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K'UNG-TZU OR CONFUCIUS?
THE JESUIT INTERPRETATION OF CONFUCIANISM

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Philosophy in the Australian National University

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This thesis is wholly the work of
the undersigned

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SYNOPSIS

This thesis attempts to trace and place in context the developing interpretation of Confucius and Confucianism propounded by the Jesuit missionaries in China during the period of the old mission, from its inception c. 1580 to its collapse after the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism was rooted in the Jesuit missionary experience throughout the world, but, more immediately, arose as a response to the peculiar problems experienced by Jesuits in the Far East from the time of Francis Xavier on. Xavier and his successors were confronted by the same pressures of language and culture that had marked and to some extent frustrated earlier intrusions of foreign religions into China—Buddhism, the Nestorian Christians of the T'ang, Judaism and Islam, as well as the Franciscan missionaries of the 13th. and 14th. centuries. Problems of translation and finding equivalent terminology, the Chinese tendency to syncretism and the difficulty of finding an acceptable social role, had demonstrated the necessity of assimilation to Chinese culture.

Alessandro Valignano outlined a scheme of accommodation which Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci carried through. To Ricci belongs the responsibility for the decisive adoption of an approach to the Chinese through Confucianism. His distinction between the primitive pure theism of the Confucian classics and its later atheistic exponents remained to the end the basis of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. His scientific knowledge, his ethical teachings and his anti-Buddhist stance were attractive to Chinese scholar-officials in the political and intellectual crisis of the late Ming. His acceptance of the Confucian life-style, including ritual observances, enabled many to accept Christianity as complementing Confucianism rather than supplanting it.

Ricci's interpretation of Confucianism was challenged both from within the Society of Jesus by those suspicious of Neo-Confucian 'atheism' and by missionaries of other orders who favoured a direct approach and regarded Confucian rites as idolatrous. The Jesuits soon agreed to follow Ricci's line. And at the Canton Conference of 1667-1668 a working policy on the Rites question was adopted, again along Ricci's lines. The Jesuit view of 'Confucius, the Chinese Philosopher', teacher of a pure theism and high morality, was widely propagated in Europe and deeply influenced European thinkers.

The Rites issue broke out again in the 1690s largely through its involvement in essentially non-Chinese ecclesiastical arguments. The missions of the papal legates, de Tournon and Mezzabarba, and associated papal decrees against the Rites, undercut the Jesuit method by removing its social base and inhibiting the Jesuit writings in Chinese.

Some Jesuits in Peking attempted to satisfy European and Chinese critics by a fresh approach — the detection of traces of the primitive revelation and Old Testament history in the Chinese classics. This 'Figurism' was rejected by most of the Jesuits of the China mission as unfounded and extravagant, but Bouvet, Foucquet and de Prémare each found sympathisers in Europe. Their critics, de Mailla and Gaubil, and the Jesuit editors in Europe all made contributions to European knowledge of China which laid the foundations of European Sinology. With the notable exception of La Charme's Hsing-li chên-ch'üan of 1753, the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism in the 18th. century was directed more at a European than a Chinese audience. And it still serves to raise fundamental questions about the nature of religion and about the possibility of cross-cultural understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author's indebtedness to a legion of people is obvious on every page of this work. During the years of its gestation I have received constant encouragement and good advice from historians, sinologists, librarians and members of the Society of Jesus, in Australia, Asia and Europe. May I tender the work itself as thanks, inadequate though it be, as the most appropriate way of expressing my gratitude for the interest they have taken in the subject itself and in my stumbling pursuit of understanding. I must, however, acknowledge my special debt to those without whose daily assistance the work could not have been completed. To Otto van der Sprenkel for inspiration, criticism, and access to his enormous store of knowledge of men and books, Chinese and European; to Igor de Rachewiltz and Julia Ching for lighting dark places; to Professor A.L.Basham for smoothing my way in numerous directions; to Father Edmond Lamalle, Jesuit Archivist, for unfailing kindness and help; and to Mr. J.M.Braga for sharing his enthusiasm for, and knowledge of the Portuguese pioneers in Asia: to all these heartfelt thanks, and the hope that my work will repay to some extent their time and interest.

ABBREVIATIONS
USED IN THIS WORK

CHANTILLY	-	Archives of the French Province of the Society of Jesus, Maison St. Louis, Les Fontaines, Chantilly, Oise, France.
LONDON:BM	-	British Museum, London.
LONDON:PRO	-	Public Records Office, London.
PARIS:BN	-	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
ROME:APF	-	Archives of the Congregation <u>De Propaganda Fide</u> , Rome.
ROME:ASJ	-	Archives of the Society of Jesus, Rome.
ROME:BAV	-	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome.
ROME:BVE	-	Biblioteca (Nazionale Centrale) Vittorio Emanuele, Rome.

References to manuscripts are given in this form:

Location	Fonds	Folio number(s)	Recto or Verso

e.g. Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 23, ff.62r-65v.

References to Chinese works paginated in the traditional style are given as follows:

Title	<u>Chuan</u> number	Folio number	Recto(a) or Verso(b)

e.g. Ch'ing shih kao, ch.29, 6a-7b.

Chuan 上 is indicated by A.

Chuan 下 is indicated by B.

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PREFACE

Confucius is, in a sense, a Jesuit invention. It is one of the aims of this study to establish what that sense is. It is not just a question of the name, the Latinized 'Confucius'; although it is significant that Confucius was introduced to Europe in the language of Rome. The crucial problem is to establish to what extent the 'Confucius' of the Jesuit letters, travel reports, treatises and translations, corresponds to the Chinese Confucius. We are not so much concerned here with Confucius the man, the K'ung Chiu of history, as with the myth¹, the K'ung-tzu of Chinese tradition. To what extent was the 'Confucius' introduced to Europe by the Jesuits, a Jesuit creation, and to what extent an accurate representation of the view held by the Chinese themselves of the man and his ideas?

The process by which the Jesuits of the old China mission² developed their image of Confucius is a fascinating subject of study for its own sake. It also provides us with an amply documented case of major cultural confrontation³. Two great cultures had developed in virtual ignorance of each other and were now suddenly brought into contact. The Jesuits were the first intermediaries in that confrontation, and since they quickly appreciated the dominant role of the Confucian value-system in Chinese society and government, their interpretation of Confucianism was the point of cultural shock. The political clash was delayed till the nineteenth century although the Jesuits played a role in the earliest diplomatic exchanges between China and Portugal, Holland, France, Russia and England⁴. Chinese, and especially

¹ I borrow this convenient distinction from H.G. Creel, Confucius, the Man and the Myth, New York, 1949.

² i.e. from about 1580 to after the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773.

³ v. Peter Duignan, 'Early Jesuit Missionaries. A suggestion for Further Study', in American Anthropologist, LX, 1958, pp.725-732.

Confucian ideas, as interpreted by the Jesuits, also played an important role in the intellectual ferment of the European Enlightenment. The enigmatic figure labelled 'Confucius' who gazes out at us from the pages of seventeenth and eighteenth century Jesuit books is the key to many otherwise puzzling new directions in European thought.

The abundance of the material, printed and manuscript, the problems of documents in several languages and variant copies, the inadequate bibliography of the subject, the physical dispersion of Jesuit libraries and archives⁵, make an exhaustive study impossible within the scope of a doctoral thesis. Moreover, it was clear from the outset that there are a number of areas closely related to the 'Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism' which demand extended treatment in their own right. Among these are the extent of Jesuit influence on late Ming - early Ch'ing intellectual trends, the peculiar activities of the group of French Jesuits in Peking known as 'Figurists', and above all the Chinese Rites controversy which in itself would require a multi-volume study. However, a beginning has to be made somewhere, and I am convinced that at this stage in research into the role of the Jesuit mission in Chinese and European intellectual history, there is a place for a general survey covering the whole period of the mission of the late sixteenth to late eighteenth centuries, and concentrating on the central issue of the Jesuit response to Confucianism.

It may seem arrogant to speak of a 'beginning' since so much has been written on the Jesuit mission in China. A glance at the columns of Cordier's Bibliotheca Sinica or the

⁴ In all cases they acted as interpreters, and often played a more active role. See, for example, J. Sebes, The Jesuits and the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689) Rome, 1961; and frequent comments in the Journals of Lord Macartney (J.L.Cranmer-Byng, An Embassy to China, London, 1963, pp.100, 151 etc.)

⁵ For a discussion of these problems see 'Jesuit Sources for Chinese History', the author's contribution to the forthcoming Festschrift for Emeritus Professor C.P. Fitzgerald.

relevant volumes of the Streit-Dindinger Bibliotheca Missionum is enough to show that the subject is one that has been much studied. However, a closer examination of this overwhelming mass of literature, or at least that part accessible to the scholar in Australia, reveals that much remains to be done. A great deal of writing on the mission is popular in nature and based on a few standard printed sources. Most of the serious work falls into the special category of 'mission history', a genre which lends itself to distortion and special pleading⁶. I would like to acknowledge my debt to the Jesuit historians of the China mission, to Henri Bernard-Maitre, Joseph Dehergne, the late Pasquale M. D'Elia, Francis Rouleau and Joseph Schütte, who are in general, and quite appropriately, primarily concerned with the 'mission history' aspects of the question. While a comprehensive history of the Jesuit mission in China remains to be written, the groundwork has been done and the collection and publication of the major documents has begun. We have reason to hope that the esprit de corps of the Society of Jesus and the revolution in missiology and the theology of Christian missions of the last half century will lead to much further work in mission history which will make the task of the historian of China and the historian of ideas much easier.

The present work, however, is not 'mission history' in the normal sense. I am concerned with the complex interaction of two cultures, the attempt of European scholars to understand the value-system and beliefs of a totally different culture. If America was the first 'new World', China was to prove a 'new world' in an even more fundamental sense. There was a mutual recognition, not only of high material culture, but of ideas, standards of behaviour and political systems which were worthy of respect and investigation. The glowing Jesuit accounts of Chinese society were matched by the exclamation of the late Ming scholar, Hsieh Chao-chih, 'Thus in foreign

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v. Neil Gunson, 'The Theology of Imperialism and the Missionary History of the Pacific' in Journal of Religious History, Sydney, June 1969.

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⁶ v. Neil Gunson, 'The Theology of Imperialism and the Missionary History of the Pacific' in Journal of Religious History, Sydney, June 1969.

countries there are also real gentlemen'⁷. This rapport was not altogether typical, nor did it survive the tensions introduced by the European maritime encroachment of the nineteenth century. But, for a while, a serious attempt was made at understanding and interpretation of China to the West and vice versa.

I shall be primarily concerned with the Jesuit interpretation of Chinese thought and religion to Europeans, rather than their contribution to the Chinese view of Europe. This weighting of the subject is partly due again to the limits of time and space, partly also to the difficulties posed by the Ch'ing dynasty suppression of 'unorthodox' literature⁸. I have tried to examine as much as possible of the Jesuit writings in Chinese and the more important recent studies by Chinese scholars. I can only hope that those Chinese, Japanese and Western scholars more competent than myself in the field of Late-Ming early-Ch'ing history will be able to exploit more fully what insights I may have gained in placing the Jesuits within the complex intellectual currents of the period. Holmes Welch in The Practice of Chinese Buddhism⁹ makes what I feel is a valid and pertinent distinction between the main sources in both Chinese and Western languages which must be consulted by all serious scholars of Chinese history, and 'the low grade ore' in each. The latter should, he claims, be left each to his own, Chinese to Chinese scholars, Western language material to Western scholars. In this spirit, I have attempted as exhaustive a scrutiny as possible of material, printed and manuscript, in Western languages, relating to the Jesuit mission. The Bibliography will, I hope, enable the critical reader to assess the extent of my success in this. Many of the items have been examined only cursorily in the light of my central concern with the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. I have not attempted to embrace in this study such questions as the Jesuit contribution to Chinese

⁷ Quoted in S.Y.Teng and J.K.Fairbank, China's Response to the West, New York, 1963, p.13.

⁸ See L.C.Goodrich, The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien Lung Baltimore, 1935.

⁹ The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900-1950, Cambridge, Mass., 1967, p.vii.

science or art which have been treated adequately by specialists¹⁰; and I am only too aware of the superficiality of treatment of 'Figurism' and the Chinese Rites question, both of which I would like to pursue at proper length elsewhere. However, I have come to see that a critical chronological survey of the developing Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism over the whole period of the old Jesuit mission is the indispensable prelude to serious study of the last two subjects.

When reading many of the accounts of the Jesuits' attitude towards Confucianism, I am reminded of Dickens' reviewer for the Eatonswill Gazette who wrote 'a copious review of a work on Chinese metaphysics' by combining the articles on 'China' and 'Metaphysics' in the Encyclopaedia Britannica¹¹. Too often it is assumed that 'Jesuit' and 'Confucian' are static and self-explanatory terms. Even when the Jesuits are not seen in the lurid light of a Fulop-miller¹² they are assumed to be men formed in a rigid mould whose motivation, objectives and behaviour are fully predictable. The modern Jesuits I have known are a living refutation of this, and the Jesuits of the China mission display the same individuality and variety as their successors. Certainly they were products of a particular style of spiritual formation and their behaviour was regulated by the Constitutions and the distinctive forms of organization of the Society of Jesus. But they were also men of their time, who had received the best education available and absorbed the latest developments in science, letters and theology. Over the two centuries of the mission one finds considerable change and development in ideas

¹⁰ e.g. Joseph Needham and Wang Ling in Science and Civilization in China, especially vols. 2 & 3, and articles and books on the Jesuit artists, by Paul Pelliot, P.M.D'Elia and George Loehr (v. Bibliography for details).

¹¹ The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, ch.LI.

¹² René Fulop-Miller, in the Preface of his widely-circulated The Power and Secret of the Jesuits, boasts that he has rejected 'impartial dryness and objectivity' to allow his imagination and the critics of the Society full play.

and attitudes. The eighteenth century French Jesuit, formed by the religious and intellectual debates of the France of Louis XIV, was in his scholarly and missionary style completely different from the seventeenth century Portuguese Jesuit. At the same time, the experience of the earlier missionaries which had moulded the customs and practices of the China mission, was handed on to the later Jesuits. Nationality, training, personality and experience - all must be assessed as factors in the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism.

Nor can the 'Confucianism' of the late Ming and early Ch'ing be regarded as a static monolithic orthodoxy. It was a living tradition, as Joseph Levenson demonstrated in Confucian China and Its Modern Fate. The late Ming dynasty in particular saw an extraordinary range of divergent opinions within the ambit of Confucian literati society¹³. The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism can be seen as but one of a range of contemporary 'revisionist' interpretations.

The view of Confucianism that grew out of the meeting of Jesuit missionary and Chinese scholar was not, of course, an academic exercise. The Jesuits were primarily missionaries and the risks they took in getting to China, their tenacity in the face of obstacles and dangers, their single-mindedness, are only intelligible if this is taken into account. There was always in their lives some degree of tension between the scholar, the scientist or sinologist, and the missionary. But this was a tension that the Jesuit scholar faced in Europe too, and his whole training was directed towards harnessing scholarly work to the primary aim of 'the greater glory of God'. My impression is that the degree of bias that resulted is no greater than that in most other interpretations of Confucianism, Chinese or Western, positivist or marxist. It was overt, consciously and explicitly present in all they wrote. On the other hand, the changes in emphasis, the qualifications and hesitations that are to be found especially in the private

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v. W.T.de Bary (Ed.), Self and Society in Ming Thought, New York, 1970, especially Professor de Bary's own contribution, 'Individualism and Humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought'.

correspondence between Jesuits, the differences between views expressed in popular and propagandist works and scholarly works, suggest that most Jesuits possessed a scholarly conscience. The views that most shocked their European readers were often a simple presentation of Chinese realities.

It is impossible to write about the Jesuit mission in China without to some extent rehearsing old controversies. Under the stress of the Rites Controversy the Jesuit literature on China became increasingly polemical and a 'party line' emerged, partly imposed by the European Jesuit editors of the reports from China. There is a danger that concentration on these issues will produce a subtle foreshortening effect and that we will fail to see the Jesuits as mainly engaged in the prosaic daily work of the mission. They were not preoccupied with interpreting Chinese beliefs and customs, except in so far as circumstances forced them to be. Nor was the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism a continuous conscious development. It is quite clear from the documents that many issues were forgotten only to be revived later, many methods discovered anew by later generations of missionaries. Most Jesuits did not have access to the mission archives and in any case were too busy and concerned with immediate practical issues to see the mission in historical perspective. The isolation of certain ideas, of certain controversial issues, from their context is always dangerous and misleading.

However, a justification for this procedure may be found in the importance of the ideas and issues thus isolated. The controversies are not dead, the ideas and issues are still important. For the sociologist seeking to establish the parameters or conditions of cultural change, the Jesuit experiment in China should be of great interest¹⁴. The

¹⁴ v. G.L.Harris, 'The Mission of Matteo Ricci S.J. : A Case Study of an Effort at Guided Cultural Change in China in the Sixteenth Century', Monumenta Serica, XXV, 1966, pp.1-168. It is unfortunate that Harris's study does not adequately treat the general and theoretical issues he raises, but it may suggest to the anthropologist or sociologist the value of Jesuit sources and the relevance of the history of the Jesuit mission in China to their work.

theological issues raised by a wider ecumenism and the reassessment of the relations between Christianity and non-Christian religions are well exemplified in this case. For the historian or phenomenologist of religion, Confucianism presents a kind of extreme or limiting case in which the religious or sacred elements are elusive and challenge many of the accepted generalizations. The Jesuits' apprehension of the religious values of Confucianism seems to me a first and faltering step towards the reappraisal of the nature of 'religion' and its relationship to the 'secular'. It was no accident that the philosophers of the Enlightenment took such an interest in the 'news from China',¹⁵. China was both a source and a test case for the new ideas about religion and its social role. Pascal was an implacable enemy of the Jesuits, but he perceived the crucial importance of their revelations about China, which, by enlarging the Christian world-view, simultaneously complicated and clarified the main issues¹⁶. It is my hope that this study of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism will shed some light on the issues that confronted Pascal and still confront us today.

¹⁵ Novissima Sinica, the title of Leibniz's collection of Jesuit letters and treatises, first published in 1697.

¹⁶ See Blaise Pascal, Pensées, trans. M. Turnell, London, 1962, p.229; Fragment 593, t.III, p.33 of the Brunschvicg-Boutroux edition of Pascal's Oeuvres, Paris, 1904-14.

CHAPTER 1

TO 'BECOME CHINESE'

'In breve siamo fatti Cini ut Christo Sinas lucrificamus.'

'In short, we have become Chinese in order to win China for Christ.'

- Michele Ruggieri.¹

To 'become Chinese'; thus was the programme of the Jesuits in China succinctly summed up by the pioneer missionary, Michele Ruggieri, in a letter to the Jesuit General, Claudio Acquaviva, a few months after he began his mission in China. At this time he had little knowledge of what was involved in becoming Chinese. In an earlier letter, written in Macao where he was beginning his Chinese studies, Ruggieri had written about a Chinese book on 'the moral virtues'² which he was studying. He admired, he said, 'the intelligence and ability that our Lord has given this gentile and barbarous people'; but, he states baldly, 'the Chinese have no philosophy' and no knowledge of God'.³ It is clear that at the beginning of their mission, the Jesuits were completely ignorant of the dominant Chinese value-system, Confucianism, and that their Christian interpretation of Confucianism followed rather than preceded their experience of China.

The Chinese, for their part, seem to have been equally ignorant of Christianity. The confusions in the case of the Fo-lang-chi (the 'Franks' or Portuguese) in the Ming History demonstrate this. The Jesuits themselves were responsible for one confusion. In their determination not to be identified with the Portuguese, and thus saddled with the Portuguese reputation for rapacity and narrow commercial interest, they called themselves Ta-hsi-yang-jen, 'men of the

¹ Letter of 7 Feb. 1587, in P. Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche de P. Matteo Ricci S.J., II, Macerata, 1913, p.416.

² Possibly the San-tzu-ching or a similar compilation from Confucian sources.

³ Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.401.

Great Western Ocean', and gave their homeland as 'Italy', I-ta-li-ya. Hence, the Ming-shih describes the Ta-hsi-yang-jen as having come to China and settled at Macao subsequent to the Portuguese.⁴

Much more misleading, however, is the statement that the Fo-lang-chi 'first adhered to Buddhism, and later to Christianity'.⁵ Perhaps, as Chang Wei-hua suggests,⁶ this was due to the Portuguese first impinging on the Chinese world-view in Malacca and India, the 'West' par excellence and homeland of Buddhism. But it was also the product of a persistent misreading of European customs in Buddhist terms. Chang cites a late Ming work, the Hsiang-hsu-lu by Mao Rui-cheng, which describes the Fo-lang-chi as follows:

They are accustomed to believe in Buddha. They delight in reciting the scriptures and they worship Buddha every seventh day. Three days before, they fast by eating fish, but on the day of worship they do not abstain from poultry, pork, beef and mutton. They carry a red staff in their hands when they go out. They do not use a spoon and chopsticks when they eat. The rich eat wheat, the poor and the slaves eat rice. When choosing a bride they discuss the price and exact a considerable dowry for the woman. They employ no go-between, but the couple present themselves before Buddha, with a monk as witness, and the marriage is said to have been contracted. When great events occur many of the people and the monks assemble together. When someone dies the corpse is preserved in a cloth bag for burial and half the property goes to the house of the monks.

On the whole, this is an accurate representation of European life, and it is not surprising that the Chinese observer should have seen their religious customs as those of a new sect of Buddhists. But it did create a serious ambiguity in the Jesuits' attempt to 'become Chinese'. How could they win for Christ those who did not recognize them as Christians?

⁴ Ming-shih, ch.325, in Chang Wei-hua, Ming-shih Fo-lang-chi Lu-sung Ho-lan I-ta-li-ya ssu-chuan chu-shih, Peiping, 1934, p.68

⁵ ibid., p.70.

⁶ ibid., pp.70-71.

⁷ ibid., p.70.

I. THE NESTORIAN CHRISTIANS OF THE T'ANG

What is surprising about the mutual ignorance of Western Christians and Chinese Confucians revealed by Ruggieri's dispatches and the Ming-shih is the fact that the Jesuits were certainly not the first Europeans, much less the first Christian missionaries to come to China. The reasons for this massive cultural amnesia are many, and some of them particularly relevant to an understanding of the Jesuits' approach to Confucianism. The early Jesuit missionaries themselves seem to have been in ignorance of their predecessors, and the previous history of Christianity in China had no direct impact on their methods. But a brief examination of the problems faced by earlier Christians attempting to penetrate Chinese civilization, and the reasons for their failure, may illuminate for us the task facing the Jesuits.

For exponents of a universal creed, it was difficult to believe that this great newly 'discovered' civilization had never been evangelized before their time. The Jesuits were constantly on the alert for evidence of Chinese Christians and Matteo Ricci's encounter with the Chinese Jew 'Ngai' (Ai T'ien) is instructive in this regard. Ricci thought at first that he had found a community of Chinese Christians.⁸ Although Ricci's journals make no mention of earlier missions he seems to have expected to find some Christians in China. Perhaps this was due to his reading of Marco Polo or the travel account of John of Pian di Carpine in Ramusio⁹ or another of the sixteenth century compilations; more likely it

⁸ P.M. D'Elia (Ed.), Fonti Ricciane, II, Rome, 1949, NN.722-728, pp.316-324 cf. L.J.Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, New York, 1953, pp.107-109. See also P.Pelliot, 'Le Juif Ngai, Informateur du P. Matthieu Ricci', T'oung Pao, n.p.XX, 1921, pp.32-39.

⁹ Giovanni Battista Ramusio, Delle Navigationi et Viaggi, II, 2nd. ed., Venice 1574, contained the accounts of both Polo and John of Pian di Carpine, while the first (1559) edition included a version of Polo's Viaggi. The work was widely circulated, and the extracts from both authors contain references to Chinese Christians in the thirteenth century.

was simply a general expectation based on assumptions about the early spread of Christianity. The first Jesuit missionary in the East, Francis Xavier, had come upon the legend that the apostle, St. Thomas, had preached in India and in China.¹⁰ And the first European book on China, Gaspar da Cruz's Tractado em que se cõtam muito por estêso as cousas da China (Evora, 1569), reported that St. Thomas had preached in China and left some disciples to establish a church there.¹¹ It is most likely that Ricci had read Xavier's letter, if not da Cruz, and that he hoped to find traces of the primitive Christian church which could be used to bolster the claims of his teaching to antiquity and authenticity.¹²

At the time of Ricci's death, the question of the existence of Christians in China prior to the Jesuits was still an open one. Nicholas Trigault, in editing Ricci's memoirs, refers to rumours of a sect of 'adorers of the cross' in K'ai-feng, but reports that attempts to establish contact had failed.¹³ Then, in 1625, was discovered the famous Nestorian Monument, the Ta-Ch'in ching-chiao liu-hsing chung-kuo pei, or 'Monument of the Diffusion through China of the Brilliant Religion of Ta-Ch'in'. It was discovered at or near Sian in Shensi,¹⁴ which had been the capital at the time of the T'ang dynasty.

¹⁰ v. his letter from Amboina, 10 May 1546, in G. Schurhammer and J. Wicki, Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii, I, Rome, 1944, Ep.55, p.335. On the origins of the legend see A.C.Moule, Christians in China before the Year 1550, London, 1930, pp.24-26.

¹¹ Tractado, ch.xxvii, in C.R.Boxer, South China in the Sixteenth Century, London, 1953, pp.212-213.

¹² Trigault's edition of Ricci's memoirs does contain a discussion of the evidence for St. Thomas' preaching in China, but this is an interpolated chapter (Bk.I, ch.II) by Trigault himself (v. China in the Sixteenth Century, p.113).

¹³ China in the Sixteenth Century, p.112 cf. Fonti Ricciane, II, N728, pp.323-324.

¹⁴ There is some confusion as to the exact place of discovery, some accounts giving Chou-chih, south-west of Sian, others Sian itself. For this and other points relating to the discovery of the monument, the best general account is that of A.C.Moule, Christians in China before the Year 1550, Ch.2, and the most exhaustive, H.Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne de Si-Ngan-Fou, 3 vols., Shanghai, 1895-1902. See also Moule's Nestorians in China : Some Corrections and Additions, London (China Society : Sinological Series, no.1) 1940.

Despite doubts as to its authenticity, largely arising from its convenience to the Jesuits, it is now universally accepted as a genuine relic of T'ang Christianity.¹⁵ Other documents of Nestorian Christianity in China have since been discovered at Tun-huang and elsewhere¹⁶ and it is now possible to reach some general conclusions about the nature of this first, at least first recorded, attempt at the accommodation or naturalization of Christianity in China.

The major problem faced by the Nestorian monks who brought Christianity to China was the foreignness of their teaching. Like the Jesuits nearly a thousand years later they were confronted by Chinese xenophobia and sinocentrism. Admittedly in the early T'ang when according to the Monument they first arrived at Ch'ang-an (Sian)¹⁷ and Confucian orthodoxy was less firmly established, the resistance was slighter. But the decree of 845 by which the monasteries of all foreign religions, Buddhist, Zoroastrian and Christian, were destroyed, indicates the dangers faced by any religion which could be labelled 'foreign'. According to the Chiu-T'ang-shu:

The monks and nuns have been placed under the jurisdiction of the Controller of Aliens to make it clear that theirs is a foreign religion, and we have compelled more than 3,000 of the Ta-Ch'in (Christians) and Mu-hu-fu (Zoroastrians) to return to lay life and to cease to confound the customs of China.¹⁸

The Nestorians confronted this problem in much the same way as the Jesuits, by attempting to establish the importance, if not the equivalence to the 'Middle Kingdom' of their place of origin, and by gaining the protection of the Emperor.

¹⁵ y. Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, Pt. II, pp.262-313, for a discussion of the debate about the authenticity of the Monument.

¹⁶ y. Moule, Christians in China, ch.2; and P.Y.Saeki, The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China, 2nd. ed., Tokyo, 1951. The best general account of Nestorian Christianity in China, based partly on an unpublished work by Pelliot, is in J. Dauvillier, 'Les Provinces Chaldéennes "de l'Exterieur" au Moyen Age', in Mélanges offerts au R.P.Ferdinand Cavallera, Toulouse, 1948, pp.296-312.

¹⁷ The inscription gives 'the ninth year of the period Cheng-kuan' (635 A.D.).

¹⁸ Chiu-T'ang-shu, ch.18, 10b cf. Moule, Christians in China, p.70, and de Bary, Sources of Chinese Tradition, New York, 1964, I, P.381.

They described themselves as coming from Ta-Ch'in which had been known and regarded favourably by the Chinese as early as the Later Han dynasty. The Hou-Han-shu had explicitly declared that the people of Ta-Ch'in were comparable to the Chinese and hence had been named 'Great Ch'in' by analogy with the Ch'in or Chinese themselves.¹⁹ This account clearly refers to the Roman Empire, especially in its Eastern parts.²⁰ A-lo-pen, the monk whose arrival in Sian in 635 A.D. is described in the Monument, probably came from Persia, but the Nestorians appropriated for themselves, with some historical justification, the name and glory of the Eastern Roman Empire. The Monument tells us:

According to the Illustrated Records of Western Lands (Hsi-yu t'u-chi) and the histories of the Han and Wei, the land of Ta-Ch'in is bounded on the south by the Coral Sea; in the north it stretches to the Mountains of All Precious Things; in the west it looks towards the Borders of the Immortals and the Flowery Forest; in the east it borders on the Everlasting Winds and the Weak Waters. The country produces fire-washed cloth (asbestos)²¹, spices that restore the soul, bright-moon pearls, and night-shining gems. Robberies and theft are unknown among the common people, and men live in happiness and peace. No law other than the Brilliant is observed, no rulers other than the virtuous are appointed. The land is of vast extent and its culture flourishing and enlightened.²²

The Sian Monument dating, as it does, from a century and a half after the arrival of A-lo-pen, does not provide us with evidence for the original preaching of Christianity. But it does illustrate that preaching in its mature development. We do not know whether or not A-lo-pen described himself on his arrival in China as coming from Ta-Ch'in or from Persia (Po-ssu). Although the Monument itself cites a decree of

¹⁹ v. E. Chavannes, 'Les Pays d'Occident d'après le Heou Han Chou' in T'oung Pao, n.s.VIII, 1907, p.181.

²⁰ v. F. Hirth, China and the Roman Orient, Leipzig, 1855. Hirth's conclusions although modified by later criticism remain substantially accepted after over a century.

²¹ v. Hirth, China and the Roman Orient, pp.249-251.

²² Translation after Moule, Christians in China, p.40, and J.Legge, The Nestorian Monument of Hsi-an-fu, London, 1888, pp.13-14.

638 A.D. describing him as 'A-lo-pen of the land of Ta-Ch'in',²³ the original text as found in the T'ang hui-yao (Ch.49) refers to him as 'the Persian monk'.²⁴ There is moreover evidence that the Ta-Ch'in title was acquired somewhat later, perhaps in conscious response to the problem of assimilation. In 745 A.D. we find a decree which reads: 'The Persian scriptures and teaching originated in Ta-Ch'in and were transmitted a long time ago to China. When the first monasteries (of this religion) were built, they were called ("Persian"). But in order to show men their real origin the "Persian monasteries" of the two capitals are to be renamed "Ta-Ch'in monasteries". This should be done in all areas throughout the whole Empire'.²⁵ Whatever the date of origin of the term by the time of the erection of the monument (781 A.D.) the Nestorian Church was firmly identified with Ta-Ch'in. Christ is described as having been born in Ta-Ch'in.²⁶ A-lo-pen is said to have established a 'Ta-Ch'in monastery' in the capital,²⁷ and the author of the inscription refers to himself as a monk of a Ta-Ch'in. In the description of Ta-Ch'in on the monument we may reasonably identify the 'Coral Sea' as the Red Sea and the 'mountains of all Precious Things' as the Caucasian chain. The Western and Eastern boundaries are described in terms drawn from the traditional attributes of the Chinese Fairyland and must be regarded as literary embellishment.²⁸

²³ Moule, Christians in China, p.39; Legge, Nestorian Monument, pp.10-11; Saeki, Nestorian Documents, pp.57-58.

²⁴ Text in Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, II, p.376, No.1.

²⁵ T'ang-hui-yao, ch.19 (Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, II, p.376, No.II).

²⁶ Moule, Christians in China, p.37; Legge, Nestorian Monument, pp.6-7; Saeki, Nestorian Documents, p.55.

²⁷ Moule, Christians in China, p.39; Legge, Nestorian Monument, pp.10-11; Saeki, Nestorian Documents, p.58.

²⁸ Many of the details in this passage come from the Hou-Han shu, ch.118 (cf. text and translation in Chavannes, 'Les pays d'Occident...', T'oung Pao, n.s.VIII, 1907, pp.179-187) and the Wei shu, ch.102 (translated in Hirth, China and the Roman Orient, pp.48-51). The geographical details may have been drawn from the lost Hsi-yü t'u-chi since only the 'Weak Waters' appear in the Hsi-yü chuan of the dynastic histories.

However the geographical puzzles are really irrelevant to our purposes; and the point of the passage is perfectly evident. Ta-Ch'in was a great, highly civilized and somewhat mysterious land, known to the Chinese from earlier times, and hence its religion was worthy of respect.

The bulk of the Sian monument is devoted to an account of the favours of successive emperors to the ching-chiao or 'Brilliant Religion', an account which is again reminiscent of the tactics of the Jesuits. The earliest and most important of these favours is a decree of T'ai-tsung of 638 A.D. The preamble describes A-lo-pen's reception by the Emperor, the translation of the Scriptures and the Emperor's approval of his teaching. The decree itself is a remarkable document and it is not surprising that it was denounced as a forgery by opponents of the Jesuits. What is even more remarkable is that the Jesuits themselves do not seem to have been aware of the existence of independent evidence for T'ang Christianity including the text of this particular decree.²⁹ It was not until 1855 that the Protestant missionary Alexander Wylie pointed out that the decree was to be found in ch.49 of the T'ang-hui-yao, a compilation published in 961 A.D., and that it was substantially identical with the text of the Sian monument.³⁰ Apart from a few phrases of no great significance present on the monument but not in the T'ang-hui-yao, the only difference is the substitution already mentioned of 'the greatly virtuous A-lo-pen of the country of Ta-Ch'in' for the phrase 'the Persian monk (Po-ssu sêng) A-lo-pen' presumably the original reading. It amounts to a cautious but favourable judgement on Christianity and approval for its preaching:

²⁹ See, for examples, the comments of Antoine Gaubil in his Abrégé de l'Histoire chinoise de la Grande Dynastie Tang (Mémoires concernant l'histoire etc. des Chinois, t.XV, Paris, 1791), pp.449-50.

³⁰ North-China Herald, 29 December, 1855.

In the seventh month, the autumn of the twelfth year of Cheng-kuan (638 A.D.) the following edict was issued: 'The name of the Way is not everlasting, the teaching of the sages is not unchangeable. Each religion is established according to the local customs and all the living are mysteriously aided. The greatly virtuous A-lo-pen of the country of Ta-Ch'in has come from afar bringing with him his scriptures and his images³¹ to present them at the capital. The spirit of this teaching has been investigated, and it is found to be profound and other-worldly.³² In its original doctrine it establishes the essential points for a life of perfection. Its language has no troublesome expressions, and its principles are ineffable.³³ It assists all living things, is profitable to men, and it is fitting that it spread throughout the empire. Therefore let the officials establish a Ta-Ch'in monastery to accommodate twenty-one monks in the I-ning ward of the capital.³⁴

It will be noted that the decree is vague as to the doctrine taught by A-lo-pen, and judges it by its social utility and political harmlessness. The new religion is to be given its place among the religions of the empire, but that place is among the foreign religions. It should also be noted that Nestorian Christianity was regarded as a monastic institution. Nothing in the records of Nestorian Christianity in China suggests that it ever ceased to be regarded as foreign and monastic. Once imperial approval of foreign religions

³¹ hsiang : the T'ang-hui-yao has chiao, 'teachings', but the former seems to me a more likely reading.

³² wu-wei : I have followed here the translation of the Archimandrite Palladius, 'separate from the world' (Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, II, p.254, n.6) rather than Legge, 'requiring nothing (special) to be done' (The Nestorian Monument, p.II). Admittedly both elements are present in this Taoist concept which in its comprehensiveness defies translation.

