.Corsi, "Pozzo's Treatise as a Workshop for the Construction of a Sacred Catholic Space in Beijing", in *Mirabili disinganni: (Trento 1642--Vienna 1709), pittore e architetto gesuita*, edited by Richard Boesel and Lydia Salviucci Insolera (Roma: Artemide, 2010), 242.

12. Letter of G.Castiglione S.J. to the Preposito Generale M. Tamburini S.J. of 14th October 1729, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), Jap. Sin.184, p.41 (published by G.R.Loehr, "Un artista fiorentino a Pechino nel Settecento", in *Antichità Viva*, 2 (marzo 1963): 48 and 49.

13. F.Bortone S.J., *I gesuiti alla corte di Pechino (1601-1813)* (Roma: Desclee & Co., Editori Pontifici, 1969), 242.

the “Chinese Rites Controversy”<sup>14</sup>. Such controversy paradoxically took place when the Jesuits’ letters and publications about the Celestial Empire (including its religions and philosophies) were nourishing an almost global phenomenon of Sinophilia even in the visual arts<sup>15</sup>: a trend, or a wide set of trends, that we generally called *Chiniserie* and about which Castiglione was fully aware.

Interestingly Brother Castiglione’s first signature in Qing China is to be found at the end of the so called Red Manifest of October 1716 (nearly a year after his arrival in Beijing on 22<sup>nd</sup>. December 1715, and along that of other 16 missionaries including the famous Vincentian musician Teodorico Pedrini). The Red Manifest was a document sent by the Kangxi Emperor to the Holy See to help to solve the “Chinese Rites Controversy” by also identifying the Jesuit Giuseppe Provana as his rightful ambassador<sup>16</sup>.

Despite all efforts by the Jesuits stationed in China, tension between Rome and Beijing became extremely high especially during the reign of the following Yongzheng Emperor, the moment during which Castiglione met the young prince Hongli, later to become the Qianlong Emperor, and to whom Brother Giuseppe delivered the famous *One hundreds horses* scroll although painted for Yongzheng<sup>17</sup>. In an attempt to moderate Yongzheng’s negative opinion of the Christian apostolate among the Chinese, Castiglione was employed by Jesuit leaders almost with the role of an artist-diplomat. He was already working for the Neiwufu (the Imperial Household Department), where Chinese artisans and foreign missionaries were cooperating to expand the imperial collection of artifacts and foreign curiosities. Brother Coadjutor Giuseppe’s specific diplomacy – consisting of art and of respect for the powerful host culture – truly began with a tribute he made to the new emperor, when missionaries were in serious danger in the province of Fujian. In the spring of 1723 they had been accused of practices that seemed immoral to the local administrators, including men and women praying together, and doubts were entertained about their influence on children of both genders. They were therefore placed under the scrutiny of governor Man Bao, who was also suspicious of the substantial sums of money that these ‘barbarian priests’ collected and used to build religious edifices, which were quickly confiscated to be turned into public schools<sup>18</sup>.

With his mind weighed down by those dramatic issues but eager to help his confreres,

14. N. Standaert S.J., “Jesuit Corporate Culture as shaped by the Chinese” in *The Jesuits. Culture, Sciences and the Arts 1540-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1999), 352-363.

15. J.O’Malley S.J., *Preface*, in K. Stumpf S.J., *The Acta Pekinensia or Historical Records of the Maillard de Tournon Legation*, vol-I, December 1705-August 1706, edited by P. Raule and C. von Collani (Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu and Macau: Macau Ricci Institute, 2015), V.

16. G. Criveller PIME, “Giuseppe Castiglione and the Chinese Rites Controversy”, in *Giuseppe Castiglione Jesuit and Painter in the Celestial Empire*, 47-50.

17. F. Vossilla and Zhang Zheng Ying, “La “desiderata missione” Giuseppe Castiglione a Pechino”, in *Giuseppe Castiglione Jesuit and Painter in the Celestial Empire*, 73-76.

18. F. Bortone S.J., (1969), 190. *Yongzheng chao man wen zhu pi zou zhe quan yi* 雍正朝滿文朱批奏摺全譯, edited by X. L. Guan and L. S. Qui (Beijing: First Historical Archives of China, 1998), 257-258.



Fig. 4. Giuseppe Castiglione S.J., *Gathering of Many Auspicious Signs*, 173 × 86.1 cm, 1723, color ink on silk, The of National Palace Museum collection



on September 15<sup>th</sup> 1723 Castiglione finished the silk scroll entitled *Gathering of many auspicious signs*<sup>19</sup>. (Fig. 4) Brother Giuseppe, adopting the Mandarin name of Lang Shining, had decided to paint some Chinese good luck symbols for the first year of Yongzheng's reign. Those were metaphors based on real things picked up from the imperial garden as he declared in the accompanying inscription: "In the first year of the reign of the Yongzheng Emperor every kind of good omen emerged: doubled grain stems grew in the fields and lotus flowers bloomed in the small lake of the Forbidden City. Your servant Lang Shining has respectfully painted these auspicious signs on a vase after careful observation, with the purpose of commemorating these events, September 15<sup>th</sup>.1723"<sup>20</sup>.

