

brief index complete this erudite book, which would perhaps one day be superseded if time and finance allow Gimm to publish a critical edition of the entire secret protocols concerning the Jesuit astronomers and their Chinese associates. Perhaps one last word is in order. Whereas Western science triumphed in the end and the four Jesuits suffered temporary imprisonment, their Chinese Christian colleagues (including Li Jubo and his brother) were not as lucky. They were executed. Such was the price for their faith in an episode in which too often we only remember the main Jesuit actors.

R. Po-chia Hsia

History Department, Penn State, State College, PA, USA

rxh46@psu.edu

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Litian Swen, *Jesuit Mission and Submission: Qing Rulership and the Fate of Christianity in China, 1644–1735*. East and West: Culture, Diplomacy and Interactions, 9. Leiden: Brill, 2021. Pp. x + 227. Hb, € 39,00/ \$47.00.

Slavery—an evocative term, not least amidst the latest reassessment of the European utilization of African slave labor in the construction of their imperial economies. To readers familiar with the slave-holding societies of Western antiquity, other dimensions than pure coercion will also spring to mind—such as the Greek teachers who formed part of the wealthier settings of Roman society. The present volume is thus a timely and very welcome contribution to the tension field of early Christian missions and the ethnic complexity of Qing China.

The chapters of Swen's monograph are structured in a sequence which allows the argumentation to culminate in the center, i.e. around chapters four and five. The initial chapter is devoted to a thematic introduction of the topic. In logical order, the reader is being primed for the main argumentation of the book's thesis, namely by illustrating the relevance of Manchu culture, the house (*boo-i*) slavery tradition, and the early Qing palace management. Numbering around twenty pages, Swen's introduction is brief, placing the clear emphasis on the essential quality of the Jesuit court missionaries at the Kangxi court as members of the emperor's personal network—his very family. In return for the voluntary subjugation of the missionaries—just as it was customary for senior Manchus—the Kangxi emperor would extend the unconditional protection of his court over every single “house slave” (*boo-i aha*). Whilst there

can be no doubt that the Qing emperors derived their immediate authority from rituals of submission, for instance by the symbolical lashing of the *ahada šusiha* (slave steward whip) whenever a Qing emperor climbed up the steps to his throne, the paucity of comparative analysis concerning the nature of slavery—and in fact concerning the choice of translated vocabulary by the author—is the principal weakness of this monograph. There is one paragraph (9–10) devoted to the “original designation” of the *boo-i aha* phenomenon in Manchu society, in addition to one footnote (fn. 29, ch. 1) citing the latest publications on the topic, but otherwise not much is said about the background of this rather central tenet. Swen’s list of consulted titles clearly emphasizes works on Christianity during the Rites Controversy rather than literature on Manchu culture and history. Ideas as to how the author could further develop the analysis of the term “*boo-i* slave” are given at the end of the present review.

Having made this rather marginal objection, Litan is using his knowledge of relevant sources in the following chapters to admirable levels. A wide array of Chinese and European sources is systematically employed for the analysis of the relationship between the Kangxi emperor and “his” missionaries, whilst the *Acta Pekinensia* edited by Kilian Stumpf provide the backbone of Swen’s archival evidence. Part 1 (“The Jesuits’ Identity and Qing Rulership, 1644–1705,” 25–106) builds up the main argumentation of the volume, setting out the paradigm shift in the Catholic China mission when the Manchu-dominated Qing took over the Celestial Mandate from the Ming dynasty in 1644 (chapter 1: “Jesuits and Their Entrance in the Manchu World”). This part then continues with the strategic choices which the ascent of the Kangxi emperor brought along (chapters 2 “The Jesuits’ Strategic Turn” and 3 “The Jesuits and Kangxi’s Imperial Household Department”), going far beyond their nominal role as ministerial advisers and extending into a sphere which by all intents can be described as a “special relationship” of intimate dimensions (105–6).

It is at this point that *Jesuit Mission and Submission* enters the climax of its argumentation. Having laid the groundwork concerning the genuine relationship between the Jesuit missionaries and the Kangxi court, Part 2 (“Emperor Kangxi’s Negotiations with the Pope, 1705–1721,” 109–65) elucidates the debate between the emperor and the missionaries as regards the nature of the Confucian rites. In particular, the pages setting out the preparations for the visit of de Tournon (e.g. 110) are masterly interwoven by Swen with the preceding analysis of the intra-family politics determining the court politics of the Kangxi emperor. Chapter 4 (“Kangxi, the Jesuits and the First Papal Legation to China”) expands on the degree of dogmatic unity the close bond between ruler and servants had created. The Kangxi ruler, by any definition a “pagan,” could thus live up to the role of advising his Western subjects on theological