³³ Literally 'forget the fishtrap', a reference to Chuang-Tzu, ch.26: 'Fishing stakes are employed to catch fish; but when the fish are got, men forget the stakes...Words are employed to convey ideas; but when the ideas are apprehended, men forget the words' (J. Legge, The Texts of Taoism, Sacred Books of the East, XL, reprint New York, 1962, p.141).

³⁴ My own translation cf. Moule, Christians in China, p.65; Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, II, p.254 n.6; and Legge, The Nestorian Monument, pp.10-12.

was withdrawn, the monasteries sequestered and the monks secularized in the persecution of T'ang Wu-tsung, the very basis of its existence was undermined. The Nestorian experience demonstrates, above all, the importance of sinification, of truly becoming Chinese, for the survival of any religion imported into China.

The problem of sinification arose for the Nestorians not only in externals, but also in regard to doctrine. It was not a matter of choice so much as the exigencies of the Chinese language itself. T'ai-tsung's decree of approval cautiously skirted questions of doctrine yet in its very language raised fundamental questions of translation and interpretation. The Nestorians are called séng, a term applied to Buddhist monks;³⁵ the Bible received the title of ching, which was used of the Confucian and Taoist 'classics' and also of Buddhist 'sutras'. The naming of the religion ching-chiao, 'the Brilliant Religion', is explained by a Taoist analogy.³⁶ The decree begins with a reference to 'the Way' (tao) and contains several explicit references to Taoist texts, which is hardly surprising since the early T'ang emperors were patrons of Taoism and claimed descent from Lao-tzu. The problem of translation - one might even say of the very possibility of translation - is raised by nearly every line of the Sian monument, and in the other surviving Nestorian documents in Chinese. Havret claims to have identified three to four hundred literary allusions in the text of the monument alone. One is led to speculate about the impact of the inscription on a literate Chinese accustomed to layers of meaning and implication. Would the resonance of the phraseology have been such that he would miss the foreign aspects and interpret the whole in familiar and therefore misleading terms?

³⁵ Paul Pelliot has demonstrated that even their religious titles were of Buddhist origin. v. 'Deux Titres Bouddhiques portés par les Religieux Nestoriens', T'oung Pao, n.s.XII, 1911, pp.664-670.

³⁶ v. Legge, The Nestorian Monument, p.9.

In the very first section of the monument we find a description of the attributes of God which is couched in terminology drawn from Taoist sources - from the Tao-te-ching, the Huai-nan-tzu, the Chuang-tzu.³⁷ It was this that led Gaubil to declare that Ching-ching, the author of the inscription, was 'un homme habile, mais porté pour la secte de Tao'.³⁸ However, when we consider the difficulties facing the Nestorian, and later the Jesuit, translators of Christian theology into Chinese, it is not at all surprising to find echoes of, and direct borrowings from, Chinese classical sources. There were only two alternatives: phonetic representation of terms in a foreign language using Chinese syllables purely for their phonetic value; or the use of Chinese terms, most, if not all of which, necessarily had associations with one or other of the Chinese religious or philosophical schools. When, for examples, Ching-ching wished to express the notion of the Trinity he employed the simple phrase wo san-i, 'our three-one'. Havret finds this usage objectionable, not only because it is less explicit than the terminology of later Catholic catechisms, san-wei i-t'i, 'three persons, one substance'; but also because san-i is used in Ssu-ma Ch'ien's Shih-chi to describe a special triennial sacrifice to the spirits.³⁹ In this case, as in most others, the danger of confusion seems unavoidable. Just as one cannot read references in ancient Chinese literature associating 'three' and 'one' as references to the Trinity (a procedure Havret himself criticises in others⁴⁰) neither would a Chinese reader necessarily see it as an allusion to the Shih-chi passage. There was always the possibility of misunderstanding

³⁷ See Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, III, pp.10-21, for an analysis of this passage and the identification of its sources.

³⁸ Abrégé (Mémoires, t.XVI, Paris, 1814), p.371.

³⁹ Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, III, p.15. For an earlier Jesuit comment see Emmanuel Diaz Jr., Ching-chiao liu-hsing Chung-kuo pei sung cheng-ch'üan, in T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, II, pp.665-6.

⁴⁰ Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, III, pp.16-17.

but it would be unreasonable to look for a full exposition of Christian theology in an inscription such as the Sian Monument and one presumes that the phrase was neither equivocal nor opaque to the Christians themselves.

It is true that in the Sian Monument, and even more in other Nestorian documents, we find what must be conscious citations of Chinese works. The Nestorians, like the Jesuits much later, were faced not only with problems of translation, but of acculturation. It is clear that the Nestorians chose Taoism and Buddhism, the dominant systems of their day, as sources for borrowing concepts and terminology, just as the Jesuits later borrowed from Confucianism. We have no way of knowing whether this was just a matter of convenience, or the result of a deliberate choice based on doctrinal considerations. My examination of the Nestorian documents leads me to agree with Joseph Edkins that the process of borrowing from Buddhism went much further with the Nestorians than with later missionaries.⁴¹ I do not agree, however, with his claim that Buddhist influences predominate in the monument itself. Here, as we have already seen, the borrowings are mainly Taoist.

There is, however, undoubted Buddhist influence in documents such as the Hsü-t'ing mi-shih-so ching ('The Book of Jesus Messiah'),⁴² and the I-shen lun ('Discourses on Monotheism')⁴³ which Saeki attributes to A-lo-pen himself.⁴⁴ For example, it is surprising to find the Messiah represented as saying:

Who can tell where the Heavenly One will be after he has revealed himself? In what place will he dwell? Only such as the Buddha, extraordinary beings, the Superintendants of Heaven, and the Arhats.⁴⁵

⁴¹ J. Edkins, Chinese Buddhism, London, 1880, p.354. Ch.XXII of this work, 'Buddhist Phraseology in relation to Christian Teaching' presents the problem from the point of view of the nineteenth century Protestant missionary.

⁴² The Chinese text is given in Saeki, Nestorian Documents, appendix of 'Chinese Texts', pp.13-29; translation and notes, pp.125-160.

⁴³ Saeki, Nestorian Documents, pp.30-70 (text) and pp.161-247 (translation and notes).

⁴⁴ Saeki, Nestorian Documents, pp.113-124.

⁴⁵ The Hsü-t'ing mi-shih-so ching; Saeki, Nestorian Documents, 'Chinese Texts', p.13. My translation differs somewhat from Saeki's (p.125) but we agree on essentials: that the Messiah in preaching the law of the 'Heavenly One' (T'ien-tsun) makes reference to four categories of Buddhist beings.

And again:

It is not fitting that those who have accepted the Heavenly One and his teaching should break his commandments. First he sent all living things to worship the Devas. Then the Buddha became Buddha by undergoing suffering and setting himself up. Heaven and earth exist only in order that he may purify them and exercise dominion over them.⁴⁶

The only hypothesis on which we can explain these curious passages in which Heaven is peopled with Buddhist devas and the Messiah himself is equated with Buddha, is that the Chinese text as we have it was the work of a Buddhist. The text of the Hsü-t'ing mi-shih-so ching has many errors, mostly phonetic (i.e. the substitution of one character for another of similar pronunciation) which suggests dictation. If the 'Book of Jesus Messiah' is indeed the work of A-lo-pen, or one of his disciples, and Saeki's early dating suggests this, then we can envisage it as the product of the collaboration of a Persian Nestorian monk and a rather ill-educated Chinese Buddhist.⁴⁷ In other words, it is not so much an attempt at Christian-Buddhist syncretism, as an inadequate early attempt at translating Christianity into Chinese terminology with the same difficulties and subsequent errors that the first Jesuit missionaries in China and Japan experienced.

This reading of the earliest Nestorian documents is confirmed by a comparison with the later Christian treatises written by the Nestorian scholar, Ching-ching, author of the Nestorian Monument.⁴⁸ These are free from egregious errors

⁴⁶ Saeki, Nestorian Documents, 'Chinese Texts', p.20. Again the text is obscure and my translation follows Moule (Christians in China, p.60) rather than Saeki (pp.134-5).

⁴⁷ This hypothesis combines the views of Saeki (Nestorian Documents, p.148) and Haneda (Moule, Christians in China, p.58).

⁴⁸ I accept the common attribution of the Hsüan-yuan chih-pen ching and the Chih-hsüan an-lo ching to Ching-ching, on the basis of the clear statement at the end of the Tsun ching. I find Saeki's counter arguments (Nestorian Documents, pp.248-265) totally unconvincing.

and the Buddhist and Taoist allusions which are quite frequent are generally appropriate and literary rather than doctrinal in nature. Ching-ching was most probably native born, and certainly was quite competent in Chinese. An interesting confirmation of this was discovered by Professor Takakusu in the Japanese Tripitaka.⁴⁹ A passage from Yüan-chao's Chêng-yüan hsin-ting shih-chiao mu-lu describes the arrival in China from India of the Buddhist monk Prajña and his translation of a Buddhist sutra in 786 A.D. in collaboration with 'the Persian monk of the Ta-Ch'in monastery, Ching-ching'. They worked from a hu text i.e. one in a barbarian language, probably Sogdian.⁵⁰ Yüan-chao continues:

Prajña was, at the time, not versed in the hu language, and, moreover, did not understand Chinese; and Ching-ching knew no Sanskrit, nor did he understand Buddhist doctrine. Although they claimed to have made a translation they had not grasped half the jewels. They had sought vaingloriously to make a name for themselves, not to profit others. They wrote and presented a memorial hoping for the publication of their translation. The Emperor, endowed with wisdom and learning, and respecting the law of Buddha, examined their translation and found the ideas obscure and the expression careless. He declared that since Buddhist monasteries and those of the Ta-Ch'in monks each had a different way of life and followed a completely different rule, Ching-ching should propagate the teaching of the Messiah and the Buddhist monk should explain the Buddhist sutras. He wished to make their doctrines and laws clear-cut lest men be confused. Truth and error are different, just as the Ching and the Wei can be distinguished from each other.⁵¹

This is an ironical reversal of the situation of the original Nestorian missionaries. Now it is the Christian who assists the Buddhist. It serves to illustrate both the depth of the acculturation of the Nestorians, and their relations with the Buddhists. It is doubtful whether one may, with Havret,⁵²

⁴⁹ 'The Nestorian Missionary Adam, Presbyter, Papas of China, translating a Buddhist Sutra', T'oung Pao, December 1896, pp.589-91.

⁵⁰ Moule, Christians in China p.69, n.82.

⁵¹ Text in Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, II, p.384 cf. translations in *ibid.*, III, pp.6-7, and Moule, Christians in China, pp.68-9.

⁵² La Stèle Chrétienne, III, p.6.

interpret the passage as showing Ching-ching attempting to make Christian propaganda out of a Buddhist treatise. But, at the very least, it indicates a state of symbiosis between Nestorian Christianity and Buddhism.

To what extent had Christianity in China succumbed to the Chinese tendency to syncretism and been submerged in the sea of competing sects and doctrines? This lack of distinctiveness,⁵³ or, as Legge characteristically puts it, this lack of evangelical spirit,⁵⁴ may have played a part in the collapse and virtual disappearance of Christianity from China; but other, far more important forces were at work. Firstly, the Nestorian documents reveal the close dependence of the Nestorian church on the approval of the Emperor. When this was finally withdrawn in 845 A.D. the Nestorians practically disappeared; and, according to an Arab document cited by Moule,⁵⁵ by the late 10th century, their extinction was complete. The Nestorian church appears never to have made many Chinese converts, or at least, the extant records make no mention of any but foreign Christians. When Nestorians reappear in the Chinese records in the Yuan they are always classed as sé-mu, or 'scheduled peoples',⁵⁶ foreigners. And once again they disappeared with the collapse of the regime of their Mongol protectors.⁵⁷ As Moule observes, 'The story of Christians in early and medieval China is not the story of the beginning of a Christian church which has

⁵³ v. K.S. Latourette, A History of Christian Missions in China, London, 1929, p.59.

⁵⁴ The Nestorian Monument, p.54.

⁵⁵ Christians in China, pp.75-6.

⁵⁶ I am indebted to Dr. Igor de Rachewiltz for the explanation of the term. It was used to distinguish foreigners, mainly Central Asians and Uighurs, but also Europeans and others, from Mongols on the one hand and Chinese on the other. See Yanai Waitari, Yüan-tai Meng Han Sé-mu tai-yü K'ao, Shanghai, 1932.

⁵⁷ On the destruction of Nestorianism at the end of the Mongol period, see Ch.6 of Chang Feng-chen, Fu-yin liu-ch'uan Chung-kuo shih-lueh, I, Taipei, 1970.

become established in the land, but rather the record of the residence in China for longer or shorter periods of larger or smaller numbers of foreigners who were in name or in fact Christians'.⁵⁸ When one adds that these foreign Christians were nearly all monks, that their monasteries were destroyed and the monks expatriated, and that communications with Persia and Syria were always difficult and sometimes impossible, one is struck more by their persistence than by the fact of their eventual disappearance.

The lessons of the Nestorian mission were not available to the first generation of Jesuit missionaries in China who had to shape their methods by direct and sometimes bitter experience. It is not surprising that the problems they faced and the solutions they adopted often matched those of the Nestorians. After the discovery of the Sian Monument, however, the historial precedent was fully acknowledged and exploited by the Jesuits and their church built in Peking in 1650 proudly bore testimony to 'the Western scholars of Ta-Ch'in who entered China to teach their religion in the T'ang dynasty'.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ A.C.Moule, 'The Primitive Failure of Christianity in China' in International Review of Missions, XX, 1931. p.459.

⁵⁹ The Chinese text of this inscription is given in Havret, La Stèle Chrétienne, II, p.97.

II. THE MONGOL MISSIONS OF THE 13th AND 14th CENTURIES

While it is quite understandable that the Jesuits should have been ignorant in the 16th century of the Nestorian Christians of the 7th century, it is more surprising that they knew so little of their 13th and 14th century Catholic predecessors. When Matteo Ricci reached Peking for the first time in 1598 he seems to have been quite unaware that in the 14th century there had been a Catholic Archbishop of Peking. The three letters of the first Archbishop, John of Montecorvino, were not published till long after Ricci's time.⁶⁰ But Marco Polo's account of his travels was well known in Europe and Giovanni Battista Ramusio had published extracts from the History of the Mongols of John of Pian di Carpine,⁶¹ and from the Relation of Oderic of Pordenone, as well as from Marco Polo, in the second volume of his Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi.⁶² Oderic's account was also plagiarised in the legendary Travels of Sir John Mandeville which circulated widely in many editions.⁶³

One difficulty was that all these authors had described China as 'Cathay'. It was only gradually that the confusion disappeared from European books and maps, and largely due to the Jesuits themselves. In Matteo Ricci's memoirs we can trace the developing conviction that the China they knew

⁶⁰ By the Franciscan, Luke Wadding, in his Annales Minorum, seu trium Ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum, III, 1636.

⁶¹ John of Pian di Carpine's History had also been incorporated in the great medieval encyclopaedia of Vincent of Beauvais.

⁶² The 1st edition of the second volume of Ramusio, Venice, 1559, included Marco Polo's Viaggi; the second (1574) and later editions, also contained extracts from Oderic of Pordenone and John of Pian di Carpine (y. full table of contents in D. Lach, Asia in the Making of Europe, vol. I, bk. 2, Chicago, 1965, p. 859).

⁶³ y. Malcolm Lett's 'Introduction' to his edition of Mandeville's Travels, London, Hakluyt Society, n.s. CI and CII, 1953, pp. xxvii-xxxviii.

and the 'Cathay' of the medieval accounts were identical.⁶⁴ The final proof was offered by the epic journey of the Jesuit brother Bento de Goes, in 1602-1605, which took him from India over the silk route through Central Asia to the North-west of China.⁶⁵

It is not surprising that the China encountered by the 16th century European travellers was not immediately recognized as the 'Cathay' of the medieval accounts. When we examine the latter it is clear that the real China, that of the subject Chinese people, figures very little. The Europeans, whether merchants like the Polos, or papal envoys and missionaries like the friars, were attached to the courts of the Mongol rulers of China, one might even call them camp followers of the conquerors. Any information that could have been gleaned from their accounts by the Jesuits about native Chinese religious practices and social customs was slight indeed.

Karl Wittfogel's description of Marco Polo as 'a Mongol Gauleiter',⁶⁶ is undoubtedly excessive, yet he certainly saw the Chinese from the point of view of their Mongol overlords. Marco claimed 'to know several languages and four sundry written characters',⁶⁷ but he makes so many elementary errors

⁶⁴ Fonti Ricciane, NN4-5, I, pp.7-12; N523, II, pp.26-28. In fact Martin de Rada had already made the identification in his Relation (Boxer, South China in the Sixteenth Century, p.260), which remained unpublished till the 19th century. Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza's Historia of 1585 which incorporates much of de Rada's material, omits this comment.

⁶⁵ Fonti Ricciane, Lib.V, Cap.XII-XIV, NN802-852, pp.389-445; Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, pp.499-521. cf. H. Bernard (-Maitre), La Frère Bento de Goes chez les Musulmans de la Haute Asie, Tientsin, 1934.

⁶⁶ 'Chinese Society and the Dynasties of Conquest' in H.F. MacNair, China, Berkeley, 1951, p.119.

⁶⁷ H. Yule & H. Cordier, The Book of Ser Marco Polo, rev.ed., London, 1903, I, p.27.

in translating Chinese terms that it is most unlikely that one of these was Chinese.⁶⁸ Rather, as Paul Demiéville puts it, 'son ethnographie est celle du touriste sourd-muet'⁶⁹. The result is a portrait of the Chinese that reads very strangely indeed to the student of traditional China. Their religion, which is presumably what interested the Jesuits when reading Marco Polo, is dismissed as 'the religion of the Idolaters'.⁷⁰ This description seems to be applied chiefly to the Buddhists, although one should note that it is also used to describe the religions of India and the Andaman Islands.⁷¹ The Buddha himself is treated quite sympathetically. He is said to have fled from his father's palace to the mountains where he led 'a life of great hardship and sanctity, and keeping great abstinence, just as if he had been a Christian. Indeed, an he had but been so, he would have been a great saint of Our Lord Jesus Christ, so good and pure was the life he led'.⁷² The hostility of the Jesuits to Buddhism and their dismissal of the Buddha as 'a devil' did not derive from Marco Polo.

The exaggerations and wonders which fill the pages of The Book of Ser Marco Polo and which earned him the sobriquet Il Milione⁷³ are not simply the literary conventions of his day.

⁶⁸ Sir Henry Yule thinks that he knew no Chinese, spoken or written, while Cordier credits him with some spoken Chinese only. Cordier's arguments are not very strong. (The Book of Ser Marco Polo, I, pp.29-30.)

⁶⁹ P. Demiéville, 'La Situation Religieuse en Chine au Temps de Marco Polo', in Oriente Poliano, Rome, 1957, p.224.

⁷⁰ Yule-Cordier, The Book of Ser Marco Polo, I, p.445.

⁷¹ v. Demiéville, 'La Situation Religieuse...', p.225.

⁷² Yule-Cordier, The Book of Ser Marco Polo, II, p.318.

⁷³ Yule-Cordier, The Book of Ser Marco Polo, I, p.67. Boleslaw Szczesniak has argued in his article, 'Marco Polo's surname "Milione" according to newly discovered documents', T'oung Pas XLVIII, 1960, pp.447-452, that the name originated as a surname for one branch of the Polo family. Even if this is so, it does not explain the persistence of the use of the name, nor its popularity.

On close examination they frequently prove quite soundly based.⁷⁴ It is the omissions which are disturbing. For Marco Polo, Taoism and Confucianism hardly existed. A passage on 'the sensin' has been interpreted as a confused account of Taoism.⁷⁵ And there is a single passage which suggests that he observed but misinterpreted Confucian ancestral tablets:

As we have said before, these people are Idolaters, and as regards their gods, each has a tablet fixed high up on the wall of his chamber, on which is inscribed a name which represents the Most High and Heavenly God; and before this they pay daily worship, offering incense from a thurible, raising their hands aloft, and gnashing their teeth three times, praying Him to grant them health of mind and body; but of Him they ask naught else.⁷⁶

This may be, as Cordier suggests, an allusion to the worship of t'ien.⁷⁷ But even if the first Jesuit missionaries in China knew their Marco Polo - and this is not certain⁷⁸ - they can hardly have acquired any exact idea of Chinese religion from him. Marco Polo's legacy consisted rather of high expectations as to the civilization and splendours of 'Cathay', a general picture of the people as 'idolaters' and the hope of finding some Christians, probably Nestorians.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Y. Demiéville, 'La Situation Religieuse...', pp.225-6; E. Balazs, Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy, New Haven, 1964, Chs.6 and 7; L. Olschki, Marco Polo's Asia, Berkeley, 1960.

⁷⁵ Yule-Cordier, The Book of Ser Marco Polo, I, p.303, and notes, pp.321-6.

⁷⁶ Yule-Cordier, The Book of Ser Marco Polo, I, p.456. In note 2, p.458, Yule suggests that 'gnashing their teeth' should be amended to 'prostrating themselves' i.e. the Chinese k'ou-t'ou with forehead touching the floor. But Cordier (note 3, p.461) cites Palladius on a Taoist practice of gnashing the teeth.

⁷⁷ Yule-Cordier, The Book of Ser Marco Polo, I, p.461.

⁷⁸ Matteo Ricci's references to Marco Polo are confined to remarks about the identification of 'Cathay' with China, and 'Cambalù' with Peking (Fonti Ricciane, NN4,523,607,802). The Pei-t'ang Jesuit library in Peking possessed the 1583 edition of the second volume of Ramusio's Navigazioni et Viaggi which contains extracts from Marco Polo, but the date of acquisition is uncertain (v. Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Pe-t'ang, Peking, 1949, no.3424).

⁷⁹ Most of the references to Christians in Marco Polo's book specify that they were Nestorians (y. the extracts in Moule, Christians in China, ch.V). The somewhat mysterious 'Christian' community of Fu-chou were probably Manichees. y. Moule, pp. 141-3, and L.Olschki, 'Manichaeism, Buddhism and Christianity in Marco Polo's China', Asiatische Studien, V, 1951, pp.1-21.

The other accounts of the Mongol missions which were accessible to the Jesuits, those of the Franciscans John of Pian di Carpine and Oderic of Pordenone,⁸⁰ cannot have been much more enlightening. John of Pian di Carpine had come as a legate to the Great Khan from Pope Innocent IV and arrived in time for the enthronement of Güyüg on 24 August 1246. This was the closest he got to Cathay, and his Ystoria Mongalorum is sparing in details of its inhabitants. The brief passage which gives the first European account of China since the description of the Seres in classical literature⁸¹ is characteristically vague and couched in misleading European terms:

The Kytai ... are pagans who have their own kind of letters. They have, it is said, the New and Old Testaments, and the lives of the Fathers; they have their hermits and buildings constructed like churches in which they pray at the appointed times; and they say they have certain saints of their own. They worship one God, they honour our Lord Jesus Christ and believe in eternal life, but are not baptized. They honour and revere our scriptures, they love Christians and give alms in abundance. They seem on the whole to be kind-hearted and humane people.⁸²

It seems likely that John's translation of Chinese practices into Christian terms was due simply to an optimistic interpretation of the testimony of Mongol, or possibly Chinese, informants. The 'New and Old Testaments' may be the Four Books and the Chinese Classics respectively, the 'saints' the Chinese

⁸⁰ Published as 'Due Viaggi in Tartaria, per alcuni Frati dell' ordine Minori e di San Dominico, mandati da Papa Innocentio IV, nella detta provincia per ambasciatori l'anno 1247' and 'Viaggio del Beato Odorico da Udine...' in Ramusio, Delle Navigationi et Viaggi, II, 2nd. ed., 1574.

⁸¹ For which see the first chapter of Sir Henry Yule's 'Preliminary Essay on the Intercourse of China and the Western Nations...', edited by Henri Cordier in Vol. I of Cathay and the Way Thither, London, Hakluyt Society, 2nd. ser., No. XXXVIII, 1915; and Georges Coedès, Textes d'Auteurs Grecs et Latins relatifs à l'Extrême Orient, Paris, 1910.

⁸² Translated from A. van den Wyngaert (Ed.), Sinica Franciscana, I, Quaracchi-Firenze, 1929, pp.57-58.

sages, and so on.⁸³ But even in this account the Chinese themselves are distinguished from the 'Christians'. Neither John nor the marvel-mongering Oderic left much of substance in their accounts to prepare future missionaries for their apostolate.

There was, however, in the last chapter of Oderic's Relatio an enigmatic reference to 'our Bishop' waiting with other Friars, including Oderic himself, along the route taken by the Great Khan into 'Cambaluc'.⁸⁴ The Jesuits do not seem to have realized till a considerable time after they entered China that 'the Bishop' referred to was in fact the first Archbishop of Cambaluc or Peking, John of Montecorvino, O.F.M. The letters of John and of his counterpart the Bishop of Zayton (Ch'üan-chou), Andrew of Perugia, were first published in Wadding in 1636, although they did not contribute to the Jesuits' expectations of Cathay, they do tell us something about the first Catholic missions in China and the problems they faced.

John of Montecorvino arrived in China in 1292 or 1293, shortly after Marco Polo began his homeward journey. In fact, their paths must have crossed in India, because John, like the Polos, took the sea route via India. John's first extant letter was written from Malabar in India, while the second and third letters describe his mission in China. On reading these letters one is immediately struck by the similarities

⁸³ Both van den Wyngaert (Sinica Franciscana, I, p.57, n.4) and the editors of de Bridia's Historia Tartarorum (R.A.Skelton, T.E.Marston and G.D.Painter, The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation, New Haven, 1965, p.62, n.I) cite in connection with this passage W.W.Rockhill's explanation (The Journey of William of Rubruck, London, 1900, p.155). I generally accept this, but the 'lives of the Fathers' can hardly be the Analects and the Mencius as distinct from the Confucian 'Four Books'; and Rockhill's equation of 'God' with T'ien-chu is a serious anachronism. Equally misleading is Christopher Dawson's note that 'The two Testaments are no doubt the Hinayana and Mahayana scriptures (The Mongol Mission, New York, 1955, p.22). It is, of course, possible that Carpine was actually describing Nestorian Christians.

⁸⁴ Sinica Franciscana, I, p.493.

between the Franciscan mission in Cambaluc and the Nestorian establishments earlier in Ch'ang-an. Both survived precariously by royal favour in the capital both were monastic in nature and apparently restricted to the non-Chinese inhabitants of those cities. It must be added that John's letters show an implacable hostility towards the Nestorians which was apparently reciprocated.⁸⁵ Dr. Igor de Rachewiltz has argued very plausibly that this conflict was not only due to doctrinal differences but even more to the tendency of the Mongols to identify the two Christian sects.⁸⁶

John of Montecorvino writes in his second letter (1305) of his church in Cambaluc in which his choir of forty boys bought at an early age from their families, sang the office in Latin.⁸⁷ He claims to have learnt to speak and write 'competently' in the 'Tartar tongue' and to have translated the New Testament and the Psalter into that language.⁸⁸ Whatever the 'Tartar tongue' was - Ongüt, Mongol or some other - it was certainly not Chinese, and there is no evidence that he learnt or preached in Chinese.⁸⁹ The whole description leaves one with the impression that the Franciscan mission was a European convent transplanted in Peking and that the Franciscans functioned essentially as chaplains to the foreign Christian community, and would-be chaplains to the Mongol court.

The friars were, of course, not monks restricted to their monasteries. They travelled and built churches in other cities.

⁸⁵ Sinica Franciscana, I, pp.346-7.

⁸⁶ I. de Rachewiltz, Papal Envoys to the Great Khans, London, 1971, pp.169-170. Special thanks are due to Dr. de Rachewiltz for kindly allowing me to consult the proofs of his book.

⁸⁷ Sinica Franciscana, I, pp.347-8.

⁸⁸ Sinica Franciscana, I, p.350.

⁸⁹ In the 3rd. letter he writes about pictures he had painted 'for the instruction of the unlearned' (ad doctrinam rudium) with inscriptions in Latin, 'Tursic' and Persian (Sinica Franciscana, I, p.352). The omission of Chinese is significant.

In the second letter John claims to have personally baptized 6000 persons,⁹⁰ yet he also describes his congregation in Cambaluc as consisting solely of 'babes and sucklings',⁹¹ i.e. the boys he has bought. One suspects that many of his converts were in fact Nestorians who quickly lapsed into the 'idolatry' of which he writes.⁹² Confirmation of this is found in John's second letter in the case of the 'good King George' reputed to be a descendant of Prester John,⁹³ who was converted from Nestorianism together with a large part of his people. John himself admits that his tribe, the Öngüts, were reconverted to Nestorianism on George's death, due to the influence of his brothers who were 'perfidious in the errors of Nestorianism'.⁹⁴ And Ch'ên Yüan's studies of the Chinese records relating to this personage reveal him always depicted as a model Confucian and patron of Confucian scholars.⁹⁵ His Christianity, however genuine, cannot have been very public.

The Franciscans, then, made little impact on China, and it would appear, none at all on the Chinese themselves. Writing twenty years after John of Montecorvino, Andrew of Perugia is highly pessimistic about the progress of the mission:

⁹⁰ Sinica Franciscana, I, p.347.

⁹¹ Sinica Franciscana, I, p.348. I follow Moule, Christians in China, p.173, in translating 'conventu' as 'congregation' rather than 'convent' in the technical sense.

⁹² Sinica Franciscana, I, p.346. This charge against the Nestorians indicates how seriously relations had deteriorated but I think it must be discounted as serious evidence for the state of Nestorianism in the Yuan.

⁹³ For the origin and importance of this legend of a Christian King in the East, see F.M.Rogers, The Quest for Eastern Christians, Minneapolis, 1962, and de Rachewiltz, Papal Envoys, Ch.I, 'In Search of Prester John: Europe's Early Vision of Asia'.

⁹⁴ Sinica Franciscana, I, p.348.

⁹⁵ v. L.C.Goodrich, 'Westerners and Central Asians in Yuan China', in Oriente Poliano, pp.7-8.

In this vast empire there are truly people from every nation under heaven, and from every sect. And each and every one is permitted to live according to his own sect. For they share this opinion, or rather error, that each one is saved in his own sect. Even though we can preach freely and securely, none of the Jews or the Saracens are converted. A great many of the idolaters are baptized, but once baptized they do not walk straight in the way of Christianity.⁹⁶

This first attempt at implanting Western Christianity in China proved a false start. Those few missionaries who survived the long and incredibly arduous journey to Cathay were eventually expelled with their Mongol masters in the revolution that established the native Ming dynasty. Their converts were, as Mark Chang puts it,⁹⁷ 'drowned' (yin-mo) in the sea of Chinese religion, and it was as if it had never existed.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Sinica Franciscana, I, p.376.

⁹⁷ Chang Feng-chen, Fu-yin liu-ch'uan Chung-kuo shih-lueh, I, p. 447.

⁹⁸ Chang describes Christianity in the Ming sources as i-wu-so-wen, 'unheard of', ibid. p.453.

III. SYNCRETISM AND ASSIMILATION

If Christianity disappeared in China through lack of assimilation to Chinese culture, other 'foreign' religions had suffered the opposite fate and succumbed to Chinese syncretism. 'Syncretism' seems the only term to apply to the inveterate Chinese tendency to reconcile, absorb and synthesize foreign and native schools of thought. I do not use it in the usual derogatory sense, although this usage does, I think, reflect the orthodox Christian reaction to such a tendency. To the Christian, as to the Jew or Moslem, God is a jealous god and his revelation unique. However, the long history of China's encounter with alien religious and philosophic systems from Buddhism to Marxism suggests that syncretism is the normal pattern of China's response.

This is not the place to examine the complex interaction of the native traditions, principally Confucianism and Taoism. It will be more illuminating for our purposes to trace the fate of non-Chinese doctrines in China. Chinese scholars generally assume some degree of syncretism in any developed tradition and attempt to analyze the elements and influences that produced the doctrine under discussion. An interesting example of this is to be found in the Macao gazeteer, the Ao-men chi-lüeh, written by two mid-eighteenth century officials, Chang Ju-lin and Yin Kuang-jen. Both served as Vice-prefect of Macao and had ample opportunity to examine Christianity at first hand. They reject Christianity's own account of its origins and see it as a synthesis of other Western religions known to the Chinese. In the section on the T'ien-chu-chiao⁹⁹ ('The Lord of Heaven Religion' or Christianity) they attempt to demolish the claims of Christianity by proving that it is an unoriginal amalgam of other foreign doctrines. Their

⁹⁹ Ao-men chi-lüeh, B.51ff., p.267ff. of the 1968 Taipei reprint. I have followed, with a few modifications, the translation by J.J.L.Duyvendak in T'oung Pao, XXXIX, 1945-50, pp.193-197.

remarks are addressed to the Chinese 'scholars and students' who have accepted the new teaching which 'has openly beguiled the Chinese from high ministers down to ordinary scholars and common people'. The critique begins by attacking the 'confused' treatment of Heaven and Fate and in passing criticizes the style of Christian writings as 'particularly atrocious and even worse than Buddhist books'. But the heart of the argument lies in the claim that Christianity is derived purely from Buddhism and Mohammedanism which were the original teachings of the countries of the Western Ocean.

Their custom is to be fond of what is singular and to take delight in what is new and thus to vie with and surpass brilliant scholars. Thereupon they took hold of the name (i.e. the outer appearance) of the Mohammedan worship of Heaven but based themselves really on the Heaven and Hell of the Tathagata (i.e. Buddhism), so as to combine these two doctrines.¹⁰⁰

But the worse feature of the 'Lord of Heaven doctrine' is not its syncretism. The Christians wanted 'to go one better'. They claimed that their Lord of Heaven was unique, and creator of Heaven and Earth. Jesus lived in the Han. How could he be Lord of the Heaven that existed before Buddha or Lao-tzu or even the first man, P'an Ku?

This reasoning may be called logical. P'an Ku lived in high antiquity, Lao-tzu lived in the Shang period, and Buddha lived during the Chou. They were all men so that none of them could have produced Heaven and Earth and the ten thousand things. However, if Jesus lived during the decline of the Han dynasty, was he alone then not a person belonging to mankind, and so posterior to Heaven and Earth? This attack on Buddha, on Lao-tzu and on the ancient emperors thus rebounds on themselves!¹⁰¹

The viewpoint of this critique is orthodox Confucian and the remarks about Buddhism and Taoism are strictly ad hominem. But it is clear that the authors are far less offended by syncretic tendencies, which they take for granted, than by Christian claims to uniqueness.

¹⁰⁰ Ao-men chi-lüeh, B.51b (p.268); Duyvendak, p.194.

¹⁰¹ Ao-men chi-lüeh, b.52a (p.269); Duyvendak, p.195.

If we look at the history in China of the other religions of the Book, Judaism and Islam, we find a constant struggle to assert the uniqueness of their revelation in the face of social and cultural pressure to syncretism. Neither lost their sense of a unique historical destiny nor their uncompromising monotheism, but there seems to have been a constant attrition as the upwardly mobile became absorbed into the Confucian gentry.¹⁰² Amongst the Muslims, who found some of the ritual duties incumbent upon officials repugnant, it was common for those who became mandarins to be excluded from the mosque during their term of office.¹⁰³ And Marshall Broomhall describes a number of compromises adopted in the mosques themselves, such as removing the Imperial Tablet during worship or placing the name of Allah in front of it, and prostrating before it without allowing the head to touch the ground as was done in worship.¹⁰⁴ In the synagogue the tablet was exposed as required by law but a Hebrew inscription placed above it reading, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord, Blessed be the glorious name of his kingship'.¹⁰⁵ There was assimilation, too, to Confucian domestic ritual. The Jesuit Giovanni Paulo Gozani found the Jews of Kaifeng in 1704 following ancestor rites and the cult of Confucius, with the significant omission of images and inscriptions.¹⁰⁶

When we examine Jewish and Muslim writings in Chinese we find the same pressure to conform to Chinese ways. It is interesting in the light of the later use by the Jesuits of the term t'ien-chu, 'Lord of Heaven', for the Christian God, to find the Jews using t'ien for Yaweh,¹⁰⁷ and the Muslims

¹⁰² V. Fonti Ricciane, (N727), II, p.322.

¹⁰³ M.Broomhall, Islam in China, London, 1910, p.228.

¹⁰⁴ Islam in China, p.228.

¹⁰⁵ W. White, Chinese Jews, New York, 1966, Pt.II, p.25.n.23.

¹⁰⁶ Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses, VII, 1707, p.19, and translation in White, Chinese Jews, Pt. I, p.43.