The double lotus flower is here recognizable in three different states (bud, flower, and fruit); it has been painted by the Italian Jesuit as if it has just been picked and at the same time "after careful observation", as he himself underlined. Moreover, Giuseppe also imitated the real leaves of the lotus flower, sheaves of foxtail millet, flowers and leaves of other plants, all with Italian minute precision and shadowing, but employing Chinese painting techniques. In point of fact Castiglione had to work within the limits of his capacity to transpose graphically concepts and terms from a complicated and alien tradition of analogies.

It could be that the double lotus flower alludes to a happy marriage. We also detect a good luck wish for prosperity in the first year of Yongzheng's ruling because of the representation of grain sheaves. Those sheaves Giuseppe called *gu* (edible grain) in his Mandarin inscription, locals call simply *su*, or "small rice" *xiao mi*<sup>21</sup>. Furthermore the type of grain here depicted, foxtail millet, is common in Northern China<sup>22</sup>. The people of the North and Beijing used it in a popular soup, which the Yongzheng Emperor liked so much that in 1724 he tried to spread that hearty meal to other provinces, after a great shortage of local rice because of heavy flooding<sup>23</sup>.

In China the term *su* is often associated with good food policy, moving from the meaning of an edible plant to the metaphor for national wealth based on well-organised agricultural policy. That was the responsibility and the traditional concern of the Chinese Emperors, and a sign of their so-called 'Mandate of Heaven.' When the Manchus were ruling one of the classical texts on good land management was still *Notes for the Emperor about the importance of growing grains*, written many centuries before by Chao Cuo for the Han dynasty. In his document Chao wrote the almost proverbial line: "Grain (*su*) is the greatest resource for an emperor, given that the practice of farming has political value for

19. G.R. Loehr, *Missionary Artists at the Manchu Court*, 59-60; Wang Yao-ting, 50 and 154; Yang Boda, 44.

20. F. Vossilla and Zhang Zheng Ying, *La "desiderata missione" Giuseppe Castiglione a Pechino*, 66-71.

21. L. M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline. 1690a-1990s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 93-94.

22. Pan Fu Jun, *Chen yu zhi wu tu jian* 成語植物圖鑑 (Taipei: Maotouying, 2002), 97.

23. *Yongzheng chao han wen zhu pi zou zhe hui bian* 雍正朝漢文朱批奏摺彙編, edited by X. L. Guan and L. S. Qui (Beijing: First Historical Archives of China, 1998), 257-258.

every ruler”<sup>24</sup>. Those symbols-double lotus, su, and vase (ping)-also recall concepts expressed in the Da Xue, one of the Confucian classics: Qijia, Zhiguo, Ping tianxia (i.e. “regulated their families, rightly governed their States, the entire world would be at peace”).

In 1727, Castiglione sketched other sheaves of foxtail millet for drawings to be printed to accompany a communication from the Yongzheng Emperor attesting to the productivity of farming under his wise auspices in all the territories of the Empire<sup>25</sup>.

The symbolism of the lotus, a strong, robust plant that grows from the muddy base of ponds, also plays a Buddhist reference. This element, along with the medicinal purpose of the lotus as well as the presence of the double sheaths of foxtail millet as a sign of prosperity for all the population, supports the idea that Castiglione had been guided by a member of the Qing court. Maybe the Jesuit painter had been made knowledgeable of such things by Prince Yin Xiang, well aware of the specific interests of the Yongzheng Emperor for medicine and botany. Prince Yin Xiang, the half-brother of the Emperor, became Minister of Finance in 1723, as well as superintendent of the state stocks, including that for the pigments Castiglione needed. Further Yin Xiang was in charge of looking after the new ruler’s foreign artists, and that was surely the start of a close familiarity with “maestro” Lang Shining, from whom Yin Xiang ordered various art works, including a scroll depicting a Chinese fable and forty painted fans<sup>26</sup>.

Intelligently Brother Giuseppe painted his bouquet after having arranged it with care in a Song dynasty vase. He painted it with such realism that to this day we feel that we are almost in the presence of a delicate 13<sup>th</sup>-century ceramic masterpiece with its elegant blue and green neck. In the era of Yuan and Ming, it was common to paint such depictions of plants as good luck symbols arranged in beautiful vases. For the Manchu court, the novelty of this very painting of Brother Giuseppe lay in the creative depiction devised by one of the foreign missionaries who had entered into a moment of tension of international scope. In other words, Castiglione had devised his gift for the Emperor as both a technical and “diplomatic” surprise, thence his own inscription and the antique symbols bore testament to his capacity of cultural accommodation. The inscription imitates the printed style known as Song, and he also copied a *celadon* ceramic- an expression of the Song decorative culture- which seems an intentional choice. Castiglione here demonstrated his familiarity with the collections of the Manchu emperors who- despite their not being Han- collected iconic Song artefacts to show their adherence to the highest of Chinese aesthetic ideals.

