

A MANCHU IN CONQUISTADOR'S CLOTHING:
JESUIT VISUALIZATIONS OF THE LATE MING AND EARLY QING DYNASTIES

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ABSTRACT

Upon their arrival in China, priests of the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, quickly began writing their opinions and observations of the Ming Dynasty, of the Manchu invasion, and of the subsequent Qing Dynasty. These priests arrived in China with both secular and religious goals, and these goals created the context for their comments, coloring their writings. However, when the Jesuits praised the Qing Dynasty, they began to use particularly European metaphors in their descriptions of the Manchus, from appearance and mannerisms to policies. While the Jesuit descriptions serve as informative material, they are not objective, detached observations. In terms of their opinions, Jesuit writings offer historians critical information about the Jesuits themselves and about the Manchus as a distinctively non-Chinese dynasty, despite their efforts to Sinofy themselves in the eyes of the Han Chinese majority.

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend its publication.

Approved: Ryan Crewe

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When an Amsterdam publisher printed a Latin edition of Martino Martini's *De bello Tartarico* (About the Tartar War) in 1661, an European artist provided this frontispiece image of the ongoing conflict between Chinese and Manchus.



Figure 1

The European appearance of the Manchu warrior and the Mongolian appearance of the conquered Chinese eloquently visualized Martini's observations of the Manchu invasion. As a priest of the Society of Jesus, Martini arrived in China in 1643 along with many other

Jesuits who had ambitious goals to convert the country by targeting elite Confucian scholars. At the same time, these priests recorded both their observations of Chinese culture and their research into Chinese history, and they printed their writings in Europe. People in Europe hungered for information about distant China, and very few Europeans had any first-hand information. The Jesuits not only provided highly sought after information, but they also documented a monumental event in Chinese history. As Martini's title explained, China was at war. From the early 1600s, Jürchen tribes in the North unified under a single leader, called themselves Manchus, conquered China, and founded the Qing Dynasty. Although Chinese literature labeled the Manchus as barbarians, Martini disagreed, saying that "they appear more human," meaning more familiar and European than Chinese.¹ Figure One vividly reflects Martini's glowing description, and the crux of this study: domestic events witnessed by an "objective" observer.

This frontispiece represents two major historical events occurring in China during the seventeenth century: globally, East and West encountered each other in a new and immediate way, and domestically, the Ming Dynasty ended with a regime change by invasion. For the first time, Europeans directly witnessed, participated in, and reported on the establishment of a new dynasty in China, although global interactions had occurred for many centuries. Between the Eastern and Western edges of the Eurasian continent, traders traveled the Silk Road routes as early as the first century AD. By the sixteenth century, the advent of the age of exploration and the rise of maritime trade dramatically changed the nature of interactions between Europe and Asia by creating a more immediate cultural

¹ Lynn Struve, trans. and editor, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers' Jaws* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 51.

exchange. "The first substantive contact between China and the West began when the Portuguese entered south China in the early 1500s."² Europeans arrived directly in Chinese seaports without any Central Asian merchants serving as intermediaries. In the realm of cultural exchange, priests from multiple mainstream Catholic orders arrived in China.³ The fact that Europeans were present in China to see an invasion, record it, distribute records of it in Europe, and visualize a Manchu warrior as a European soldier demonstrated the new global interactions occurring between Europe and Asia.

The frontispiece not only represents the European observers who imagined it, but it also records regime change, a typical domestic event. Throughout Chinese history, nomadic peoples living north of the Great Wall periodically organized, unified, rode south, and conquered parts or all of China; the Mongol Yuan Dynasty exemplified this pattern. While today these people would be identified as Chinese because they lived within the borders of modern China, dynastic Chinese viewed them as foreigners. The Han ethnic majority ruled dynastic China and considered themselves to be more civilized, labeling themselves as "the settled people" as opposed to the tribal Northerners. When these Northerners established dynasties in China, as the Manchus did through the Qing Dynasty, they Sinified themselves, adopting Chinese culture and court structure in order to create the appearance of an

² D.E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 15.

³ These Catholic priests were not the first Christian missionaries. In the fifth century, a small group of Nestorian Christian proselytizers arrived, and while they did not convert masses of Chinese, these missionaries at least left their mark. Mark Norell, Denise Patry Leidy, and the American Museum of Natural History, *Traveling the Silk Road: Ancient Pathway to the Modern World* (New York: Sterling Signature Publishing, 2011), 35 and 85.

unbroken dynastic chain.⁴ The Manchu invasion was not unusual, but its results were profoundly unique. Sinified Manchus, not Han Chinese, eventually led China into the twentieth century, and geographic space alone demonstrates the deep and indelible mark of the Qing on modern China. The Manchus expanded their empire and set the boundaries of the modern state.⁵ Territorial integrity throughout the twentieth century is more than a matter of appearance on a map; it represents the steadfast, if imperfect, heritage of the Qing. "The Qing and its successors ... constitute perhaps the only case of a major world empire that actually controlled more territory in 2000 than it did in 1900." This may lead future students of global historical studies to ask "why the empires of the West were unable to last as long as China's."⁶ Though regime change was not unique in Chinese history, the establishment of the Qing Dynasty had distinctive consequences because it was the gateway through which China entered the twentieth century and encountered a new age of global relations with the West. Again, the frontispiece elegantly summarizes the simultaneous occurrences of these pivotal global and domestic phenomena by depicting a domestic event as interpreted by global observers.

⁴ A note on terminology in this paper: The term "Chinese" refers to Han Chinese, and the term "Manchu" refers to the invading people who established the Qing Dynasty. The Jesuits most often referred to the Manchus as Tartars because they identified Manchus as related to Central Asian Tartars. To Sinify or Sinification is the process of adopting Chinese culture and court structure in order to emulate a Han Chinese identity.

⁵ Kirk W. Larson, "The Qing Empire (China), Imperialism, and the Modern World," *History Compass* (2011): 499, accessed October 8, 2015, DOI: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2011.00780.x. William Kirby, "The Internationalization of China: Foreign Relations at Home and Abroad in the Republican Era," *The China Quarterly*, Special Issue: Reappraising Republic China (June 1997): 437, accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/655344>.

⁶ Larson, "The Qing Empire," 505.