¹⁰⁷ Lettres Edifiantes, VII, p.9; White, Chinese Jews, p.40.

chu for Allah.¹⁰⁸ The inscriptions in mosques and synagogues seem to have stressed the antiquity of their doctrines and the points of similarity with Confucian teaching. For example, the inscription in the Sianfu mosque included the statement:

Within the Four Seas everywhere Sages arise who possess this uniformity of mind and truth. Mohammed, the great Sage of the West, lived in Arabia long after Confucius, the Sage of China. Though separated by ages and countries, their doctrines coincide one with another. Why? Because they had the same mind and truth.¹⁰⁹

This passage is paralleled in the inscriptions in the Kaifeng synagogue. For example, the 1489 inscription reads:

The Confucian religion and this religion agree on essential points and differ in secondary ones. The principles of establishing the mind and restraining the conduct are nothing more than honouring the Way of Heaven, venerating ancestors, giving high regard to the relations between the Prince and his ministers, being filial to parents, living in harmony with wife and children, preserving the distinction between superiors and inferiors, and having neighbourly relations with friends. In short, these principles do not go beyond the Five Relationships.¹¹⁰

And again, in the inscription dated 1512:

Although the written characters of the Scriptures of this religion are different from the script of Confucian books, yet on examining their principles it is found that their ways of common practice are similar. That is why when the Way reigns between father and son, the father extends loving-kindness and the son responds with filial love.¹¹¹

The latter inscription raises an important point about the viability of Judaism in China. It was indeed true that the Scriptures of the Jews were in different characters,

¹⁰⁸ S.Wells Williams, The Middle Kingdom, New York, 1907, II, p.269. Both Jews and Muslims in fact used a variety of terms for 'God' which are listed exhaustively in H.Havret, T'ien-tchou, "Seigneur du Ciel", 2nd. ed., Shanghai, 1909, pp.3-6.

¹⁰⁹ Broomhill, Islam in China, p.84 (translation modified after the facsimile facing p.84).

¹¹⁰ White, Chinese Jews, Pt.II, pp.14-15.

¹¹¹ White, Chinese Jews, Pt.II, p.43.

inaccessible to the Chinese. The Jews made no attempt to translate the Hebrew Bible into Chinese but jealously preserved their copy of the Torah. It was this presumed ancient text of the Hebrew Bible, more than any feeling of spiritual kinship, that attracted the Jesuit missionaries to the Kaifeng Jews.¹¹² However, during the 18th and 19th centuries the Kaifeng Jewish community seem to have gradually lost what knowledge of Hebrew they had, and Bishop White attributes their ultimate disappearance to their rigid adherence to Hebrew in liturgy and doctrine.¹¹³

The Chinese Muslims, by contrast, although refusing to translate the Koran,¹¹⁴ did produce a considerable body of religious literature in Chinese. While I think White attributes too much to this,¹¹⁵ and there are obvious geographical and cultural reasons for the strength and vitality of Islam in China, it does seem to have been an important factor. However, some of these Chinese Muslim tracts suggest that in avoiding the Scylla of failure to accommodate, they ran aground on the Charybdis of syncretism.¹¹⁶ It was not easy to keep the 'Pure True Religion' (ch'ing-chen chiao) pure and true to its Middle Eastern doctrines in a Chinese environment.

The people of the Book, seem to have been reluctant to translate their Book into Chinese. Paradoxically, the Buddhists who had much less reverence for the text of their scriptures,¹¹⁷ were great translators. And it is in the

¹¹² See, for example, J.F.Foucquet's note 'Sur les Juifs chinois' in his Réponse aux questions regardant la Bibliothèque Historique et Critique des Geographes et des Voyageurs, 1727 (Paris: BN, Fr.25670), p.25.

¹¹³ White, Chinese Jews, Pt.III, p.101.

¹¹⁴ Wells Williams, The Middle Kingdom, II, p.268.

¹¹⁵ White, Chinese Jews, Pt.III, p.101.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, 'Une Chanson Edifiante des Chinois Musulmans', in A.J.A.Vissière, Etudes Sino-Mahométanes, 2e série, Paris, 1913, ch.V.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, the passage in the Hsi-yü chi of Wu Ch'eng-en (Trans. A.Waley, Monkey, Penguin, 1961, p.330) in which the Buddha tells Monkey that blank scrolls are the true scriptures. This is, of course an extreme position, which would only be held by the Ch'an Buddhists. But compared with Christians, Jews and Muslims, and even Hindus, Buddhists generally were much less bibliolatrous.

translations of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese that we find the best example of Chinese syncretism at work. The process was partly conscious, the product of basic Chinese cultural assumptions held by the educated Chinese who made or helped make the translations. Arthur Wright has succinctly described this as 'the transmutation into intellectual processes of the social ideal of harmony'.¹¹⁸ Partly, too, it was due to intractable difficulties of translation. How, for example, to render a text in a highly inflected and grammatically sophisticated language like Sanskrit into the multivalent Chinese characters? Should names and technical terms be given, where possible, in Chinese equivalents, or should they be represented by strings of Chinese characters used for their phonetic value only, thus opening the way to misinterpretation as well as offending the trained Chinese ear? Were there, in fact, any real equivalents? Was there any common ground between the Indian cultural matrix of Buddhism and the Chinese?¹¹⁹

All these factors were at work at the highest level of Chinese Buddhism, amongst educated monks and laymen who were devout Buddhists seriously and conscientiously attempting to translate the doctrine of salvation. On the level of popular religion of course Buddhism became yet another ingredient in the folk beliefs of China.¹²⁰ But the translators were, as Zürcher has demonstrated, predominantly representatives of 'gentry Buddhism',¹²¹ and especially by the fourth century, adept in Buddhist metaphysics. The process

¹¹⁸ 'The Chinese Language and Foreign Ideas', in A.F.Wright (Ed.), Studies in Chinese Thought, Chicago, 1967, p.289.

¹¹⁹ The Chinese translators were themselves fully aware of these difficulties. v. Tao-an's 'Five Points' and 'Three Difficulties' in K.S.Ch'en, Buddhism in China, Princeton, 1969, pp.370-1.

¹²⁰ A.F.Wright, Buddhism in Chinese History, Stanford, 1959, pp.98-107; C.B.Day, Chinese Peasant Cults, Shanghai, 1940, esp. Chs.III,VIII,IX,XII.

¹²¹ E. Zürcher, The Buddhist Conquest of China, Leiden, 1959, pp.4-9.

of transmutation of Buddhism from its Indian to its Chinese form, this 'continuous process of selection and hybridization',¹²² which eventually produced forms totally at variance with basic Buddhist concepts,¹²³ was not due to pressure from outside Buddhism, but to basic factors in Chinese culture. It was carried further by the desire to conform to Chinese society and to counter the arguments of Confucians and Taoists, but the tendency was evident in the most rigidly orthodox.

In the beginning mistranslations and distortions arose from the fact that neither the Indian monks nor the Chinese scholars engaged in translating knew both Sanskrit and Chinese well. The usual method was for the monk to recite the text from memory, a bilingual interpreter to give the sense, and the Chinese scholar to produce a polished literary version. Later we find translators like Chih Ch'ien who was well versed in the 'Barbarian' language as well as in Chinese.¹²⁴ But already in the case of Chih Ch'ien we find some conflict between his desire to produce a text that would read well in Chinese and the plain sense of the original.¹²⁵ Chih Ch'ien was a Yüeh-chih, a semi-barbarian himself. Scholars educated in the orthodox Chinese fashion were even more likely to put literary qualities first and to find what they thought were analogous concepts in Chinese classical literature. Chu Fa-ya, a fourth century translator is described in his biography as follows:

¹²² Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, p.2.

¹²³ As, for example, in the transformation of the doctrine of anatmya or denial of a permanent soul, into a defence of the immortality of the soul. v. Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, pp.11-12.

¹²⁴ According to the biography in Ch.13 of the Ch'u san-ts'ang chi chi quoted in Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, p.24.

¹²⁵ See, for example, his disagreement with the Indian Monk Vighna, Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, p.48.

In his youth he excelled in secular studies, and when he grew up he became well-versed in the tenets of Buddhism; young members of gentry families all adhered to him for information and instruction. Since at that time the disciples who followed [Fa-] ya were all well-versed in the secular canons, but had not yet become conversant with the principles of Buddhism, Ya together with K'ang Fa-lang and others then took the numerical categories of the sutras and matched them with terms from secular literature, as a method to make them understand; this was called 'matched meanings' (ko-i) ... Thus he alternately explained the secular canons and the Buddhist scriptures.¹²⁶

The method of 'matched meanings' went further than simply finding Chinese equivalents such as tao for dharma. It involved, for example, equating the Indian Mahabhutas or 'four elements' with the Chinese 'five elements'.¹²⁷ No doubt this was more meaningful to his disciples, but one wonders whether what they understood and responded to was the Buddhist doctrine or the familiar concept.

There is, of course, a distinction to be drawn between works of apologetics or propaganda and doctrinal treatises for the believer. The treatises of Hui-yuan in which he defends Buddhist doctrines and the sangha against Chinese critics are full of quotations from the Confucian classics and Taoist works. Yet his correspondence with the monk Kumarājīva is almost totally devoid of Chinese philosophical terms.¹²⁸ If we take as typical of early Chinese Buddhism, a work such as the Feng-fa-yao or 'Essentials of Religion' by Hsi Ch'ao (336-377)¹²⁹ we find a highly developed and distinctive Buddhist terminology combining simple equivalents, transcriptions of the Sanskrit terms (often with explanation in Chinese)¹³⁰ and fresh coinings in Chinese. Some of the

¹²⁶ From the Kao-sêng chuan, ch.4, translated in Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, p.184.

¹²⁷ Y. T'ang Yung-t'ung, 'On "ko-yi", the Earliest Method by which Indian Buddhism and Chinese Thought were Synthesized', in W.R.Inge (Ed.), Radakrishna, London, 1951, p.278.

¹²⁸ Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, p.12.

¹²⁹ Translated in Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, Ch.III, Appendix B, pp.164-176.

¹³⁰ e.g. in the first paragraph Buddha is equated with the Chinese chüeh, 'to awaken', and Sangha with chung, 'the group'. v. Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, p.164.

equivalents seem dangerously misleading, as, for example, Nirvana with wu-wei,¹³¹ but, on the whole, the doctrine is authentic Buddhism.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, however, under Confucian and Taoist attack, new attempts were made to place Buddhism in, rather than outside the Chinese tradition. We find not only a blurring of distinctions between the schools but a new attempt to assert the 'Chineseness' of Buddhism. This took the form of a line of argument that became increasingly untenable and fantastic. Beginning with the argument that Buddhism was known to the ancient Chinese, it ended by claiming that China had been converted to Buddhism in the time of Asoka and that Confucius and Lao-tzu were themselves Buddhists.¹³² Buddhist apologists used writings such as the passage in the Lieh-tzu¹³³ which quotes Confucius as referring to the 'Sage of the West', to prove that Confucius knew and revered the Buddha.¹³⁴ And eventually it was even claimed that Confucius, Lao-tzu, and the Chinese culture-heroes Fu-hsi, Nu-kua etc. were Bodhisattvas.

Chinese Buddhism, as it finally emerged from the formative process, was something so characteristically Chinese that Hajime Nakamura has used it as a model for determining the characteristics of Chinese thought in his Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples. Some of these features may be regarded as merely external, as affecting the forms rather than the substance of Buddhism. But it is very difficult to regard the process as merely one of adaptation, of accommodation,

131 Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, pp.171, 174.

132 For the stages of this development, see Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, pp.269ff.

133 IV.41 v. Zürcher, Buddhist Conquest, p.274.

134 Ironically, some of the Jesuits later used this same passage to prove that the ancient Chinese knew of Christ. At least the Buddhists were not guilty of anachronism.

rather than a syncretistic loss of identity and essential doctrinal substance. As the expression of Chinese Buddhism in the translations and commentaries on the Sutras was modified by the pressures Nakamura enumerates - emphasis on the concrete and particular rather than the abstract and universal; conformity to Chinese notions of morality and social hierarchy; esteem for nature and for antiquity - they took on a quite new substance. The relationship of concepts, their range and resonance, was changed. New schools developed independently, especially as contact with Indian Buddhism was broken by Islam. And eventually, explicitly syncretistic schools arose, which may be summed up in the teaching of the T'ang master, Tsung-mi: 'Confucius, Lao-tzu and Sakyamuni all attained sainthood. They preached their doctrines in different ways in accordance with the time and place. However, they mutually helped and benefitted the people by their teachings'.¹³⁵ The result was not only loss of identity but denial of it: 'For those of great wisdom, (all schools) are the same. On the other hand, for those with little capacity they are different. Enlightenment and illusion depend solely on the capacity of the man and not on the difference of teachings'.¹³⁶ The specific 'enlightenment' of the Buddha had evaporated.

The history of the introduction of Buddhism to China, and the subsequent process of assimilation, offers many points of interest for the student of Christianity in China.^{136a} Later we will find the Jesuits adopting Chinese terminology and concepts, quoting Confucian and Taoist texts, attempting to

¹³⁵ Quoted in Nakamura, Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples, Honolulu, 1964, p.287.

¹³⁶ Nakamura, Ways of Thinking, p.287.

^{136a} Paul Demiéville in 'La Pénétration du Bouddhisme dans la Tradition Philosophique Chinoise', Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale, III, 1956-7, p.36, draws some interesting parallels between the time lag and the principles of selection operating in the case of Buddhism on the one hand and Western ideas on the other.

establish the antiquity of Christianity in China and even, in the case of the Figurists, assimilating the Chinese and Judaeo-Christian mythologies. But in all cases, Buddhism seems to have gone further, to have definitely crossed the line between accommodation and syncretism. This was partly because the notion of orthodoxy in Buddhism was less highly developed, partly because it was less bound to a historical revelation, and partly because it was able to establish itself in China at a time when orthodox Confucianism was at a low ebb. It was so strong in the T'ang dynasty that it had to be absorbed rather than eliminated and it became a potent element in the Neo-Confucian synthesis of the Sung. The Jesuits were able to use this Buddhist influence on Confucianism as evidence for the corruption of the pure doctrine of Confucius, and thus to win Confucian supporters. But a deeper knowledge of the process by which Buddhism became Chinese might have given the Jesuits pause in their own plan of becoming Chinese. China had shown a great capacity to convert its would-be converters.

IV. EUROPEAN KNOWLEDGE OF CHINESE RELIGION BEFORE THE JESUITS

We have seen that at the time of the first entry of the Jesuits into China around 1580 the lessons that they might have learnt from previous Christian missions had been largely lost. What other sources of knowledge of Chinese conditions were open to them? As classical scholars they were probably familiar with the occasional reference to the Seres or Sinai in Greek and Latin Literature.¹³⁷ However few of these passages referred explicitly to Chinese religion. Origen in his Contra Celsum thundered against the 'atheism' of the Chinese, but in terms that suggest that the religion of the Seres was chosen for rhetorical effect rather than through any precise knowledge of their beliefs.¹³⁸

The medieval accounts had swung between the two extremes of depicting the Chinese as quasi-Christians, and as unshakeable idolaters. Only direct experience could dissolve the mystery surrounding the Chinese. That experience of Portuguese merchants and later of Portuguese and Spanish priests seeking entry to China is preserved in various sixteenth century works. We can trace the order of their publication and their contents but it is impossible to be certain as to their influence on the minds of those who planned and carried out the Jesuit mission to China. The Jesuit letters and their library catalogues testify to their reading of the published accounts of China. However, the general Portuguese secrecy about their voyages, and the lack of interest of merchants in literary activities, leave many gaps in our knowledge of the mid-sixteenth century exploration of the China coast. The Jesuits in India, Malacca and later in Macao

¹³⁷ Ricci in the second chapter of the Storia, 'Del Nome, Grandezza, e Sito della Cina', explicitly equates the Cina of the Portuguese not only with Marco Polo's Cataio but also with the Serica of the ancients (Fonti Ricciane, N4, I, pp.7-10).

¹³⁸ y. G.Coedès, Textes d'Auteurs Grecs et Latins relatifs à l'Extrême Orient, p.82. Presumably Celsus himself had cited the Seres as a nation of atheists.

must have heard many tales about the Chinese that never found their way into print. In fact, their oral sources may often have been more reliable than the printed sources. One would expect, for example, that Fernão Mendez Pinto during the period when he wore the gown of a Jesuit brother, was more accurate in relating his adventures in China to his Jesuit confreres than he was in his published Peregrinagam,¹³⁹ with its romantic embroidery and inventions.¹⁴⁰

Even in the extreme case of Mendez Pinto's book it is difficult to be certain where we are dealing with complete fabrication and where we have actual experience exaggerated and fictionalized. A good example of the former is his account of a meeting in 'Sempitay' with the daughter of the Portuguese envoy, Tomé Pires, and a community of 300 Chinese Christians.¹⁴¹ Pires almost certainly died in prison and there was no trace of these Christians some thirty years later. Yet Pinto does not deserve his reputation as a liar.¹⁴² His story of the destruction of the Portuguese colony in Liampo¹⁴³ is an illustration of his habit of taking an actual incident - the expulsion of the Portuguese from Ningpo¹⁴⁴ - and elaborating it into an episode of epic proportions. Samuel Purchas caught

139 Peregrinagam de Fernam Mendez Pinto em que da conta de muytas e muyto estranhas cousas que vio e ouvio no reyno da China... Lisbon, 1614. (Mendez Pinto died in 1583; after an adventurous career in India and the Far East he had briefly (1554-1558?) been a member of the Society of Jesus before returning to Portugal. Although his work was not published till long after his death, it was widely circulated in manuscript and he was interviewed by the Jesuit historian G.P. Maffei in 1582 during the preparation of the latter's History of the Indies. v. Lach, Asia in the Making of Europe, I, p.325.

140 v.G. Schurhammer, 'Fernão Mendez Pinto and seine "Perigrinagam"', Asia Major, III, 1926, pp.71-103, 194-267.

141 Peregrinagam, ch.XXVII.

142 cf. the line in Congreve's Love for Love (1695): 'Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee, thou liar of the first magnitude'.

143 Peregrinagam, ch. CXXI (II, pp.646-651 of the Rio de Janeiro ed., 1952).

144 Probably more exactly from the Shuang-hsü islands near Ningpo. v. T'ien-tse Chang, Sino-Portuguese Trade from 1514 to 1644, Leiden, 1934, pp.76-80; Lach, Asia in the Making of Europe, I, p.737; and A. Kammerer, La Découverte de la Chine par les Portugais, Leiden, 1944, pp.71-82.

the flavour of Mendez Pinto and other sixteen century accounts, as well as the European reaction to them, when he wrote:

Once, the Sunne Rising hath found many worshippers, but the Westernne Sunne is neerer night: and neerer obscuritie and meannesse are our Westernne affaires then those China Raies of the East; and wee were Backes and Owles not to beleeeve a greater light then our selves see and use. All China Authours how diversified soever in their lines, yet concurre in a centre of Admiranda Sinarum,¹⁴⁵ which if others have not so largely related as this, they may thanke God they payed not so deare a price to see them; and for mee, I will rather beleeeve (where reason evicts not an ejectione firma) then seeke to see at the Authors rate; and if he hath robbed the Altars of Truth, as he did those of the Calempluy Idols, yet in Pequim equity we will not cut off the thumbs (according to Nanquin rigour) upon the bare surmise without any evidence against him.¹⁴⁶

The sixteenth century writers on China were conscious of their role as heroic explorers of the unknown and purveyors of the exotic in words as well as goods. And they agreed on their theme of the Admiranda Sinarum, 'the wonders of China'.

Where they diverged was in the nature and extent of their experience of China and their purpose in writing. We must distinguish between those with first-hand experience, allowing of course for the tendency to conflate hearsay and personal observation,¹⁴⁷ and the compilers of second-hand material in Goa and Lisbon. The merchant or official might be expected to have a different point of view to that of the missionary, although in practice nationality often provided more common ground than vocation. Fortunately, the task of listing these

145 Purchas' marginal note attributes the phrase to Valignano. This appears to be a reference to the section entitled 'Admiranda regni sinensis' in John Hay's compilation, De rebus Japonicis, Indicis, et Peruanis, Antwerp, 1605. y. J.M.Braga, 'The Panegyric of Alexander Valignano S.J.', Monuments Nipponica, V, 1942, p.239, n.7.

146 'Introduction to Mendez Pinto' in S. Purchas, Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes, Glasgow, 1906 ed., XII, p.57.

147 Mendez Pinto again provides us with a good example of this. For a somewhat unconvincing defence of the method, see M. Collis, The Grand Peregrination, London, 1949.

sources, analyzing their mutual dependence and assessing their reliability has been admirably carried out by Donald Lach in his Asia in the Making of Europe.¹⁴⁸ I am largely indebted to him for the account that follows.

China, or rather Cathay, had been the goal of Columbus. In the famous letter of Toscanelli which is alleged to have been Columbus's inspiration we find it presented not just as a source of goods but of wisdom. 'This country', wrote Toscanelli, 'is worthy to be sought by the Latins, not only because thence may be obtained vast gains of gold and silver and gems of every kind and of spices that are never brought to us; but also because of the wise men, learned philosophers and astrologers, by whose genius and arts that mighty and magnificent province is governed, and wars also are waged.'¹⁴⁹

It was with these expectations, too, that the Portuguese approached China. Their first accounts of China concentrated on questions of trade and navigation,¹⁵⁰ but they were also predisposed to finding Christians as they had in India.¹⁵¹ Andrea Corsali, a Florentine in Portuguese employ, reporting the first voyage along the China coast to Lorenzo de' Medici, was sceptical about the Christians but not about the profits:

They are people of great skill, and on a par with ourselves, but of uglier aspect, with little bits of eyes...I believe them to be pagans, though many allege that they hold our faith or some part of it. During this last year some of our Portuguese made a voyage to China. They were not permitted to land, for they say it is against their custom to let foreigners enter their dwellings. But they sold their goods at a great gain, and they say there is as great profit in taking spices to China as in taking them to Portugal, for it is a cold country and they make great use of them.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Volume I, 'The Century of Discovery' (in two books), Chicago, 1965. y. esp. Bk. 2, Ch.IX, 'China'.

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in G.F.Hudson, Europe and Asia, London, 1931, pp.208-9.

¹⁵⁰ e.g. The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires (written 1512-15), Ed. and trans. A.Cortesão, I, London, Hakluyt Society, 2nd. ser., LXXXIX, 1944, pp.116-128.

¹⁵¹ The 'St. Thomas Christians' of the Malabar Coast. Even before this Nestorian community was discovered Vasco da Gama had briefly imagined that he had found Christianity in the Hindu devotions of Calicut. y. A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama, London, Hakluyt Society, 1st. ser., XCIX, 1898, pp.50-55.

¹⁵² Quoted in G.F.Hudson, Europe and China, p.203. This letter, written in January 1515 was later published in the first volume of Ramusio's Delle Navigationi et Viaggi.

China was to prove 'a cold country' indeed to the Portuguese. The next eyewitness accounts we have, come from Portuguese prisoners in Chinese prisons who naturally took a rather jaundiced view of their surroundings.¹⁵³ A later prisoner, Galeote Pereira, rather surprisingly praises the Chinese administration of justice¹⁵⁴ but he is uncompromising in his dismissal of Chinese religions. His description is important because it was widely published in the second half of the sixteenth century,¹⁵⁵ and certainly known to the Jesuits, and it is worth quoting at length. I use the colourful 1577 English version of the ex-Jesuit Richard Willes.

The inhabitants of China, be very great idolaters, all generally do worshyppe the heavens: and as we are wont to saye, God knoweth it: so say they at every worde, Tien Tautee,¹⁵⁶ that is to saye, THE HEAVENS DO KNOWE IT. Some do worshippe the Sonne, and some the Moone, as they thynke good, for none are bounde more to one then to an other. In their temples, the which they do cal Meani,¹⁵⁷ they have a great altar in ye same place as we have, true it is that one may goe rounde about it. There set they up the Image of a certayne Loutea¹⁵⁸ of that countrey, whom they have in great reverence for certayne notable things

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- 153 See the letters of Cristavão Viera and Vasco Calvo published by D.Ferguson in the Indian Antiquary, XXX, 1901, pp. 467-491, and XXXI, 1902, pp.10-32, 53-65. Lach corrects the dates given by Ferguson, 1534 and 1536, to 1524 (Asia in the Making of Europe, I, p.734, n.14).
- 154 pp.307-313 of the extract in Richard Hakluyt's Principal Navigations, Glasgow ed., 1904; cf. Boxer, South China in the Sixteenth Century, pp.17-25.
- 155 Written in 1553 after his escape from China, it was published in 1565 in abridged form, translated into English by Richard Willes in 1577 and incorporated into Gaspar da Cruz's Tractado of 1569 and Hakluyt's Principal Navigations. y. Lach, Asia in the Making of Europe, pp.748-9.
- 156 Boxer suggests t'ien hsiao-te and gives in his text the transcription of the Portuguese original as Tien xautee (South China in the Sixteenth Century, p.15) but the original text as printed by Boxer in Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu, XXII, 1953, p.72, has Tien jautee. Both transcriptions would in Portuguese pronunciation sound somewhat like t'ien hsiao-te.
- 157 In the original meãos i.e. miao, temples or shrines.

he dyd. At the rygght hande standeth the devyl, muche more uglie paynted than we do use to set hym out, whereunto great homage is done by suche as come into the temple to ask counsell or to draw lottes. If you aske them what they do thynk of the soules departed, they will answeare, that they be immortall, and that as soone as any one departeth out of this life, he becometh a devyl if he have lived well in this worlde, if otherwyse, that the same devyl chaungeth hym into a bufle, oxe, or dogge. Wherefore to this devyl do they muche honour, to hym do they sacrifice, praying hym that he wyll make them lyke unto hym self, and not lyke other beastes. They have moreover an other sorte of temples, wherein both uppon the altars and also on the walles do stande many Idoles well proportioned, but bare headed: these beare name Omithofon,¹⁵⁹ accompted of them spirites, but such as in heaven do neither good nor eveyll, thought to be such men and women, as have chastlye lyved in this worlde in abstinence from fyshe and fleshe, fedde only with ryse and salates. Of that devyle they make some accompte, for these spirites they care little or nothyng at all.¹⁶⁰

It is possible to discern in this account many elements of the main Chinese religious traditions - Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist. But it is probably more informative to us, through hindsight, than it was to the sixteenth century reader, and not the least for its tendentious and hostile terminology.

The best known pre-Jesuit accounts of China, those in João de Barros' Decadas da Asia, Terceira Decada (1563);¹⁶¹ Lopes de Castanheda's Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India pelos Portugueses (1551-1563);¹⁶² the Crónica do

¹⁵⁸ Pereira has earlier given this as a generic term for 'a certain order of gentlemen' i.e. the gentry or scholar-official class. Boxer (South China in the Sixteenth Century, p.10) derives it from the Amoy vernacular, lo-tia, 'old father' (mandarin lao-tieh).

¹⁵⁹ i.e. O-mi-to-fo, Amida Buddha.

¹⁶⁰ 'Certayne Reportes of the Province China, learned through the Portugalles there imprisoned, and chiefly by the relation of Galeotto Perera, a gentleman of good credit, that lay prisoner in that countrey many yeeres', in Willes' edition of Richard Eden's The History of Travayle in the West and East Indies, London, 1577, f.241. cf. Hakluyt's Principal Navigations, pp.304-5, and Boxer, South China in the Sixteenth Century, pp.15-16.

¹⁶¹ Liv.2, cap.VI-VIII, and Liv.6, cap.I & II (pp.84-105 and 301-310 of the 6th ed., 4 vols., Lisbon, 1945-6).

¹⁶² Liv.IV, cap.XXVII (Coimbra ed., 1924-33, II, pp.421-4).

Felicissimo Rei D. Emanuel of Damião de Gois (1566-7)¹⁶³ and Bernardino de Escalante's Discurso (1577),¹⁶⁴ added little to Western knowledge of Chinese religion. Lopes de Castanheda had more to say than previous writers about Buddhism¹⁶⁵ and Gois about Chinese monasteries and temples.¹⁶⁶ But the principal theme of all these writers was Portuguese expansion and they saw China in the light of trade and possibly conquest.

It is to two missionaries, or would-be missionaries, the Portuguese Dominican, Gaspar da Cruz, and the Spanish Augustinian, Martín de Rada, that we owe the most interesting accounts of Chinese religion from the third quarter of the century. Da Cruz, who spent a few weeks in Canton in 1556 published his Treatise on China on his return to Portugal in 1569.¹⁶⁷ Despite the brevity of his experience of China, a few months at the most,¹⁶⁸ his account is perceptive and detailed. He seems deliberately to have set out to destroy the optimistic view of Chinese beliefs that had become established. He denies the reports¹⁶⁹ that the Chinese studied philosophy and possessed colleges and universities. 'The truth is', he wrote, 'that there are no other studies nor universities in it, nor private schools, but only the schools royal of the laws of the kingdom.'¹⁷⁰ The consequence is that they lack that natural knowledge of God that St. Paul tells us natural

¹⁶³ Part IV, Ch.XXIV (IV, pp.55-60 of Coimbra ed., 1926).

¹⁶⁴ Discurso de la Navigacion que los Portugueses hazen a los Reinos y Provincias del Oriente, Seville, 1577, published in facsimile edition under the misleading title of Primera Historia de China by Carlos Sanz, Madrid, 1958.

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, his references to the worship of Nama (A-ma?) and Conhâpuca (Kuan-yin pu-sa?), Historia, II, p.422.

¹⁶⁶ Crónica, IV, pp.58-9.

¹⁶⁷ Tractado em que se cõtam muito por estêso as cousas da China, Evora, 1569, translated in C.R.Boxer, China in the Sixteenth Century, pp.45-239.

¹⁶⁸ v. Boxer's 'Introduction', p.lix.

¹⁶⁹ e.g. De Gois, Cronica, IV, p.59.

¹⁷⁰ Boxer, South China, p.161.

philosophy can attain.¹⁷¹ There is, however, some hope for the Chinese:

Generally, among them is no notice of the **evangelical** law, nor of Christianity, nor even of one God, nor a trace thereof, save only that they believe that everything depends from on high, both the creation of all things as the conservation and ordering of them; and not knowing who in particular is the author of these things, they attribute it to the same sky. And thus they blindly grope after God.¹⁷²

Another source of hope is the very lack of religion on the part of the Chinese:

There is a very good disposition in the people of this country for to become converted to the faith; and one reason being that they hold their gods and their priests in small esteem, whereby when they learn of the truth they esteem it, which is not the case with any of the peoples in all the regions of India.¹⁷³

In his summing up of the prospects for Christianity in China, Da Cruz made some observations that directly foreshadow the Jesuit policy. He sees 'two very great inconveniences' to Christian Missionaries in China, the Chinese dislike of novelty and their refusal to allow foreigners to reside in China without special licence from the officials.¹⁷⁴ Without support of the 'Louthias' nothing can be done. The only way out of this dilemma is to send an embassy to the 'King of China',

religious men going with the ambassadors to obtain the licence for to go about the country, showing themselves to be men without arms, and how our faith is no prejudice to his dominion and government, but a great help that all might obey him and keep his laws.¹⁷⁵

The fate of Da Cruz's own mission, and of the later attempt of Martín de Rada in 1575 to land with some Spanish

¹⁷¹ Boxer, South China, p.212.

¹⁷² Boxer, South China, p.213.

¹⁷³ Boxer, South China, p.217.

¹⁷⁴ Boxer, South China, p.221.

¹⁷⁵ Boxer, South China, p.221.

friars on the Fukien coast,¹⁷⁶ proved his point that the key to the penetration of China lay with the officials. What neither Da Cruz nor de Rada perceived, was that these officials or Louthias had a 'philosophy', that they held their position by virtue of their accomplishments in and adherence to the Confucian value-system. It was the achievement of the Jesuits to add this new and vital dimension to European knowledge of Chinese religion.

¹⁷⁶ y. De Rada's Relation in Boxer, South China, pp.241 ff. The accounts of Da Cruz and de Rada, as well as other sources, were used by Juan González de Mendoza in his Historia de las Cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del Gran Reyno de la China, Rome, 1585. I have deliberately omitted a consideration of Mendoza's work because it falls outside the chronological limits of this chapter. But, although it was published after the Jesuits' entry into China it serves as an admirable summary of the Pre-Jesuit picture of China.

V. THE JESUIT MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE

When Michele Ruggieri first visited Canton in April 1580, the Society of Jesus was only forty years old. Yet it had already accumulated an extraordinary amount of missionary experience in most parts of the known world, and developed a distinctive missionary style. In such a close-knit centrally controlled body this experience was shared through an elaborate system of reports, conferences and directives. The Jesuit mission in China was in some respects simply an application of policies proved and developed elsewhere.

The Jesuits are frequently characterized as a military-style body, the brain-child of a Spanish soldier turned priest. There is, of course, some truth in this. Military metaphors abound in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola and the Bull of approval of the Society issued by Pope Paul III in 1540 bears the title Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae. But the Jesuits were not formed with the intention of acting as 'shock-troops of the Counter-Reformation'. On the contrary, the founding fathers originally intended to go to the Holy Land and work for the conversion of the infidels. The Society of Jesus was first and foremost a missionary body.

The great innovation in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus was a special vow of obedience to the Pope, and the language in which it is expressed is most revealing. The Jesuits pledged themselves to 'take themselves to whatever peoples he (the Pope) should decide to send them, amongst the faithful or the infidels, for the greater glory of God and the help of souls'. And the Constitutions add that 'the Society has no Particular place in mind, but chooses to be scattered throughout the world in various regions and places, since it desires to choose what is, or what it hopes to be the best, as long as the Supreme Pontiff shall have appointed it.¹⁷⁷ Long before the definitive drawing up

¹⁷⁷ Constitutiones Societatis Jesu, Pt.7, ch.I, in Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, vol.65 (Constitutiones, III), Rome, 1938, p.197.

of the Constitutions we find the same missionary aim expressed in the deliberations of 1539 over the form the new group should take¹⁷⁸ as well as in the Bull of approval of the infant Society. In the latter the Jesuits declare their willingness to go wherever the Pope sends them whether 'to the Turks, or to some other infidels, even in the parts of the world called the Indies'.¹⁷⁹

One of the ten founding fathers named in Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae was indeed sent to 'the Indies' as papal nuncio and founder-director of the whole Jesuit missionary enterprise in Asia. This was, of course, Francis Xavier. Although he never actually reached China, he died on the island of Sancian (shang-ch'uan) off the coast of China and so can truly be called father of the China mission as well as father of Jesuit missions in general.

After the classic studies of Alexander Brou¹⁸⁰ and Georg Schurhammer,¹⁸¹ and the definitive edition of Xavier's letters by Schurhammer and Wicki,¹⁸² there seems little point in treating Xavier's missionary career in detail. In any case, his methods were so intimately connected with his charismatic personality that there was little that his successors could learn directly from him. Nevertheless, as superior of the Jesuit missions he developed certain policies that became characteristic of Jesuit missions not only in the East but also in the Americas. And towards the end of his life,

178 Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, vol.63 (Constitutiones, I), Rome, 1934, Mon.I, par.3; Mon.3, pars. 1 & 11; and Mon.4, par.3.

179 Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae, in Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, vol.63, pp.27-28.

180 Saint Francois Xavier, 2 vols., Paris, 1912.

181 Franz Xaver: Sein Leben und Seine Zeit, Freiburg, I, 1955; II, 1964, and still in progress.

182 Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii, Rome, Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, vols. 67-68, 1944-5.

in response to his first contacts with the great East Asian cultural area, he began to plan a radically new approach that was to be taken up by the Jesuits of the Chinese and Japanese missions.

Xavier was always the pioneer, pushing on into new areas, opening up missionary fields, founding Christian communities which he then left to the care of others. James Brodrick has effectively exploded the myth of St. Francis Xavier's 'gift of tongues'.¹⁸³ In fact his command of the many languages he used in the course of his preaching remained very slight indeed. His usual method was to get someone experienced in the language - Tamil, Malay, Japanese - to translate some prayers and the creed into the language, then to memorize its pronunciation.¹⁸⁴ This led to many serious errors and misunderstandings especially in Japan where for more than a year he unwittingly preached the religion of 'Dainichi', a Buddhist deity, in the belief that he was preaching the Christian God. But his experience led him to stress the importance of the study of the languages of the peoples he served and through institutions such as the famous college of St. Paul in Goa he made provision for this.