Song dynasty China reached high levels of material and economic progress primarily

24. G.Bertuccioli, *La letteratura cinese*, a cura di F. Casalin, (Roma: L’Asino d’Oro, 2013), 118-119.

25. F. Vossilla and Zhang Zheng Ying, *La “desiderata missione” Giuseppe Castiglione a Pechino*, 68 and 182.

26. Ju De Yuan, “Qing Gong Hua Jia Lang Shi Ning Nian Pu- Jian Zai Hua Ye Su Hui Shi Ji Nian 清宮畫家郎世寧年譜- 兼在華耶穌會士史事稽年”, *Gu Gong Bo Wu Yuan Yuan kan* 故宮博物院院刊 No.2 (1988): 27-71; F. Vossilla and Zhang Zheng Ying, *La “desiderata missione” Giuseppe Castiglione a Pechino*, 65.

due to prosperous farming (as a result of the revolutionary introduction of early-ripening Vietnamese rice) and heavy urbanization; these factors had fostered the development of arts and culture, including private and public patronage with the Academy of Imperial Painting at the forefront. In the difficult year of 1723 Brother Castiglione somehow understood all of this; he might have learned to understand the labile line both separating and joining arts and craftsmanship in China. This element of refinement extolled poets and painters, while at the same time Chinese intellectuals were excited by innovations in ceramics as demonstrated by pieces by Song ceramists. Those ceramists had perfected *celadon* with its rich undertones in grey-blue-green and with the fascinating spider web crazing. Moreover, Castiglione's use of a *celadon* vase created a figurative, harmonious and coherent solution to match the pale undertones of the flowers he collected and displayed in that rare vase<sup>27</sup>.

In *Gathering of many auspicious signs*, one might find an echo of the Italian painting tradition particularly that of Milan, Brother Giuseppe's hometown. We grasp this factor both in the controlled rhetoric and in the pictorial presence emanating from his scroll. As a matter of fact those are native elements that go back to the rigorous ideas of the Catholic Reformation in Lombardia, inspired as they were by the sober taste of Cardinal Federico Borromeo, himself close to the Jesuits. Thus this very work by Castiglione "ideologically" ties to the late sixteenth century, more than to the arabesques of the late seventeenth century. As examples we can cite Caravaggio's *Basket of Fruit* at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, or the realistic elements seen in the works of Simone Peterzano, Caravaggio's teacher, and in Giovan Battista Crespi, known as Cerano, that we can admire in Milan's Cathedral (*Charles Borromeo brings the Jesuits and Theatins to Milan*) and in the Jesuit church San Fedele (*Vision of Saint Ignatius*)<sup>28</sup>.

To further clarify which kind of Jesuit art Brother Giuseppe may have absorbed, one should again mention Andrea Pozzo, particularly some flowers placed in sumptuous baroque vases seen in 1680s frescoes for the Stanze di Ignazio in Rome<sup>29</sup>. (Fig. 5) An interesting analogy can be drawn also with the paintings of flowers in vases and frames painted by the Flemish Jesuit Daniel Seghers (1590–1661), a student of Jan Brueghel, who often worked for Borromeo's Milanese commission<sup>30</sup>. It is impossible to say now if Castiglione had had a chance to see those Flemish compositions of his confrere Seghers. Yet we rest assured Giuseppe was familiar with the emblematic value of flowers and plants in Christian iconography, such as the symbol of Mary used among the Jesuits to foster their

27. Castiglione painted another vase with flowers, and again during the reign of the Yongzheng Emperor. This vase is a blue and white Ming style ceramic. See Wang Yao-ting, 68 and 156.

28. F. Vossilla and Zhang Zheng Ying, "La "desiderata missione" Giuseppe Castiglione a Pechino", in *Giuseppe Castiglione. Jesuit and Painter in the Celestial Empire*, 70.

29. G.A.Bailey, "Italian Renaissance and Baroque Painting under the Jesuits and its legacy throughout Catholic Europe" in *The Jesuits and the Arts 1540-1773*, edited by J.W.O'Malley and G.A.Bailey, (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2005), 189-195.

30. F. Vossilla and Zhang Zheng Ying, "La "desiderata missione" Giuseppe Castiglione a Pechino", in *Giuseppe Castiglione. Jesuit and Painter in the Celestial Empire*, 70 and 180.



Fig. 5. Andrea Pozzo S.J., *Saint Ignatius de Loyola performing an exorcism*, 1681-1686. fresco on wall, Stanze di Ignazio, Casa Professa, Roma

preachers' greater eloquence in sermons, as in the illustrated pages of *Partheneia Sacra or the Mysterious and Delicious Garden of the Sacred Parthenes* (1633) by Father Henry Hawkins S.J.<sup>31</sup> This is to say how Castiglione had been equipped with a "toolbox" of Jesuit eloquence to take to heart every depiction of creation (in which Divine Design was seen), and how freely he was capable of comparing the symbols of his faith with those cherished in his new country by pursuing a laborious but genuine marriage of the two.