In order to become the primary European witnesses to these Chinese events, Jesuits used their academic training to make alliances with Confucian scholars, which in turn allowed the Jesuits to gain exception to the laws governing foreigners. Both Ming and Qing Dynasties regarded all Europeans with an attitude of distrust and prudence, and they attempted to control foreign influence by sequestering Europeans in Canton and Macao. The Ming court treated these ports as foreign territory and the Chinese who lived there as overseas Chinese who had abandoned "their traditional values."⁷ With their astronomical skills and accommodating policies, Jesuits overcame these anti-foreigner laws and achieved a *sui generis* position. The priests portrayed themselves as European equivalents of Confucian scholars, and their willingness to share the most current European learnings with Chinese officials won them many useful relationships. "The insistence of this order that their members be [academically] accomplished ... were important factors in the acceptance they found among Chinese scholar-officials and rulers."⁸ For example, French Jesuit Pierre D'Orléans met a prince of Western Tartary [Tibet] during a trip with Qing Emperor Kangxi. "The favourable welcome we received in this meeting, gave us some ground of hope that our religion might be received by some of these princes, particularly if care were taken to instill it into their minds through the medium of mathematics."⁹ Through their adept political maneuvering, associations with upper class Confucian scholars, and academic abilities, Jesuits gained exception to exclusion laws, which then enabled them to move deeper and deeper inland, and for Europeans, they had almost exclusive access to the

⁷ Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking, 1984), 193.

⁸ Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm*, 49.

⁹ Père Pierre Joseph D'Orléans, *History of the Two Tartar Conquerors of China*, trans. The Earl of Ellesmere (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971), 87.

Chinese interior. From their position close to the court, Jesuits became the primary European observers of China. In *De bello Tartarico*, Martino Martini reported the Manchu invasion for his European audiences.

To return to the *De bello Tartarico* frontispiece itself, the image clearly represents the event as interpreted by Europeans. It does not attempt to envisage either Manchus or Chinese accurately; instead, it visualizes them through the lens of Jesuit biases. The Jesuit lens imagines the Chinese with queues and Mongolian features – more foreign – and the Manchus in armor and appearing almost Caucasian – more familiar. Due to their academic skills and spiritual roles, it might be assumed that Jesuits were objective observers, and they certainly attempted to sound objective. However, biases abound throughout Jesuit writings, but these biases do not degrade the referential value of these sources. Instead, these documents have profound value because of their biased nature. When modern scholars analyze Jesuit writings for biases, they find the assumptions that Jesuits passed to their European readers, and these assumptions are important to understand because they laid the foundation of European understandings of China. Perhaps most importantly, *how* the Jesuits expressed their opinions provides the most insight into the assumptions that Jesuits passed to Europe through their writings, and understanding these assumptions aids modern historians to appreciate the foundational beliefs and ideas upon which the last 400 years of East / West relations have been based. Through a careful examination of Jesuit descriptions of both the Chinese Ming and Manchu Qing, a clearer understanding of Jesuit biases can be discerned, and more importantly, understanding these biases illuminates new aspects of the Manchu invasion and of European assumptions about themselves. Biased as

Europeans, as religious agents, and as colonial agents, Jesuits wove their prejudiced opinions into even their most objective sounding passages, and by examining their opinions and beliefs about the regime change that they witnessed in China, scholars can gain fresh insights about the Ming Dynasty, about the Qing Dynasty, and ultimately about the Jesuits themselves.

CHAPTER II

THE IMAGE ITSELF: PURPOSEFUL EUROPEANIZATION?

The conquistador image of the frontispiece deserves a moment for analysis, and in that analysis, the question arises: did the artist intentionally portray the Manchu warrior as a European, or were the Caucasian features a happenstance of poor artistic skill in terms of rendering ethnic features? The answer to this question cannot be fully known because an answer would require a statement from the artist about his intentions. However, an examination of the image's features reveals similarities to images of conquering saints. The Manchu's sword raised over his head strikingly resembles the raised sword of St. James the Moor Slayer and of St. Michael. In Figure 2, St. James the Moor Slayer, like the Manchu warrior, rides on horseback upon his enemies, his sword aloft.



Figure 2

Renderings of St. Michael the Archangel also portray this holy warrior posture, as seen in Figure 3.



Figure 3

Perhaps the artist unconsciously referenced these familiar postures when he read Martini's words: "the Divine Providence of God, who raised so sharp [a] War against *China*, when they neglected Christian Peace, and permitted, at the same time, these *Tartars* to take so

deep a root, in this Empire of *China*."¹⁰ Whether or not intentional, the artist of Martini's frontispiece rendered the Manchu warrior in a posture familiar to the images of conquering saints.

While the Manchu warrior and these martial saints have visual similarities, did the artist intend to make these connections, and regardless of his intentions, did the similarities influence Martini's readers? The image probably implicitly registered in the minds of the observer as "holy warrior," and the comments of some Jesuits certainly supported the imagining of Manchus as holy European warriors. As noted later, the Jesuits deemed the Manchu invasion as a divine occurrence, suggesting that Manchus delivered God's will to the Chinese; hence, portraying the Manchu warrior as a holy warrior delivering divine retribution corresponds sensibly. If the holy warrior posture of the Manchu warrior seems to draw directly from the Jesuit writings, then what conclusions should be drawn from the Caucasian features of the warrior's face? Again, the intentions of the artist or the artist's ability will not be known, but does the implicit connection between the Manchus and holy warriors also implicitly connect to the Manchus as being akin to Europeans?

Other examples of European drawings of Manchus suggest either confusion about Asian facial features, an inability to replicate them on paper, or a more conscious attempt to render the Manchus as more European in appearance. As stated previously, the artist seemed confused about the ethnicity of the conqueror and the conquered; the heads of the conquered appear to wear the Manchurian queue. A series of prints commissioned in the

¹⁰ Martino Martini, *Bellum Tartaricum or The Conquest of the Great and Most Renowned Empire of China* (London: Printed for JCookk, 1655), 260.

mid eighteenth century by the Qianlong emperor also portray this confusion.