Bitter experience also caused him to change his opinion on the type and quality of missionary suitable to the Asian missions. At first he was overwhelmed by the work to be done and wrote urging that as many men as possible be sent. He begged St. Ignatius to send the rejects of the Society in Europe, even those who 'are unable to hear confessions, or preach, or carry out the other works of the Society'. As long as they are virtuous and strong they will do. 'In this land of the infidels, learning is not indispensable.'¹⁸⁵ His problems with men like Francesco Mansilhas soon persuaded him otherwise. Mansilhas, although deeply attached to Xavier,

¹⁸³ J. Brodrick, Saint Francis Xavier, London, 1952, pp.132, 457.

¹⁸⁴ Brodrick, Saint Francis Xavier, pp.141, 240, 396-7.

¹⁸⁵ Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii, Ep.47, I, p.258.

gave him endless trouble and eventually had to leave the Society.¹⁸⁶ As he extended his apostolate from the low-caste fishermen of Cape Comorin to the Brahmins he became convinced of the necessity of a solid grounding in philosophy and theology, as well as in languages. His later letters increasingly concentrate on the organization of the Jesuit colleges and the formation of future missionaries.

A study of the development of Xavier's ideas on missionary method makes clear another point, highly pertinent to the present investigation. It was precisely his experience in Japan and his plans for China that convinced Francis Xavier of the need for missionaries with the best possible training. He asks for men well educated, preferably with master's degrees - 'necessario letras, pryncypalmente buenos artystas' - to counter the arguments of the Buddhist 'bonzes'. Once in Japan they should attend Japanese 'universities' in order to master the language and philosophy of Buddhism.¹⁸⁷ The latter provision was not due to any high appreciation of Buddhism or its proponents. One of the lasting legacies of Xavier to the Jesuit missions in both China and Japan was a deep aversion to Buddhism and a conviction that the bonzes were the chief obstacles to Christianity. Their gods, 'Xaca' and 'Ameda',¹⁸⁸ are held by some to have been philosophers but in reality they were 'demons'.¹⁸⁹ The bonzes are morally degenerate, but because of their great influence they must be countered and refuted.¹⁹⁰ If the Jesuits were not prepared to find Confucians in China, they certainly had preconceptions about Buddhism backed by the moral authority of St. Francis Xavier himself.

¹⁸⁶ Brodrick, Saint Francis Xavier, pp.250-1.

¹⁸⁷ Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii, Ep.97, II, p.289.

¹⁸⁸ i.e. Sakyamuni and Amida Buddha.

¹⁸⁹ Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii, Ep.96, II, p.269.

¹⁹⁰ v. Ep.96, paragraphs 27-34, II, pp.268-270, for Xavier's comments on the Japanese bonzes.

His last great scheme was for the spiritual conquest of China which he had come to realize was the cultural heart of East Asia. It ignored the difficulties that we have seen confronted earlier missionaries in China, and Xavier himself was not able to surmount the first obstacle of gaining entry to the country. But he was optimistic of success when he set out from Goa. A few days before his departure he wrote to the King of Portugal:

It must appear extreme audacity to go thus into a strange land and to a king wielding such enormous power in order to admonish men and proclaim the truth, two things highly dangerous in our time even among Christians and how much more so among pagans! Still, there is one thing which puts us in good heart, that God knows the desires implanted by his mercy in our hearts. With them He has given us great confidence and trust in Himself who is incomparably more powerful than the King of China.¹⁹¹

He had, however, thought out a method of approach which was in essence that successfully adopted thirty years later by Ricci and Ruggieri.

The first step was to get to the Emperor of China and win him over, if possible making a treaty of friendship between the Emperor and the King of Portugal.¹⁹² Then 'we Fathers of the Society of Jesus are to start war and discord between the demons and those who adore them'.¹⁹³ If the warlike imagery raises misgivings and reminds one of schemes of spreading the gospel at the point of the sword, a corrective is found in a slightly later letter to Loyola. He abandons the language he used to King John III and speaks of peaceful conquest through learning Chinese and preparing books in Chinese characters. His hopes now are based on the character of the Chinese people:

¹⁹¹ Brodrick, St. Francis Xavier, p.491 cf. Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii, Ep.109, II, p.361.

¹⁹² ibid.

¹⁹³ Brodrick, St. Francis Xavier, p.491 cf. Ep.109, II, p.362.

The Chinese are a very clever people, desirous of knowledge, and much given to study, especially of the human laws by which the empire is governed. They are a white, beardless race, with very small eyes, liberal of disposition and remarkably pacific...I am in great hope that by the labours of the Society of the name of Jesus both Chinese and Japanese will abandon their idolatries and adore God and Jesus Christ, the Saviour of all peoples.¹⁹⁴

Although we find in Xavier's plans for the China mission the two-fold approach of working from the top down and adaptation to Chinese ideas, both are embryonic and naive. His last letters from Sancian in October and November 1552 reveal his confidence that it is possible simply to land on the Chinese coast, go to Canton and present himself to the Governor, and say that he wishes to see the 'King of China'. As for adaptation, he makes no mention of dress or behaviour. One may presume that he would have acted as he did in Japan where he switched to court dress and ceremonial when he found it necessary. But his knowledge of the nature of the Chinese language was very deficient and he thought that a Japanese book written in Chinese characters would 'help me along in China until I learn to speak the language'.¹⁹⁵

The scheme was never put to the test. Xavier died on the 3rd of December, 1552, still hoping to persuade one of the Chinese 'merchants', that is the smugglers who acted as middle-men between the Portuguese and the Chinese ports, to land him near Canton. But in vain. It was to be thirty years before this first obstacle was overcome.

During this period several attempts were made by Jesuits and other missionaries to establish themselves in China.¹⁹⁶ After the de facto occupation of Macao by the Portuguese

¹⁹⁴ Brodrick, St. Francis Xavier, pp.491-2 cf. Epistolae, Ep.97, II, pp.291-2.

¹⁹⁵ Brodrick, St. Francis Xavier, p.492 cf. Epistolae, Ep.97 II, p.293. This letter also contains a very misleading account of the Chinese language (ibid., pp.292-3).

¹⁹⁶ v. H. Bernard(-Maître), Aux Portes de la Chine, Tientsin, 1933. A list of attempts, 1555-1583, is given in Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.139-142, n.5.

in the late 1550s efforts were made to enter China through Canton. It appears from a letter of the Bishop of Macao, Melchior Carneiro S.J., that missionaries regularly accompanied the Portuguese merchants on their biennial visits to Canton but were not permitted to stay.¹⁹⁷ Spanish friars from the Philippines made some unsuccessful attempts to land directly on the coast of Fukien or Kwangtung but were arrested and expelled. The only fruit from the latter attempts was the collection of some hundred Chinese books that Martín de Rada brought back to Manila, which were translated by Chinese Christians and used by Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza in his Historia. By 1580 many had given up hope and were beginning to think of military conquest as the only way of gaining a hearing for Christianity.

However, in the thirty odd years from the death of Xavier to the beginning of Ruggieri's mission in Chao-ch'ing, Jesuit missionaries in many parts of the world had developed methods of working that were a considerable advance on Xavier's pioneering efforts. It is possible to sum up these methods under three heads.¹⁹⁸

197 Bernard, Aux Portes de la Chine, p.99.

198 I have in general based this section on convenient secondary sources and published treatises rather than original records with the partial exception of Japan where the details are of more immediate relevance to my subject. The main works used are: José de Acosta S.J., De Procuranda Indorum Salute (1577, first published 1589) in F.Mateos (Ed.), Obras del P. Jose de Acosta, Madrid, 1954; Pablo de Arriaga S.J., Extirpación de la Idolatria del Peru (1621), trans. L.C. Keating as The Extirpation of Idolatery in Peru, Lexington, 1968; C.R.Boxer, The Christian Century in Japan, Berkeley, 1951; Jacobo Fenicio S.J., Livro da Seita dos Indos Orientais (1609), Ed. J.Charpentier, Uppsala, 1933; Luis Frois S.J., Tratado (1585), Ed. J.F.Schütte as Kultur-gegensätze Europa-Japan, Tokyo, 1955; R.B.C.Graham, A Vanished Arcadia, London, 1901 (on Paraguay); J.H.Kennedy, Jesuit and Savage in New France, New Haven, 1950; L.Martin, The Intellectual Conquest of Peru, New York, 1968; V.Cronin, A Pearl to India, London, 1959, and A. Rocaries, Robert de Nobili S.J. ou le 'Sannyasi' Chrétien, Toulouse, 1967, on De Nobili; and Alonso de Sandoval, De Instauranda Aethioporum Salute (1627), Ed. A. Valtierra, Bogota, 1956.

1. STUDY OF, AND ADAPTATION TO LOCAL CONDITIONS. In each Jesuit mission one of the first concerns was to study local customs, especially the local religions, in order to plan the best way of approaching the people. The Jesuits were certainly not the first to apply this method,¹⁹⁹ as obvious as it is necessary. But they approached it with a seriousness and a system that marked their efforts off from those of their predecessors. Whereas Bernardino de Sahagun O.F.M. and Bartolomé de las Casas O.P. on the whole met with lack of interest and even opposition from their orders regarding their studies of the Indians of Mexico,²⁰⁰ the works of José de Acosta S.J. on the South American Indians, Luis Frois S.J. on Japan, and various Jesuit authors on India²⁰¹ were widely circulated. The missionary methods that resulted varied from the paternalism of the North and South American missions to the ascetic witness of the 'Christian Sannyasis' in India. They were known and consciously imitated where conditions seemed suitable. And they were based on a common principle summed up by Acosta in the phrase, 'los costumbres de los Indios que no repugnar al Evangelio se debem conservar'.²⁰²
2. THE STUDY OF LANGUAGES AND CIRCULATION OF CHRISTIAN WRITINGS. The Jesuit colleges of the New World and the Indies, as well as Europe, provided facilities for the systematic study of the languages and customs of the peoples amongst whom the

199 Perhaps the most outstanding historical precedent was that of the 14th century missionary to Islam, Ramón Lull. y. R. Sugranyes de Franch, Raymonde Lulle, Schoneck-Beckenried, 1954.

200 R. Ricard, La "Conquête Spirituelle" du Mexique, Paris (Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, XX) 1933.

201 y. Jarl Carpentier's Introduction to Fenicio's Livro da Seita dos Indias.

202 Title of Bk.III, ch.XXIV of his De Procuranda Indorum Salute, Obras, p.502.

Jesuits worked. Ramón Lull's dream in the fourteenth century of monasteries for the study of languages to prepare missionaries 'to preach the gospel to all creatures',²⁰³ became a reality in the Jesuit colleges of the sixteenth century. In centres like the College of San Pablo in Lima and São Paulo in Goa, newly arrived missionaries studied the languages of their future missions while the professors and experienced missionaries wrote grammars, catechisms and treatises of apologetics.

3. CENTRALISED ORGANISATION. While the principle of missionary adaptation is as old as the Christian Church, the Jesuits gave it new force through the centralised administration of the Society. All superiors had to report at regular intervals to their intermediate superiors and to Rome. In this way all major decisions and innovations became quickly known and discussed. Sometimes this resulted in tensions and disagreements. But frequently we find the decisions of the Jesuit General and his advisers in Rome favouring the innovators against their more conservative confrères. Once the final decision was taken, and after due allowance for appeal or 'representation' against directives from Rome, the Jesuits adopted a united front. This curious mixture of internal democracy and autocracy proved extremely effective. Of course the huge distances involved meant long delays at times. An annual letter of the late seventeenth century estimates that a letter dispatched from Macao in December 1689 (and therefore probably written much earlier in the year somewhere in the interior of China) would not receive an answer till late 1693 at the earliest.²⁰⁴ A century before this, the time elapsed must have been even longer, and certainly a high proportion of the ships were lost on the way.^{204a}

203

Matthew, XVI.15 v. Sugranyes de Franch, Raymond Lulle, p.45.

204

Quoted by J. Correia-Afonso, Jesuit Letters and Indian History, Bombay, 1955, p.28.

204a

An estimated 112 vessels were lost between Portugal and India in 1550-1650 (see M. Cooper, The Southern Barbarians, Tokyo, 1971, p.22).

But, despite these inconveniences, the Jesuit system proved on the whole quite satisfactory. While it is easy to exaggerate the military aspects of Jesuit organization there was a coherence and efficiency that justified the analogy of military obedience. The Jesuit mission to China was appropriately labelled an 'expedition'.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ The title of Nicholas Trigault's Latin version of Matteo Ricci's memoirs of the opening of the China mission is De Expeditione Christiana apud Sinas...

VI. ALESSANDRO VALIGNANO AND THE ACCOMMODATION METHOD

In the light of the glowing accounts of China and its missionary possibilities successive Jesuit Generals pondered over the problem of gaining entry into the country.²⁰⁶ In 1555 St. Ignatius considered the possibility of nominating a 'Patriarch' of China, a Jesuit Bishop with full ecclesiastical powers such as had been sent to Ethiopia. But he rejected the suggestion as 'premature since the door is not yet open to the Gospel'.²⁰⁷ After the initial successes of the missions of the East we find a more cautious attitude in Rome as problems of consolidation arose. The third Jesuit General, Francis Borgia, in 1567 wrote in disgust of the 'useless crowd' (*turba inutilis*) of missionaries in Goa and urged a shift in focus from mass baptisms to a deeper approach, including 'learning the languages like children'.²⁰⁸ These two concerns, for opening the remaining doors and improving mission methods in the existing missions, resulted in the appointment of a Jesuit Visitor, a superior with a roving commission and full powers to make major decisions about the running of all the Jesuit missions of the East.

The first such Visitor, Gonçalo Alvarez, was appointed by Francis Borgia in 1568. He carried out a visitation of India and Macao and was on his way to Japan when he was drowned in a typhoon in July 1573.²⁰⁹ Meanwhile, in Rome Francis Borgia had died and the new General, Mercurian, had in ignorance of the fate of the previous Visitor, appointed his 'beloved brother in Christ, Alessandro Valignano' as 'substitute on our behalf and Visitor of our Society in the whole of East India'.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ v. Bernard, Aux Portes de la Chine, Pt.I, Ch.V, 'L'élan missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jésus vers la Chine'.

²⁰⁷ Letter of 21 November, 1555, quoted in Bernard, Aux Portes de la Chine, p.73.

²⁰⁸ Quoted in Bernard, Aux Portes de la Chine, p.83.

²⁰⁹ J.F.Schütte, Valignanos Missionsgrundsätze für Japan, I Bd., I Teil, Rome, 1951, p.54.

²¹⁰ See the text of this patent in Schütte, Valignanos Missionsgrundsätze, I Bd., II Teil, Rome, 1958, p.451. 'India Orientalis' seems to have been regarded as covering the whole of Asia with the possible exception of the Spanish controlled Philippines.

Alessandro Valignano, or Valignani as he is often incorrectly called,²¹¹ was undoubtedly the second founder after Xavier of the Jesuit missions of the East and 'father' of the China mission.²¹² He reformed the missions of India, drastically changed mission methods in Japan and planned the successful opening of the China mission. He controlled the missions of East Asia for over thirty years and on his death in 1606 left flourishing missions in both China and Japan. It is surprising that no full biography of this exceptional man exists despite the abundance of documentary material about his career.²¹³ However, the published works of Valignano and the massive study by Father Josef Franz Schütte S.J.²¹⁴ of Valignano's work in Japan enable us to reconstruct accurately his influence on Jesuit methods in East Asia.

²¹¹ All his letters and treatises are signed Valignano or occasionally Valegnano, but never Valignani. v. H. Bernard (-Maître), 'Valignani ou Valignano ...', in Monumenta Nipponica, I, 1938, p.378, and P.M.D'Elia, Il Mappomondo Cinese del P. Matteo Ricci S.I., Vatican City, 1938, p.8 n.I.

²¹² 'Padre di questa missione' Ricci calls him in a letter to Acquaviva, Peking, 22 August 1608 (Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.299).

²¹³ There is a late 17th century Life which I have not seen by D. Ferrante Valignani (Vita del Padre Alessandro Valignani, Rome, 1698); P.M.D'Elia has written a brief sketch in the series I Grandi Missionari, Rome, 1940, II, pp.119-170; and there is a useful summary of his life and career in the 'Introducción' by José Alvarez-Taladriz to his edition of Valignano's Sumario de las Cosas de Japon, Tokyo, 1954. J.F.Schütte's works on Valignano have concentrated on his career in Japan but there is a 'Brevis Conspectus Biographicus P. Alexandri Valignani' in Schutte's Introductio ad Historiam Societatis Jesu in Japonia, 1549-1650, Rome, 1968, pp.45-61. J.M.Braga has published in Monumenta Nipponica, V, 1942, pp.523-535, a contemporary panegyric from the old Macao archives, and there are some interesting biographical and bibliographical details in an article by Alfons Kleiser S.J. in Monumenta Nipponica, I, 1938, pp.70-98.

²¹⁴ Valignanos Missiongrundsätze für Japan. One volume in two parts (I.Bd., I & II. Teil, Rome, 1951, 1958) has appeared so far and a further two volumes are promised. Schütte notes in his Introductio ad Historiam Societatis Jesu in Japonia, p.45 n.I, that an English edition is to appear soon.

It is clear that the Jesuits owed to Valignano the inspiration for the methods that enabled them not only to breach successfully the barriers erected by Chinese cultural assumptions but also to overcome their own prejudices.

By the time Valignano arrived in India in August 1574 most of the Jesuits had despaired of China and the Portuguese in Macao had settled down as chaplains to the Portuguese community and the Westernized Chinese Christians of the settlement. The attitude of Belchior Nunes Barreto may be taken as typical. He held several positions of authority in the missions of Japan and India and had led the unsuccessful attempt to establish a mission in Canton in late 1555, the first missionaries actually to visit the Chinese mainland for over two centuries. His initial reactions seem to have been highly favourable and his hopes sanguine. In a letter dated November 1556, from Macao, he wrote that 'this nation of Chinese, from what I can gather, have a very good understanding, and it would be even greater if they became Christians because they are governed by vices of the flesh which blind their judgement.'²¹⁵ He does not seem to have regarded the set-back as more than temporary. Yet by 1567 he was writing to the General in much blacker terms. Without official approval there was no hope of missionaries staying or preaching in China and it seemed that nothing short of force could gain that permission.²¹⁶ In a letter to Francis Borgia of January 25th, 1568, he presents the three possible ways of entering China. The first, that of an embassy from the Portuguese king, seems to have failed. The Chinese regard the Portuguese as robbers - and Barreto admits they have some reason for this view. The second is that of conquest.

²¹⁵ Cartas que os Padres e Irmaos da Companhia de Jesus escreverão dos Reynos de Japao e China, Evora, 1598, I, f.36.

²¹⁶ Barreto to Francis Borgia, Cochin, 20 January 1567, in J. Wicki (Ed.), Documenta Indica, VII (Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, vol.89), Rome, 1962, p.209.

Barreto finds justification for this in the Chinese rejection of civilized diplomatic relations, and even more in their rejection of preachers of the Gospel. But he adds a warning that the Portuguese experience in India would suggest that conquest is much easier than conversion. The third way he suggests is to continue the present policy of 'knocking on the door', but it is hard to regard this in Barreto's presentation as more than a counsel of despair:

If Our Lord God should deign to grant to some of our men the gift of curing the sick, or prophecy, or performing some other kind of miracle, they would easily be received by the Chinese, for they are a people very curious of novelties.²¹⁷

While the Portuguese were pessimistic and apparently incapable of finding a way of overcoming the difficulties, the Spanish in the Philippines revived the plan of conquest. Alonso Sanchez S.J. was sent to China from Manila in 1582 with a two-fold mission, to impart to the Portuguese of Macao the 'good news' that they were now dependent on the Spanish crown through the union of the two kingdoms, and to sound out the possibilities of a Spanish mission to China. He reported, disconcerted, that 'nothing justifies the rumour spread so widely in Spain, in New Spain and even in the Philippines, that the door is open for the conversion of China'.²¹⁸ His reaction was to propose to the Spanish King an expedition against the Chinese to force the acceptance of the gospel, a sort of 'armed protectorate of the missions'.²¹⁹ Fortunately the Spanish authorities resisted this appeal for yet another

²¹⁷ Documenta Indica, VII, pp.491-2.

²¹⁸ Quoted in Bernard, Aux Portes de la Chine, p.184.

²¹⁹ H.Bernard (-Maître), Les Isles Philippines du Grand Archipel de la Chine: Une Essai de Conquête Spirituelle de l'Extrême-Orient (1571-1641), Tientsin, 1936, p.48. I find some difficulty in reconciling Father Bernard's full description, 'un protectorat armé des missions, non seulement défensif, mais même agressif', not only with Sanchez's own statements, but also with Bernard's rejection of the view that this was to enter China 'the sword in one hand and the cross in the other'.

conquista and the only response to Sanchez's plan was a ringing attack on this kind of thinking by José de Acosta S.J. in Mexico. Acosta presents the arguments commonly used by defenders of the rights of the Indians, such as Las Casas and Vitoria.²²⁰ But by this time (1587) he had an even stronger argument. The Jesuits had already entered China peaceably and were establishing themselves by an entirely new method of approach. Acosta sums up the position, and the new accommodation of the Jesuits to Chinese ways as follows:

That these hopes (of peaceful conquest) are not in vain, but real, is shown by the fact that the Fathers of Xauquin (Chao-ch'ing) have been able to bring forth fruit. My argument is, firstly, that if you say that the Chinese do not allow, and their laws do not permit, foreigners to live in their land, they have already done this for our Fathers, giving them a house in which they have lived for several years. Secondly, they have allowed them to practice Christian customs and to build a chapel and say mass. Thirdly, that the law of God has been publicly printed in the very language of China, and not only do they not contradict it, but they praise and revere it. Fourthly, that it is still increasing, and that they have permitted other Portuguese Fathers to enter, a superior and some Christian companions, to the number of ten or twelve in all. Fifthly, that the brother of the king of China has invited Father Ruggieri to call and converse with him. Sixthly, that in all this land they have a high opinion of good men and regard the Fathers of Saint Paul²²¹ as such, especially the aforementioned Italian Fathers. To disregard all this and seek war, seems contrary to all good sense and prudence.²²²

²²⁰ 'Parecer sobre la Guerra de la China', Mexico, 15 March 1587, in F. Mateos (Ed.), Obras del P. José de Acosta, Madrid, 1954, pp.331-334; and 'Respuesta a les Fundamentos que Justifican la Guerra contra la China', 23 March 1587, *ibid*; pp.334-345. The Parecer is also found in P.Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche del P. Matteo Ricci S.J., II, Macerata, 1913, pp.450-455.

²²¹ The Jesuits in the Far East were known as 'Paulists' after their colleges in Goa and Macao. The name of St. Paul's is still popularly applied to the ruins of the church of 'the Mother of God' in Macao which adjoined the College. v. M.Hugo-Brunt, 'An Architectural Survey of the Jesuit Church of St. Paul's, Macao', in Journal of Oriental Studies, Hong Kong, I, 1954, p.330, n.11.

²²² The Respuesta, Obras de P. José de Acosta, p.344.

As we shall see in the next chapter, this is an inaccurate and exaggerated account of the fortunes of the mission by 1587, but it does give some measure of the success of the first five years of the China mission. That success was due almost entirely to the decisions of Alessandro Valignano arrived at as a result of his experiences in India and Japan from 1574 to 1582. We can trace his maturing appreciation of the problem of adaptation, and the inadequacies of methods used up till this point, in a series of reports, instructions and letters to Rome written during this period.²²³ They culminate in three works, now available in modern editions, the Sumario of 1583, the work on Japanese customs, and his unfinished Historia.²²⁴ It is on the basis of these that I shall attempt to reconstruct the evolution of Valignano's accommodation method.

Valignano's early career gives us few clues to the reasons why, at the age of 34 with only 7 years in the Society of Jesus, he should have been appointed to the difficult and responsible office of Visitor. The historian looking at the bare facts of the record can only assume that his superiors had detected those qualities of character and judgement that he displayed so conspicuously in the East. He was born in 1539, a native of Chieti, then part of the Spanish kingdom of Naples. His father was a noble, official, and confidant of the Bishop of Chieti, Giovanni Pietro Caraffa, who in 1555 became Pope Paul IV. The young Alessandro went to Rome in 1557 to seek a career in the Church under the patronage of Paul IV, but Paul's death in 1559 frustrated his plans and he returned to his old University, the famous centre of

223 For the somewhat complicated chronology and publication history of Valignano's writings, see Lach, Asia in the Making of Europe, pp.256-7; Boxer, The Christian Century in Japan, p.459; and Streit-Dindinger, Bibliotheca Missionum, IV, no.984, pp.258-9.

224 Summario de las Cosas de Japón (1583), Ed. J. Alvarez-Taladriz, Tokyo, 1954; Il Ceremoniale per i missionari del Giappone, Ed. J.F.Schutte, Rome, 1946; and Historia de Principio y Progreso de la Compañia de Jesús en las Indias Orientales (1524-64), Ed. J. Wicki, Rome, 1944.

legal studies, Padua, to obtain a doctorate in utroque iure i.e. in canon and civil law. His record in Padua was hardly that of an exemplary churchman, and we find him in November 1562 imprisoned for having slashed with a knife the face of a lady of the town.²²⁵ He was released from prison due to the intercession of Cardinal Charles Borromeo, and came to Rome where apparently he reformed his ways, Alvarez-Taladriz suggests under the influence of St. Philip Neri and his circle.²²⁶ In any case, the Register of the Jesuit Novitiate of San Andrea in Rome tells us that on the 27th of May, 1566, 'Doctor Alexander Valegnanus' was examined for admission to the Society, and received two days later by Francis Borgia.²²⁷ In 1567-9 he followed a course of philosophy at the Roman College, including lessons in 'physics' from Christopher Clavius, the astronomer and mathematician. He was ordained priest in March 1570, and in late 1571 served for a few months as Master of Novices in San Andrea at a time when the young Matteo Ricci was a novice there. After less than a year of theological studies he was named Rector of the College of Macerata in September 1572. He applied to be allowed to join the mission of the Indies in February 1573, and in August was called to Rome and named Visitor. Even by the flexible standards of the young and rapidly expanding Society this swift rise was quite extraordinary. Certainly his legal qualifications must have fitted him for office in the litigious Portuguese East but this alone does not explain the choice. The General, Eduardo Mercuriano, must have seen in him the qualities of leadership, tact and commonsense that appear in his works and words in the Far East.

Valignano's missionary experiences, as those of all the Jesuits who are the subject of this study, began with the voyage out. It is important to remember the difficulties and dangers they faced, and the fact that those who arrived at last in their mission were usually merely the remnants of

²²⁵ Alvarez-Taladriz, Introduction to Sumario, p.5*.

²²⁶ Sumario, p.6*.

²²⁷ Sumario, p.7*.

much larger groups who set out.^{227a} I suspect that the influence of this initial experience on the attitudes of Jesuit missionaries in China and elsewhere has been under-rated, if noted at all. Even in an age when disease and disaster were so much more prevalent than in our own, a 'survivor mentality' must have resulted. Valignano's own account of the voyage is preserved for us in his account of the life of Francis Xavier,²²⁸ and makes hair-raising reading, despite his own good fortune in travelling. He lists the hardships of the conditions on board, over-crowding, lack of food and water, disease and discomfort, as well as the dangers from storm, reef, fire and pirates. 'It often happens', he writes, 'that the majority of the passengers die, sometimes two hundred, sometimes three or four hundred, on a single ship, and it is the most heart-rending thing to watch each day the poor inflated bodies being committed to the sea. With all these and other perils, it is extraordinary that so many Portuguese should seek to come to India every year. Yet they do, and as cheerfully as though India was only a league from Lisbon'.²²⁹ It is obvious that the Jesuits were kept fully occupied with apostolic work during the voyage²³⁰ and had little leisure to prepare for their mission.

227a George Pray estimated that of 376 Jesuits who set out for China between 1581 and 1712, 127 died on the voyage. See L. Pfister, Notices Biographiques et Bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l'Ancienne Mission de Chine, 1552-1773, Shanghai, 1932-4, I, p.329.

228 Monumenta Xaveriana, Tomus Primus, 'Sancti Francisci Xaverii Epistolas aliasque scripta complectens, quibus praemittitur eius vita a P. Alexandro Valignano S.J. ex India Roman missa', Madrid, 1899, pp.10-13. Parts of this account are translated in Brodrick, St. Francis Xavier, pp.98-100.

229 Brodrick, St. Francis Xavier, pp.99-100.

230 See the anonymous panegyrist's account of Valignano's directions to his fellow Jesuits on his voyage out, 'to distribute themselves over the whole ship, engage their fellow passengers in spiritual conversation, read pious books to them and teach the catechism to the uneducated among them' (Monumenta Nipponica, V, 1942, pp.534-5).

José Alvarez-Taladriz in the Introduction to his edition of Valignano's Sumario de Japón²³¹ examines the growth in Valignano's knowledge of China during the period from his arrival in India in 1574 to the writing of his Historia in 1583. In India he met some of the old Macao hands, such as Baltasar Gago, Francisco Pérez and Emanuel Texeira, and he spent from September 1578 to July 1579 in Macao itself. During this period in Macao he made the decision which resulted in the establishment of the China mission. He wrote to the Provincial of India, Rodrigo Vincente, requesting someone suitable to be sent to Macao to learn Chinese and attempt once more, but in a new way, to enter China. Vincente chose Michele Ruggieri, who had disembarked in Goa in September 1578.²³² Ruggieri had already, in the course of a few months, learned Tamil, and was described in the Annual Letter from Goa of 1579 as 'a person in whom are combined the age, virtue, ability, propensity and all the other qualities necessary.'²³³ He arrived in Macao on the 25th of July, 1579, a fortnight after Valignano's departure for Japan, and, with great difficulty, began his studies in Chinese.

Valignano's actual instructions to Ruggieri have not been preserved. But we have some indications of his state of mind both in his instructions for the Indian missions and in the chapter 'De la Casa de la China' (ch.14), of his Sumario de la India, written in 1579-80.²³⁴ Alvarez-Taladriz

²³¹ pp.34*-41*.

²³² It is interesting to note that among those who arrived on the same fleet were the other pioneers of the China mission, Francisco Pasio and Matteo Ricci, as well as the future missionary to the Mogul court and martyr, Rodolfo Acquaviva. Ruggieri has left an account of their reunion in Goa during which he predicted that they would all go to China, and that they would convert the Chinese, himself by his knowledge of law, Ricci through mathematics, Pasio through philosophy and Acquaviva through theology. v. F.Bortone, P. Matteo Ricci S.J., Rome, 1965, pp.77-78.

²³³ Quoted in Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.148-9, n.I.

²³⁴ Alvarez-Taladriz gives this chapter in full on pp.36*-41* of the Introduction to his Sumario de Japón.

sums this up neatly as 'a method of authentic infiltration, spiritual and intellectual, with perseverance rather than arms, mastery of the language and adaptation to the customs of the land,'²³⁵ in other words, accommodation.

Already in India he had seen the necessity of accommodation to the local languages and urged the establishment of special language schools.²³⁶ This was not new, of course, but it seems that the Portuguese in India had been neglecting the study of languages for the easier course of employing interpreters. Valignano was convinced that this was not enough. It is in the light of his insistence on acquiring fluency in the language that we should look at his request for a new man to be sent to Macao. To my knowledge, no Jesuit before Ruggieri had seriously attempted to learn Chinese, with the exception of Brother de Gois, a companion of Barreto in 1555, whose health had been broken by the experiment.²³⁷ And by the time Ruggieri arrived the Jesuits of Macao seem to have become opposed to any such attempt.²³⁸ Ricci's account of Valignano's decision is revealing in this respect. Valignano, he says, decided that the only way to gain entry to China was to select 'some Fathers of good life who would know their language and letters'. But when he came to Macao and 'sought to apply some of the Fathers who were in Macao to learn the letters and language of China, in order that, if they found a way of entering, they might be well prepared', he found opposition. 'Since it was contrary to

²³⁵ Sumario de Japón, p.35*.

²³⁶ See, for example, 'Pregunta Decima' of the Consultation of Chorão in J.F.Schütte, Valignanos Missionsgrundsätze, I.Bd., I. Teil, p.201.

²³⁷ Bernard, Aux Portes de la Chine, pp.64-5. There is extant a letter of Father Organtino Gneccchi Soldi written around 1570 in Macao where he was en route from Goa to Macao, which urges the Jesuit General to set two Fathers to learn Chinese, and speaks of the Chinese books he has by him (presso di me). But he does not claim to be able to read them. v. Bortone, P. Matteo Ricci S.J., p.50.

²³⁸ cf. the contemporary Macao letters cited by D'Elia in Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.142-3, n.1.

the views of some of the old and experienced Fathers in China, who thought the enterprise impossible, and not having with him anyone suited to be put to this task, Father Valignano wrote to Father Rodrigo Vincente, Provincial of India, to send at least one Father of good parts to this residence to carry it out. And he, continuing his voyage to Japan, left in writing what had to be done to reach the end he had in mind'.²³⁹ This new man, brought in by the Visitor now safely out of the way, against the advice of the old hands, naturally had a difficult time. Apart from his major problem of struggling with a demanding language without any grammars or dictionaries, he had to put up with harrassment from his superiors. It is no wonder that Ricci describes him in a letter of 13 February 1583 as 'un mezzo martire'.²⁴⁰

We do not know directly the contents of Valignano's directive of 1579. However some letters and the contemporary Sumario de la India give us some idea of the plan as conceived by its begetter. Valignano wrote to the General from Macao in terms that make it clear that he did not underestimate the difficulties of the task:²⁴¹

I confess to Your Paternity that having seen and understood the character of the Chinese race, I have found no repose by day or by night since my arrival in Macao, so intense is the desire I experience to come to the aid of a people so immense and so worthy of knowing their God...If it depended on me alone, I would consecrate myself entirely to this enterprise as the most desirable and the most precious that one could propose to a missionary, but, just as I command my brothers, I depend in my turn on my superiors, and I would not dare throw myself into this work without the blessing of obedience. The enterprise is difficult and dangerous. If I tried to explain to the people of Europe how narrow is the gate, how difficult to negotiate and how jealously guarded, it would seem an exaggeration, or even a lie.

However, although appreciating the obstacles, he did not share the despair of the Fathers of Macao. It was a question of method.

²³⁹ Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.142-147.

²⁴⁰ Quoted in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.143, n.

²⁴¹ Translated in Bernard, Aux Portes de la Chine, p.141 cf. Monumenta Xaveriana, I, p.194.

The only possible way of penetration will be to adopt a completely different approach to that which has been adopted up till now in the other missions of these areas.

In the Sumario he isolates the problem as one of winning over the mandarins.

It seems humanly impossible to find a way of preaching to them, because they have an inviolable law that no foreigner can enter China without permission of the mandarins and these are so subordinated one to the other, and so high and unapproachable that there is no way of entering into their friendship, or conversing with them.²⁴²

He does not yet clearly see the way out, but he decisively rejects the use of Portuguese power. The Chinese have rejected Portuguese embassies, and Portugal is a long way off. Portugal has no authority except over the Portuguese and Christians of the port of Macao.

This is not the way to deal with these people; the only thing certain is that to get anywhere some of our Fathers must learn the mandarin language.²⁴³

Nor does he underestimate the difficulty of this. It will take 'much time and work and I do not really know if anyone can succeed with it, especially in the port of Macao, which is a Portuguese place, because the same necessity does not force people here to learn something which involves so much difficulty and time'.²⁴⁴ Suspecting Portuguese opposition to the whole scheme, he left orders on his departure for Japan that the Father sent from Goa to take on the task should be 'free from all other work and provided with masters and given everything necessary for the job'.²⁴⁵

In March 1582, on his return from his first trip to Japan, Valignano found Ruggieri well advanced in his studies and added a cheerful note to the text of his Sumario de la India:

²⁴² Sumario de las Cosas de Japon, pp.39*-40*; extract from Sumario de la India, cap.14, 'De la Casa de la China'.

²⁴³ Sumario, p.40*.

²⁴⁴ Sumario, p.402.

²⁴⁵ Letter of January 1598, describing his instructions of 1578, quoted in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.147, n.1.

Already there is one of our Fathers here who has learnt the language and made great progress in it and one can hope that his work will not be in vain. He has no other preoccupation than to learn the language and for this purpose I have provided him with masters and a house apart from the others, with all the facilities necessary for this.²⁴⁶

It was at this point that he remembered his former novice, Matteo Ricci, and personally ordered him to join Ruggieri.²⁴⁷ Francisco Pasio who was already in Macao was added to the team and the 'completely different approach' was under way.