Later, during his activity for the Qianlong Emperor, I wonder if Giuseppe Castiglione did not consider himself to be of less apostolic and devotional stature than Andrea Pozzo, the Jesuit artist whose disciple he proclaimed himself to be. In the context of art in the service of the Society of Jesus, it is plausible that Giuseppe mentally compared

his own court portraits and his pictures of horses and pagan warriors, to the sacred inventions of Pozzo: works that in Rome or in Vienna celebrated the success of heroic Jesuits in converting so many non-European nations.

Brother Giuseppe surely made great mental efforts to ignore the Qianlong Emperor's non-Christian status, striving to discern in him moral gifts that were equivalent: these gifts he had long observed in the boy and in the young prince Hongli before his ascent to the throne<sup>32</sup>. So I think that this accommodation to the exterior qualities of Qing power reveals in Brother Coadjutor Castiglione the same state of mind as the Jesuit Fathers, for whom the exterior qualities of the Japanese or Chinese were to be regarded irrelevant and exterior as those mundane values which the Jesuits had rejected in Europe, including the formal signs of rank and status. Further more, Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* taught all Jesuits to adapt themselves in detached and disinterested fashion, and to alter their own minds as well as those of others, codifying a scrutiny that could be applied to different conditions of culture, state, gender and class.

In the gigantic (h.322.5, l.232 cm, Fig. 6) *tieluohua* painting *The Qianlong Emperor riding*

31. K.J.Höltgen, "Henry Hawkins: a Jesuit writer and emblemist in Stuart England", in *The Jesuits. Culture, Sciences and the Arts 1540-1773*, 609.

32. P.M. Cibot S.J., Letter of November 3<sup>rd</sup>. 1771, in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses...XXIV*, (Paris 1781), 238; G.R. Loehr, *Giuseppe Castiglione(1688-1766), pittore di corte di Ch'ien-Lung imperatore della Cina*, 12 and 53.



in ceremonial armour what astonishes us is the rhetorical strength of a Jesuit artist celebrating a non-Christian ruler. It shows the twenty-nine-year-old Emperor preparing to review his troops at the great military parade of 1739<sup>33</sup>. In evaluating the heroic tone of this opulent work – paradoxically dedicated to one of the defenders of the isolationism of Manchu culture in relation to Westerners, including missionaries attempting to spread the word of Christ – we detect an echo of the European debate on the morality of political action supported by military force, as practised by heroic Christian sovereigns. This was a debate that in the artistic world had results such as the political portraits created by Gianlorenzo Bernini for various rulers, including the equestrian portraits of Francesco Duke of Modena, and more importantly of Louis XIV King of France<sup>34</sup>. One of the most significant texts for this debate was one by the Jesuit Domenico Gamberti, entitled *L'idea di un principe et eroe cristiano* and dedicated in 1659 to the memory of Francesco d'Este, Duke of Modena<sup>35</sup>. Comparing Castiglione's painting with these inventions by Bernini and with others derived from them, such as the medal by Antonio Travani (showing Louis XIV in armour, mounted on a rearing steed) which the French Jesuits in Beijing undoubtedly knew, we note a different kind of representation of royal power: of no less impact but more solid, since Castiglione seems to emphasise the control and the majesty of the Celestial Emperor, no doubt in response to precise instructions from the Qianlong Emperor himself.



Fig. 6. Giuseppe Castiglione S.J., *The Qianlong Emperor riding in ceremonial armour*, 1739, 332.5 x 232cm, color ink on silk, The Palace Museum, Beijing

The large size, the photographic details, and the ability to represent the Emperor as supercilious and almost hieratic but with the accuracy characteristic of the Europeans, were new things in the context of Chinese art. In point of fact, by using slight shadowing on the visage of his patron, Castiglione departed from the Chinese style, infusing a particular flavour of introspection into all of his portraits depicting the Qianlong Emperor. In that

33. M. Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, *Giuseppe Castiglione 1688-1766: peintre et architecte à la cour de Chine* (Paris: Thalia, 2007), 97-98.

34. I. Lavin, "Bernini's image of the Ideal Christian Monarch", in *The Jesuits. Culture, Sciences and the Arts 1540-1773*, 442-479.