Figure 4

In Figure 4, “The Battle of Oroï-Jalatu,” the Jesuit artists rendered the Manchu forces defeating the Dzungar people of Central Asia. The print was one of several painted by Jesuit artists and engraved in Paris. While the familiar Mandarin hat defines the Manchu army, the defeated Dzungar warriors wear the Manchu queue, suggesting that Europeans did not understand Asian and Central Asian hairstyles. This would support the theory that the artist of the Martini frontispiece only mistakenly portrayed the Manchu warrior as European because he did not know how to accurately depict a Manchu and because he did not understand the cultural significance of the queue. However, the comments of the Jesuits themselves would seem to suggest that the European similarity is purposeful. While the Jesuits praised Manchus with Eurocentric compliments, they also hailed them as an improvement to the Ming Dynasty.

CHAPTER III

MING TO QING TRANSITION: FROM AWE, TO FRUSTRATION, TO ADMIRATION

Initially, the Jesuits described the Ming Dynasty of the late 1500s and early 1600s very positively; they admired the size and stability of China and of the Ming government. The immensity of China and everything Chinese elicited wonder from the Jesuits. While Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit to venture to China, did not pass Macao, he repeated the positive descriptions of the Ming Court that he had heard from others. "Portuguese merchants had informed him that it was 'superior to all Christian states in the practice of justice and equity'."¹¹ Matteo Ricci, perhaps the most famous China Jesuit, echoed this sentiment: "[h]e admired the enormous size of China and its populace, the diversity of its crops, its favorable climate, the industry of its people, and its Confucian morality."¹² Additionally, Ricci expressed surprise that such a large country had maintained its borders for such a long time. He contrasted the Chinese with Europeans "who are frequently discontent with their own governments and covetous of what others enjoy. While the nations of the West seem to be entirely consumed with the idea of supreme domination, they cannot even preserve what their ancestors have bequeathed them, as the Chinese have done through a period of some thousands of years."¹³ Perhaps, Ricci credited the longevity of the Chinese Empire to the high moral standards to which the Chinese held their government. "It may be said in praise of the Chinese that ordinarily they would prefer to

¹¹ Colin Mackerras, "Jesuit Missionaries and the Philosophers," in *Western Images of China* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press (China) Ltd., 1999), 24.

¹² Mungello, *Great Encounter*, 17.

¹³ Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matteo Ricci: 1583-1610*, trans. Louis J. Gallagher, S.J. (New York: Random House, 1953), 55.

die an honorable death rather than swear allegiance to [an] usurping monarch." Here, Ricci described the Chinese with characteristics that a European would attribute to his fellow countrymen. As noble and honorable Europeans would never tolerate an inept ruler, the Chinese also would not suffer such ineptitude. Even D'Orléans, who had many negative things to say about the Ming, lauded the wisdom and vigilance of one Ming prince. "He possessed not only a high order of intellect, but a singular aptitude for everything. He gave his orders in the field as if he had grown grey in harness. He kept a watchful eye on the conduct of the magistrates and the officers of the crown, in consequence of which nothing escaped his penetration."¹⁴ Ming China initially impressed the Jesuits with its size, with its stability, and with the noble character of both the people and the government.

Also, the Jesuits, immersed in the scholarly traditions of their order, appreciated the dedication of Chinese society to learning and the respect shown to teachers. During Ricci's time at court, the emperor impressed him with his dedication to mathematics. "The present Emperor supports two separate schools of mathematics at a very great expense"¹⁵ In addition to academic subjects, Ricci praised the profound respect and loyalty given to teachers, as dictated by Chinese culture. "These people pay more respect to their teachers than we do, and if one man places himself under another for instruction, even for a day, he will call him master for the rest of his life. Not only that, but he will show him the deference of a pupil to his master, by sitting beside him at any public gathering and by honoring him with the titles and the rites that are due to a magistrate."¹⁶ Ricci perhaps wished that

¹⁴ D'Orléans, *History of Tartar*, 29.

¹⁵ Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

Europeans would adopt a similar attitude, or this may have further convinced him that the success of the Jesuits relied upon imitating these Chinese teachers. In either case, early Jesuits in China admired the Confucian dictates about honoring education and scholars.

Despite their appreciation for the Ming in some sectors, Jesuits criticized more than praised the Ming Dynasty, and they particularly pinpointed aspects of both Chinese culture and government foreign to Europeans. Culturally, the Jesuits criticized Chinese sexual practices, aesthetics, and beliefs that they termed as "backwards." From the perspective of European culture whose sexual ideals condemned many practices, the Jesuits deplored many of these acts accepted in Chinese culture. "[Ricci] was especially critical of Buddhist and Daoist monks whose personal and sexual immorality was flagrant. He was highly critical of Chinese sensuality and slavery, which he felt were related. And he reserved some of his harshest criticisms for homosexual practices, particularly sodomy, which he believed was widely practiced among Chinese males."¹⁷ Sexuality heavily influenced Ricci's criticism of court eunuchs. While Europeans and particularly Catholics were familiar with castration, Ricci criticized the Chinese eunuchs with an eye toward accentuating European masculinity. "To a certain extent, Ricci's ethnographic strategy was to demonize the eunuchs with the aim of shoring up European claims to superiority."¹⁸ Not surprisingly, Jesuits disparaged sexual practices considered taboo by European culture.

In addition to cultural practices, the Jesuits disparaged Chinese visual culture. Jesuit artists made a Herculean effort to integrate with Chinese artists; however, the Jesuits

¹⁷ Mungello, *Great Encounter*, 17.

¹⁸ Mary Laven, "Jesuits and Eunuchs: Representing Masculinity in Late Ming China," *History and Anthropology* (2012): 211, accessed March 20, 2016, DOI: 10.1080/02757206.2012.675794.

resisted changing their European aesthetics, as Bailey's quote from Ricci demonstrated.

"The Chinese, although great enthusiasts of painting, nevertheless cannot approach our [artists], and they fall very much behind them in the manufacture of statuary and the art of foundry or casting."¹⁹ As they assessed both cultural practices and visual culture, Jesuits used European standards as a measure for "normal," and their assessment of Chinese "superstition" used the same basis. After the magistrates and priests announced an eclipse, they assembled and performed a ritual. "The assistance they render [to the kingdom] is made up of the clashing of innumerable cymbals and sometimes in a kneeling position, and the din is continued throughout the entire duration of the eclipse. I am told that, during an eclipse, they fear lest the planet will be devoured by a dragon; just what kind of a dragon, I do not know."²⁰ Though Jesuits viewed the Chinese through the lens of accommodation, they disparaged aspects of Ming culture which seemed to them foreign and uncultured.