Unfortunately Valignano's instructions of 12 February 1582 ordering four more Jesuit students to learn Chinese remain unpublished.²⁴⁸ Once more, however, we have an abundance of information about the state of Valignano's mind. From the 25th of July 1579 to the 20th of February 1582, he was carrying out a visitation of the Japanese mission and his conclusions about the methods used here, added to his experience in India and Macao, began to add up to a complete mission theory, a set of principles or missionsgrundsätze as Father Schütte puts it. The Jesuits were to adapt themselves to Japanese (and Chinese) ways, not only in learning the language but in dress, diet, behaviour and every other way possible.

On his arrival in Japan Valignano found many things not to his liking. The Superior, Francisco Cabral, was an energetic man and quite successful in some ways.²⁴⁹ But he was an

²⁴⁶ Sumario, p.40*.

²⁴⁷ Actually Ruggieri had as early as 1580 written to Valignano asking for Ricci to be sent to join him. v. Ruggieri's letter of 8 November 1580 to the General (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 8, II, ff.303-4) quoted in Bortone, P. Matteo Ricci S.J., p.191.

²⁴⁸ D'Elia promised it as N5010 of the Fonti Ricciane but the later volumes were unpublished on his death. It is to be hoped that this important collection of documents the contents of which are listed in Vol. I, pp.CLVIII-CLXIII of the Fonti will be published soon.

²⁴⁹ Schütte notes in particular his success with the Feudal Lords - 'In Japan gibt es keine besseren Apostel als die Feudalherren' (Valignanos Missionsgrundsätze, I Bd., I Teil, p.263).

inveterate 'Portuguesizer', totally opposed to the adoption of Japanese customs and oppressive in his treatment of the Japanese Jesuit brothers and helpers (dōjuku).²⁵⁰ Valignano told the General on the 27th of October 1580 that he was 'muy triste y desconsolado' by what he had seen and that despite the apparent success of the mission ruin was staring them in the face.²⁵¹ The Rules of the Society were being neglected, there was a shortage of men, 'disunion and aversion' between the Europeans and the Japanese brothers, the spiritual formation of the latter was neglected, and study and learning was discouraged.²⁵²

Valignano conducted a number of 'consultations' in the main mission centres, and his conclusions were promulgated in a series of regulations and 'summaries' of the situation. The main document which he sent off to Rome from Cochin in India in October 1583, is the Sumario de las Cosas de Japón. It displays not only an extensive knowledge of Japanese conditions but a positive and sympathetic assessment of Japanese civilization. As for the Japanese mission, it is, he writes, 'without doubt, the most important and most profitable of the many that we have in these Eastern parts, and even in the whole of the newly-discovered lands (lo discubierto).'²⁵³

250 As late as 1595 Valignano was still attacking Cabral's treatment of the Japanese brothers. He accuses him of racism - 'accounting them as blacks and regarding their customs as barbarisms' - and reiterates his view that the Japanese made good religious and were suitable to be ordained priests. (Sumario del Japón, pp.167*-168*)

251 'La ruina que la Compañía se aparejava era muy cierta'. Letter in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 8, I, ff.298v - 299v; Document 8 in Schutte, Valignanos Missionsgrundsätze, I.Bd., II Teil, pp.487-494. This passage on p.487.

252 This is a rough summary of the five heads or 'principios' of Valignano's letter.

253 The beginning of Ch.VI, 'De la Importancia de Este Empresa y del Grande Provecho que se hace y esta para hacer en Japon', Sumario del Japón, p.131. It is interesting that a corresponding passage in the August 1580 draft of the Sumario qualifies the praise of the Japanese mission with the phrase, 'with the exception of the Chinese' (v. Boxer, The Christian Century in Japan, p.76).

In the Sumario and his book on Japanese customs²⁵⁴ Valignano shows a deep appreciation of Japanese culture. The missionaries could ignore the elaborate code of etiquette only at the price of being dismissed as barbarians. If they wished to be accepted, they must find a place in Japanese society and assume the rank, dress and behaviour appropriate to that place. On examining Japanese society he found the Buddhist monks or 'bonzes' occupying the next most important place after the feudal lords.

The religious, whom they call bonzes, are great in number and powerful. On account of the respect in which the people hold them by reason of their state, there are many among them who are noble by birth, brothers, relatives, and sons of the great lords, and they enjoy all the best things of the land.²⁵⁵

Hence, the Jesuits must assume the position of 'bonzes of the Christian religion', both because they are indeed 'religious', and because this will give them a secure niche in Japanese society. They will 'enjoy the same rank as the bonzes of the Zen sect which is the chief of all the sects of Japan and which is in greatest contact with all ranks of the people of Japan'.²⁵⁶

Not only did he reject Cabral's strictures on the Japanese Jesuits living in Japanese style, he insisted that the European Jesuits should wear a modified Japanese dress, eat Japanese food, drink tea, and build houses and churches in the Japanese style. They must learn and practice Japanese forms of courtesy, entertain guests in the Japanese fashion. In short, they must 'become Japanese'.

It seems that Valignano had in mind mainly, perhaps even exclusively, accommodation in externals. There is no evidence that he foresaw the way in which adoption of a new social role would entail adoption of new concepts and attitudes.

²⁵⁴ The Advertimentos e Avisos acerca dos Costumes e Catangues de Jappão, published by J.F.Schütte as Il Cerimoniale per i Missionari del Giappone.

²⁵⁵ Historia de Principio y Progreso de la Compañia de Jesús en las Indias Orientales, p.130.

²⁵⁶ Il Cereimoniale, p.124.

Perhaps the problem did not present itself so urgently in Japan with its tradition of social innovation and adaptation, as it did later in China. But even in Japan we read that people thought of missionaries as preachers of 'the Christian Buddha'.²⁵⁷ The Jesuit General, Claudio Acquaviva, was a little alarmed when he received Valignano's new regulations. He wrote in reply that he approved of the general principle of 'accommodating ourselves to them and entering by their way in order to come out our way'. St. Paul himself wrote of becoming all things to all men in order to win all to Christ. But isn't there, he says, a danger of losing our identity, of becoming 'so accommodated to the dress and concepts of the bonzes that insensibly the Society in Japan will take on a new form (induat Societas in Japone aliam faciem)'.²⁵⁸ Perhaps that is just what Valignano had in mind, 'a new form' of Christianity. But he certainly underestimated the difficulties.

It was in the context of these Japanese problems that Valignano planned the beginning of the China mission. It is not surprising that he saw China through Japanese spectacles and approved of the first missionaries wearing the dress of Buddhist monks. Within a very few years, however, he was aware of his mistake and the first part of the Historia, sent to Rome in 1584, draws a distinction between the position of the Buddhists in Japan and in China. Although both follow the same books, in China it is the mandarins who count and the mandarins generally hold bonzes in low regard. In China the letrados hold the position held by the bonzes in Japan.²⁵⁹ The decision to switch from a Buddhist to a Confucian social role in China was not a change of policy, but a new tactic arising out of wider experience.

²⁵⁷ kirishitan no hotoke v. Sumario de Japón, p.59, n.5.

²⁵⁸ Letter of 24 December 1585 in Schutte, Il Cereimoniale, pp.317-319.

²⁵⁹ Historia, Pt. I, ch.28, esp. pp.252-3.

Other features of Valignano's accommodation method which originated in Japan became standard in China. First of all there was the basic attitude of respect for the culture of the people, and respect for them as people. Where Cabral had seen the vices of Japan as arising from their 'nature' and rooted in 'the climate of the land and the influence of the stars', Valignano saw basic human nature, amenable to good influences.²⁶⁰ In practice, this meant adaptation to the way of life, as far as possible, and the adoption of a recognizable social role. In Japan, as later in China, a general policy of working from above, concentrating first on people with political and social influence, was followed.²⁶¹ And in many details of organization of the mission such as the attempt to exclude other orders who might disturb the delicate balance of social acceptance, the Japanese model was followed in China.

In other respects, too, the Japanese experience influenced the China mission. Valignano had little to say in his writings on accommodation in regard to what was later called the problem of 'terms' i.e. the use of Japanese (and Chinese) terms when presenting Christian doctrine. I assume that by this time the question was closed in Japan and the compromise developed after Xavier's initial disastrous experiment was accepted by all. Georg Schurhammer S.J. in his study, Das Kirchliche Sprachproblem in der Japanischen Jesuiten mission, has shown how Xavier, on the advice of his Japanese companion, Paul Anjiro, at first preached the religion of 'Dainichi' in the belief that the name was the equivalent of the Christian 'God'. In fact it meant something like 'the godhead of the great sun' and had a specific Buddhist doctrinal content,²⁶²

²⁶⁰ I. Sumario, p.165*.

²⁶¹ This was one aspect of Cabral's policy that Valignano continued. See, for example, his approval of Father Organtino's apostolate in Miyako (Schütte, Valignanos Missionsgrundsätze, I Bd., II Teil, p.154 ff.).

²⁶² Dainichi was the Japanese equivalent of the Indian Vairocana. v. Brodrick, St. Francis Xavier, p.445.

as well as a popular obscene connotation.²⁶³ The result was that, when he realized his mistake, Xavier switched to a safer use of the European form, Deusu (=the Latin and Portuguese Deus). The same principle was used for transcribing other Christian terms and a whole new Christian vocabulary developed in this way e.g. supiritsu (spirit), anjo (angel), sakramento (sacrament), morutaru (mortal).²⁶⁴ This solution was possible in Japanese which already had a phonetic syllabary (hiragana) suitable to the purpose. In China the corresponding use of Chinese characters for their phonetic value was awkward and inelegant. Jesuits of the Japanese mission were to prove among the most bitter opponents of the Chinese mission's policy of using equivalent Chinese terms.²⁶⁵

Another legacy of the Japanese mission to the Chinese mission was a certain attitude towards Buddhism. It is somewhat surprising to find in Valignano's writings on Japan an unremitting hostility to Buddhism, surprising that is, in view of his directives that the Jesuits should become 'bonzes of the Christian religion'. From the time of Xavier's landing in Japan the Jesuits had seen and found the Buddhists as their chief rivals. This hostility was due partly to theological reasons, and perhaps even more to the way the Jesuits and the Portuguese 'great ships' upset the Japanese political game in which the Buddhists had a stake.²⁶⁶ Xavier had held public debates with them, and his successor as superior of the mission, Cosme de Torres, continued the attack.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Das Kirchliche Sprachproblem, p.30.

²⁶⁴ Many examples are given in Ch.III of Schurhammer's Kirchliche Sprachproblem and also in J. Laures, Japanische Ansprachen und Gebete, Tokyo, 1941.

²⁶⁵ See, for example, a letter of Camillo Constantio S.J. to the Jesuit General, 25 December 1618, cited in Schurhammer, Kirchliche Sprachproblem, pp.29-30.

²⁶⁶ y. G.Sansom, A History of Japan, 1334-1615, London, 1961, Ch.XVIII, 'Christianity and Buddhism under Nobunaga'.

²⁶⁷ y. G.Schurhammer, Die Disputationen des P. Cosme de Torres mit den Buddhisten in Yamaguchi im Jahre 1551, Tokyo, 1929.

However, the general impression conveyed by the accounts of these debates is mutual incomprehension and debating ploys rather than genuine engagement. In the chapter on Japanese religion²⁶⁸ in his Sumario de Japón, Valignano discusses the two kinds of gods of Japan, the kami and the hotoke. The latter is the Japanese reading of the Sino-Japanese butsu or Buddha, and Valignano apparently took it as a general term covering a class of deities, of whom the chief were Xaca and Amida. The passage on Xaca i.e. Sakya or Gautama Buddha, is of particular interest, both because of the deep-seated ill-will towards the Buddhists displayed in it, and because of its influence on anti-Buddhist apologetics in China.

This Xaca was a perverse natural philosopher, ambitious and shrewd, who, desirous of ennobling and improving his reputation in this world, as one who knows something of the other (world), feigning a holy and penitential life, began to preach to the Siamese, a great and rich kingdom near China, about Amida, extolling him and giving him divine attributes and honours, making him the principle from whence come all things and the end to which all return, and saying that to him, who is the true and holy hotoke, who is in all things giving them existence and life, all men owe adoration and reverence.²⁶⁹

Valignano excuses himself from a deeper examination of Buddhist doctrine by claiming that Xaca was shrewd enough to preach his doctrine in a way that can bear different interpretations, and that the many sects disagree amongst themselves.²⁷⁰ One sympathises with Valignano's bewilderment in the face of the linguistic and doctrinal confusion of Buddhism,²⁷¹ but there

²⁶⁸ Sumario de Japón, pp.58-67.

²⁶⁹ Sumario de Japón, p.61 cf. an identical passage, presumably borrowed from the Sumario, in the Historia, p.155.

²⁷⁰ Sumario de Japón, pp.61 and 63.

²⁷¹ cf. the reaction of Polanco, Secretary of the Society of Jesus, to Xavier's description of Japanese Buddhism - 'there are a number of things related there which are incredible, and which diminish the trust one can place in the others' (Polanco to P. Helmio, 26 August 1553, quoted in H. Bernard-Maître, 'La Découverte de Bouddhisme', Franco-Asie, no.100, X, 1954, p.1147). If this was the reaction to Xavier's grossly oversimplified account, what would a 16th century European make of the reality.

also appears an uncharacteristic narrowness of mind. This was to be the least fortunate of his contributions to the nascent China mission.

When Ruggieri wrote that he and his companions had 'become Chinese' he was not announcing an innovation in Jesuit missionary methods, but merely the application to Chinese conditions of Valignano's policies. These in turn owed something to other missionaries and other missions, but Valignano had set his personal stamp on them. He was, indeed, what the Macao Jesuit who wrote his panegyric called him, 'the life and soul of our missionary work in China'.²⁷² He had established the parameters of accommodation, personally in Japan, and, as it were, by proxy in China. 'If', said Ruggieri, 'Father Alexander Valignano had not come to these parts, this work of the conversion of China would not have gone ahead as it did'.²⁷³ The impetus had been given. But the decisive point, accommodation to Confucianism, was not yet reached. It was Ruggieri and Ricci who discovered Confucius.

²⁷² Braga, 'The Panegyric of Alexander Valignano S.J.', p.531.

²⁷³ Letter to the General, Macao, 8 November 1580, quoted in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.1XXXVIII.

CHAPTER 2. MATTEO RICCI AND THE JESUIT INTERPRETATION
OF CONFUCIANISM

Procurò molto di tirare alla nostra opinione il principale della setta de' letterati, che è il Confutio, interpretando in nostro favore alcune cose che aveva lasciate scritte dubbiose. Con che guadagnorno i Nostri molta gratia con i litterati che non adorano gli idoli.

It was very helpful to draw to our opinion the leader of the sect of the literati, Confucius, by interpreting in our favour anything which he left ambiguous in his writings. In this way our Fathers gained great favour with the literati who do not adore the idols.

- Matteo Ricci¹

The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism was not an abstract intellectual exercise, but the direct result of experience, of creative confrontation with and involvement in Chinese life. In this chapter, as in the rest of this study, I shall be obliged to isolate the Jesuits' confrontation with Confucianism from their total missionary concern and activities, a procedure that involves danger of distortion and misinterpretation. It would be less dangerous if there existed an adequate history of the Jesuit mission in China to which the reader could be referred to correct the inbalance of concentration on the issue of the Jesuits and Confucianism. But such a history does not exist,² and it would be disastrous for the author to attempt to fill many of the lacunae himself. All I can do is to draw attention in a general way to the peculiar circumstances of each period of the development of

¹ Fonti Ricciane, N709, II, p.296.

² This remark is not intended to reflect on the value of the many histories of the mission that have been written and which will be frequently drawn upon in the following chapters. It simply draws attention to the fact that there is no work that is adequately documented from manuscript as well as printed sources, comprehensive in time and geographical scope, and following the canons of critical historical method. Such a work must probably await the publication of more of the mission records, especially the 'Jap. Sin.' series of the main Jesuit archives in Rome.

the mission and to correct any major errors or misunderstandings in the standard accounts that are relevant to the central theme.

Fortunately, the first period of the mission, the era of Matteo Ricci, is one of the best documented. Ricci's life has been treated by several competent biographers³ drawing on Ricci's own account of his mission⁴ and his letters,⁵ as well as his Chinese works.⁶ Ricci's predecessor and companion, Michele Ruggieri, has received less attention although he appears at least marginally in all the Ricci studies and has recently been the subject of a dissertation by Joseph Shih S.J.⁷ The lesser figures of the period, Francesco Pasio, Antonio d'Almeida, Eduardo de Sande, Francisco de Petris, Didaco Pantoja, Emanuel Diza etc. are known only through a few published letters, and it is unfortunate that neither Father D'Elia's projected sequel to the first three volumes of the Fonti Ricciane, nor the 'Monumenta Serica' series of the Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu have yet appeared. One would like to know much more about the practice and views of Ricci's companions and fellow missionaries in order to speak confidently of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism in this period rather than Ricci's interpretation. However,

³ Notably by Henry Bernard (-Maître) in Le Père Matthieu Ricci et la Société Chinoise de Son Temps, 2 vols., Tientsin, 1937; Vincent Cronin, The Wise Man from the West, London, 1955; and F. Bortone, P. Matteo Ricci S.J.: Il "Saggio d'Occidente", 2nd. ed., Rome, 1965. Mention should also be made of the treatment of Ricci in G.F.Dunne, Generation of Giants, London, 1962.

⁴ Published in the original form for the first time by P. Tacchi Venturi in Vol. I of his Opere Storiche del P. Matteo Ricci S.J., Macerata, 1911, and in a revised edition by P.M.D'Elia in the Fonti Ricciane, 3 vols., Rome, 1942-1949.

⁵ Published in Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, Macerata, 1913. D'Elia's revision which was to have made up the later volumes of the Fonti is as yet unpublished.

⁶ Most of these have been republished in Nos. 23, 24 and 40 of the Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh ts'ung-shu series of the Taiwan publisher, T'ai-wan hsüeh-sheng shu-chu.

⁷ Le Père Ruggieri et le Problème de l'Évangélisation en Chine, Rome, 1964 (Excerpta ex dissertatione ad Lauream in Facultate Missiologica Pontificae Universitatis Gregorianae).

for most of the time Ricci was the superior of the mission, and for all of the period until his death the dominant figure of the mission. Divisions do not seem to have appeared in the Jesuit ranks, at least such as to attract public notice, till after his death. As far as Confucianism is concerned, the personal history of Ricci is the history of the developing Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism in its first stages.

In this chapter, then, I shall concentrate on Ricci, on his discovery of Confucianism, his reaction to it, and the development by him of a distinctive interpretation of Confucianism that became normative for the mission. I shall also deal with Ricci's relations with individual Confucian scholars, but in outline only, reserving a fuller analytical treatment for the next chapter. The debate amongst Confucian scholars, both friends and opponents, largely centred upon Ricci's writings, even though it did not come to a head till after his death. On the other hand, I will discuss Ricci's views on the Chinese Rites question which did not really become an issue till after his time. Ricci's successor as superior of the mission, Nicolò Longobardo, precipitated the controversy amongst the Jesuits themselves, and the influx of other religious orders exacerbated it. As for the influence on Europe of these early Jesuit contacts, until Nicholas Trigault published his version of Ricci's journals in 1615, there was hardly any knowledge of, not to say debate about, Confucianism, so the question of the Jesuits' role in introducing Confucianism to Europe must also wait till a later chapter.

The theme of this chapter is well summed up in the quotation from Ricci's journals with which I began it. The Jesuits first discovered Confucius and Confucianism, 'the sect of the *literati*' as they not inaccurately called it.⁸ They recognized the dominance of Chinese society, government and scholarship exercised by the Confucian *literati* and sought to make contact with them by allying themselves with the Confucians

⁸ 'La setta de' *letterati*' is in fact a fairly literal and exact translation of the term they applied to themselves, ju-chiao.

against the Buddhists. In the process they developed an interpretation of Confucianism that took advantage of the ambiguities of the Confucian tradition, interpreting it in a sense favourable to Christianity. The sources of that interpretation, its motivation and articulation, are the subject of this first stage of our investigation.

I. MICHELE RUGGIERI AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MISSION

The priority in the establishment of the Jesuit mission in China certainly belongs to Michele Ruggieri. In a sense he was also the discoverer of Confucianism, the first Westerner to study the Confucian books and to report on them to Westerners outside China.⁹ However, his account of Confucianism is so incomplete and his appreciation of its importance to the mission apparently so slight, that it is probably more appropriate to credit Ricci with its discovery. Pasquale M. D'Elia characterizes the relationship succinctly if rather blasphemously when he describes Ruggieri as playing John the Baptist to Ricci.¹⁰

Ruggieri was the first Jesuit to learn Chinese, and the first to implement Valignano's 'accommodation policy'. How detailed were the instructions left behind in Macao by Valignano in July 1579 we do not know. Ruggieri describes them in terms that suggest they extended only to learning Chinese.¹¹ We do have a later letter of Valignano which outlines his plans for the mission and stresses contact with the letrados as the key aim, but this postdates the crucial discovery of the significance of the Confucian literati and may not, I think, be used uncritically as evidence for Valignano's intentions in 1579 or 1582. Valignano wrote to the Bishop of Evora, Dom Theotonio de Bragança, from Goa, on 23 December 1585:

⁹ Slightly earlier Martín de Rada had brought back to Manila from China 100 Chinese books, presumably including Confucian books, but de Rada himself knew no Chinese and they were 'translated' - or rather, I presume, summarized - by Chinese Christians in the Philippines. The information they provided was used by Juan González de Mendoza in his Historia which first appeared in Rome in 1585.

¹⁰ 'Quadro Storico-Sinologico del Primo Libro di Dottrina Cristiana in Cinese' in Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu, III, 1934, p.222.

¹¹ 'Un regimento in scriptis che apprendessi el leggere e scrivere e parlar in questa lingua cina' is the description he gives in a letter to the General of 12 November 1581 (Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.401).

When I was on the way to Japan, I decided that two fathers should be stationed in Amacao, the Portuguese port of China, and that they should be engaged in no other work than learning the language and letters of China, and be given masters and everything else necessary. They made such great progress in the language that when I returned from Japan I determined to try them out in this business of entering China. Giving them orders which appeared to me convenient for the task, I instructed them to introduce themselves in China as men of letters (homens letrados) who had come from faroff lands because of the fame of the wisdom and writings (letras) of China. To this end, they first wrote a treatise in the form of a dialogue in the language and letters of China, in which were presented all the substance of our holy faith, proving that the soul is immortal, that there is another life and one sole God who must be adored, and finally dealing with the creation, the manner of our redemption, and all the most important things one has to do and believe in order to arrive at the other life. They joined to this a clock, a sphere, and a map of the world, which they also brought with them and adorned with Chinese letters. They dressed in the Chinese fashion, in capes with long sleeves and four-cornered hats, in the same way as some of their literati (letrados).¹²

This letter has many points of interest for us. It was written almost exactly three years after Valignano had left Macao for India and the section immediately following on the one quoted here shows that he had received some news of the initial successes of the mission. The stress on the letrados may then have been due to the information he had received from Ruggieri and Ricci in Chao-ch'ing, but I think it more likely that it represents his own intentions and instructions based on Ruggieri's early contacts with Chinese officials in Canton. Ruggieri and Pasio had left for Chao-ch'ing to establish a permanent mission residence a few days before Valignano departed from Macao¹³ and this letter may well indicate Valignano's thinking at that time. It stresses the

¹² Cartas que os Padres e Irmaos da Companhia de Jesus escreverão dos Reynos de Japao e China..., Evora, 1598, II, f.170.

¹³ According to D'Elia, Fonti Ricciane, III, p.22, Ruggieri and Pasio set out for Chao-ch'ing on 27 December and Valignano left Macao for Goa on 31 December, 1582.

necessity for gaining the approval of the 'grandes letrados', especially the 'supreme Mandarin, and Viceroy of the Province of Canton'.¹⁴

What Valignano does not seem to have been aware of, is that Ruggieri and Pasio, had not in fact established themselves in Chao-ch'ing in the guise of literati, but rather as Buddhist monks. This false step, as it later appeared to Ricci,¹⁵ was, it would seem, undertaken at the request of Chinese officials. A letter of Ruggieri from Chao'ch'ing of 12 February 1583 describes an interview with the Military Commander (tsung-ping) of Kuangtung, an old acquaintance from Canton,¹⁶ who was paying his respects to the visiting Censor in the viceregal seat of Chao-ch'ing.

We went to see him two days ago and he received us very well, giving us a tael of silver as alms. When he spoke about our dress, he designed a hat for us himself, saying that the Viceroy and everyone else wished us to wear the dress of their padres of Peking ... who are highly respected and esteemed.¹⁷

What exactly this curious dress was like I have been unable to establish in detail. The hat was described as 'a beretta square in memory of the cross', and as standing 'a quarter (of a yard?) high'.¹⁸ This may be the hat described by Valignano, or he may simply have been referring to the hat normally worn by Jesuit missionaries in the East.¹⁹

¹⁴ Cartas, II, f.170v.

¹⁵ v. Fonti Ricciane, N429, I, pp.335-7, for Ricci's arguments against the Buddhist role and Valignano's permission for Ricci and his companions to change to that of Confucian scholars (1593-4).

¹⁶ v. Fonti Ricciane, N210, I, p.156. This man is identified by D'Elia as Huang Ying-chia.

¹⁷ Quoted in Bernard(-Maître), Ricci, pp.88-89.

¹⁸ v. D'Elia's note in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.167 n.3. He gives the height as equivalent to about 21cm., presumably based on the measure of quarter of an Italian braccio.

¹⁹ The hat worn by the 'bonzes of the san-pa-ssü' i.e. the Jesuits of San Paulo in Macao, in the illustrations to the Ao-men chi-lüeh (p.28 of the Taipei, 1968 ed.) seems high and four-cornered. However contemporary illustrations from Japan seem to depict a round hat as normal Jesuit dress (see, for example, F.Bortone, P. Matteo Ricci S.J., pp.80 & 189).

In other respects the Jesuits adopted the appearance of Buddhists. Ruggieri had at his first interview with the Viceroy in Chao-ch'ing sported a luxuriant beard which had been fingered and admired by the Viceroy.²⁰ When he and Ricci returned to Chao-ch'ing late in 1583, on the advice of Wang P'an, the Prefect of the city, they cut off their beards, shaved their heads, and dressed as bonzes.²¹

Whatever the reasons, and whatever the dress Valignano described in his letter to the Bishop of Evora, it is clear that the Jesuits were being assimilated by the officials of Chao-ch'ing to Buddhist monks. Valignano's plan of gaining acceptance as scholars or literati was abandoned from the outset. It was only much later when Ricci had come to appreciate the social disadvantages of this, that the Jesuits once more grew their beards and hair and changed to the silk gowns of the Confucian scholars.

Joseph Shih S.J. suggests in his study of Ruggieri, that the latter had no objections to being regarded as a Christian bonze, as a monk and religious teacher. He sees Ruggieri and Ricci differing not only on the tactical question of the actual influence and social rank of the Buddhists, but on the theoretical issue of missionary priorities.

On the theoretical level, their differences may be reduced in essence to the conflict between the two fundamental desires of missionaries of all periods: that of retaining the religious character of the missionary, and that of becoming integrated with the society that they wish to evangelize.²²

Ruggieri appears to have had a narrower view than Ricci as to the nature and scope of 'the religious', as I think an examination of his comparatively brief career in China attests. It should be pointed out, however, that it is only in comparison with Ricci that Ruggieri can be accused of narrowness. As a

²⁰ Fonti Ricciane, I, p.162 n.6.

²¹ Fonti Ricciane, I, p.337 n.1.

²² J. Shih, Le Père Ruggieri, p.7.

pioneer struggling with the language and customs of China, making contact with Chinese scholars and officials, producing Christian books in Chinese with no known precedents to guide him, his work was courageous and imaginative. It was his misfortune - and only unfortunate from a standpoint he himself would certainly not have approved of - to be overshadowed by his friend and companion Matteo Ricci.²³

Ruggieri came from a background very similar to that of Valignano.²⁴ He was a native of Spinazzola in the Kingdom of Naples, a bachelor in utroque jure, and had served in the Spanish administration of Naples. He was born in 1543 which means that he was nearly forty when he began the study of Chinese, thus adding age to his other disadvantages.²⁵ When one considers the methods by which he learnt Chinese it is surprising that he made any progress at all.

Ruggieri describes these methods in his letter to the Jesuit General, Mercurian, of 12 November 1581. The interpreters employed by the Portuguese were useless since they were barely literate.²⁶ So a Chinese painter was engaged who since he knew little Portuguese²⁷ would draw a picture of the object corresponding to the Chinese character, then teach Ruggieri the pronunciation. 'He had to teach me the Chinese letters', wrote Ruggieri, 'by drawing a picture, as well as the pronunciation; when, for example, he wanted

²³ It is noteworthy that in early accounts of the mission such as Luis de Guzman's Historia de las Misiones de la Compania de Jesus en la India Oriental, Libro Cuarto, 'El P. Miguel Rogerio' looms much larger than 'El P. Matteo Ricci'.

²⁴ y. The biographical sketch in D'Elia's introduction to the Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.XCVIII-C.

²⁵ A comment in his own account of his mission suggests that we should add to his missionary disabilities a middle-aged build. He tells us that he required double the normal number of bearers when being carried in a litter, 'perche era grande di corpo' (Fonti Ricciane, I, p.228 n.3).

²⁶ Ricci says they knew no written Chinese (niente della lettera sinica) and little Portuguese. (Fonti Ricciane, N207, I, p.155.

²⁷ Fonti Ricciane, N207, I, p.155.

to teach me to read and write the word for 'horse', he painted a horse and above it painted the character that signified 'horse', which was pronounced ma.²⁸

In this way Ruggieri claimed to have learnt 15,000 characters between July 1580 and November 1581, a figure which in the light of experience as well as later evidence of his accomplishments²⁹ seems incredible. He even boasted that he was so proficient in Chinese after less than a year and a half that he was hailed by the Chinese as sifu³⁰ or 'Gran Maestro'.³¹ One suspects a certain irony in this comment, although by comparison with other Europeans he was no doubt a 'Great Master'. At least he had learnt enough Chinese to accompany the merchants to Canton, and to make the first contacts with Chinese officials. Ricci tells us that Ruggieri was treated with special honour because of his knowledge of Chinese and that during his four visits in 1580-2, he managed to become friends with the Zumpino (tsung-ping or General), Huang Ying-chia, and the hai-tao or Marine Superintendant.³²

In June 1582 the opportunity he had been waiting for finally arrived. The Viceroy, Ch'en Jui, called the Bishop and the Captain Major of Macao to Chao-ch'ing, Ricci suggests in order to extort whatever he could from the Macao merchants.³³ Ruggieri who was at the time on his fourth visit to Canton was sent as representative of the Bishop, with additional instructions from Valignano to try to secure permission to remain. Eventually, by means of a judicious bribe of a clock,

²⁸ Quoted in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.XCIX.

²⁹ See, for example, Valignano's comments on his knowledge of Chinese in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.43 n.2 and p.250 n.1.

³⁰ Probably shih-fu, a 'teacher', the term found in Ruggieri's notes on common conversational phrases (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. I. 198, ff.3-7).

³¹ Letter to Mercurian, 12 November 1581, in Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.402.

³² Fonti Ricciane, NN 209-210, I, p.156.

³³ Fonti Ricciane, N 214, I, p.161.

Ruggieri was granted a patent for the Jesuits to remain in China and he and Francesco Pasio established themselves in December 1582 in a temple in Chao-ch'ing. In March 1583, when the Viceroy fell into disfavour, they were obliged to return to Macao, and Pasio was sent on to Japan by previous arrangement of Valignano. But by this time Matteo Ricci had learnt some Chinese and when, in August 1583, Ruggieri was granted permission by the new Viceroy to return to Chao-ch'ing, Ricci accompanied him. On September 10, they arrived in Chao-ch'ing, thus beginning in definitive fashion the Jesuit mission in China.

This achievement of Ruggieri's, the establishment of the mission in the face of so many obstacles, had been accomplished by a combination of tact, knowledge of Chinese, and cultivation of Chinese officials. He had reached a practical accommodation with Chinese society. But there is little in his letters and writings either before 1583, or from the remainder of his period in China (till November 1588), that suggests he grasped the importance of Confucianism to the future of the mission. He had begun very early to translate Chinese books, enclosing a translation of 'un libro molto piccolo' on the moral virtues 'transcribed hastily in bad Latin' while in Canton, with his letter to Mercurian of 12 November 1581. Whatever this work was - Father Henri Bernard-Maître plausibly suggests the San-tzu-ching³⁴ - it was almost certainly Confucian. However, the same letter reflects very unfavourably on Confucianism and on Chinese learning generally. 'They have no philosophy, but proceed by way of sentences and conclusions as their reason dictates. Although they are compelled to live morally, they have no knowledge of God, and they cannot be excused for not knowing.'³⁵ He interprets the Confucian 'Heaven' (t'ien) in material terms and concludes that the key to the conversion of China lies with the mandarins, who are 'adored' by the people.³⁶ Luis de Guzman was merely echoing

³⁴ Aux Portes de la Chine, p.155 n.50.

³⁵ Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.402.

³⁶ Ibid., pp.402-3.

the opinion of Ruggieri when he wrote in his Historia (1601)³⁷ that 'the principal idols of China are the mandarins'.

I have found no evidence that Ruggieri himself ever changed his low opinion of Confucianism. He must certainly have continued to study Confucian texts, because on his return to Europe he produced a Latin translation of the Confucian Four Books.³⁸ He was not allowed to publish this translation or a Latin catechism for the China mission because of the opposition of Valignano, who wrote to the General in December 1596 that the translations 'could not be well made since Father Michele Ruggieri knows very little of the Chinese letters and language'.³⁹ Valignano must have been influenced in this judgement by the opinions of the men of the China mission itself, principally Matteo Ricci, and it is at least possible that Ruggieri's recall to Europe was due to conflict with Ricci over method, and particularly over the attitude of the missionaries to Confucianism.

There is little in Ruggieri's major work in Chinese, the T'ien-chu shih-lu, published in 1584, that enables us to assess Ruggieri's views on Confucianism. It is probably unfair to compare this work with Ricci's famous T'ien-chu shih-i when one considers its date and its intentions. Both have been described as 'catechisms' but if one accepts Humbertclaude's distinction⁴⁰ between a catechism, a work of apologetics defending Christian teaching against objections, and a doctrina, a positive and systematic exposition of doctrine, the T'ien-chu shih-lu is clearly a doctrina and Ricci's work a catechism. Yet even in its exposition of doctrine, in its terminology and general method, Ruggieri's book appears to ignore almost completely the existence of Confucianism.

³⁷ Historia de las Misiones de la Compañia de Jesus en la India Oriental, Bilbao, 1891, p.184.

³⁸ Now in the Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele in Rome (Fondo Gesuitico 1195) and dated 1591-2 v. Note in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.43 n.2.

³⁹ Fonti Ricciane, I, p.250 n.1.

⁴⁰ P. Humbertclaude, 'La Littérature Chrétienne au Japon il y a trois cent ans' in Bulletin de la Maison Franco-Japonaise, VII, 1936, pp.167 and 178-9.

I have examined the T'ien-chu shih-lu both in the original edition of 1584⁴¹ and in a later revised edition.⁴² The major difference between the original and later editions seems to be the substitution of the description 'man of the Far West' (yüan-hsi-jen) for his original self-description as a 'monk from India' (t'ien-chu-kuo sêng) but in substance they are the same. Basically the work is an exposition of Christian doctrine addressed not to a specifically Chinese audience but to the common man. In Ch.3, for example, we find an explanation of God's nature for the 'ordinary man',⁴³ who knows black from white, but does not understand the nature of a spirit. The creation is described, as are the histories of Adam and Jesus Christ, and the ten commandments listed. The whole concludes with a chapter on baptism.

Of necessity, there are many Christian coinings in the terminology of the T'ien-chu shih-lu. Names are put into Chinese syllables - for example, Jesus Christ becomes Yeh-su ch'i-li-ssü-tu, and the Trinity is represented by an attempt to put the Portuguese Padre, Filho, Espirito Santo into Chinese.⁴⁴ The most important of the new terms, however, and one that was to become characteristic of the Catholic Church in China and to give it its Chinese name,⁴⁵ was t'ien-chu, 'Lord of Heaven'. Its first appearance in print was in Ruggieri's translation of the Ten Commandments,

⁴¹ There are two copies in the Jesuit Archives in Rome (Rome: ASJ, Jap.Sin. 1, 189 and 190).