35. D. Gamberti S.J., *L'idea di vn principe et eroe christiano in Francesco I. d'Este di Modona e Reggio dvca VIII., generalissimo dell'arme reali di Francia in Italia...*, Modena 1659. I. Lavin, 451-455.

genre so risky for a Jesuit, he did not fall into excessive flattery but – as we see in this equestrian portrait – tried to interpret and describe the resolute character of the monarch, here intent on carrying out his ceremonial functions with intelligence and dignity. Castiglione relied on the charm his brush was so capable of generating in portraying with solemn truthfulness the countenance of his all-powerful friend and the regal and tranquil horse, and in re-creating with concentration the Emperor's armour, saddle and quiver. Mysteriously this huge painting does not bear Lang Shining's signature. However its style helps us to confirm the attribution to Castiglione. Moreover I notice here memories of Western portraitists who specialised in great lords and commanders, such as the Lombard Giovan Battista Moroni or the Fleming Rubens. I am thinking here of the efforts made to flood with light the faces of the personages and make them stand out, together with details of their rich clothing and splendid armour. Pieter Paul Rubens, much loved by the Jesuits, had left in Genoa – where Castiglione studied as a novice – a number of portraits of gentlemen on horseback, large as life. Among them is one showing Giovanni Carlo Doria, son of the Doge Agostino Doria<sup>36</sup>, although Rubens's horse has a different movement from that of Castiglione and the whole is less firm. Both the patron and the artist well knew that such precise adherence to actual forms would have appeared strange to the Chinese public. The walking horse is shown as though cut out against a landscape that has been attributed to Chinese collaborators<sup>37</sup>: I am not sure about this, as the plants in the foreground definitely look as though they were painted by Castiglione, who did in fact paint landscapes in a Chinese manner<sup>38</sup>.

Thence Brother Castiglione came up with a style half way between the conventions of Chinese painting and a typically Western courtly manner, in which we discern various references to Italian equestrian monuments. I am thinking of the fifteenth-century funerary monument to Sir John Hawkwood frescoed by Paolo Uccello in Florence Cathedral, or the bronze equestrian statue of the Grand Duke Ferdinand I, made in 1608 by Pietro Tacca after a model by Giambologna, in Piazza Santissima Annunziata of Florence<sup>39</sup>. (Figs. 7-8) Even if Castiglione had not been in Florence, though I surmise that he had, his Florentine Jesuit Brother Ferdinando Bonaventura Moggi (1684 Florence – 1761 Beijing, Chinese name Li bou Ming<sup>40</sup>) could easily have described these examples to him. Moggi had been a sculptor and an engraver, and cooperated with the celebrated Florentine sculptor and

36. S.Biavati, I.M.Botto, G.Doria, G.Frabetti, E.Poleggi and L.Tagliaferro, eds., *Rubens e Genova, Genova: Palazzo Ducale 18 dicembre-12 gennaio 1978, Genova 1978* (Genova: La stampa, 1977), 208.

37. Zhu Jiajin, "Castiglione's Tieluo Paintings", *Orientalism*, XIX, 11 (1988): 80-83; M. Musillo, *Mid-Qing Arts and Jesuit Visions: Encounters and Exchanges in Eighteenth-Century Beijing*, in S. Delson ed., *Ai Weiwei: Circle of Animals* (Munich-London-New York: Prestel Publishing, 2011), 157.

38. C. Beurdeley, M. Beurdeley, 179.

39. C. Avery, *Giambologna. La scultura* (Firenze: Cantini, 1987), 228-229 and 258.

40. C. Cinelli and F. Vossilla, "Rileggendo due lettere: alcune precisazioni sull'attività di Giuseppe Castiglione e di Ferdinando Bonaventura Moggi a Pechino", in I. Doniselli Eramo, ed., *Giuseppe Castiglione un'artista milanese nel Celeste Impero* (Milano: Luni Editrice, 2016).



Fig. 7. Paolo Uccello, *John Hawkwood*, 1436 ca., fresco on wall, Santa Maria del Fiore, Firenze



Fig. 8. Pietro Tacca after a model by Giambologna, *Ferdinand I Medici on horse*, 1608, bronze, Piazza della SS. Annunziata, Firenze (photo of the author).

architect Giovan Battista Foggini<sup>41</sup>. Interestingly, Foggini designed the tomb of Saint Francis Xavier S.J. (finished in 1698) for the famous altar in the Bom Jesus of Goa, and made use of Giambologna's old workshop in Florence often re-employing Tacca's designs for the appreciation of international patrons. This reference by Castiglione to Tacca's equestrian statue depicting Ferdinand Medici is then very intriguing, because that monument stands in front of a church well known to all Italian Jesuits. It was in fact during a visit to the church of the Annunziata in Florence that the young marquis of Castiglione, Luigi Gonzaga, made his vow of perpetual chastity; he became one of the best known Jesuits saints (canonised in 1726), and in Beijing both Castiglione and Moggi celebrated him in a chapel in the church of St. Joseph<sup>42</sup>. The outlook of St. Joseph is possibly shown in two drawings of the Arquivo Historico Ultramarino of Lisbon now attributed to Brother Moggi<sup>43</sup>. In one of the drawings we see the altar dedicated to Luigi Gonzaga, and

41. I would like to express my gratitude for this reference to prof. Luigi Zangheri, President Emeritus of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno di Firenze, with whom Carlo Cinelli and myself are now working on new researches about Moggi S.J.