As the Jesuits used their European sensibilities to judge other aspects of Ming China, they also used their European ideas of government to judge the Ming court, which they deemed dysfunctional. They criticized the court's lack of military power and its lack of punishment for criminals, but they reserved their harshest criticism for what they interpreted as the court's dishonorable conduct. Military displays of martial power saturated European cultures, and even Ricci as a priest found these displays impressive and used them as measures of a good government. He thought it weak that the military structure "was only a pale shadow" of the authority of its civil counterpart and that only

¹⁹ Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "'With Much Gallantry and Ornamentation': The Jesuit Mission to China, 1561-1773," in *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Inc., 1999), 88. Bracket in Bailey.

²⁰ Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 32.

weak men, in his opinion, sought a military career. "Such men, wrote Ricci, were motivated neither by patriotism nor love of king nor search for glory, but sought only sustenance for themselves and their families."²¹ In other words, the men of the Chinese military lacked a martial spirit of ambition. Ricci also saw a deficiency of martial strength in the Ming's judicial system; he accused the Ming of laxity when enforcing punishment. "With respect to the punishment of crime, one would say that in general Chinese authorities are rather remiss and particularly so in the case of a first theft. Capital punishment is never administered for this crime." He noted that more severe punishments, such as beating and galley slave sentencing, only occurred after the third charge.²² Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, S.J. even suggested that Chinese spiritual culture lacked concern for adequate punishments in the afterlife. "It is true that though the Canonical Books often exhort Men to fear *Tien*, and tho' they place the Souls of virtuous Men fear *Chang ti*, yet it does not appear that they have spoken clearly of the Punishments in the life to come."²³ In terms of military infrastructure, the penal code, and even spiritual punishments, the Jesuits disparaged what they deemed a weakness in the Ming court.

Jesuits identified xenophobia as another weakness of Chinese culture and the Ming Dynasty, but Jesuits pinpointed this "weakness" after their own failures. In order for Jesuit goals to succeed, the Ming court had to accept the Jesuits as equals, and no wide spread

²¹ Spence, *Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, 46.

²² Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 81.

²³ Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, S.J., *The General History of China: Containing a Geographical, Historical, Chronological, Political and Physical Description of the Empire of China, Chinese-Tartary, Corea and Thibet. Including an Exact and Particular Account of their Customs, Manners, Ceremonies, Religion, Arts and Sciences*, v. 3 (London: J.Watts, 1739-1741), 28, accessed August 1, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015057241484;view=1up;seq=7>.

acceptance ever occurred. Thus, Jesuits criticized the beliefs that they believed to have caused the Ming's rejection of Europeans. A sense of superiority and xenophobia complicated conversions and thwarted the Jesuits' inculturation policy. While the size of China and its state garnered awe from the Jesuits, the attitude of superiority that the grand state inspired in the Chinese people frustrated the priests who hoped to win more acceptance into Chinese society for the purpose of conversions. "Because of their ignorance of the size of the earth and the exaggerated opinion they have of themselves, the Chinese are of the opinion that only China among the nations is deserving of admiration."²⁴ Ricci further expressed frustration with this belief because it prevented a broader acceptance of European knowledge and theology. "The Chinese are so self-opinionated that they cannot be made to believe that the day will ever come when they will learn anything from foreigners which is not already set down in their own books."²⁵ More than identifying an actual xenophobic belief, Ricci's comments revealed that the Jesuits had perhaps expected more awe and admiration for their European knowledge and technology.

While the Jesuits fretted over what they interpreted as conceit, intense external pressures on the dynasty as well as their already suspicious attitudes toward Europeans contributed to these xenophobic beliefs. The connections between the Jesuits and merchants made it difficult for the Ming court to separate the priests from their fellow Europeans. After all, Matteo Ricci, perhaps the most famous China Jesuit, came to China

²⁴ Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 167.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

via the funds of King João III of Portugal.²⁶ Alonso Sanchez, S.J. arrived in China in order to spread the suggestion that Spain would build an embassy in Peking.²⁷ Additionally, Sanchez believed that China would fall under Spanish rule as quickly as Mexico and South America.²⁸ The Chinese proceeded prudently in their dealings with the Jesuits, and erring on the side of caution, they lumped all Europeans into a group of potential threats to the court. Certainly, the court had reason to be wary: "[i]t was partly owing to the evil deeds of the Portuguese and Spanish freebooters of the sixteenth century, that the Chinese government and people manifested such a distrust of foreigners who came by sea from the West."²⁹ Jesuits not only complained about this attitude, but they also used it as an excuse for the lack of conversions. However, the faltering Ming government was the more likely culprit. The "Ming state's frequent bureaucratic malfunctioning during the first three decades of the seventeenth century created a climate of uncertainty about the future that led many to be suspicious of the Jesuits."³⁰ The collapse of political, economic, and social structures – internal phenomena – most likely prevented the Chinese from focusing their full attention on the Jesuits. This distraction may have put them at a further disadvantage in their dire situation. While the Ming allowed German Jesuit Adam Schall to build only a few canons for them, the Qing "had no intention of treating such a useful scientific advisor as an enemy,"

²⁶ Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 42.

²⁷ Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 36.

²⁸ Manel Ollé, "The Jesuit Portrayals of China between 1583-1590," *Bulletin of Portuguese - Japanese Studies* 16 (Junio 2008): 54, accessed May 4, 2013, <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=36112468003>.

²⁹ C.W. Allan, *Jesuits at the Court of Peking* (Arlington, VA: University Publications of America, Inc., 1975), 26.

³⁰ Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 84.

and the first Qing emperor appointed Schall to a high court position within the Imperial Board of Astronomy.³¹ The Ming court's distrust of the Jesuits may have prevented them from utilizing the full benefit of European technology, a mistake that the next dynasty would not make. While Jesuits blamed their failure to garner religious conversions and veneration on xenophobia, the reality of the Jesuits' complicated relationships with other Europeans and of the deteriorating Ming Dynasty truly caused the lukewarm Chinese reception of the Jesuits, perhaps to its own detriment.

³¹ Bailey, "With Much Gallantry," 100.