⁴² Published under the title of T'ien-chu sheng-chiao shih-lu in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, Taipei, 1966, II, pp.755-838. The edition reprinted here is a facsimile of the copy in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 324 (1). It bears the names of Emanuel Diaz Jr., Gaspar Ferreira and Giovanni Monteiro, as revisors, and the approval of Francisco Furtado as Superior, which according to Fang Hao's Preface (ibid., I, p.25) dates it to 1634-41.

⁴³ Shih-jen. I presume Ruggieri is using the term in a sense uncommon in Chinese as equivalent to the Christian 'worldly'.

⁴⁴ Pa-té-lê, Fei-lüeh (or Fei-lioh), and Ssü-pi-li-to san-to.

⁴⁵ T'ien-chu-chiao.

Tsu-ch'uan t'ien-chu shih-ch'eng, published in late 1583 or 1584.⁴⁶ The origin of the use of this term is ascribed in Ricci's memoirs to one of the first converts 'Cim Nicò' (Ch'en ?)⁴⁷ who during Ruggieri's absence from Chao-ch'ing in mid 1583 had looked after the missionaries' altar. 'When at the time of our return we went to visit him, we found that he had placed the altar in a little room in his house, and, having no other image, had written on a tablet in the middle of the wall, two huge Chinese letters that said "to the Lord of Heaven".'⁴⁸ The Jesuits, ignorant of other usages of this term in Chinese religious works,⁴⁹ enthusiastically adopted it. Despite the objections raised by critics of the use of the term it remains standard Catholic usage to the present day. However, Ricci himself, as we shall see, did not scruple to use other terms, including t'ien, in his apologetic treatises, while retaining t'ien-chu as the normal name for the Christian God.

The only characteristically Chinese traits I have found in the T'ien-chu shih-lu are a few uncomplimentary remarks about Buddhism,⁵⁰ and a considerable development of the fourth commandment in terms of the Confucian five relationships. Confucianism itself is not mentioned but it is stressed that children must obey their parents, servants their masters, students their teachers, and so on.⁵¹ On the other hand,

⁴⁶ I have examined the copy in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 189a (also reproduced in the Fonti Ricciane, I, Tavola IX, opp.p.194). D'Elia's note (ibid., pp.194-5, n.3) establishes that it must have been printed between 10 September 1583 and January 1584, certainly not in 1582 (Wieger) nor late 1584 (Tacchi Venturi). Cf. a longer account by D'Elia, 'Il Domma Cattolico integralmente presentato da Matteo Ricci ai letterati della Cina', in Civiltà Cattolica, anno 86.ii, 1935, pp.35-53.

⁴⁷ y. Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.185-6, n.10, on the identification of 'Cim Nico'.

⁴⁸ Fonti Ricciane, N236, I, p.186.

⁴⁹ y. Fonti Ricciane, I, p.186 n.I, and H. Havret, T'ien-tch'ou "Seigneur du Ciel".

⁵⁰ T'ien-chu shih-lu (T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien ed.), p.779.

⁵¹ T'ien-chu shih-lu, p.819.

there is no attempt to conceal the 'stumbling blocks' of Christianity. Jesus is plainly stated to have died on a cross⁵² and it is emphasised that Christianity allows for only one wife or one husband.⁵³

On the evidence of Ruggieri's Chinese works alone we could not conclude to any difference of opinion between Ruggieri and Ricci. Yet there are reasons for thinking that some divergence of views lay behind Ruggieri's departure for Europe in 1588. The account of Ruggieri's return to Europe given in Ricci's Storia is that Valignano was planning an embassy from the Pope to the Emperor of China and Ruggieri was sent back to arrange it. However, on the reasons for choosing Ruggieri, Ricci remarks that,

Because Father Ruggieri was already old, and unable to learn the language, (Valignano) took the opportunity to send him to Europe; and also because after so many years in these parts, besides what was written in the letters to the Pope, to the Father General and others to promote this work, he could bear testimony to what he had seen, and recount other things that might be a propos.⁵⁴

This is not altogether satisfactory as an account of the reasons for choosing Ruggieri, the most senior and experienced of the missionaries, for the task. Ruggieri was hardly 'old' at forty five, and he himself claimed to be expert in Chinese. One suspects a deeper reason, an alliance of Valignano with Ricci against Ruggieri.

This suspicion is confirmed by a letter of Valignano to the General written at the time of Ruggieri's recall. He writes:

Father Michele Ruggieri has laboured much in this mission, and sending him now to Rome seems reason enough to give him some repose; he is already much burdened with old age, and this journey is so long, that there is all the more reason to let him rest. Add to this that he does not pronounce the language well, and so it seems that Your Paternity should excuse him from returning here, since this mission is not for men who are old and worn out, and he has done enough for the good of this mission by taking on the legation.⁵⁵

⁵² T'ien-chu shih-lu, p.819.

⁵³ T'ien-chu shih-lu, p.833.

⁵⁴ Fonti Ricciane, N303, I, pp.249-50.

⁵⁵ Quoted from Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 11, f.29v, in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.250 n.2.

The strong impression is that Valignano was trying to let down Ruggieri gently, to make sure that he did not return but to give him an honourable and dignified retirement.

Some clues to the reasons for this attitude on the part of Valignano are to be found in Ruggieri's Latin works preserved in the Jesuit Archives and elsewhere in Rome. We have already seen that Valignano objected to the publication of Ruggieri's translations from the Confucian books, and of his Latin Catechism;⁵⁶ to the former on the grounds that the Chinese was imperfect, and to the latter because Ricci was producing a much better catechism.⁵⁷ In addition to these works in the Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuel,⁵⁸ there is in the Jesuit Archives in Rome⁵⁹ an incomplete manuscript ascribed to 'P. Mich. Roggeri', entitled Commentarii, and presumably dating from the period between his return to Europe in 1589 and his death in 1607. These fragments suggest that Ruggieri

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- 56 There seems to be considerable confusion about this work which exists in manuscript in Rome: BVE, Fondo Gesuitico 1276, under the title of Vera et Brevis Divinarum Rerum Expositio. It is clearly related to the T'ien-chu shih-lu but contains several passages not in the Chinese text. Léon Wieger (in Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu, I, 1932, p. 74) regarded it as the Latin original of the T'ien-chu shih-lu and dated it 1582. Tacchi Venturi, who published it in his Opere Storiche, II, pp. 498-540, thought it was a Latin translation of the T'ien-chu shih-lu. D'Elia (Fonti Ricciane, I, p. 197 n. 2) points out that it must be dated 1581 since it places the creation 5,547 years before while the Chinese gives 'more than 5,500 years ago' (cf. p. 781 of the Taipei ed.) and cites a letter of Ruggieri as evidence for a Chinese translation being made of Ruggieri's Latin original in late 1581. Joseph Shih's explanation of the anomalies seems most satisfactory - that it is the 1581 original revised in the light of the Chinese text which was prepared by a Chinese scholar in May 1584 (Le Père Ruggieri, pp. 19-25). D'Elia is in error in claiming that it remained in manuscript in the Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele in Rome till published in Tacchi Venturi's edition of Ricci's works (Fonti Ricciane, I, p. 250 n. 1). In fact it was published in Antonio Possevino's Bibliotheca Selecta. I have not had the opportunity of comparing Tacchi Venturi's text with Possevino's, but Possevino is explicit in attributing his Catechismi Sinensium Capita in Lib. IX, Cap. XXVI-XXVIII, of the 1603 Venice edition, to 'Michael Rogerius Societatis nostrae'.
- 57 Valignano to the General, Goa, 16 December 1596, cited in Fonti Ricciane, I, p. 43 n. 2.
- 58 The translation of the Four Books is in Fondo Gesuitico 1195.
- 59 Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 101, 11, ff. 296-315.

to the end thought of Buddhism rather than Confucianism as the most promising point of contact with Chinese culture. In the section entitled De animi cultu atque optima dispositione ad recipiendum evangelium, he equates Chinese 'theology' with 'astrology',⁶⁰ in a way that suggests he still believed t'ien to refer exclusively to the physical heavens. He does, however, praise the Chinese teaching on virtue which he regards as favourable to the preaching of the Gospel. He lists the Confucian virtues⁶¹ without, here or elsewhere, referring explicitly to Confucius or Confucianism.

He is more explicit on Buddhism, listing the names and attributes of the principal Buddhist deities. Some are described under the heading, 'On the Adoration of False Gods and the Superstition of the Chinese'. Others, however, are significantly listed in the section on the 'Prophecies and Oracles of the Chinese' where he makes a clear attempt to interpret Buddhism as related in some way to Christianity:

The Chinese have veiled and, in my opinion, prophetic intimations of the Christian religion, and first of all the chief object of their religious cult, scie chia,⁶² the wisest and most intelligent of beings, whom they believe to have brought down from heaven the most holy law.⁶³

This god is depicted under three different forms, nan vu,⁶⁴ o-mi-to-fe,⁶⁵ and scie-chia, 'as if to signify in some way the most august mystery of the divine Trinity'.⁶⁶ He then tells the story of the dream of the Emperor Ming of Han in which the Emperor saw a golden youth who told him to seek

⁶⁰ f.300r.

⁶¹ He lists these as gin, 'universalis amor' (somewhat misleading in view of the contrast between the Confucian jen and the Mohist chien ai); gni or 'grati animi virtus' (=i); li or 'urbanitas'; ci or 'prudencia' (=chih); and sin 'veritas seu simplicitas' (=hsin) - ff.300r-301r.

⁶² i.e. shih-chia, Sakya or Sakyamuni, the Buddha.

⁶³ f.310v.

⁶⁴ Probable nan-wu, also pronounced na-mo, Sanskrit namah, 'to trust in (the Buddha)'. Ruggieri seems to have mistaken the Buddhist formula for the name of a manifestation of the Buddha.

⁶⁵ A-mi-to-fo, or Amida Buddha.

⁶⁶ f.310v.

truth in the West. This was really an angel announcing the birth of Christ to the Chinese, but the devil succeeded in preventing the legates sent by Ming Ti from reaching Judea, and diverted them to the land of idols.⁶⁷

Ruggieri's thoughts, in exile from the mission he had founded, were turning on the apologetic uses of Buddhism for Christian propaganda in China. He had pioneered the process of accommodation, but diverted it into the natural channel of Chinese popular religion. The Jesuits were 'bonzes from the West', religious men preaching religious truth, a purified Buddhism. This role had been in the first place imposed by Chinese officials,⁶⁸ but there is no evidence that he questioned it. His companion and friend, Matteo Ricci, with a far greater command of Chinese, was already, by the time of Ruggieri's departure from China moving towards the adoption of a new role, that of a Christian Confucian scholar.

⁶⁷ ff.310v - 311r.

⁶⁸ See, for example, the inscriptions by the Prefect Wang P'an placed on the doors of the residence and chapel in Chao-ch'ing, both of them specifically Buddhist in tone (reproduced in Bortone, P. Matteo Ricci S.I., pp.202 & 203, and Fonti Ricciane, Tavola XII, opp.p.200).

II. MATTEO RICCI AND THE DISCOVERY OF CONFUCIANISM

Ricci's mature views on Confucianism are presented to us in his Storia dell' Introduzione del Cristianesimo in Cina,⁶⁹ written at the very end of his life.⁷⁰ Much of the Storia is in the form of an historical narrative, although it is clearly not to be regarded as Journals⁷¹ in the sense of a diary or contemporary record. Rather it is, as Tacchi Venturi called it, Commentarii, recollections, memoirs, the record of a life's work. Yet even the Storia itself stresses the tentative trial-and-error approach taken by Ricci, and this is confirmed by his letters. He set out with no preoccupations about Confucianism, nothing but Valignano's general directions to come into contact with 'men of letters' and to penetrate Chinese culture from within. In the process he may be said to have discovered Confucianism.

The discovery began, as in the case of Ruggieri, with his Chinese language studies. No doubt he proceeded from one of the standard Chinese primers to the study of the Confucian Four books - the Analects of Confucius, the Mencius, the Doctrine of the Mean and the Great Learning - the classics, and the dynastic histories.⁷² Like Ruggieri, Ricci too

⁶⁹ Storia ... is actually the title given the work by its most recent editor, Pasquale M. D'Elia. The original manuscript is entitled Della Entrata della Compagnia di Gesù e Christianità nella Cina.

⁷⁰ D'Elia demonstrates in his 'Preliminary NOTE' that most of the Storia must have been written in 1609 and early 1610; Ricci died in May 1610. v. Fonti Ricciane, I, pp. CLXVII - CLXX.

⁷¹ The subtitle of Gallagher's translation of Trigault's version, China in the Sixteenth Century, is The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610. In his 'Translator's Preface', Gallagher defends his use of 'Journals' by arguing its preferability to 'Diary' (see especially p. xvii); but I fail to see how this avoids the difficulty that it was written for the most part long after the events described.

⁷² Giulio Aleni's description of Ricci's Chinese studies in his Chinese life of Ricci is, no doubt, drawn from his own experiences, and not necessarily those of Ricci himself. But his description of the order of studies as 'classics, philosophers, histories' (ching, tzū, shih) is probably accurate (v. passage cited in Chang Wei-hua, Ming-shih, p. 165).

eventually translated the Four Books into Latin.⁷³ This translation has not, unfortunately, been preserved, but we know from several references in his letters that it was finished before November 1593 and that he hoped to send it to Europe.⁷⁴ Giulio Aleni in his 1620 Chinese Life of Ricci, claimed that it had, in fact, been sent home⁷⁵ but no trace has been found in European archives. It would be extremely informative to have access to Ricci's reading of the Four Books after ten years of Chinese studies. What we do know is that Ricci used this translation to teach the language to newly-arrived missionaries and that as well as the Four Books he also used 'one of the Five Classics'.⁷⁶ The multiplicity of citations from both the Four Books and the Five Classics, as well as commentaries, in Ricci's Chinese works suggests that his initiation into Confucianism followed the conventional course of Confucian books and classics in editions with the commentaries of Chu Hsi, although one may not deduce too much from such citations. Ricci's Chinese collaborators rather than himself may be the source for particular references. However it seems reasonable to assume that he was well acquainted with both texts and standard commentaries and imbued the basic doctrines of Confucianism in the traditional Chinese way, by reading and memorizing the texts under the guidance of a teacher. It seems that in this respect Ricci's

⁷³ This work was described by Ricci himself as a 'paraphrase... in Latin with many annotations' (Fonti Ricciane, N527, II, p.33), which has led some authorities to regard it as something other than a true translation. But other references in his letters and Aleni's description of the work suggest that it was in fact a complete translation and that Ricci's title of Parafrasi was due to modesty, a praiseworthy restraint in view of his mere ten years' acquaintance with the language.

⁷⁴ Fonti Ricciane, II, p.33 n.5; Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, pp 117-118, 125.

⁷⁵ Jules Aleni, Ta Hsi Li Hsien-sheng Ma-tou chuan, Trans. Léon Desbuquois, Revue d'Histoire des Missions, I, 1924, p.56.

⁷⁶ Fonti Ricciane, NN424,494, II, pp.330 and 380.

acquaintance with Confucianism was similar to Ruggieri's with the crucial difference that Ricci's initiation was more intensive, more prolonged and clearly more successful.

One most interesting relic of this period is a manuscript dictionary, or rather vocabulary, now in the Jesuit archives in Rome.⁷⁷ The work probably dates from the early years in Chao-ch'ing. Ricci states in the introduction that he has been three years in the city, thus indicating 1585 or 1586, but the list was probably added to throughout the period. From the indications of date and authorship, it seems to me likely that it was taken to Rome by Ruggieri himself in 1588. It is incomplete and should not be confused with the later dictionary compiled by Ricci in 1599-1600 in which, with the aid of the musical Cattaneo, he indicated the five 'tones' of Chinese.⁷⁸ The vocabulary proper is in four columns. The first contains Portuguese words, arranged alphabetically, the second an Italian romanization in Ricci's hand, the third Chinese characters, and the fourth (completed for the first eight pages only) an Italian translation in Ruggieri's hand. Even more valuable than this evidence of their struggles with the language are some notes which indicate their method of approach to Chinese scholars: remarks in Chinese characters on geographical and astronomical subjects (ff.17-27, 170-1); some conversational phrases in romanization in the hand of Ruggieri (ff.3-7); and what D'Elia describes as 'conversazioni catechetiche' by Ricci in Chinese characters (ff.13-16). The latter, apart from their linguistic interest, show Ricci already developing a catechetical method based on Confucianism. He alludes to Confucian teaching on, for example, the five relationships, and he carefully distinguishes his doctrine from Buddhism. Ricci's pro-Confucian bias is clear in this earliest Chinese work from his pen.

⁷⁷ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. I, 198. For an account of its contents see P.M.D'Elia, 'Il Domma Cattolico integralmente presentato de Matteo Ricci ai Letterati della Cina; secondo un documento cinese inedito di 350 anni fa', Civiltà Cattolica, anno 86.ii, No.2035, pp.35-53; and Fonti Ricciane, II, p.32 n.1. There are reproductions of pages of this manuscript in the Fonti Ricciane, II, Tavola V (of f.33v) and in Bortone, P. Matteo Ricci S.I., p.270 (of f.33r).

⁷⁸ Fonti Ricciane, N526, II, pp.32-3.

Some clues to Ricci's later development may be found in his history before coming to China. He was younger than Ruggieri, only 30 years old when he arrived in Macao in 1582. He came from Macerata in the Papal States, had been a student of the Jesuit College there, and was studying law in Rome when he decided to join the Society of Jesus. He followed courses in rhetoric, philosophy and mathematics at the Roman College, the last under the famous Christopher Clavius, noted as astronomer and author of the Gregorian calendar reform. It would seem that his education up to this point was in the best Jesuit humanist tradition.⁷⁹ His theological studies were cut short by his call to the China mission from Goa but his deficiencies as a theologian have been exaggerated by opponents of the Jesuits' methods in China.⁸⁰ He spent the best part of three years studying theology in Goa (1578-1581 with a year off due to ill health) and his critics are clearly in disagreement more with his conclusions than with his competence in theology. One might agree to some extent with the author of the Anecdotes sur l'état de la religion de la Chine that he was 'plus Politique que Théologien',⁸¹ but only in the sense that he was not primarily a scholar but a missionary, and more a humanist than a dogmatic theologian.

What is more striking is that even before he came to China the young Ricci had already made his mark with the Superiors of the Society. We have seen that Valignano who had known him as a novice in Rome had personally selected him for the new mission, at the urgent request of Ruggieri⁸²

⁷⁹ On Jesuit education of the period, see R.G.Villoslada, Storia del Collegio Romano, Rome, 1954; F. de Dainville, La Naissance de l'humanisme moderne, Paris, 1940; and F. Rodrigues, A Formação Intellectual do Jesuita, Porto, 1917.

⁸⁰ See the citations in Bernard-Maitre, Le Père Matthieu Ricci, II, pp.350-1.

⁸¹ Quoted from t.3, p.VIII, in Bernard-Maitre, Le Père Matthieu Ricci, II, p.350.

⁸² See Ruggieri's letter to the General, 8 November 1580: 'L'anno passato scrissi al P. Alessandro Valignano se mi potera dare un compagno per l'impresa nella quale fino adesso lavoro da solo, e gli domandai con insistenza Matteo Ricci, che si trova in Goa' - from Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 8, II, f.303, quoted in Bortone, P. Matteo Ricci S.I., p.191.

who had been his companion on the voyage out. Ricci had been chosen by his former teacher, the official historian of the Jesuit missions, Giovanni-Pietro Maffei S.J., as his correspondent and informant, and in a letter of 30 November 1580 from Cochin, he makes some caustic comments on the standard of previous reports from the Indies and promises a much greater reliability in his own contributions than in previous reports.⁸³ Even more significant is a most outspoken letter that the young priest wrote to the Jesuit General, Claudio Acquaviva, from Goa on 25 November 1581. Ricci is objecting to the policy beginning to be implemented in India of providing a second-rate education for native candidates for the priesthood. He sees this as demeaning, short-sighted and, in the long term, disastrous.

This year the course of philosophy begins, and a quite new policy has been decreed which not everyone agrees with; namely, that no student from this land, that is, sons of natives of India, should follow the courses of philosophy and theology in our classes, but only Latin and cases of conscience. And this has been put into practice. Since this seems to me a matter of some importance I want to put it down here. I do not consider the reasons which are advanced for it very strong. They say that study makes them proud and that they will not want to minister in poor parishes; and that they will hold in low esteem the many Jesuits who are frequently heard of in these parts, who make little progress in philosophy and theology. But all this, and perhaps with even better reason, could be said of those who study in our schools elsewhere than in India, even in Europe; and we don't refuse, for that reason, to teach all comers. All the more reason then, in the case of natives of this land who, however much they know, very rarely receive much credit from white men. On the other hand there is a universal custom in the whole Society to make no distinction between classes of people, and even here in India there are so many Fathers, old, holy and experienced, who open schools and are favourably disposed to all who come there. Secondly, in this way we encourage ignorance in the ministers of the church in a place where learning is so necessary. These men have to be prepared in every way to be priests and to care for souls, and it

⁸³ Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, pp.16-24. One of the first fruits of this collaboration is the Relatione of 1584 found in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 123, ff.43-48.

is not a good thing if, with so many kinds of infidels, priests are so ignorant that they do not know how to answer an argument or to confirm themselves or others in our faith. We should not demand miracles where they are not necessary, and a simple casuist cannot match up to these demands. Thirdly, and this is the thing that most disturbs me, in my opinion they have none who show kindness to them except our people, and for this reason they have a special affection for us. If they come to learn that our Fathers are opposed to them and do not want to allow them to lift up their heads and obtain advantages and office equal to others, they will come to hate us, and thus will be impeded the principal goal of the Society in India, the conversion of the infidels and their conservation in our holy faith.⁸⁴

I find this letter remarkably frank for so young and inexperienced a missionary, and a striking indication of the spirit in which he approached his future work. Just as Valignano in Japan was opposing the racially discriminatory policies of Cabral, Ricci in India was attacking the same tendencies. For Ricci, the fullest collaboration with native Christians, and concentration on the intellectual apostolate were axioms of missionary method.

Ricci's introduction to China was undertaken under the auspices of Ruggieri. He arrived in Macao on 7 August 1582 and immediately began to study Chinese. When Ruggieri set out with Francesco Pasio for Chao-ch'ing in December, Ricci was left in charge of the House of St. Martin, the centre for the mission to the Chinese of Macao. In February Ruggieri obtained permission from the Viceroy, Ch'en Jui, for Ricci to join him, but the Viceroy was deposed from office shortly afterwards, and Ruggieri and Pasio returned to Macao. When Ruggieri finally returned to Chao-ch'ing in September 1583, he brought Ricci with him as his companion.

Ruggieri was, of course, Ricci's senior both in years and experience, and Ricci seems to have deferred to his views at least at first. The young mission was dependent in theory on the Jesuit Superiors in Macao but in practice most decisions had to be made independently and Ruggieri

⁸⁴ Translated from Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, pp.20-1. Most of this passage is translated by G.H. Dunne in Generation of Giants, p.25, somewhat less literally than the above. I prefer to retain the fairly intimate and informal tone of the original.

acted as de facto superior. It was he who gave the mission its initial Buddhist orientation and it is quite probable that Ricci at first agreed with this policy. Francesco Cabral, who had been replaced by Valignano as Superior of the Japanese mission, was now Rector of the College of Macao and seems to have been uneasy about Ruggieri's direction of the mission. He wrote to the General on 20 November 1583 that Ruggieri was unsuitable to control the mission. For all his virtues, he was 'mais simplex de necessarijo e algun tanto pusilanimos'.⁸⁵ The General in reply instructed Valignano to appoint 'a man of greater prudence' to the post of Superior of the mission.⁸⁶ Duarte de Sande was chosen for the job and arrived in Macao from Goa in May 1585. Despite two attempts, in 1587 and 1588, he failed to establish himself in Chao-ch'ing, and to the end of his term of office in 1597 he ruled the mission from Macao.⁸⁷ On de Sande's retirement from office Ricci was named Superior of the China mission. In practice, however, Ricci had been directing the mission for a long time before, with de Sande in Macao and Valignano providing general guidance from outside. From at least November 1588 when Ruggieri set out for Europe, we may confidently regard Ricci as the policy-maker and leading spirit of the mission.

The decisive change from the dress and role of Buddhist monks to those of Confucian literati was accomplished in May 1595 when Ricci left Shao-chou for Nanking but it had been in preparation for a considerable time. As early as 1585 the Jesuits had begun to perceive the inconveniences of their

⁸⁵ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 9, II, f.186 cf. Fonti Ricciane, I, p.222 n.1.

⁸⁶ Fonti Ricciane, I, p.222 n.1.

⁸⁷ He did manage to spend three months with Ricci in Shao-chou in 1591 (Fonti Ricciane, NN383-4, I, pp.307-8) but by this time he had also been given charge of the Macao mission and was obliged to return. In Macao de Sande was responsible for the Latin work, De Missione Legatorum Japonensium ad Romanam Curiam, 1590, often, but erroneously, called 'the first book printed by Europeans in China' (v. Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.223-4 n.).

identification as 'bonzes'. In a letter of 20 October of that year Ricci told the General that the Emperor had ordered the destruction of Buddhist temples throughout China because of the involvement of some Buddhist monks in a seditious movement. Wang P'an, Prefect of Chao-ch'ing, who had earlier recommended that the Jesuits dress as bonzes, took fright. He felt compromised by the fact that he had lent his name to the first edition of Ricci's Map of the World (Shan-hai yü-ti ch'uan-t'u) and ordered it to be erased. He had, even more dangerously in view of the proscription of the temples, presented the Jesuits with an inscription for their church, reading 'Temple of the Flower of Saints', and another for their residence, 'Men who have come from the Pure Land of the West'.⁸⁸ He was persuaded to allow the inscriptions to stand and defended his actions to the Imperial Commissioner entrusted with investigating Buddhist establishments by explaining that the Jesuits were not 'bonzes' but 'literati' and 'teachers' (maestri di dottrina). Ruggieri, who records this contretemps⁸⁹ does not seem to have drawn the obvious conclusion that it would be more expedient to appear in public as 'literati' rather than 'bonzes'.

Ruggieri's reluctance to change may have been due to a genuine attachment to the role of religious ascetics and devotees. But even in the period of his direction of the mission the Jesuits were moving beyond this. As the process of accommodation to Chinese culture continued, they increasingly moved over to the role of teachers not only of an esoteric new doctrine but of secular wisdom as well. The secular learning was often used as a vehicle for first attracting, then propagating their religious message. There is, unfortunately, no surviving example of the first (1584) edition of Ricci's map of the world but Ricci's Preface to the third, Peking edition of 1602, suggests the way in which the display of new scientific ideas was linked with the exposition of the new religion. He writes:

⁸⁸ v. Fonti Ricciane, N254, I, pp.199-200.

⁸⁹ v. Fonti Ricciane, I, p.234 n.9.

I have heard it said that only the true gentleman can read in the one great book of heaven and earth and perfect his knowledge. He who has exhausted the mysteries of heaven and earth is absolutely good, absolutely great, and absolutely one. The ignorant reject heaven but learning that does not get back in the end to the original Emperor of Heaven (t'ien-ti) is no true learning.⁹⁰

Whatever their ultimate aims and the use made of their learning, it is clear that long before 1595 the Jesuits were cultivating the public image of scholars and gentlemen. In European terms, they were 'clerks' not monks, an identification which was perfectly in accord both with the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and the activities of the Society throughout the world in education and scholarship.

From the beginning the missionaries sought respect for their learning and secular accomplishments. One of their first public activities in Chao-ch'ing had been a display of Western goods which included prisms, clocks, maps and astronomical instruments as well as religious objects.⁹¹ In the Storia, Ricci stresses their scholarly activities during the early days in Chao-ch'ing:

No little credit in the eyes of the Chinese did the Fathers, and consequently the Christian religion receive, through the many books we had, containing the sciences and laws of our lands. Some of these books were large, such as our Bibles, and others were gilded and sumptuously bound. Even to those who could not read them nor understand what they contained within, purely from the delicacy of their exterior and the fineness of their printing, all were easily persuaded that these books treated of important matters since in our kingdom we made so much of them. In this matter of books, our nation excelled not only all the other nations the Chinese had heard of, but even China itself, which up till now they thought to be superior in letters to all the kingdoms of the world. Added to this, they saw that the Fathers always kept someone learned in Chinese studies in the house, that they applied themselves with great diligence day and night to the study of letters, and to this end had bought many of their books which already filled their study.⁹²

⁹⁰ Translated from the text in Tavola XVIII of P.M. D'Elia, Il Mappomondo Cinese del P. Matteo Ricci S.I., Vatican City, 1938.

⁹¹ Fonti Ricciane, NN239, 240, I, Pp.188-189; N262, I, pp.207-211; N310, I, pp.258-9.

⁹² Fonti Ricciane, N252, I, p.196.

The effect of this activity, or at least as Ricci recalled it over twenty years later, was to distinguish the Jesuits from the Buddhist bonzes.

From this they came to understand both that letters and sciences were esteemed in our land and that the Fathers were, as they had declared, literati in their own land and in their own sciences, which is the only kind of nobility recognized in China. Hence, by comparing our priests with those of their sects in which ignorance reigned, they easily concluded how much more reasonable must be the law that our (Fathers) professed than that which the ministers of the idols (the Buddhists) taught.⁹³

After Ruggieri's departure for Europe and the move of the mission to Shao-chou (1589), we find Ricci's life-style falling more clearly into the literati pattern. Early in the Shao-chou period (late 1590), Ricci acquired his first important disciple, Ch'ü Ju-k'uei,⁹⁴ of Su-chou, whose father had been a scholar of some renown and held high office including that of Resident of the Board Rites. The son, although intelligent, had dissipated his patrimony and travelled the country living off friends and acquaintances, 'a way of life amongst these people'.⁹⁵ He was interested in alchemy, and seems to have been attracted to Ricci through the reputation the Fathers had acquired in this respect, a reputation based partly on their display of science and partly on the fact that they appeared to have no source of income.⁹⁶ Ch'ü had first met Ricci in Chao-ch'ing in 1589, and the next year he followed him to Shao-chou. To Ricci's astonishment,

⁹³ Fonti Ricciane, N252, I, pp.196-7.

⁹⁴ Ricci refers to him as 'Chiutaisu' after his tzü, T'ai-su. v. Biographical note in Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.295-6, n.1.

⁹⁵ 'Un modo di vita in questa gentilità' - Fonti Ricciane, N359, I, p.296.

⁹⁶ The Jesuits were always careful to conceal the fact that they received income from outside China, a fact which might have left them open to charges of subversion. Hsü Kuang-ch'i in his Apologia of 1616, insisted that the Jesuits received an allowance, not from subversive foreign merchants but directly from Europe, and suggested that this be checked at the Canton customs house so that 'all communication (with Europe) will be cut off, and every suspicion removed' ('Paul Sü's Apology addressed to the Emperor Wanli', in The Chinese Repository, XIX, 1850, p.124).

One morning (Ch'ü) came with great solemnity, in the Chinese fashion, with a large present of lengths of silk and other precious things, made three prostrations before Father Matteo, and took him as his master.⁹⁷

Ricci soon disabused Ch'ü of his belief that the Jesuits possessed the art of turning mercury into silver. But Ch'ü remained as his student in mathematics and science, and Ricci began to appreciate the advantages of having influential friends in the world of scholar-officials. Through Ch'ü Ju-k'uei he was introduced to a number of influential people, all friends, acquaintances and relatives of the Ch'ü family.⁹⁸ If Ricci had not up to this time appreciated the nature of Chinese gentry society, the system in which power and influence flowed from a combination of family and scholarship,⁹⁹ he must certainly have learned a great deal from his friendship with Ch'ü.

Ricci learned other lessons, too, from his relationship with Ch'ü Ju-k'uei. He soon succeeded in interesting Ch'ü in his religious ideas as well as his mathematics. Ch'ü listened and compiled a list of difficulties which he found in the Catholic Faith as presented to him. Ricci was surprised by the subtlety of Ch'ü's objections which he found to be 'the most difficult that are treated in all theology.'¹⁰⁰ The task of converting a Chinese scholar was to be no easy one. When, eventually, he convinced Ch'ü and resolved his doubts, he found another difficulty. Ch'ü declared himself a Christian but had to be refused baptism because of his attachment to a concubine. Although his first wife was dead, the concubine was of too low birth to become his principal wife, and he had no son or heir. Ch'ü remained a close friend and associate

⁹⁷ Fonti Ricciane, N361, I, p.297.

⁹⁸ Fonti Ricciane, N367, I, pp.299-300.

⁹⁹ Y. Ho Ping-ti, The Ladder of Success in Imperial China, New York, 1962; O. B. van der Sprenkel, 'High Officials in the Ming', Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, XIV, 1952, pp.87-114.

¹⁰⁰ Fonti Ricciane, N366, I, p.299.

of Ricci in his literary work, but it was not until 1605 that he finally married the concubine and received Baptism.¹⁰¹

The whole experience with Ch'ü Ju-k'uei must have been of decisive importance in the development of Ricci's missionary methods. He learned the value of a sympathetic Chinese collaborator, the difficulties involved in persuading even a friendly Chinese scholar to accept Christianity, both in theory and in practice, and the importance of social role in Chinese eyes. It seems to have been Ch'ü Ku-k'uei who finally persuaded him to abandon the dress of the Buddhist monks. Li Chih-tsao, who did not come to know Ricci till later, but who was in a position to know the facts, appears to attribute the change to Ch'ü's influence. In his commentary on the Nestorian Monument he notes that the Nestorian monks wore their hair long and adds:

When Ricci first entered Canton for some years he was feeling his way. Then he met Ch'ü T'ai-su and found it inconvenient to behave like a bonze. Later he let his hair grow and described himself as a scholar (ju) who had come to our country to admire our ways.¹⁰²

Ch'ü Ju-k'uei may have explicitly advised a change of dress during his first contact with Ricci in 1589-90, but it was some time before action was taken. It seems more likely that Ricci was inspired by his experience with Ch'ü to rethink the whole basis of his mission. He visited Macao in late 1592 or early 1593 to consult with Valignano¹⁰³ but amongst the 'many matters which were conducive to the promotion of our affairs in China',¹⁰⁴ curiously enough, the change of dress does not seem to have figured. Perhaps Ricci feared

¹⁰¹ Fonti Ricciane, N755, II, p.342.

¹⁰² Tu Ching-chiao pei-shu hou, T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, Taipei, 1965, I, p.85, cf. translation and text in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.336 n.1. The Chinese text is ambiguous, but I think D'Elia is wrong in implying explicit advice on the part of Ch'ü - 'che (Ch'ü) guidico sconsigliato per lui (Ricci) d'imitare i bonzi'. G.L.Harris in his account of the change of dress ('The Mission of Matteo Ricci S.J.', Monumenta Serica, XXV, 1966, pp.87-90), as elsewhere, simply follows D'Elia both in his translation and his interpretation.

¹⁰³ Fonti Ricciane, N410, I, p.323.

¹⁰⁴ Fonti Ricciane, N411, I, p.323.

that Valignano, whose recent Japanese experience had led him to a policy of accommodation with Buddhism, would not approve. Or perhaps he was still uncertain what the best course of action would be. According to his own account,¹⁰⁵ the missionaries were following a half-way policy of denying they were 'osciani' (ho-shang, Buddhist monks), wearing their hair short and shaving their beards in the normal fashion of priests and religious in Portugal. Whatever the reasons it was not Ricci himself, but Lazzaro Cattaneo, a newcomer to the mission, who raised the question with Valignano. Before setting out from Macao for Shao-chou he asked Valignano for permission for the Jesuits of the China mission 'to grow their beards and hair, like our Fathers in Germany, and to use formal dress, namely of silk, when paying courtesy calls, especially on mardarins'. Cattaneo adds to his account a curious remark that might be interpreted as meaning that the suggestion really came from Ricci. 'Father (Valignano) gave the permission, since Father Matteo Ricci also thought it necessary, and had never thought otherwise, but he had not wanted to be the first to permit it.'¹⁰⁶ Whether Ricci indirectly inspired the approach to Valignano, or merely approved the suggestion when his opinion was asked, Valignano agreed to the request. When he left for India in November 1594 he left the Superior, de Sande, instructions that the missionaries were, in future, to call themselves 'letrados' not 'bonsos', were to wear beards and hair down to their ears, and to use silk garments for formal occasions.¹⁰⁷ The Church authorities in Rome in turn gave their approval for the innovation.