42. F.B. Moggi S.J., Letter to the Preposito Generale M. Tamburini of November 8th. 1729, ARSI, Lus. 24, P. 109, in G.R. Loehr, "Un artista fiorentino a Pechino nel Settecento", *Antichità Viva*, 2 (marzo 1963): 48.

43. E. Corsi, 233-243; According to Zhang Fuhe (cfr. Zhang Fuhe, ed., *The Modern Architectural History Of Beijing From The End Of 19th Century to 1930s* (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2004), 40 and 348) after 1721 Moggi designed and rebuilt contemporarily both the Nantang and the Dontang churches for the Chinese capital city. Zhang Fuhe dates the two drawings of Arquivo Historico Ultramarino to a later period. According to Wang Lian Ming, "Zheng hua tian xing: Lang Shining dui Beijing Tiangzhutang de gongxian 正畫天形：郎世寧對北京天主堂的貢獻", *The National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art 故宮文物月刊* No. 393 (Dec. 2015): 30-37, the drawings describe the Nantang Church of Beijing.



for its design we notice references to the Feroni Chapel by Giovan Battista Foggini in the Annunziata of Florence. Furthermore Castiglione and Moggi drew on Florentine art, such as the post-Giambologna statue by Tacca, for their attempts at hybridising Western and Chinese art for the European-style pavilions and fountains (the Monkey Fountains derive from Tacca's *Fontana della Scimmia* in the Boboli Gardens in Florence) in the Yuan Ming Yuan of Beijing<sup>44</sup>.

The Qianlong Emperor admired the military engravings of Georg Philipp Rugendas<sup>45</sup>, which for him were interesting and exotic. Then we can compare the equestrian portrait of the Manchu emperor with a little work by the German: a print based on the famous *Knight, Death and the Devil* by Albrecht Dürer, which Castiglione would undoubtedly have appreciated. (Figs. 9-10) Another possible source for the imperial portrait is the illustration at the beginning of Andrea Pozzo's *Prospettiva*, a book Castiglione used constantly in Beijing. In the frontispiece by Brother Andrea, we notice, inside an extravagant architectural setting, an equestrian statue of a bewigged prince: the statue is being admired by some scholars or artists, while other figures in the foreground practise the three arts<sup>46</sup>. (Fig. 11)



Fig. 9. Georg Philipp Rugendas, *Knight*, beginning of the XVIII century, engraving, private collection.



Fig. 10. Albrecht Dürer, *The Knight, Death and the Devil*, 1513, 24.5 x 19.1cm, engraving, private collection.

44. G.R. Loehr, *Un artista fiorentino a Pechino nel Settecento*, 53 and 57; V. Siu, "Castiglione and the Yuanming Yuan Collections", *Orientalism*, vol. 19, n. 11 (November 1988): 72-79; Hui Zou, *A Jesuit Garden in Beijing and Early Modern Chinese Culture* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2011), 8-12 and 139-144. F.Bortone S.J., 205-208.

45. M.Pirazzoli-t-Serstevens, 191; J. Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War in China. Empire and the Military under the Qing Dynasty* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co, 2006), 42.