CHAPTER IV

INVASION AND DESTRUCTION: JESUITS HAIL THE MANCHU ARRIVAL

As the Ming military structure pushed north to battle the descending Manchu army, Jesuits remained with their fledgling congregations and observed the progression of invasion. Their frustration with Ming court policies turned into disgust as the priests scrutinized Ming military policies. Jesuits despised the consequences that the Ming court resolutely enforced against generals who either had lost battles or otherwise disagreed with the court, and they acknowledged the "noble" behavior of the Manchu generals. These positive comments demonstrated the changing attitudes of the Jesuits; as they lost affection for the Ming, they viewed the Manchu invaders more and more positively.³²

In the midst of a military situation, Jesuits commented heavily on the behavior of Manchu commanders and soldiers. Martini described how Manchu commanders offered a choice of freedom to the Chinese commanders, as opposed to the Ming court who executed commanders for losses and disagreements. "[T]hey found so much Humanitie in the *Tartar*, and so much Inhumanity in the Emperor, they rather chose to fly to the former."³³ This "Humanitie" inspired D'Orléans to compliment the Manchus for their appreciation of good character. For Western Europeans, a comparison to the Romans constituted a high compliment. D'Orléans described a Chinese "grandee" as having a Roman deportment, but the Manchus, not the Chinese, appreciated the character of the grandee. The Manchus captured and imprisoned the grandee, but when he appeared before the leader, he demonstrated the "constancy which we admire in the ancient Romans." The Manchus were

³² Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 249.

³³ Martini, *Bellum Tartaricum*, 267.

impressed by the mandarin "with a noble bearing which would have done honour to a Roman consul ... True virtue always inspires respect, the Tartars were struck with admiration in this instance," and they released him. "The Chinese condemned the general, in spite of his character, according to law." Unlike the Chinese who adhered to the exact letter of the law above the honorable character of the general, the Manchus understood the virtuous "Roman" character of the general, just as a European would have appreciated it.

Another example concerned a Christian Chinese official, whose "noble conduct, which excited the admiration of all classes in the empire, met with nothing but censure from the court." Meanwhile, "the Tartar prince, who had been informed of what was passing, sent to offer him a refuge in his dominions, assuring him of protection if he would consent to join his party."³⁴ In both examples, D'Orléans portrayed the Chinese as morally weak and unable to appreciate the obvious-to-a-European virtue of the officers, while the Manchus acknowledged it. In the final example, D'Orléans used frank language to accuse the Ming court of moral frailty. He related the story of a Ming official who received unfair, in his interpretation, censure and chose to end his own life in order to achieve an honorable death. "[F]or not only did he refrain from murmuring at his hard fate, but ... he submitted to the savage decree of the tyrant with a resolution more akin to the firmness of ancient Rome than to the effeminacy of the Chinese."³⁵ D'Orléans directly expressed his distaste for the Chinese with explicit gendering language: the noble character of the official was steadfast and Roman, a baseline of manliness, while the Chinese court portrayed

³⁴ D'Orléans, *History of Tartar*, 11-13.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

“feminine” frailty. Ironically, the Jesuits criticized the Ming for minimizing their military and for their lenient treatment of criminals, but they also criticized the Ming for punishing their officials too severely. Clearly, Jesuits began to view the approaching Manchus as more preferable leaders than the Ming. By 1699, Jesuit Joachim Bouvet would write a praise-filled treatise about Kangxi as the unquestionable and legitimate ruler of China and about the Qing Dynasty as the perfect balance of Manchu martial abilities and Chinese learning.³⁶ Numerous Jesuit descriptions of how the Manchus appreciated excellent character and of how the Chinese failed to honor it expressed both their growing disapproval of the Ming court and their increasing admiration for the arriving Manchus.

Despite the outpouring of positive Jesuit observations about the Qing, they disliked the harsh life of Manchu warriors, and they spoke honestly about the destruction caused by the Manchu invasion. As Martini described the Manchu army, he clearly thought them rough and surly. “[I]t is no wonder they are so quick, for they never carry with them any Baggage, nor do they take care for Provision; for they fill themselves with what they find, yet commonly they eat Flesh, though half roasted or half boyled; if they find none then they devour their Horses, or Camels.”³⁷ Martini recounted that the Manchus cremated servants with the bodies of important individuals; although, “now since they conquered *China*, they have left off this Barbarous custome, being reprehended and corrected for it by the *Chinenses* themselves.”³⁸ Because Jesuits served small congregations of commoners in

³⁶ Edwin J. Van Kley, “News from China: Seventeenth-Century European Notices of the Manchu Conquest,” *The Journal of Modern History* (December 1973): 577, accessed April 3, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1879263>.

³⁷ Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm*, 53.

³⁸ Martini, *Bellum Tartarticum*, 258.

addition to court positions, they witnessed the devastation left in the wake of the mounted warriors. "In the opinion of Francisco Furtado, the tragedy he had seen played out before his eyes seemed like a full dress rehearsal for 'the state of the world on the last day of Judgment after the War of the Elements.'" Another Jesuit remarked on the scarred landscape: "[w]hat more vivid image could there be of a finished world but grassless fields and devastated cities with all their inhabitant gone?"³⁹ Martini commented that the Manchus were known "to have that custom and practise, to destroy and put all to fire and sword that did resist."⁴⁰ The Jesuits knew that the Manchus could be brutal to those who displeased them. While D'Orléans had previously praised a Qing emperor as someone close to a French prince in character, he described another Qing prince as "one of the most cruel and sanguinary monsters that ever existed."⁴¹ Though the Jesuits welcomed the Manchus and openly praised the conquering abilities of the Qing, they disliked the mannerisms of the horse lords and criticized the devastation caused by the invasion, but these criticisms of wartime destruction did not diminish their positive assessments of the Manchus.

³⁹ Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 112-113.

⁴⁰ Martini, *Bellum Tartaricum*, 259.

⁴¹ D'Orléans, *History of Tartar*, 26.