details—a quality which the emperor tried to perfect also with other areas of knowledge (rather than “faith,” to the Jesuits’ disappointment). In fact, the determination with which the emperor defended the legitimacy of the Confucian principles and rituals when drafting his response to the papal objections (e.g. 124 or 129) should have dashed any hopes concerning a Christian conversion. Having defended the court missionaries’ position on the Rites during the sojourn of Apostolic Visitor Charles-Thomas Maillard de Tournon in 1705, the emperor took exception when the papal legate briefly decided to override the authority of the trusted “court slave” Joachim Bouvet, who had been appointed to convey Beijing’s objections to the papal condemnation of the Confucian rites in person. The tug of war between the papacy and the Qing ruler came to a head during the second apostolic visit, analyzed in chapter 5 (“Kangxi’s Fourteen-Year Wait and the Second Papal Legation”).

By this chapter, the close-knit bonds between “master” and “slaves” have been made amply clear, which explains why the book enters the brief third part (“The Prohibition in 1724,” 169–95) as a mere chapter in length. Chapter 6, however, deals with an important de-coupling between the Jesuit missionaries and the Qing rulers (“The Yongzheng Emperor and Christian Missionaries”). Swen’s interpretation is clear: since the bond between the court missionaries and the Qing throne was a personal one determined by the Kangxi emperor, this closeness could not persist once the pro-Buddhist Yongzheng emperor had won the bloody succession struggles and taken over the reins of the Qing empire. The postscript (“Coincidences? The Rise and Fall of the Christian Mission,” 196–200) makes this point obvious: without the trust which a Manchu master-servant relationship entailed, the protection that the court extended over the missionaries had to be rescinded. In order to illustrate this key argument, Swen Litian decided to add Kangxi’s threatened prohibition of the Christian missions (Appendix 2) and the later letter by the Yongzheng emperor to Nian Gengyao (App. 1). More could have been said concerning the understanding of Christianity as a missionary religion by the Yongzheng emperor. The author’s immediate conclusion, namely that the anti-missionary edict of 1724 had disastrous consequences for Christianity in China, disregards the fact that Christianity took root and expanded as a folk religion throughout China between then and the 1850s, despite the decreasing number of European missionaries and also despite the official backlash against perceived heresies.

Given the highly evocative range of topics discussed in Swen’s monograph, it leaves little to be desired. However, there are three lines of thought that could well be expanded in any future revision: 1. Is “slavery” the correct term to use when referring to a relationship that entailed a high degree of autonomy in the decisions and daily lives of the court Jesuits? Had historical parallels

from different eras been compared in the introductory chapter, the relativity of the term would have become more obvious. This could have included models of slavery in pre-historical times and in early civilizations (the Graeco-Roman world included), pre-Columbian America, African regions before European colonization, slavery and Islam, slavery in Mongolia and Tibet, and the parallels with and differences to master-vassal relationships in feudal settings.

2. What is the precise definition of “*aha-hood*” /slavery in the social culture of the Manchus who established themselves in the Jianzhou region from the late Ming period onwards? From an anthropological perspective, is it feasible to equate the Kangxi court with the social patterns established by their Tungusic forebears? If it were indeed a matter of “importing the Steppe into China,” would Mongol practices of social interaction not have been more important? If in the master-slave relationship the *boo-i aha* followed the wishes of the *boo-i ejen* (house master) as part of a “natural” social order, would this not put the Manchu ruler into the position of a Confucian family head, similar to the *paterfamilias* in ancient Rome? In other words, was the Kangxi court more “Manchu” or more “Confucian” in the application of hierarchical family structures?

3. Finally, was the concept of “submission” really alien to the Jesuits entering China—or was it not a concept already familiar to the clerics from the West, since they had sworn perpetual oaths of submission to God, in the concrete setting of the religious orders which they belonged to? At this point the translation not only of “slave” (*aha*) is of interest, but also of “master” (*ejen*), which is a term of great importance in the religious language used by Catholics in Manchu. In other words, the Jesuits behaved within the Kangxi court not merely as “family members” of the Qing *khan*, but also as if they belonged to the same order as their master. The potential conflict between the earthly *ejen* of the *boo-i aha* thus stands contrasted to their submission to the Master of Heaven (*abka-i ejen*) until the end of their lives.

The above criticism is not meant to distract from the value of this study, but to open avenues for future academic debate—anthropological, linguistic, and legal. As it stands, *Jesuit Mission and Submission* by Swen Litian is a thought-provoking, intelligently researched and presented, and very timely publication that I would advise all students of early Qing China and of the Jesuit missionary enterprise to read without delay.

Lars Peter Laamann

SOAS, University of London, London, UK

LL10@soas.ac.uk

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