46. F. Vossilla, *Il pittore venuto dall'Occidente del Mare e il suo imperatore*, 118.



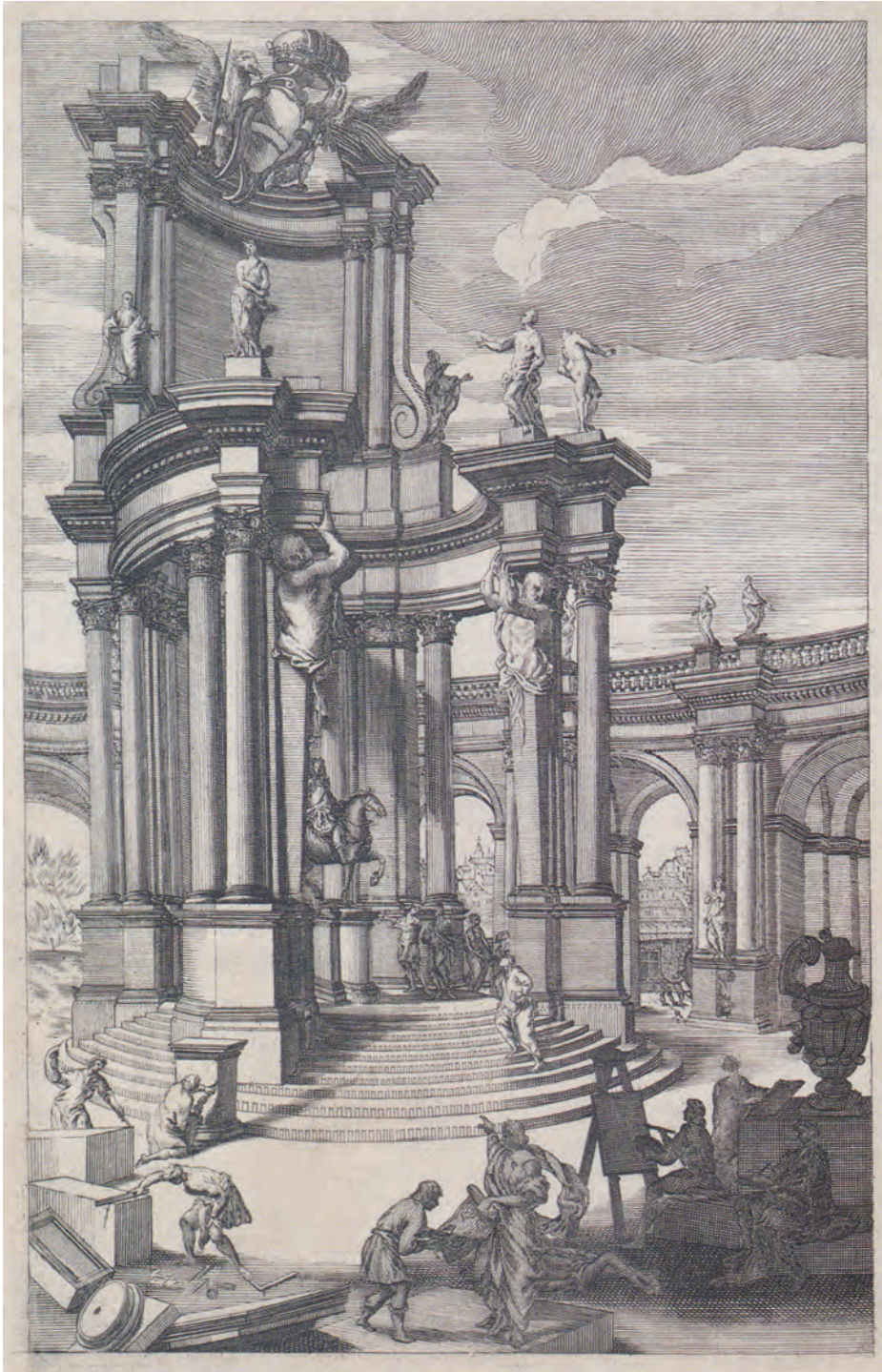


Fig. 11. Andrea Pozzo S.J., Frontispiece illustration of *Prospettiva de Pittori e Architetti...*, Roma 1693, vol. I, private collection

In the West, among the critical problems of modernity, we find that of the relation between artists and political power. To believe in a man wielding supreme power and to place oneself in his service has been a commitment and a wager for many European artists. I find the case of Brother Castiglione particularly interesting, because he had to deal with this issue ahead of time and on the other side of the world. As a Jesuit he owed allegiance to the pope in Rome, yet to perform his role as a missionary artist he was induced to embrace the flag of a pagan prince: a sovereign who seemed to him to be just, and at whose court he might perform his task of service in authentic fashion. We know from contemporary Jesuit sources that the Qianlong Emperor had since his boyhood been an admirer of Castiglione, and that because of his respect for his old friend's moral and artistic qualities, the emperor awarded him important commissions, and even appointed him a mandarin of the third class. The close relationship between a low rank Jesuit and the Manchu emperor continues to exert a fascination in our own day, when cultural barriers and religious differences tend to circumscribe authentic relations between persons of different class and ethnic origin. Castiglione was well aware of those differences. He sought to overcome them through his faith in Christ, acting on that sparkle of spirituality that renders similar the men of every latitude.

Thanks to their thorough humanistic training, the Jesuits had managed to carry beyond the bounds of Christendom not only Catholicism but the best of Western culture and professionalism. During the first phase of the mission to China, the creativity of the Jesuits and their writings had been of an essentially religious character. Then Matteo Ricci realised that, in order to attract the ruling classes and the imperial court, it was necessary to bring into play areas of knowledge not connected with religion: technical subjects such as mathematics, astronomy and geography, very much in response to the requests of the Chinese. The mission's objective came to play an active and dominant role in the dialogue between Jesuits and Chinese. As Nicholas Standaert wrote: "the Jesuits hoped to convert the emperor and his entourage, as they sometimes converted court women and eunuchs, but their presence in court circles was dictated largely by practical concerns (i.e. it enabled them to avoid being seen as heterodox on a local level) and was acquired only through compromise. Very often there was a subtle interplay between the missionaries and the emperor, in which each side took advantage of the other for its own purposes"<sup>47</sup>.