CHAPTER V

MOTIVATIONS COLOR THE LENS: HOW JESUIT ROLES SHAPED THEIR “OBJECTIVE”

OBSERVATIONS

As discussed previously, Jesuits arrived in China at the discretion of secular authorities, and they harbored their own spiritual goals as well. Despite these roles, Jesuits recorded their assessments of Chinese and Manchus with the intention of remaining objective collectors who based their writings on facts. As Du Halde stated to his readers, “here I shall relate nothing but what is drawn from the *Chinese History*, or gained from the Memoirs of Persons of Judgement and Sincerity, who have spent the greatest part of their lives in the Empire of *China*, and who are become skillful in the Language and learning of this Nation.”⁴² Even though he admitted that he used second-hand sources, Du Halde committed to providing authentic information. Jesuits fully intended to write historic and accurate current event accounts, and historians have since used Jesuits writings as historical documents. While the fact that Jesuit opinions appear in their writings shocks no one, no one has yet examined how the priests’ unique positions in China shaped their opinions of Chinese and Manchus. Being Europeans, being religious men, and being colonial agents all influenced Jesuit observations.

The first role which influenced the priests was intrinsic; they evaluated the Manchus based upon how they seemed to be Europeanesque. From the first reports about the Manchus, the Jesuits immediately praised their physical appearance, personable demeanors, and martial ability, attributes that the Jesuits deemed familiar or associated

⁴² Du Halde, *The General History of China*, 15.

with Europeans. Manchurian warriors resembled Central Asian horse lords, people with whom Europeans were familiar. Martini described their physical appearance, and he highlighted qualities appealing to Europeans. "[T]heir faces are comely, ... their colour is white, but their Nose is not so flat, nor their eyes so little, as the Chineses are." While Martini equated the Manchus with Central Asian tribes, he described the Manchus as an improvement over these tribes. "In the rest of their manners they resemble our Tartars of Europe, though they may be nothing so barbarous." He also made a bold statement about his preference for the manner of the Manchus. "They rejoice to see Strangers; they no way like the grimness and sourness of the Chines gravity, and therefore in their first abords [on first approach] they appear more human."⁴³ Appearing more human can be read as appearing more European, as though Martini ranked the Manchus within a global racial hierarchy with Europeans at the top as truly human. The Manchus struck Martini as an improvement over the Chinese, and he certainly saw them as more attractive because they seemed more familiar to Europeans. Perhaps Martini also derived his positive attitude about the Manchus not only for their familiar qualities, but also for their openness toward strangers. For the Jesuit priest, a willingness to communicate meant more opportunities to convert the heathen. In addition to appearance, Martini complimented the Manchus on their martial abilities; they praised this same aspect of the Manchus that they had criticized about the Ming. He described the Manchu warriors' quick ascension of the city walls during an attack, "for such is the quicknesse and nimblenesse of the *Tartars* (in which they excell all Nations)." This quickness and nimbleness neutralized the Chinese ability to fire muskets

⁴³ Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm*, 51.

because the Manchus surprised the Chinese forces with a second charge, and the Chinese dropped their weapons and fled.⁴⁴ As Europeans, Jesuits assessed the Manchus in terms of their similarity to Europeans, and they deemed Manchus “more human” due to physical appearances, personable demeanors, and martial abilities that the Jesuits considered to be familiar and European-like.

The second Jesuit role which influenced their descriptions of Manchus involved their capacity as religious men with a religious cosmology. In this role, they welcomed the Manchus not only as a new regime with new conversion opportunities, but also as God's judgment upon the stubborn Ming. In his *History of China*, Semedo praised the Manchus in terms of Manchu virtues overcoming Ming vices. "*Ambition and Avarice* prevailed over *virtue*, and *private Interest* had blinded *Honour* and *Generositie*, this manner of living began to decay."⁴⁵ According to the Jesuits, the Ming earned destruction at the hands of the Manchus because of their rejection of Catholicism. "From Macau, Alfonso Vagnone ventured that the Almighty 'wants to give a great lashing to this kingdom for its many sins and, in particular, for having thrown out the preachers of the Gospel.'"⁴⁶ The Jesuits not only believed that the Ming deserved their defeat, but they also believed that the arriving Manchus provided new opportunities for the priests to gain footholds in China. D'Orléans praised one Manchu general highly, explaining that the general's greatness lay in his restoration of churches in China: "he is a great man, full of good qualities, and to whom the Christian religion owes its restoration in China, as the Tartars owe to him in a great degree

⁴⁴ Martini, *Bellum Tartariucm*, 258-259.

⁴⁵ F. Alvarez Semedo, *The History of the Great and Renowned Monarchy of China* (London: by E. Tyler for John Cook, 1655), 150.

⁴⁶ Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 71.

the preservation of their conquest."⁴⁷ D'Orléans' praise focused on his hope that the Manchus would welcome the Jesuits. As he praised the Qing emperor of his day, D'Orléans expressed this sentiment again. "It was to a prince so just that God had reserved, as to a second Cyrus, the glory of re-establishing his worship and his altars in China."⁴⁸ Through their religious understandings of the functioning of the world, the Jesuits hailed the arrival of the Manchus both as divine retribution for the Ming and as a new dynasty which would welcome them.

Because Jesuits interpreted the arrival of the Manchus as divinely ordained, they praised the Qing Dynasty as the pinnacle of Chinese civilization. Le Comte went so far as to describe the Qing as nearly divine rulers. "As if god himself had been the legislator, the form of government is hardly less perfect in its origin than it is at present after the more than 4,000 years that it has lasted".⁴⁹ Following the interpretation that God established the Qing Dynasty, Jesuits suggested that European rulers, also divinely ordained rulers, should and would take great interest in Qing rulers. When D'Orléans dedicated his book to the Lord Chancellor, he promised that the new rulers of China would greatly impress the Chancellor. "China has nothing to surpass the history of the two kings who conquered it; and the rest of the world would have had nothing to equal it, if Louis the Great had not reigned in France." He upheld the Manchu rulers as examples of good governing for a vast empire: "But that which cannot be sufficiently admired, and which I am sure, my lord, will interest you much, is the wisdom of these monarchs in governing this vast empire, and the

⁴⁷ D'Orléans, *History of Tartar*, 61.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁹ Mackerras, "Jesuit Missionaries and the Philosophers," 30.

infinite multitude of people which Heaven has subjected to their administration." Further, he suggested that the Lord Chancellor's great wisdom would be able to appreciate "the conduct of these princes, the traces of a policy which has been skillful without cunning, and efficacious without violence." While he commended the Manchus as honorable in their conquest, D'Orléans praised the first two Qing emperors for their qualities as rulers. "Their genius, their courage, and their general conduct, were alike remarkable; and it will be seen by what we are about to relate, that the politeness of these Tartar kings would be held in as high estimation in France as in China."⁵⁰ As the Jesuit religious role led them to interpret the Qing as divinely ordained, they saw the actions of the Qing as actions befitting divinely installed rulers. When Manchus were seen as being appointed by God, they were elevated in Jesuit estimation from heathen to worthy of European interest.