Ricci seems to have immediately begun to grow his beard, because by August 1595 he could write that both he and Cattaneo had beards down to their waists. He left the change of dress till his departure for Shao-chou in April 1595,

¹⁰⁵ Fonti Ricciane, N429, I, p.335.

¹⁰⁶ Letter of 12 October 1599 to the General describing the events of 'five years ago'; Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 13, f.319r, quoted in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.336 n.1.

¹⁰⁷ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 14, f.230, quoted in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.336 n.1.

and, according to a letter of 29 August 1595 to de Sande, appeared for the first time in his new garments in Chi-shui in Kiangsi Province in May 1595. From this time on, as is attested both in written accounts and in drawings and paintings, the Jesuits dressed like Confucian scholars in a long silk outer garment and a hat, playfully described by Ricci as 'an extravagant cap as steep as a Bishop's mitre'.¹⁰⁸

Even before the change of dress, however, the new policy began to bear fruit. Ricci's memoirs describe the delight of their friends in Shao-chou at their new identification:

The Fathers of Shao-chou began little by little to put (the new policy) into execution. Our friends were very pleased with this, seeing that they could use many more signs of respect to us than they used to their bonzes. Although from the first we were regarded very differently from the ministers of the idols, in view of the great difference in virtue between them and the Fathers, nevertheless the ordinary people made little distinction between us and the bonzes, and the upper class could not pass the barriers that we had set up by our name, our dress and our appearance.¹⁰⁹

Ricci goes on to describe their assumption of the rank of hsiu-tsai, or 'bachelors', and their acceptance as such by the mandarins and scholars.

Some difficulties remained, however, due to their long identification as Buddhists. In Kwangtung the Jesuits continued to be called sêng, 'bonzes', and their churches ssü or miao, 'temples',¹¹⁰ despite the efforts of the Jesuits to change these titles. Elsewhere the Jesuits became known as

¹⁰⁸ Letter to G. Benci, Nanchang, 7 October 1595, cited in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.337 n.4.

¹⁰⁹ Fonti Ricciane, N430, I, p.338.

¹¹⁰ y. Ao-men chi-lüeh, Taipei, 1968 ed., pp.28-29, where the Jesuit is described as san-pa-ssü sêng, 'a bonze of the São Paulo Temple' (the inscription actually reads 'êrh-pa', an obvious misprint), and the Dominican as pan-chang-miao sêng, 'a bonze of the Camphorwood(?) Temple'. San-pa is apparently a phonetic local variant of the more common Shêng Pao-lu. 'Shêng Pao-lu, commonly called San-pa is where the Jesuits reside' says Lu Hsi-yen's Ao-men chi, p.118 in the translation by E.H.Pritchard and So Kwan-wai in Symposium on Chinese Studies commemorating the Golden Jubilee of the University of Hong Kong, III, Hong Kong, 1968. The map on pp.10-11 of the Ao-men chi-lüeh shows several Christian churches as ssü or miao.

tao-jen, or 'preachers of the Way',¹¹¹ and their churches were called t'ang or 'halls'. The latter title avoided the difficulties experienced in Chao-ch'ing and elsewhere from the Chinese custom of using temples as places of public recreation.¹¹²

Ricci had been thinking for some time of moving the mission both because of the unhealthy climate of Shao-chou,¹¹³ and as part of a more general long term plan to reach Peking and obtain imperial approval for the preaching of Christianity. The first attempt in 1595 proved fruitless due to a spy-scare arising from the current war with Japan in Korea. He was forced to leave Nanking after only two weeks in June 1595, but instead of returning to Shao-chou he established himself in Nan-ch'ang in Kiangsi province, where he found his reputation had preceded him. Here, Ricci extended his policy of accommodation to gentry society. He began the exhausting and often frustrating round of banquets and learned conversations, visiting and being visited, that was to occupy much of his time. He wrote to a friend in October 1595 that he often had no time to eat till at least one o'clock in the afternoon, and that sometimes he had to attend two dinners in the one day.¹¹⁴ All this required a quite different life-style to the old mission-church centred approach practised at Chao-ch'ing and Shao-chou. When he acquired a permanent residence in Nan-ch'ang he decided to have no public church but a reception hall, 'because one preaches more effectively and with greater fruit here through conversations than through formal sermons'.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Ricci translates this as 'predicatori letterati' (Fonti Ricciane, N431, I, p.338) which does capture the ambiguities of tao with its overtones of teaching and of Confucianism. v. D'Elia's note (Fonti Ricciane, I, p.338 n.3) and also his note (p.335 n.2) on the later, more common, usage of shen-fu, 'spiritual father'.

¹¹² v. Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.46-47.

¹¹³ v. Fonti Ricciane, N429, I, p.337.

¹¹⁴ Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.186.

¹¹⁵ Letter to Giulio Fuligatti, Nan-ch'ang, 12 October 1596, Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.215, translated in part in Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.46.

The missionary 'monk from the West' had become a Confucian scholar.

It was in Nan-ch'ang that Ricci first established himself as a member of the world of Chinese scholars. By now he had twelve years of Chinese studies behind him and was able to carry off the role successfully. He became acquainted with two princes residing in Nan-chang, and became quite friendly with one of them, the Prince of Chien-an.¹¹⁶ If he hoped to gain help from him in approaching the throne, he had seriously misunderstood the position of distant relatives of the Emperor.¹¹⁷ However, I think it would be wrong to assign such calculated motives to Ricci's relations with the Prince. It was for this man that Ricci produced his first Chinese work, entitled 'A Treatise on Friendship' (Chiao-yu lun), sometime in the year 1595.¹¹⁸ It is a collection of maxims translated or paraphrased from European sources, mainly from Andreas d'Evora, Sententiae et Exempla.¹¹⁹ The original work appears to have been in Chinese and some form of transliteration,¹²⁰ but only the Chinese text was published. Actually,

¹¹⁶ Fonti Ricciane, NN478-483, I, pp.365-371.

¹¹⁷ He was disabused in 1597. v. Fonti Ricciane, N503, II, p.7.

¹¹⁸ There has been an acrimonious debate on the subject of the exact date between P.M. D'Elia and Fang Hao, hingeing on the reading of the Chinese date to Ricci's Preface. Both agree, however, in placing the writing of this work some time before the end of 1595. v. Fonti Ricciane, I, p.368 n.1; P.M. D'Elia, 'Il Trattato sull'Amicizia...', Studia Missionalia, VII, 1952, pp.425-515; and 'Further Notes on Matteo Ricci's De Amicitia', Monumenta Serica, XV, 1956, pp.356-377. Fang Hao, 'Notes on Matteo Ricci's De Amicitia', Monumenta Serica, XIV, 1949-55, pp.574-583; 'Ku I-ta-li Han-hsueh-chia Te Li-hsien chu-tso cheng-wu' ('Corrections to the Works of the Italian Sinologist Pasquale M. D'Elia'), in Fang Hao liu-shih tzü-ting kao, Taipei, 1969, II, pp.1730-1731.

¹¹⁹ A copy of the 5th edition of this work, Paris, 1590, possibly the one used by Ricci himself, survived in the Pei't'ang Library, Peking, till 1949. For identification of sources, see P.M.D'Elia's edition in Studia Missionalia, VII, 1952, pp.425-515.

¹²⁰ v. Fonti Ricciane, I, p.369 n.1.

the publication was not the responsibility of Ricci himself. A friend published it in Ningtu in 1595 or 1596 without authorization, thus circumventing Ricci's scruples about publication without an ecclesiastical imprimatur.¹²¹ Later editions by Ch'ü Ju-k'uei (1599), Feng Ying-ching (1601) and Li Chih-tsao,¹²² were considerably enlarged by the addition of some maxims of Ricci's own. It seems to have been immensely popular. Ricci himself claimed, in a letter of 14 August 1599,¹²³ that it 'gave more credit to me and to Europe than anything we have done', and ten years later he noted that 'even now it continues to astonish this kingdom'.¹²⁴ Confirmation of this may be found in the fact that it went through many editions and was eventually included in the great Ch'ing encyclopedic compilation, the Ku'chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng.¹²⁵

It seems to me significant and appropriate that Ricci's first work, and the first fruit of his Nan-ch'ang period, should be a treatise on friendship. He was beginning to achieve real intimacy with a number of Chinese scholars, who returned his regard. Feng Ying-ching begins his Preface to the 1601 edition by claiming that 'Ricci endured the discomfort of travelling 80,000 li in an easterly direction to China for the sake of friendship. He understands the ways of friendship'.¹²⁶ No doubt Ricci saw his own motives differently,

¹²¹ D'Elia, 'Il Trattato sull'Amicizia...', p.455. cf. Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.250, letter of 14 August 1599 to Girolamo Costa: 'I cannot publish it (the Chiao-yu lun), because in order to publish anything I have to get permission from so many of our people that I cannot do anything. Men who are not in China, and cannot read Chinese, insist upon passing judgement.' (translated in Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.44.)

¹²² Included in his T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, 1629.

¹²³ To Girolamo Costa, cited in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.369 n.

¹²⁴ Fonti Ricciane, N482, I, p.369.

¹²⁵ In the section entitled Ming lun-hui-pien chiao-i tien, ch. 12, ff.12-52. The editors appended a note pointing out that its style was Western and many of the passages unintelligible which may be no more than a device on their part to avoid charges of unorthodoxy. v. G.Gné & J.Dehergne, 'Le "Traité de l'Amitié" de Matthieu Ricci', Bulletin de l'Université d'Aurore, 3s., VIII, 1947, p.586.

¹²⁶ T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, Taipei, 1965 ed., I, p.291.

but there is an element of truth in the comment. What he was doing was establishing a link between the European humanist tradition and the Confucian humanist tradition.¹²⁷ He wanted to be received not just as a pedlar of novelties but as a scholar and a friend. 'The other things', he wrote, 'give us the reputation of possessing ingenuity in the construction of mechanical artefacts and instruments; but this treatise has established our reputation as scholars of talent and virtue.'¹²⁸

Ricci attracted attention as much by his personality, as by his status as cultural intermediary. Shen Tê-fu, who makes a number of comments on the Jesuits, not all of them favourable, in his Yeh-huo pien of 1606, remarks that Ricci had 'a strange power to move men',¹²⁹ and describes his attractive qualities as follows:

Li Hsi-t'ai (Ricci) took a vow to try to use his own religion to entice the Chinese to be converted...He is of attractive disposition, adaptable to all circumstances, and everybody appreciates his sincerity and generosity and the fact that he doesn't make himself a burden to anybody. He has a healthy appetite for food and drink, and is very clever in what he makes. He does not make money by lending at interest, and he is continually generous to others, yet he is not poor, so he is suspected of practising alchemy, but I don't believe this is so.¹³⁰

This description actually comes from a slightly later period in Peking where Shen was a neighbour of Ricci,¹³¹ but it seems to apply equally well to Ricci's years in Nan-ch'ang. He appeared as a scholar with an open and generous character yet something mysterious about him.

¹²⁷ v. Bernard(-Maître), Le Père Matthieu Ricci, I, p.248.

¹²⁸ Translated from Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.243, in G. Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.44.

¹²⁹ Ch.30, cited in Chang Wei-hua, Ming-shih Fo-lang-chi, Lü-sung, Ho-lan, I-ta-li-ya, ssü-chuan chu-shih, Peiping, 1934, p.167.

¹³⁰ Yeh-huo pien, ch.30, in Chang Wei-hua, Ming-shih, p.177.

¹³¹ Fonti Ricciane, II, p.73 n.1.

The mystery was increased by Ricci's reputation for a prodigious memory. At a banquet early in his stay in Nan-ch'ang he repeated after one reading a random list of some hundreds of characters¹³² and this seems to have become a regular 'party trick'.¹³³ Ricci's interest in memory training went back to his student days in Rome when he had written a short treatise on the subject for his friend Lelio Passionei. He had brought this with him to China¹³⁴ and he made good use of it in 1596 when the Governor of Nan-ch'ang, Wang Tao, fearful of getting into trouble over Ricci's presence in the city, tried to force him to live in a temple outside the walls. Ricci had no desire to revive the old identification as a bonze, and he appealed to the Viceroy, whom he had met earlier, accompanying the request with a copy of a work in Chinese, the Hsi-kuo chi-fa, on memory training.¹³⁵ The Viceroy accepted this on behalf of his sons, appreciating the value of a good memory in the competitive examinations which led to office, and gave Ricci permission to reside where he wished.¹³⁶

In Nan-ch'ang Ricci made contact with many scholars whose friendship was to prove of great value. In December 1597 the triennial provincial examinations were held in Nan-ch'ang and Ricci was overwhelmed with visitors.¹³⁷ In Nan-ch'ang too, he was introduced to the less official aspects of Confucianism, the world of academies and discussion circles. He was beginning to appreciate that Confucianism was not a monolithic orthodoxy but a living doctrine with a variety of conflicting tendencies. And he was beginning to feel his way towards establishing a place for Christianity within these movements. In his Storia he describes these first encounters.

¹³² Fonti Ricciane, I, p.360 n.1.

¹³³ v. Fonti Ricciane, N469, I, pp.359-60; N475, I, p.363.

¹³⁴ See his letter to Passionei, 25 December 1597, cited in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.376 n.6.

¹³⁵ The Hsi-kuo chi-fa is reprinted in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'u-n wen-hsien, Taipei, 1965, pp.1-70.

¹³⁶ Fonti Ricciane, N475, I, p.363.

¹³⁷ Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.242.

The Father gained even more authority from his friendship with another sort of scholar, the satraps of this country, who profess to preach in their confraternities the true law which must be followed. The head of them all at the time was an old man of seventy whose surname was Chang and personal name Tou-chin.¹³⁸ This man and his companions had heard much about the Father from our friend Ch'ü T'ai-su, who had stayed for a long time in that place and had spread the fame of the learning and sanctity of our men, so much so that the Father was very much afraid of not being able to fulfil the expectations they had about him.

And so these men, who are accustomed to treat everybody with great haughtiness, treated the Father with great humility and courtesy, and were even more pleased when they perceived that the Father was well versed in their books, and could adduce and prove the things that he said about our holy law on the authority of their ancient books.¹³⁹

From the last remark it would appear that it was in this period and on the basis of these contacts that Ricci developed his interpretation of Confucianism. We know from his letters that he worked on his definitive book, the T'ien-chu shih-i, during these years. It had been begun in 1594 as a revision and amplification of Ruggieri's T'ien-chu shih-lu, put aside during 1595 due to his busy round of engagements, and taken up again in 1596 when it was sufficiently advanced for friends to urge him to publish it.¹⁴⁰ Although not printed till 1603, it was the fruit of the Nan-ch'ang years.

Ricci's mature policy may be regarded as a logical extension of the methods evolved during the formative years in Chao-ch'ing, Shao-chou and Nan-ch'ang. New men arrived on the mission and were trained in the language and customs of polite Chinese society. From Ricci's pen there flowed

¹³⁸ Chang Tou-chin, or Chang Huang, was President of the Academy of the White Deer Cave (Pai-lu-tung shu-yuan) to which the great Sung Neo-Confucian philosopher, Chu Hsi, once belonged. For biographical details see Fonti Ricciane, I, p.371 n.5.

¹³⁹ Fonti Ricciane, N484, I, pp.371-2.

¹⁴⁰ See the note, including references to Ricci's letters, in Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.379-380.

a stream of books on scientific and religious subjects.¹⁴¹ The conversations with Chinese scholars continued, new friends were made, collaborators and converts secured; but the basic method of working through Confucianism was followed everywhere.

The main change in Ricci's life was the shift to the north, to Nanking and on to Peking. In August 1597, Valignano, back in Macao once more, decided that the time had come for changes in the mission. Ricci was named Superior and ordered to attempt once more to establish himself in Peking. Just at this time Wang Hung-hui, President of the Li Pu (Board of Rites) in Nanking, whom Ricci had met in Shao-chou,¹⁴² passed through Nan-ch'ang on his way to take up his office. Since he intended to travel to Peking, for the Emperor's birthday celebrations on 17 September 1598, he offered to take Ricci with him.¹⁴³ His motives were not altogether disinterested since the Li Pu had responsibility for the mathematical bureau which compiled the imperial calendar. At this time the old Chinese calendar was badly out of adjustment¹⁴⁴ and Wang seems to have hoped to gain credit, and perhaps the senior presidency in Peking, by introducing Ricci there.¹⁴⁵

It was a bad time to travel since hostilities had broken out again in Korea. Despite Wang's patronage, Ricci was distrusted in Nanking, and when he finally arrived in Peking he found doors closed against him. He returned via Soochow to Nanking where, with the news of peace with Japan, he was able to set up a mission residence. In this metropolis he

¹⁴¹ See the list of Ricci's works in Fonti Ricciane, I, pp. CXXVII-CXXVIII, and the Bibliography of this work.

¹⁴² Fonti Ricciane, N417, I, p.326.

¹⁴³ Fonti Ricciane, N505, II, p.9.

¹⁴⁴ An error of four and a half hours according to D'Elia's note, Fonti Ricciane, II, p.8 n.5.

¹⁴⁵ Fonti Ricciane, N504, II, p.8.

acquired a new group of friends and students. He visited the astronomical observatory, and became acquainted with the royal astronomers and their methods. It was here also that for the first time he came into contact with sophisticated exponents of Buddhist philosophy such as the syncretist Li Chih,¹⁴⁶ Li Pen-ku,¹⁴⁷ and the monk San-hui.¹⁴⁸ Ricci recognized in San-hui a serious opponent, 'quite different from the other bonzes, being a great poet, intelligent and learned in all matters of his sect, and an adept in their practices',¹⁴⁹ and accepted an invitation to debate with him. The debate was, of course, inconclusive, and it is clear from Ricci's own account¹⁵⁰ that they were literally speaking different languages. It was a confrontation rather than a true exchange of views; but it did cause Ricci to take Buddhism more seriously and resulted in the composition of a treatise on the virtues called the Twenty-Five Sentences (erh-shih-wu yen), conceived as a counter to the Buddhist Forty-two Paragraphs sutra (ssü-shih-erh chang ching).¹⁵¹

It was in Nanking in early 1600 that Ricci met for the first time the man who was to become the most illustrious of all Chinese Christians, Hsü Kuang-ch'i, or 'Doctor Paul'. This first brief meeting led to a friendship, cemented later in Peking, and to a collaboration on scientific and religious writings with Ricci and other Jesuits that proved enormously fruitful. As holder of several high offices, eventually the highest of all, ko-lao, or Grand Secretary, he was protector of the mission during the crucial period of its establishment and early growth. Without Hsü Kuang-ch'i, Li Chih-tsao and

¹⁴⁶ Fonti Ricciane, N551, II, pp.66-69.

¹⁴⁷ Fonti Ricciane, N556, II, pp.73-4.

¹⁴⁸ Fonti Ricciane, N558, II, pp.75-77.

¹⁴⁹ Fonti Ricciane, N558, II, p.75.

¹⁵⁰ Fonti Ricciane, NN558-9, II, pp.75-80.

¹⁵¹ Ricci first mentions this in the Storia in his account of the Nanking mission (Fonti Ricciane, II, p.97). Later he cancelled the passage and included a paragraph on the subject in a later chapter in which he describes its publication in Peking in 1604 (Fonti Ricciane, N707, II, pp.286-288). The Epilogue to the work, by Hsü Kuang-ch'i, attributes it to this period in Nanking (v. Fonti Ricciane, II, p.289 n.).

Yang T'ing-yün, the 'three great pillars',¹⁵² of the Church in China, the mission might well have been destroyed quite early. For our purposes, however, the importance of these three men lies more in the insight they gave Ricci and his successors into the potentialities of a rapprochement between Confucianism and Christianity. The 'Christian Confucian' was a living reality, not an abstract concept.

In May 1600, with the arrival of reinforcements for the Nanking mission, and of some valuable objects suitable as gifts to be offered to the Emperor, Ricci set out once more for Peking. This time he was successful both in having an audience with the Emperor and in establishing the mission in the capital itself. The details of Ricci's reception in Peking need not delay us here.¹⁵³ For a time he found himself unwittingly caught up in the power struggle between the court eunuchs and the official bureaucracy. Ricci and his gifts were taken over on the way by the powerful eunuch Ma T'ang and the whole enterprise was almost lost through the opposition of the Board of Rites to this irregular procedure. The 'audience', on which Ricci had placed his hopes for so long, was an anti-climax. Despite later claims by Alen in his life of Ricci¹⁵⁴ that the Emperor observed proceedings from behind the screen, Ricci's own account makes it clear that it was merely a formal presentation before the empty throne.¹⁵⁵ Matteo Ricci's entry to Peking was simultaneously an initiation into the enormous gap between Confucian theory and the practice of government in the late Ming.

¹⁵² San ta chu-shih. See, for example, the preface to Yang Ch'en-o, Yang Ch'i-yüan hsien-sheng nien-p'u, Shanghai, 1946, p.1.

¹⁵³ For Ricci's own account, see Fonti Ricciane, NN581ff., II, p.107ff.; and for Chinese sources on the same events, Chang wei-hua, Ming shih, p.171 ff.

¹⁵⁴ Ta-hsi Li hsien-sheng Ma-tou chuan, translated by L. Desbuquois, Revue d'Histoire des Missions, 1, 1924, p.61. D'Elia gives an account of the origin of this error in Fonti Ricciane, II, p.160 n.1.

¹⁵⁵ Fonti Ricciane, N609, II, p.144; and reiterated in N622, II, p.160.

The last ten years of Ricci's life were richer and more fruitful than the long years of preparation that preceded them, but I can detect no major changes in his methods. It was a period of development and refining of the basic approach; a time of harvesting. His major works in Chinese belong to this period - the third and fullest edition of his World Map in 1602; the publication of the T'ien-chu shih-i (1603) and the Twenty-five Sentences (1605); the Ten Paradoxes (chi-jen shih-p'ien) in 1608. In the last years of his life he worked on his Storia del Cristianesimo in Cina which was completed shortly before his death but not published in its original form till 1911 (a Latin version by Nicholas Trigault was published in 1615). He conducted an extensive correspondence in Chinese and, by this time at least, he seems to have written his letters without the aid of a Chinese secretary.¹⁵⁶ We even find him sending an example of his calligraphy together with a complimentary essay to the ink-merchant, Ch'eng Ta-yüeh.¹⁵⁷ Some new and important friends and allies were gained, among them Feng Ying-ching, courageous critic of corrupt government;¹⁵⁸ Li Chih-tsao who was to collect many of Ricci's works in his T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han of 1629, and to produce a number of scientific works in collaboration with the missionaries; and Li T'ai-tsai, President of the Board of Civil Office. The encounters with leading Buddhists continued, mainly centred now around Ricci's arguments in the T'ien-chu shih-i,¹⁵⁹ and touching on substantial points such as reincarnation and monism.

¹⁵⁶ y. Fonti Ricciane, II, pp.531-2.

¹⁵⁷ See "'The Transmission by Writing", presented to Master Ch'eng Yu-po', translated by J.J. L. Duyvendak in T'oung Pao, XXV, 1940, pp.394-7.

¹⁵⁸ y. Fonti Ricciane, NN624-627, II, pp.162-8; Ming shih, ch. 237, 7a-10b; Huang Tsung-hsi, Ming Ju hsüeh-an, ch.24, 17a in the Ssü-pu pei-yao ed.

¹⁵⁹ See Fonti Ricciane, NN633-4, II, pp.180-182, for Ricci's exchanges with Huang-hui; and the Pien-hsüeh i-tu, an account of a debate between Ricci and the monk Shen Chu-hung (Shen Lien-chih) c.1608, probably recorded by Hsü Kuang-ch'i and published by Li Chih-tsao (T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, Taipei, 1965 ed., I, pp.637-688).

On the pretext of regulating the clocks presented to the Emperor, Ricci and his companions gained access to the Forbidden City, and through the eunuchs answered the Emperor's queries about Europe.¹⁶⁰ Ricci did not succeed in obtaining formal permission to reside in Peking or to preach his religion but the Emperor by his refusal to reply to the complaints of the Board of Rites against Ricci indicated his wishes. The eunuchs privately informed Ricci that the Emperor favoured him and that he should regard the official silence as permission to stay.¹⁶¹ The Ming History represents Ricci's de facto position accurately when it says: 'The Emperor commended him for coming from so far, granted him food and lodging, and a generous allowance. The nobles, officials and common people respected, appreciated and welcomed him. (Li) Matou settled down (in Peking) and remained there for the rest of his life. He died in the capital on May (10th) 1610 and was buried outside the western suburb.'¹⁶²

In a strange way it was Ricci's death itself that confirmed his status and ratified the position of the mission. Important people came in large numbers to express their condolences, and a curious but appropriate combination of Christian and traditional Chinese ceremonies were observed.¹⁶³ Li Chih-tsao prepared a memorial in the name of the Peking Jesuits requesting a fitting burial ground for the great man. The memorial stressed his virtue and his devotion to Chinese culture:

¹⁶⁰ Fonti Ricciane, N595, II, p.127. Ricci also prepared a special edition of his map for the Emperor with notes which he hoped would interest him in Christianity (Fonti Ricciane, N893, II, p.474).

¹⁶¹ Fonti Ricciane, N617, II, p.153.

¹⁶² Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, pp.177-8.

¹⁶³ Fonti Ricciane, N967, II, pp.547-9. The account of Ricci's death and its aftermath in the Fonti comes from Trigault's De Christiana Expeditione which in turn draws on the Annual Letter for 1610 written by Ferreira.

Your servant, Li Ma-tou, from the time he entered your court, began to absorb your brilliant culture, to read (Chinese) books and penetrate their meaning. Morning and evening, reverently and respectfully he burnt incense and prayed to Heaven, reciting your praises in poor return for your kindness. The loyalty of his heart is known to everybody, high or low, in the city, and we would not dare to embellish it. While he was yet alive he was reputed to be a lover of scholarship and a writer of no mean ability. In his earlier days across the seas he was known as a famous scholar, and when he came to this country he was praised by high officials who did not fear to liken him to the hermits who withdraw to lonely places.¹⁶⁴

Wu Tao-nan, acting Minister of Rites, passed on the memorial, again stressing Ricci's devotion to Chinese culture:

(Li) Ma-tou gradually absorbed the teaching of China, and diligently studied our important doctrines, and achieved fame as a writer. One day without warning he died. He has no family within 10,000 li and it is impossible to send his coffin home. The situation is extremely unfortunate.¹⁶⁵

With the support of Yeh Hsiang-kao, the Grand Secretary, another old friend of Ricci, the request was approved and a villa confiscated from one of the eunuchs granted to the Jesuits. Ricci's body was transferred to this site where some years later the tomb was adorned with a long inscription in his praise by Wang Ying-lin, Governor of Peking.¹⁶⁶

Through his death Ricci, and by association the other Jesuits, had received official recognition of their presence in Peking. The posthumous honours paid to him culminating in an entry in the Ming shih, the eulogies of friends and acquaintances, all combined to identify him as a scholar and a gentleman in the Confucian sense. The Jesuits had found a definitive place in the Chinese world, as Western scholars and assimilated Confucians. Ricci was perfectly aware of the ambiguities of that position and its dangers but he had discovered a way of accommodation to Chinese culture. His deathbed remarks were a perfect summing up of his achievement.

I leave you at a door opened up to great rewards, but fraught with peril and labour.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Fonti Ricciane, III, p.5, for Chinese text and D'Elia's translation.

¹⁶⁵ Fonti Ricciane, III, p.7.

¹⁶⁶ v. Fonti Ricciane, III, Appendix II, pp.9ff.

¹⁶⁷ Fonti Ricciane, N962, II, p.540.

III. RICCI'S INTERPRETATION OF CONFUCIANISM

We have seen how Matteo Ricci first discovered then adapted himself to Confucianism in the course of his thirty odd years in China, thus setting a pattern for the Jesuits of the China mission. In practical terms this meant an accommodation to the social role of Confucian scholars, extending to title, dress, language and, in general, way of life. In intellectual terms, it involved the presentation of Christianity in Confucian language, and the placing of the T'ien-chu-chiao in relation to the Confucian tradition. It is this intellectual accommodation to which I now turn.

In delineating Ricci's interpretation of Confucianism there are two kinds of sources we may draw on, his writings in European languages, addressed primarily to his Jesuit colleagues and through them to a European public; and his writings in Chinese. As for the former, we have in his letters an indication of his developing views on Confucianism, and in the Storia dell'Introduzione del Cristianesimo in Cina, a full statement of his mature position. However, in some respects, the Storia is of less value for a systematic overview of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism than it might seem. It was, I presume, intended for publication in Europe, or at least Ricci foresaw this as a strong possibility.¹⁶⁸ Apart from the general practice of publication of mission reports for propaganda purposes - using 'propaganda' in its primary and neutral sense of spreading and advancing a cause - a practice to which Ricci had contributed from the beginning

¹⁶⁸ Trigault, in his preliminary remarks 'To the Reader', suggests that Ricci left the manuscript 'to furnish some future writer with material prepared for the Mission annals' (China in the Sixteenth Century, trans. L.J. Gallagher, New York, 1953, p.xiii). But this misrepresents the quality of the original manuscript which, apart from some lacunae deliberately left to be filled by reference to records not at hand, was complete and polished. It was only Ricci's death which prevented it being sent on to Rome.

in his correspondence with Maffei and others, Ricci seems to have regarded the Storia as an exercise in keeping the record straight, presumably publicly.¹⁶⁹

The manuscript was taken to Europe by Nicholas Trigault in 1613, no copy to my knowledge remaining in the mission, and published in a Latin version by Trigault in 1615. It is this Trigault version, which went through many editions in at least six European languages, which was taken in Europe to represent Ricci's view of Confucianism. In fact, however, it shows considerable modification and simplification, especially in the passages referring to Confucianism. It plays a considerable role in the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, but it is not reliable as evidence for Ricci's own view, as I shall show below.

Ricci's Chinese writings, on the other hand, were not intended as a contribution to European knowledge about China, nor to the polemics between missionaries about missionary methods. Polemical they were, but in direct engagement with the Chinese traditions and their protagonists. It is to these, and to Ricci's practice, that later missionaries appealed rather than to Trigault's De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas. I shall, then, base my picture of Ricci's own interpretation of Confucianism primarily on Ricci's Chinese works, especially the T'ien-chu shih-i where it receives fullest expression.

For the sake of completeness, however, and because of its importance to the later debate about the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, I must begin with some remarks on the Storia and on Trigault's version which for so long represented Ricci's views to the world. Despite frequent assertions to

¹⁶⁹ See his letter to the Portuguese Assistant, Alvarez, 17 February 1609, quoted in part in Fonti Ricciane, I, p.CLXVII.

the contrary¹⁷⁰ Nicholas Trigault's version of Ricci's Storia was basically a translation of Ricci's work. The original manuscript of the Storia in the Jesuit Archives in Rome¹⁷¹ contains an authenticating note by Trigault, dated 26 February 1615, in which he attests that the manuscript contains Ricci's Italian 'commentarii' written 'with his own hand' with additions in Portuguese and Latin by Trigault himself.¹⁷² These additions both fill in the gaps left by Ricci, covering especially the history of the Shao-chou mission after the latter's departure for Peking,¹⁷³ and complete the story with an account of Ricci's last days and posthumous triumph.¹⁷⁴ A close comparison of the original with Trigault's text¹⁷⁵ shows that in addition to these legitimate additions, corresponding to the author's intentions, there are many minor

170 It is not surprising that inattentive readers who ignored the small print of the title page and Trigault's protestations ad lectorem should have attributed the work to Trigault himself, and references to 'Trigautius', 'Trigaucio' etc. abound in the literature of the 17th and 18th century. But it is inexcusable to find modern writers making the same mistake. Louis J. Gallagher in his original translation of the First Book of De Christiana Expeditione, published as The China that was, Milwaukee, 1942, asserts that 'Book No. 1 is Trigault's original work done in Latin' (p.v.). The first volume of D'Elia's Fonti Ricciane was published only in that year, and in a country at war with the U.S.A., but Tacchi Venturi's text of Ricci's original manuscript had been available since 1912. In fairness to Gallagher it should be noted that he does not repeat the mistake in the Translator's Preface to China in the Sixteenth Century, but neither does he refract the error.

171 Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 106a.

172 See Fonti Ricciane, I, p.CLXXIV.

173 Lib.IV, Cap. XVII and XVIII (Fonti Ricciane, NN643-673, II, pp.196-244).

174 From Lib.V, Cap.XVIII to the end (Fonti Ricciane, NN908-1000).

175 I have, in fact, been unable to make a detailed comparison of the Latin text of Trigault with the Storia. But I have presumed that the English translation from the Latin by L.J.Gallagher (China in the Sixteenth Century), checked against the French translation (by Riquebourg-Trigault - I have used the Lille, 1617 ed.) is a reliable guide to at least the contents of Trigault's work.

additions and alterations. Some of these too are legitimate editorial changes - literary flourishes, explanations, rounding off and drawing conclusions. They are often foreign to Ricci's style and personality but they do not misrepresent his views. Others should be seen in the light of the purpose of Trigault's visit to Europe as Procurator for the mission, that is, to obtain recruits and financial support for the China mission.¹⁷⁶ They are exhortatory and 'edifying'. Many, however, are quite indefensible on any grounds, and may be said systematically to misrepresent Ricci's thought. I will point to some of these in appropriate places but a few examples here will demonstrate the extent of the changes.

In his description of the fortune-tellers, astrologers, geomancers etc. of China, Ricci simply describes their activities using but one mild perjorative - 'questa peste'.¹⁷⁷ Trigault embellishes this with phrases such as 'these imposters', 'a universal nuisance', 'this obnoxious class', and where Ricci says simply 'non solo huomini, ma anco donne', he adds the gratuitous slur, 'women of questionable character'.¹⁷⁸ Now, in this case, we have independent evidence for Ricci's views, a passage in his Chi-jen shih-p'ien in which he says that he did not want to disturb such a deeply held and ancient belief by a head-on attack but took every opportunity quietly to point out that the Church prohibited it.¹⁷⁹ Tact had been transformed into persecuting zeal.

On the other hand, there are cases where Trigault has softened Ricci's views, presumably because they conflict with his own aim of representing China as a virtuous, admirably governed, model state. He omits completely a long passage in

¹⁷⁶ v. E. Lamalle, 'La Propagande du P. Nicolas Trigault en faveur des Missions de Chine (1616)', Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu, ix.1, 1940, pp.49ff.

¹⁷⁷ Fonti Ricciane, N153, I, p.97.

¹⁷⁸ Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.85.

¹⁷⁹ v. Fonti Ricciane, I, p.97 n.2.

which Ricci describes the Chinese addiction to polygamy, prostitution, sodomy and pederasty.¹⁸⁰ When Ricci describes the corruption of magistrates, their overindulgence in alcohol, their untrustworthiness and fondness for intrigue, Trigault makes many cuts and considerably softens the account.¹⁸¹ As D'Elia remarks, Ricci's attitude was balanced, noting the Chinese vices as well as the virtues, but making no sweeping condemnations and seeking to excuse them where possible.¹⁸² Trigault has betrayed this balance and the tone of compassion for human frailty.

A much more serious example, and one which bears directly on our central theme, is the very first mention in the Storia of Confucius. It occurs in a passage dealing with the moral philosophy of the Chinese. Ricci's original text begins by nothing that Chinese philosophers are accustomed to present their views in dialogue form, not according to any system of logic. Trigault's additions are censorious and pedantically 'scholastic':

They seem to have obscured matters by the introduction of error rather than enlightened them. They have no conception of the rules of logic, and consequently treat the precepts of the science of ethics without any regard to the intrinsic co-ordination of the various divisions of this subject.¹⁸³

Then follows in both the original Italian and Trigault's Latin version a brief account of the life of Confucius, his reputation and influence. Most of Ricci's conclusion to the paragraph, however, has been omitted by Trigault. It has been scored out in the manuscript either by Trigault, or possibly by the superior of the mission, Longobardo,¹⁸⁴ quite clearly

¹⁸⁰ Fonti Ricciane, NN154-6, I, p.98.

¹⁸¹ Fonti Ricciane, NN161-165, I, pp.100-102 cf. Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, pp.87-8.

¹⁸² Fonti Ricciane, I, p.102 n.1.

¹⁸³ Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.30 cf. Fonti Ricciane, N55, I, p.39.