In China Castiglione played the useful Jesuit role of 'Temporal Coadjutor' (from 8 December 1721<sup>48</sup>). As demonstrated by researches of John O'Malley the role of Temporal Coadjutor Brothers in Jesuits missions was grand and most effective<sup>49</sup>. Although not ordained priests, they served as special missionaries. To understand the old Italian expression "fratello laico" you are not to translate lay brother thinking that those men were

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47. N. Standaert S.J., *Jesuit Corporate Culture as shaped by the Chinese*, in *The Jesuits. Culture, Sciences and the Arts 1540-1773*, 358.

48. G.R. Loehr (1940), 9.

49. J. O'Malley S.J., "The present state of Historiography on the Jesuits with special reference to Art, to China and to Brother Castiglione", in *Giuseppe Castiglione Jesuit and Painter in the Celestial Empire*, 39-43 and 41.

lay subjects and not part of the Jesuit order. On the contrary they were a large and relevant portion of the Society of Jesus, and they were to remain chaste and obedient to Rome as well as any Jesuit father. Being not priests they could not raise high in the hierarchy of the Jesuits, yet some of them had more time to glorify God through professional activities if talented with vocational gifts. With this very system the Jesuits created art schools in Japan, Manila, Macao and Rome.

The case of Castiglione as humble Jesuit Brother and yet prominent painter for elite patrons was no strange or too peculiar. I will mention here again only Temporal Coadjutor Daniel Seghers, Temporal Coadjutor Jacques Courtois, Temporal Coadjutor Andrea Pozzo, all possible models for Temporal Coadjutor Castiglione<sup>50</sup>. Therefore Castiglione's artistic talents were employed by the Society of Jesus as the Father Generals in Rome thought fit, so that Brother Giuseppe's efforts might bear fruit in any missionary base. Like numerous other novices, he had asked his superiors that he might offer his existence to the Jesuits as a missionary in China.

Jerry Graham described Castiglione this way: "Castiglione cared about God, Jesus and the Society of Jesus. With certainty, he cared about art, beauty and painting. He obviously had to care daily about the hard work it took for him to achieve the highest reaches of artistic excellence. He had to have cared about his companions, the Jesuits and the mission he had been given in China. He had to have cared greatly about Chinese people, Chinese culture, values, customs and art—in order to become an inculturated Italian in the China of his time. He also had to care greatly about the emperor and his relationship with the emperor, for Castiglione served at his personal pleasure. If the emperor was not pleased with Castiglione's work, he would be dismissed. He clearly cared about his own virtue, holiness and humility—or he would have been replaced by the Jesuits for jeopardizing their mission"<sup>51</sup>.

According to Victoria Su, Castiglione "mastered the time honoured Taoist tradition in which the artist so understands his subject that he can capture its essence", and in this connection she mentioned *Ayusi Sweeping Bandits with a Lance*<sup>52</sup>. (Fig. 12) I would say that the image of the mounted warrior interprets Qianlong's thoughts and poetical praises concerning this particular personage of that heroic scout, who in 1755 took part in a nocturnal attack on the encampment of the Dzungar rebels in the region of the Ili<sup>53</sup>. Ayushi's courage in leading the vanguard of the Manchu army, his unusual status as a Dzungar who had embraced the Qing cause at the time of Yongzheng, and his loyalty to the Qianlong Emperor must have struck Castiglione as much as did the emperor's own

50. F. Vossilla, 120-122.

51. J. Graham S.J., 96.

52. V. Siu, 77-78.

53. Yang Boda, "Lang Shining zai Qing neiting de chuanguo huodong ji qi yishu chengjiu 郎世寧在清內廷的創作活動及其藝術成就", *Gugong Bowuyuan huan yuankan 故宮博物院院刊*, 2 (1988): 17; Ka Bo Tsang, 77-78.





Fig. 12. Giuseppe Castiglione S.J., *Ayushi Sweeping Bandits with a Lance*, 27.1 x 104.4 cm, color ink on paper, The National Palace Museum collection

words. Qianlong ordered Ayushi to pose for Brother Giuseppe so that the Jesuit artist could portray him from the life: his face, his horse, his lance. To examine this scroll is to enter into the living world of the China pacified by the Qing; but Castiglione's invention and rhetorical ability goes further, given that he has painted Ayushi's horse not in a static pose but with all four feet off the ground, in the movement that Chinese scholars called the 'flying gallop'. For Europeans this would be a representational novelty, but in China it would be quite normal<sup>54</sup>. It is a detail that conveys to us all of Giuseppe Castiglione's commitment to making of himself a bridge between two aesthetic concepts that are often alien to one another, thereby earning the unstinting respect of his patron Asin Gioro Hongli, the Qianlong Emperor.

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54. G.R. Loehr, *Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), pittore di corte di Ch'ien-Lung imperatore della Cina*, 60; V. Siu, 77; M.Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, 173-176 and 185-186.



Finally I would like to thank all the professionals of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, who helped with *Nella lingua dell'altro. Lang Shining New media art exhibition Giuseppe Castiglione gesuita e pittore in Cina (1715-1766)*, our common exhibiton of last Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> 2015-Jen. 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 in Santa Croce of Florence.



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