By the nature of their priestly roles, Jesuits were intrinsically religious, but many of them arrived at the bidding of secular authorities who had colonial goals. "[T]hese hardy adventures were armed with *royal commissions* to occupy territory in the name of the Holy Church of Christ."⁵¹ Within this context, the third role which influenced Jesuits was as colonial agents, and as colonial agents, Jesuits praised Manchus for the colonial goals that the priests imposed upon them. As a warning about this type of values imposition, Sinologist Arif Dirlik cautioned, "[s]ome [cultures in China] had colonial ambitions of their own, but efforts to find some kind of equivalence between these world-empire colonialisms and the colonialism of capitalist or socialist modernity of the kind associated with actually

⁵⁰ D'Orléans, *History of Tartar*, 1.

⁵¹ Allan, *Jesuits at the Court of Peking*, 7. Italics added.

existing socialisms, with the nation-state at its center, are not very convincing."⁵² The Jesuit descriptions and interpretations of the collision of the Ming Dynasty with the Manchus should not be taken literally. Jesuit enthusiasm for the Qing derived in part from their perception that the Manchus had invaded China with European motivations, colonization and imperial expansion. Rather, their assumptions and interpretations express more about their own goals and about what was important to them rather than saying anything about the Manchus themselves. With this context in mind, Jesuit praise for Manchu rule and intentions provide an index for European ideals of ambition and imperialistic goals.

Jesuits specifically praised how the Manchus conquered China and how they demonstrated ambition by expanding their domain. In fact, D'Orléans claimed that past Chinese emperors who had battled against Northern peoples had missed a valuable opportunity to perfect China. Upon his visit to the Great Wall, D'Orléans remarked that "[a]fter all, the monarch who, in our days, has reunited the Chinese and Tartars under the same dominion, has done things more advantageous for the safety of China, than the Chinese emperor who built this long wall."⁵³ D'Orléans implied that the Manchu rulers acted upon a grand vision of conquest, at least the vision which the Jesuits assumed that the Manchus had for themselves. In a more direct example, Semedo compared the Manchu decision to invade and to conquer with the choice of King Theopompus who made the same choice for the sake of leaving his son a "more lasting kingdom." As Theopompus enlarged his kingdom for his sons, the Manchus created a great kingdom for the future generations

⁵² Arif Dirlik, "The End of Colonialism? The Colonial Modern in the Making of Global Modernity," *boundary2* (Spring 2005): 21, accessed May 7, 2013, DOI: 10.1215/01903659-32-1-1.

⁵³ D'Orléans, *History of Tartar*, 83.

of their dynasty.⁵⁴ Also describing Manchus as ambitious conquerors, D'Orléans expressly lauded the Manchus as worthy of European interest. "There is something so singular in the history of the two celebrated conquerors who subdued China, that we can scarcely give to the public anything more curious and agreeable than the information we have acquired concerning the great actions of these monarchs."⁵⁵ While historians would hesitate to categorize their subject in this manner, Jesuits described Manchus as colonizers of interest to Europeans, who were also hoping to colonize Chinese.

Despite the dangers of interpreting the motivations of other cultures, Jesuits recorded their opinions of Manchus and sent them back to Europe as "objective" histories of China; Jesuit roles influenced their opinions on an unconscious level. There was no conscious thought, "I am here as a colonial agent, and I believe that these people must have the same goals as me." Rather, their roles subtly created the context for their conscious experiences in China. Additionally, previous beliefs and understandings had influenced these priests to adopt certain roles in China. Hence, while Jesuits observed and participated in the events of the Manchu invasion, they observed, assessed and interpreted these events as both secular agents and missionaries. They judged physical appearance, the historical timing of the invasion, the value of studying Manchu actions, and Manchu motivations as they saw them through their lens of secular and spiritual roles.

⁵⁴ Semedo, *History of China*, 101.

⁵⁵ D'Orléans, *History of Tartar*, 1.

CHAPTER VI

TRIBAL VERSUS SETTLED: THE TRULY OBJECTIVE JESUIT CONTRIBUTION

A single term perhaps defines the value of the Jesuit perspective to historians of this time period in Chinese history: Tartar. In all of the Jesuit writings quoted here, the priests referred to Manchus as Tartars, a term referencing Central Asian peoples who spoke a Turkic language and lived a nomadic lifestyle based literally on the backs of horses. Through the use of this term in reference to the Manchus, Jesuits classified the Manchus in an ethnic category with which they were already familiar, despite the fact that the Manchus lived in North China and not on Central Asian steppes. For example, Martini referred to the Manchus as Tartars but he distinguished the “Tartars” in China from “our Tartars of Europe.”⁵⁶ While Jesuits saw the Manchus as Tartars or as tribal horse lords and actually admired the Manchus for their nomadic, militaristic culture, the Chinese had long defined themselves as civilized, settled people in contrast to the Northern nomads, whom they categorized as barbarians. As Europeans, Jesuits did not adhere to this cultural bias, and instead, they praised the martial culture and, what they interpreted as masculine and Roman, authority of the Manchus. The use of the term Tartar demonstrated both that the Jesuits recognized the Manchus as nomadic and that they categorized them in an ethnic category familiar to them.

Curiously, Jürchens had adopted the name Manchu in order to avoid associations with a tribal lifestyle. “Ming period Jürchen were the descendants of the people who founded the Jin dynasty in the twelfth century.” They had settled along what is now the

⁵⁶ Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm*, 51.

Russian-China boarder, and they lived in roughly three tribes, “the Jianzhou, the Haixi, and the Yeren.” The Jürchen tribes were semi-nomadic people who combined “hunting and fishing with limited nomadism and agriculture.”⁵⁷ Twenty-eight years before the official establishment of the Qing Dynasty, this identity changed. In 1616, the Jürchen leader attempted to avoid associations with tribal peoples by adopting the name Manchu over the name Jürchen. “Hong Taiji decided to abolish his fledgling state’s connection with the tribal past that was associated with the Jürchen name ... Instead of Jürchen, Hong Taiji’s people were now to be called Manchus.”⁵⁸ Combined with a new dynasty name – Qing, the term Manchu designated a new nation of Northern peoples, an unified ethnicity and culture riding under a new dynastic banner unsullied with tribal associations. As any historian of China knows, these linguistic constructs did not erase the Jürchens’ tribal nature in the eyes of the Chinese. Certainly, the Chinese did not consider the Manchus to be a new settled people like themselves. The increasingly frequent anti-Qing, anti-Manchu sentiments and revolts toward the end of the nineteenth century testify to the failure of the Manchus to incorporate into Chinese society. As a people foreign to the Han majority, the Manchus attempted to adopt and to claim a Han Chinese identity, but the fall of the Qing Dynasty, amid calls to reject foreigners – the dynasty itself, demonstrates the failure of this policy. Despite Hong Taiji’s efforts to aid inculturation by dissociating Manchus from their tribal past through the use of new terminology, the Qing Dynasty ultimately failed to leave their horses behind, as it were.

⁵⁷ Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 47-49, accessed February 28, 2016, Google Books.

⁵⁸ Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 31.

While Jesuits had many biases, they did not have the same biases as Chinese, and their lack of Chinese biases about settled and nomadic societies finally gives the Jesuit perspective objective value, and it works in the Manchus' favor. As Europeans, Jesuits did not disdain tribal people from the North, as many Chinese did. They were not invested in Chinese debates about nomad versus settled or about barbarian versus civilized. Since Jesuits definitely recognized the Manchus as tribal, Hong Taiji's new terminology clearly went right over their heads and failed to establish the impression of a more settled people. As evidenced by the Jesuits' failure to conceive of the Manchus as anything short of tribal and nomadic, the Manchus did not separate themselves from their Jürchen past. While historians of China already know this fact, recognizing it through Jesuit writings provides more evidence from a source outside of Chinese culture, and the multiple sources lead to the same conclusion: the Manchus were not able to dissociate themselves from their tribal past.

Over time, across dynasties, and between Jesuits themselves, the opinions of the Jesuits changed, differed, and traveled across oceans to inform a vast European audience about the distant Orient. The Jesuits arrived in China at the bidding of colonial interests and with their own spiritual goals. With their academic skills, they established a position in the Chinese court from which they made valuable observations. As meticulous academics, Jesuits recorded their observations and research, and while these writings benefited the Catholic Church, they ultimately had the greatest impact on secular society; the information that they sent back to Europe influenced Europeans and continued to influence scholars into the present. As an example of the mass distribution of Jesuit information in Europe,

Louis Daniel Le Comte published *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* in Paris in 1696. "It was immediately translated into several languages and widely read, and in the context of its time it was certainly an image-formulating work." European writers such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Hume researched Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* and his *The General History of China*.⁵⁹ Because the Society of Jesus and the Catholic Church had many detractors in countries like England, not all Europeans wanted to reference Jesuit writings; however, few other resources existed. Nicholas Koss studies how writer Samuel Purchas modified Matteo Ricci's journals to exclude Ricci's "accommodation stances and Catholic theology. Purchas was one of the first to dare to publish a Jesuit text about China in seventeenth-century England. ... [I]t must also have been the case that the demand for information about China was so great that the fact that this material was originally written by the unpopular Jesuits could be overlooked."⁶⁰ Sinologists to this day continue to rely on Jesuit writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries because "the early Jesuits seemed more tolerant of cultural and religious differences."⁶¹ Eventually, other Catholic orders gained momentum in China and sent their own, more negative, views to Europe, but "in terms of images of China conveyed to Europe, the Jesuits were incomparably more important and influential during the seventeenth and

⁵⁹ Mackerras, "Jesuit Missionaries and the Philosophers," 30-31.

⁵⁹ Nicholas Koss, "Matteo Ricci on China via Samuel Purchas: Faithful Re-Presentation," in *Western Visions of the Far East in a Transpacific Age, 1522-1657*, ed. Christina H. Lee (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2012), 100.

⁶¹ Robert Richmond Ellis, "Representations of China and Europe in the Writings of Diego de Pantoja: Accommodating the East or Privileging the West?," in *Western Visions of the Far East in a Transpacific Age, 1522-1657*, *ibid.*, 102.

eighteenth centuries than any of the rival religious orders.”⁶² Though scholars credit Northern Europe with creating the academic structure of Sinology, Jesuits pioneered “a form of 'proto-Sinology.’”⁶³ Because they provided a valuable resource to seventeenth century Europe and to scholars today, the Jesuit perspective of the Manchu invasion had lasting influence on the Western view of China.

Until now, scholars have not evaluated the Jesuits in terms of either their roles or how this perspective tinted their perception of the Ming and Qing. The cover of Martini’s book reminds us of the pivotal historical moment of Jesuit observations. In the midst of domestic invasion and global collision, Jesuits, as Europeans, priests, and colonizers, described the Manchus as being more like Europeans than like the Chinese. Many of the Jesuits’ positive comments revolved around the conquering, or as the Jesuits interpreted it - colonizing, capabilities of the Manchus. When we examine the Jesuit writings within the context of the Jesuits as colonizers observing a people whom they interpreted as colonizers, we reveal a new layer of their commentary. Though they intended their observations to be objective, their roles in the domestic and global events in China clearly affected their opinions. The most objective Jesuit observation arose from their detachment to the nomadic or settled nature of the Manchu culture. Freed from a Chinese bias for a settled culture, Jesuits openly acknowledged the Manchus as a nomadic people and unreservedly praised them. This observation of difference is critical at a time in which the Manchus attempted to establish themselves as a Chinese dynasty. As these European priests

⁶² Mackerras, “Jesuit Missionaries and the Philosophers,” 26.

⁶³ Liam Matthew Brockey, “The First China Hands: The Forgotten Iberian Origins of Sinology,” in *Western Visions of the Far East in a Transpacific Age, 1522-1657*, *ibid.*, 71.

observed the Manchu conquest of the Ming, they drew upon both their European culture and their background as Jesuit priests. Ultimately, they preferred those who colonized - those like themselves.

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