¹⁸⁴ v. Fonti Ricciane, I, p.40 n.3, and facsimile of the page of the manuscript in Tavola III, opposite p.40.

because of its embarrassingly frank description of Confucian rites. Ricci wrote that,

Besides these (honours paid to Confucius and his descendants), in every city and school where the literati congregate, according to an ancient law, there is a very sumptuous temple of Confucius, in which there stands his statue with his name and title; and every new moon and full moon, and four times in the year, the literati offer to him a certain kind of sacrifice with incense and dead animals which they offer up, although they acknowledge no divinity in him and ask nothing of him. And so it cannot be called a true sacrifice.¹⁸⁵

Trigault has reduced this careful description with its qualifications to a flat statement: 'He was never venerated with religious rites, however, as they venerate a god'.¹⁸⁶

The context of this subtle but crucial shift from qualified description to assertion was the bitter debate about the nature of Confucian rites which, as we shall see later, was beginning in the period immediately after Ricci's death. Trigault wished to avoid any possibility of Ricci's authority being invoked by the opponents of the practices of the China mission. But he betrayed one of Ricci's own vital principles in the process. Even after nearly thirty years' experience of China, Matteo Ricci was well aware of his outsider's point of view and of the complexity of the Confucian tradition itself, not to mention the diversity of practice in so huge a country. He proclaimed his hermeneutical principles clearly and unequivocally in the passage I have already cited at the beginning of this chapter - one significantly altered by Trigault.¹⁸⁷ For tactical purposes

¹⁸⁵ Fonti Ricciane, N55, I, p.40.

¹⁸⁶ Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.30.

¹⁸⁷ The corresponding passage in Trigault (Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.448 cf. Riquebourg-Trigault, Histoire, p.419) is not only misleadingly abbreviated, but qualified by an assertion that is complete nonsense: 'The Fathers were accustomed to use the authority of this sect to their own advantage, by commenting only on what had happened since the time of Confucius, who lived some five hundred years before the coming of Christ.' Apart from the numerous references to the mythical Golden Age of China in the Chinese writings of Ricci and other missionaries, the Storia itself and Trigault's version refer to early Chinese history, the Sage Kings, the Five Classics etc. See, for example, Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, pp.30, 55, 93.

Ricci wished an alliance with the Confucians against the Buddhists. He recognized that many aspects of Confucianism were ambiguous; that they could be, and were, interpreted in various ways, some perfectly compatible with basic Christian doctrines, others less so. So the Jesuits should seek to identify their teachings with Confucianism, 'interpreting in our favour anything which (Confucius) left ambiguous in his writings'.

That this alliance with and assimilation to Confucianism was tactical in origin can hardly be denied. Our examination of Ricci's formative experiences in Chao-ch'ing, Shao-chou and Nan-ch'ang has abundantly demonstrated the pressures which led Ricci to this position. But I do not see it as purely tactical. Ricci's letters show how the development of his understanding of Confucianism led him to an increasingly favourable judgement on it, a genuine intellectual rapport and not just 'a tactic...born of a sound instinct that some sort of tactic was necessary'.¹⁸⁸

In his earliest surviving letter from China, to the Spanish Jesuit Román, written on 13 September 1584, Ricci gives his assessment of the major 'religions or sects' of China. He thinks that in China there is really no 'religion' worth speaking of, but of the 'sects' he prefers 'the sect of the literati'. Although 'commonly they do not believe in the immortality of the soul' they reject the superstitions of the others, and practice an austere cult of heaven and earth.¹⁸⁹ A year later, writing to Claudio Acquaviva, the Jesuit General, he again compares favourably the Confucians, whom he describes as 'a sect of Epicureans, not in name, but in their laws and opinions', with the Buddhists who are 'Pythagoreans' and devil-worshippers.¹⁹⁰ By 1593, again writing to Acquaviva, and describing his translation of the Confucian Four Books, he finds a more favourable comparison for Confucius.

¹⁸⁸ J. Levenson, Confucian China and Its Modern Fate, I, London, 1958, p.119.

¹⁸⁹ Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, pp.48-49.

¹⁹⁰ Chao-ch'ing, 20 October 1583, in Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.57.

The Sage is now 'un altro Seneca' and the Four Books are 'buoni documenti morali'.¹⁹¹ In other words, Ricci was attracted to Confucianism in the first place not by the religious values he saw in it, but by what he saw as its non-religious nature, its ethical and social values.

As he systematically extended his studies beyond what he calls the 'Tetrabiblion' (the 'Four Books') to the six classics ('sei dottrine antiche')¹⁹² he became more convinced of the compatibility of Christianity with Confucianism. 'During these last years,' he writes in 1595, 'I have interpreted with the aid of good masters, not only the Four Books but also all Six Classics, and I have noted many passages in all of them which favour the teachings of our faith, such as the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, the glory of the blessed etc.'¹⁹³ This was not, perhaps, the method of pure disinterested scholarship but neither was it dishonest. Ricci's commitment to Confucianism was confirmed by study of the sources.

The next, and crucial, stage in the development of his interpretation of Confucianism was his realization of the divergencies between the commentaries and the basic sources of Confucianism. To his old friend, Lelio Passionei, he wrote in 1597:

At the very time when, if I calculate correctly, Plato and Aristotle flourished amongst us, there also flourished amongst (the Chinese) certain literati of good life who produced books dealing with moral matters, not in a scientific way, but in the form of maxims. The chief of these wrote four books which are most highly esteemed, and read day and night. In volume they do not exceed the size of the letters of Marcus Tullius, but the commentaries and glosses, and the commentaries on the commentaries, and further treatises and discourses upon them by this time are infinite.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Shao-chou, 10 December 1593, in Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, pp.117-118.

¹⁹² Actually there were five not six classics since the Music Classic (Yuēh ching) was reputed lost. But the Yüeh chi or 'Record of Music', a section of the Li chi, was often counted separately to restore the ancient 'six'.

¹⁹³ To Acquaviva, Nan-ch'ang, 4 November 1595, in Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.207.

¹⁹⁴ Letter from Nan-ch'ang, 9 September 1597, in Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.237.

It was from an appreciation of the variety of alternative interpretations of Confucianism that Ricci began to develop a distinctively Christian interpretation, which he based on a return to the texts themselves. Ricci placed himself and Christianity firmly on the side of those urging a return to the purity of primitive Confucianism.

Ricci spelled out his hopes for the success of this accommodation to Confucianism in a long letter to the Vice-Provincial, Francesco Pasio, written in Peking, 15 February 1609.¹⁹⁵ He describes his hopes for the mission as 'grandissima' and gives a number of reasons for his optimism. Firstly, the high reputation of the Jesuits both as 'virtuous men' and as 'literati' - 'the two things most highly regarded' in China. Secondly, he mentions the Chinese openness to reasoned argument. The third reason is the Chinese love of books and their response to Christian literature; and the fourth their natural intelligence. All these are themes which could be paralleled in his earliest letters from China, the appeal of Christian humanism to Chinese humanism. In the fifth reason, however, he breaks new ground and outlines his final position vis-à-vis Confucianism:

Fifthly, they are also inclined to religion (pietà), as I am little by little coming to perceive, although it will seem the contrary to others. To begin with the beginning, in ancient times they followed the natural law as faithfully as in our lands; and for 1,500 years this people was little given to idols and those they adored were not such a wretched crowd as our Egyptians, Greeks and Romans adored, but a lot who were very virtuous and to whom were attributed very good deeds. In fact, in the books of the literati which are those most ancient and of greatest authority, they give no other adoration than to heaven and earth and the Lord of them. When we examine closely all these books we discover in them very few things contrary to the light of reason and very many in conformity with it, and their natural philosophers need yield to none. We may hope, in the divine mercy, that many of their ancestors were saved by the observance of the natural law with the help that God in his goodness gave them. Neither should we be so silent about the fact that after the entry of the idols into this kingdom they made so little or even nothing at all of them, but rather praise them for not wanting to give them more faith than such a law merited, since it

¹⁹⁵ Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, No.42, pp.375ff.

was not well founded and worthy of belief. We can hope that the contrary will occur with regard to the truth of the Catholic faith. Neither, on the other hand, do they make so little of the idols which have very elaborate temples in which are so many thousands of priests, maintained by rents or alms, and in every case with gods of wood, bronze or other material, well made, and greatly revered by the women and common people, that we need fear for the Christians in their cult of the true God.¹⁹⁶

I find this passage peculiarly significant for a number of reasons. Clearly, it gives the main lines of Ricci's interpretation of the historical development of Confucianism, from a pure theism to an ethically orientated polytheism to an austere rationalism. Buddhism he sees as the foreign intrusive element, rightly rejected by some, and by others accepted, but in that very acceptance showing the Chinese openness to religious devotion. But there are also serious and unresolved ambiguities in the account. Ricci acknowledges a class-based divergence between 'religious' and 'non-religious' Chinese. He sees the majority of the Chinese as 'religious' in an overt but not acceptable form. On the other hand, he seems to imply that the apparently non-religious literati are not really so, yet he fails to indicate in precisely what sense they are 'religious'. I suspect that Ricci was confronted with a situation in which the classical Western dichotomies of religious/secular, sacred/profane, simply did not apply; that he intuitively grasped this, but was unable to resolve it on the theoretical plane. This passage is, to me, evidence of a wrestling with the paradox of Confucianism as a secular religion, this-worldly in emphasis yet appealing to transcendent values embodied in the concept of 'heaven'. Contemporary historians and phenomenologists of religion have not yet satisfactorily resolved the dilemma.

Ricci's sixth reason, in his letter to Pasio, is an appeal to the Christian teaching on peace between nations. If, he says, the Chinese, so peaceable by disposition, became Christians, how much more peaceable they would be. This is ironic in view of the record of 'peace-loving' Christians in the Far East. Even Ricci's own Jesuit confreres were

¹⁹⁶ Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.385.

currently plotting in the Philippines the conquest of China, and would soon become cannon-founders for the Chinese government. It would be unfair, however, to associate Ricci himself with such actions. He, at least, had faith in persuasion by reason alone. And the seventh point which he proceeds to make, confirms this. Pasio should take care that all members of the mission be thoroughly grounded not only in theology but in 'the letters of China'. What is at stake is not the conversion of 10,000 or so Christians, but 'the universal conversion of the whole kingdom'. Ricci aimed at the conversion of a culture, the Christianizing of Confucian China.

In the eighth and last point, Ricci presents his whole programme vis-à-vis Confucianism in terms that sum up neatly the fuller treatment he was currently recording in his Storia.

The eighth point, in which I wish to finish this discussion of the aid we find in the books of the literati of China in matters of our faith. Your Reverence will have understood that in this kingdom there are three sects. One, the most ancient, is that of the literati who now as always have governed China; the other two are idolaters, although there are differences between them, who are continually under attack from the literati. Even though the literati do not set out to speak of supernatural things, in morals they are almost completely in accord with us. And so I commenced in the books I wrote to praise them and to make use of them to confute the others, not directly refuting but interpreting the places in which they are contrary to our faith. In this way I have gained so much credit that not only are the literati not my enemies, but they are friends; so much so that a very distinguished person who is a follower of the sect of the idols has called me in a letter he wrote to me, an adulator of the literati, because, he said, I would place some of the ancient literati in Paradise. And I take care that others see me in this light since we would have much more to do if we had to fight against all three sects. Nevertheless, I do not leave off attacking certain new opinions of the literati of this age who do not wish to follow the ancients. And in this way many of them become Christians, confessing and communicating and striving themselves, in so far as their talents allow, to spread our holy faith.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, pp.386-7.

And so by 1609, we have the Jesuit approach to Confucianism fully evolved - alliance with Confucians against Buddhists, and within Confucianism, against the Neo-Confucians in support of a return to the sources.

The detailed working out of the consequences of this basic stance are found in the Storia and the T'ien-chu shih-i with some particular applications in Ricci's other writings in Chinese. Since I have elsewhere¹⁹⁸ examined the view presented in the Storia I will here draw mainly on the T'ien-chu shih-i for illustrations of Ricci's positions. In many ways these two major works are complementary. To a Western audience Ricci stressed the unfamiliar aspects of Confucianism which are implicit in the T'ien-chu shih-i, while in the Chinese work he comes into more direct engagement with specific problems of textual interpretation. From the two combined emerges the full range of Ricci's interpretation of Confucianism.

The T'ien-chu shih-i ('The True Idea of the Lord of Heaven') was not published till 1603 but it is the fruit of many years of effort on Ricci's part. Its dialogue form suggests direct descent from the earliest of Ricci's writings in Chinese that we possess, the 'conversazioni catechetiche' appended to the Portuguese-Chinese vocabulary produced during the Chao-ch'ing period. More directly it seems to have been inspired by Valignano. The Visitor had been dissatisfied with Ruggieri's T'ien-chu shih-lu, not only because of its language (the references to the Jesuits as 'bonzes') and its stylistic defects, but also because of its narrow range.¹⁹⁹ It was, as we have seen, a 'dottrina' rather than a 'catechism', a simple exposition of Christian teachings rather than a work of apologetics, and the latter was seen to be necessary as work amongst the litterati grew. P.M. D'Elia has traced²⁰⁰

198 'Jesuit and Confucian? Chinese Religion in the Journals of Matteo Ricci S.J., 1583-1610' in Journal of Religious History, V.2, December 1968, pp.105-124.

199 Fonti Ricciane, I, p.379 nn.3&4.

200 'Prima Introduzione della Filosofia Scolastica in Cina (1584,1603)' in 'Studies presented to Dr. Hu Shih on his 65th birthday', Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, XXVIII, 1956, pp.141-196.

Ricci's references to work on the 'Catechism' back to 1594 when he wrote about preparing 'a book on the matters of our faith, completely based on natural reason'.²⁰¹ It seems to have been largely completed by 1596 but publication was delayed while it was censored by Superiors who could not read Chinese. Ricci waxed eloquent on this subject in a letter to the Jesuit General in 1606, insisting on the absurdity of his having to prepare a Latin translation for the 'revisors' of the work.²⁰² The anomaly was corrected later, but in this case publication was delayed for several years while Ricci awaited the imprimatur from the Goa Inquisition. The work must have circulated in manuscript, however, because Feng Ying-ching's Preface is dated 3 February 1601, and the first printed edition did not appear till late 1603²⁰³ (Ricci's own preface is dated 22 August 1603).

The term Catechism when applied to the T'ien-chu shih-i has caused a good deal of confusion and misunderstanding. Strictly speaking it refers to a work in question and answer form, and this is an accurate if inadequate description of Ricci's book. Ricci himself calls it a 'catechism', but his Latin translation of the title, De Deo Vera Disputatio,²⁰⁴ indicates better its nature, a 'disputation' or argument about matters of religion. Later critics of Ricci have looked in the work, failed to discover what they regard as the essential tenets of Christianity, and concluded that he was preaching an adulterated faith.²⁰⁵ It should be considered not in isolation but together with works such as his Dottrina Christiana

²⁰¹ Ricci to Costa, 12 October 1594, in Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.122.

²⁰² Ricci to Acquaviva, Peking, 15 August 1606, in Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, No.37.

²⁰³ Fonti Ricciane, II, p.293 n.cf.II, p.301 where Ricci points out that Feng first saw it 'scritto di mano', and undertook to print it at his own expense.

²⁰⁴ In a letter accompanying the first edition sent to Rome in 1604. See Fonti Ricciane, II, p.293 n.

²⁰⁵ Bernard-Maitre, Ricci, II, p.123 gives examples of this kind of criticism.

(T'ien-chu-chiao yao)²⁰⁶ which are 'catechisms' in the modern sense of basic expositions of doctrine. Ricci carefully explains at the beginning of the first chapter that he is concerned only with 'the general meaning of the Lord of Heaven Religion' and establishing that it is the 'true religion', but not with expounding its beliefs and practices, nor its scriptures and traditions.²⁰⁷ The T'ien-chu shih-i is primarily aimed at convincing the non-Christian, hence its form of a dialogue between a Western scholar and a Chinese scholar.

To the modern reader much of the argument in the T'ien-chu shih-i has a heavy scholastic flavour. I find it difficult to imagine what impact arguments based on the Aristotelean distinction between four kinds of causes, between substance and accidents etc., all couched in newly invented terminology, would have had on a Ming scholar. Yet it does seem to have impressed many. Most notable of these was the official Feng Ying-ching, referred to by Ricci as 'Fummocam' (Feng Mukang), the very model of uprightness and Confucian orthodoxy.²⁰⁸ He was strongly anti-Buddhist, and in politics an opponent of the eunuchs for which he was deprived of office and imprisoned. In fact he undertook the printing of the T'ien-chu shih-i while still in prison. It is clear that to Feng, Ricci was not preaching an unorthodox teaching, but rather a return to early Confucian orthodoxy. The key to this interpretation of the work lies at the very beginning of his Preface where he equates Ricci's 'Lord of Heaven' (T'ien-chu) with the Shang-ti of the classics. 'Who is the Lord of Heaven? He is Shang-ti!'²⁰⁹ And he continues:

²⁰⁶ See Fonti Ricciane, N708, II, pp.289-91.

²⁰⁷ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.2a. I have cited throughout the Taipei 1967 edition, a reprint of the Ming edition which is also that used in the T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, comparing my translation in each case with the modern Chinese version by Liu Shun-te, Taichung, 1966.

²⁰⁸ For a sketch of his career see Fonti Ricciane, II, p.162 n.1.

²⁰⁹ T'ien-chu ho Shang-ti yeh.

Truly what (Ricci) says is to the point. The six classics and four philosophers of our land are sacred and honoured. He says to revere Shang-ti, to assist Shang-ti, to serve Shang-ti, to investigate Shang-ti. Who would consider this empty talk?²¹⁰

Feng Ying-ching had grasped the central thrust of Ricci's argument very well. The whole appeal to Chinese tradition rested on a certain view of early Confucianism. Ricci claimed that this was a pure form of natural religion underpinning a social and ethical philosophy. In the T'ien-chu shih-i he does not develop this explicitly, nor at length, but allows it to emerge from his critical remarks on Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism, usually placed in the mouth of the Chinese scholar rather than the Westerner. Selective quotations from the classics are used to demonstrate that many doctrines of Christianity about God, man and a future life, are not innovations but were held in an inchoate way by the ancient Confucians. These views were misinterpreted or ignored by later Confucians, partly through the pernicious influence of Buddhism, and partly in justifiable reaction to Buddhist excesses. But the main points are still taught by the Confucian school, and the texts in which they are expressed are still revered by all Confucians.

In the Storia Ricci presents his conclusions about the nature of early Confucianism in a more systematic way. He begins his chapter on the religions of China²¹¹ by remarking that the ancient Chinese had less erroneous views on religion than any other people known to Europe.²¹² They adored a Supreme God whom they called the 'King of Heaven' or 'Heaven and Earth', 'perhaps in the belief that heaven and earth were animated to make one living body by the supreme god, as if he were their soul'.²¹³ He adds that various subsidiary spirits were also worshipped, but these were not regarded as

²¹⁰ T'ien-chu shih-i, Preface 1a.

²¹¹ Lib.1, cap.X, 'De Varie Sette che nella Cina sono intorno alla Religione' (Fonti Ricciane, I, pp.108ff.).

²¹² Fonti Ricciane, N170, I, p.108.

²¹³ Fonti Ricciane, N170, I, p.108-9.

as powerful as the 'Lord of Heaven' himself.²¹⁴ Note that Ricci scrupulously presents the complexity of Chinese beliefs as found in the Classics. Trigault, while translating most of this accurately enough, oversimplifies one key passage to the bald assertion: 'They do not believe in idol worship. In fact they have no idols. They do, however, believe in one deity who preserves and governs all things on earth.'²¹⁵ Ricci certainly implies this, and argues for it in many passages of the T'ien-chu shih-i, but as an interpretation of a complex phenomenon, not as a self-evident proposition. His position would be fairly represented as an assertion that there is some notion of a supreme God in the earliest Chinese texts, associated especially with the terms t'ien and shang-ti;²¹⁶ and that reason, by logical deduction, can establish that he must be the sole preserver and governor of all things.

²¹⁴ Fonti Ricciane, NN170 & 176, I, pp.109, 115.

²¹⁵ Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.94; Riquebourg-Trigault, Histoire, p.86 cf. the original which explicitly refers to the more nuanced picture of the first paragraph of the chapter. 'Questa legge non tiene idoli, ma solo riverisce il Cielo e la Terra o il Re del Cielo, come habbiamo già detto, per parergli che governa e sostenta tutte queste cose inferiori.' (Fonti Ricciane, N176, I, p.115).

²¹⁶ D'Elia interpolates the characters for t'ien-ti after the references in the text to 'Re del Cielo' (N170) and 'Signore del Cielo' (NN176, 129). In the T'ien-chu shih-i, however, this expression is used once only (B.51b) while Shang-ti is very frequent, and T'ien or its variants quite common. D'Elia cites no textual evidence for the use of t'ien-ti in ancient Chinese texts and in his article, 'Prima Introduzione della Filosofia Scolastica in Cina', he himself interprets the isolated use in the T'ien-chu shih-i as 'an abbreviation' of the phrase t'ien-chu shang-ti (p.167). The conclusion of the elaborate discussion of texts in the 2nd chapter of the T'ien-chu shih-i, is, as D'Elia himself notes in the Fonti Ricciane (I, p.108 n.1), that shang-ti is to be identified with the Christian t'ien-chu. It seems to me preferable to think of shang-ti as the Chinese expression underlying Ricci's 'Re del Cielo' and 'Signore del Cielo', or perhaps even better, a conflation of t'ien and shang-ti, which are used to some extent as equivalents in the classics.

Confucius, himself, is presented in the Storia as 'the author, restorer and head' of 'the sect of the literati',²¹⁷ responsible for the collection and transmission of the teaching of the ancients.²¹⁸ The Chinese regard him 'as the most holy man who ever existed in the world, and, in truth, in what he said and in his good manner of living in conformity with nature, he is not inferior to our ancient philosophers, and superior to many'.²¹⁹ This cautious conclusion shows that whatever later Jesuits may have contributed to the cult of Confucius in the West, its excesses should not be attributed to Ricci.

Later Confucians, according to Ricci, may be divided into two groups: those who remained faithful to the views of Confucius and the classics, and those who invented new doctrines. The 'true literati' have nothing to say about the time and manner of the creation of the world, but commentators 'of little authority' have expressed 'opinions quite frivolous and ill-founded' on the subject.²²⁰ Similarly, the ancient literati seem to have been uncertain about the immortality of the soul, and about its fate after death. It is only the recent Confucians who teach that the soul dies with the body and explicitly deny the existence of a heaven and a hell.²²¹

In the T'ien-chu shih-i Ricci has a passage on this subject, in which he not only defends the doctrine of heaven and hell from the classics, but makes some illuminating comments on the Confucian tradition itself. The Chinese scholar has raised the obvious objection that Confucians follow the religion of the sages, and the classics in which their teachings are transmitted say nothing about heaven and hell. Ricci's Western Scholar replies:

²¹⁷ Fonti Ricciane, N176, I, p.115.

²¹⁸ Fonti Ricciane, N61, I, pp.42-3.

²¹⁹ Fonti Ricciane, N55, I, p.39.

²²⁰ Fonti Ricciane, N176, I, p.115.

²²¹ Fonti Ricciane, N176, I, pp.115-6.

Can the instructions which the sages transmitted be examined by later generations? There are some traditions which are incomplete. Either they were delivered orally and not completely recorded in writing; or they were recorded but later lost; or later, stupid scribes did not believe they were authentic and obliterated them. Furthermore the wording of texts is sometimes altered and we cannot be certain whether or not a particular text really read as it now does. Modern scholars make mistakes in interpreting ancient books, and cannot master the meaning. They are quick to quote the text, but slow to interpret it. And so, while modern scholarship flourishes, modern manners are in decline.²²²

After this attempted demolition of the argument from the silence of the classics, Ricci proceeds to quote from the Odes²²³ and the Book of History²²⁴ passages which place famous ancient kings 'on high' or 'in heaven'. When the Chinese scholar accepts these passages as evidence for an ancient belief in heaven, Ricci argues that if the good kings go to heaven, there must be a hell for bad kings.

The last stage in this key example of Ricci's method is his redefinition of the true Confucian 'gentleman' (chün-tzu). Ricci is well aware that his arguments up to this point may simply strengthen the Confucian prejudices of his reader and he makes his Chinese scholar say:

Now I get the idea. I see that this is what the books of the ancient sages say. But why must one believe in heaven and hell? If there is a heaven the gentleman must get there, and if there is a hell the small-minded man (hsiao jen) must go there. I only have to act like a gentleman and everything is alright. That's the point you're getting at, isn't it?

The Western scholar replies:

You have missed the point completely. Why do I think this? If there is a heaven the gentleman must necessarily get there. But if you do not believe in the doctrine of heaven and hell you are certainly not a gentleman.

CHINESE SCHOLAR: Why is that?

WESTERN SCHOLAR: Just now I asked you whether or not a man who does not believe in Shang-ti is a gentleman.

²²² T'ien-chu shih-i, B.31a.

²²³ Ta ya, I.i (Mao 235) and I.ix (Mao 243).

²²⁴ Chou shu XII, 'The Announcement of the Duke of Shao'.

CHINESE SCHOLAR: Of course not. The Shih Ching says: 'Now this King Wen was careful and reverent, and openly served Shang-ti' (Ta ya I.ii, Mao 236). Who can call himself a 'gentleman' and not believe in Shang-ti?

WESTERN SCHOLAR: A man who does not believe that Shang-ti is perfectly good and perfectly just - is he a gentleman or not?

CHINESE SCHOLAR: No. Shang-ti is the source of goodness and the just lord of all that is. Who can call himself a 'gentleman' and not believe that Shang-ti is perfectly good and perfectly just?

WESTERN SCHOLAR: Goodness consists in the ability to love men and the ability to hate men. If Shang-ti does not allow the good to ascend to heaven, how can he be said to love men? And if he does not condemn the evil to hell how can he be said to hate men? This world's rewards are usually not completely just. If heaven and hell do not exist after death for each according to his merits it is grossly unfair. If you do not believe this, how can you believe that Shang-ti is good and just? As for the retribution of heaven and hell, in China the Buddhists and Taoists believe it, and wise Confucians also follow it. All the great nations of East and West have no doubts about it. The Holy Scriptures of the Lord of Heaven refer to it. I myself on previous occasions have revealed this doctrine and proved it. So, he who persists in denying it cannot be a gentleman.

CHINESE SCHOLAR: After that, I certainly believe it. But I would still like to hear more about it.

WESTERN SCHOLAR: These things are difficult to explain. The Scriptures mention them in a general way but do not explain them in detail. However, the punishments of hell can be compared to the calamities of this world. Let me give a few examples...²²⁵

I have cited this passage at length because it is typical of Ricci's method of working and reveals his approach to the Confucian tradition in all its complexity. He both accepts and reinterprets the tradition, commits himself to its basic concepts and redefines their context. Joseph Levenson points out that one of the implications of this tactic is that 'in effect, it authorized the potential convert to see in the foreign church-organization, and in its foreign-composed Scriptures, at best vessels of the truth which must also exist in his own historical inheritance.'²²⁶ Ricci, in the

²²⁵ T'ien-chu shih-i, B.33a-34a.

²²⁶ Confucian China and Its Modern Fate, I, p.119.

passage just examined, seems to me to have been aware of the dilemma. He wished to relate his teaching to Confucianism both for reasons of expediency and from predilection for some of the intellectual options of the Confucian tradition. He implies, however, that the ideas of the ancient Confucians have been forgotten and distorted by later Confucians and that they need complementing by Christian revelation.

The T'ien-chu shih-i itself is primarily concerned with the restoration of the pristine doctrines of Confucianism rather than the complementary truths of Christianity, although this subject is cautiously raised in the last section, entitled 'A General View of the Customs of the West ... and how the Lord of Heaven descended to be born in the West'. The Catechism, as we have seen, was intended as a preparatio evangelica, a preparation for receiving the full message, which was elaborated elsewhere.²²⁷ He himself described his work as neither harvesting, nor even sowing, but clearing the forests.²²⁸ The T'ien-chu shih-i was a major part of that clearing operation, addressed to the 'many people desirous of knowing the truth' and aimed at convincing them 'that we Europeans are not an ignorant people who do not understand things or cannot develop a rational argument'.²²⁹

²²⁷ In the Storia, Ricci notes that the 'vera dotrina' is developed 'piu particolarmente' in other works of the Fathers (Fonti Ricciane, N709, II, p.298). In fact Ricci himself, apart from the sketchy T'ien-chu-chiao yao, wrote little in Chinese on the specific teachings of Christianity but in other early works of the mission such as Aleni's T'ien-chu Chiang-sheng chi-lu, a full account of the life and teachings of Christ was given. The works of the first generation of Chinese converts show an acquaintance with and commitment to the Trinity, the doctrine of redemption through Christ's incarnation and crucifixion, and other essentials of orthodox Christian faith. See, for example, Yang T'ing-yun's Tai i p'ien of 1621 (in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien, Taipei, 1965, pp.471-631).

²²⁸ Letter to Costa, Nan-ch'ang, 14 August 1599, in Tacchi Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, pp.246-7.

²²⁹ Fonti Ricciane, N710, II, p.300.

The theme of the complementarity of Confucianism and Christianity is implicit in the whole of Ricci's writings. It is the note struck in the prelude to the T'ien-chu shih-i where the Chinese scholar declares himself dissatisfied with his way of life, virtuous though it is.

Our way of self-cultivation - where will it end up? Although our plan is clear as far as this life is concerned, we know nothing about what happens after death. I have found that you, sir, have travelled throughout the whole world to transmit the scriptures and commands of the Lord of Heaven and induce men to do good. I wish to receive this great teaching.²³⁰

And again and again we find the Chinese scholar concluding that the Christian view is a logical extension of his Confucian premises. I know of no place in Ricci's own writings in which he speaks specifically of complementarity. There is, however, a passage in Trigault's version of Ricci's memoirs which develops this idea in the sort of theological language that Ricci himself eschewed, and in this case I think it is a fair representation of his practice.

What the Fathers continually endeavoured to emphasize ... was the fact that the Christian law was in perfect accord with the innate light of conscience. It was, as they maintained, by this same light of conscience that the most ancient of the Chinese scholars had approached to this same doctrine of Christianity in their writings, centuries before the appearance of the idols. They explained, also, that they themselves were not abolishing the natural law, rather they were adding to it what was lacking, namely the supernatural as taught by God who Himself had become a man.²³¹

Ricci's careful avoidance of the natural/supernatural dichotomy was, I believe, deliberate. But whatever his reservations about the exact theological status of Confucianism, he undoubtedly saw it as lacking something. In this, as in so many respects, his best interpreter was Hsü Kuang-ch'i, who remarked succinctly that Christianity 'does away with the idols and completes the law of the literati'.²³²

²³⁰ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.Ia-b.

²³¹ Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.156.

²³² Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.448. The Chinese phrase is given as 'Ciue Fo pu Giu', presumably ch'ueh-Fo pu-Ju. The passage is an interpolation by Trigault, not found in the original text of the Storia.

'Doing away with the idols' meant more than an attack on Buddhism. It also involved a rejection of Neo-Confucianism which Ricci regarded as the product of Buddhist influence. The basic error of the Neo-Confucians, as Ricci saw it, was their monism, their reduction of all things, including God, to one substance.

The opinion that is most commonly followed here appears to me to be taken over from the sect of the idols five hundred years ago. It is that the whole of this world is composed of one substance only, and that its creator, together with heaven and earth, men and animals, trees and plants, and the four elements, all make up one continuous body, and all are members of this body. And from this unity of substance they derive the love which we ought have one for the other. In this way all men can come to be like God through being of one and the same substance with him. This we endeavour to refute not only by reason, but even more by the authority of their ancient (philosophers) who quite clearly teach a very different doctrine.²³³

I do not intend to pursue here the vexed question of the interpretation of Neo-Confucian metaphysics. It seems clear to me that Ricci's view derives from a translation of the Chinese term t'i as 'substance' (substantia), and his subsequent conclusion that when the Neo-Confucians speak of all things being one t'i they are alleging identity of 'substance' in the Western sense. T'i, however, is a far wider term than 'substance', both less precise and carrying an enormous weight of associations to the educated Chinese

²³³ Fonti Ricciane, N176, I, p.116; Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.95 and Riquebourg-Trigault, Histoire, pp.86-7. Gallagher has apparently mistranslated the last phrase, since Riquebourg-Trigault preserves the sense of Ricci's Italian. cf. also, Fonti Ricciane, N559, II, p.79; Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.342 (Trigault expands this passage by interpolating some remarks drawn from the beginning of Lib.I, cap.X of Ricci's manuscript.).

that may even seem mutually incompatible to the Western mind.²³⁴ Certainly Neo-Confucianism stresses the unity of all things, but whether in terms of 'substance' or 'monism' in the Western sense, we may leave aside.

On the level of exegesis of Ricci's text, however, it is clear that Ricci's interpretation is far more tentative than that of most later Jesuits. As we shall see, most of Ricci's successors alleged that the Neo-Confucians were atheists or pantheists, or curiously, even both at once. And they could cite the authority of Ricci on both counts. Ricci does describe the modern Confucians as atheists,²³⁵ even asserting that 'the majority of this people end up in profound atheism'.²³⁶ And he does, in the passage just cited, and elsewhere,²³⁷ claim that the Chinese believe that God is identical with the universe. However, on closer examination, it is seen that the passages about Chinese 'atheism' refer to practical attitudes to life and in each case describe a reaction against Buddhist 'idolatry' and superstition. Where Ricci appears to describe Chinese pantheism, one finds that he avoids the term itself and its equivalents, and hedges his description with 'perhaps', 'as if' etc. Even in the account of the Chinese belief that all things make up one substance the conclusion of monism is not explicitly drawn. Where modern Jesuits, including the editor

²³⁴ See W. Liebenthal, The Book of Chao, Peiping (Monumenta Serica Monographs, XIII) 1948, pp.19-20, for comments on the impossibility of translating t'i, and examples of its use. Sister Julia Ching in her study of Wang Yang-ming (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, To Acquire Wisdom: the 'Way' of Wang Yang-ming) uses 'reality' for t'i, perhaps the best that can be done in English. I am indebted to Sister Ching for some stimulating conversations on the subject of Neo-Confucian concepts which have left their mark on many places in this work which touch on Neo-Confucianism.

²³⁵ Fonti Ricciane, N170, I, p.110.

²³⁶ Fonti Ricciane, N199, I, p.132.

²³⁷ e.g. Fonti Ricciane, N170, I, p.109.

of the Storia,²³⁸ do not hesitate to speak of the 'materialism', 'pantheism' and 'atheism' of Neo-Confucianism, Ricci, wisely, confined himself to simple and cautious statement.

Ricci's caution is even more marked when writing, in the T'ien-chu shih-i, for a Chinese audience. In the second chapter, 'Explanation of the Misconceptions held by previous generations about the Lord of Heaven', he tentatively raises the question of the basic conceptions of reality in Chinese thought.

CHINESE SCHOLAR: ...In our country there are three sects each with its own adherents. The Taoists say that things are produced from Nothing (wu) and that Nothing is their chief principle (tao). The Buddhists say that the world of appearance comes out of the Void (k'ung) and they regard the Void as fundamental. The Confucians say that change in being comes from the Supreme Ultimate (t'ai-chi) and hence only Being (yu) should be honoured and Sincerity (ch'eng) the object of study. I do not know whom you consider to be right.

The Western scholar is sure about Taoism and Buddhism, but he is much more tentative about Confucianism.

The two sects that talk of 'Nothing' and the 'Void' are completely different in their teaching from the doctrine of the Lord of Heaven, and it is clear that they are not worthy of respect. As for the Confucians who talk of 'Being' and 'Sincerity', I have not thoroughly examined their explanations but they seem to be nearly identical (with ours).²³⁹

Note that Ricci, at this point, evades the question that he himself has raised about the interpretation of t'ai-chi, the Supreme Ultimate, and restricts his comments to the basic metaphysical and ethical positions of Confucianism. And even within this restricted area his comments are cautious.

Later in this chapter, Ricci returns to the question of t'ai-chi, having disposed of the Buddhists and Taoists in a fairly summary way.

²³⁸ Fonti Ricciane, I, p.116 n.3 - 'questa nuova scuola di letterati panteisti e materialisti' cf. S. Le Gall, Le Philosophe Tchou Hi, Sa Doctrine, Son Influence, Shanghai, (Variétés Sinologiques No.6) 1923, esp. pp.15-16,23; and H. Bernard-Maire, Sagesse Chinoise et Philosophie Chrétienne, Tientsin, 1935, Iere partie, Leçon VIII and IX.

²³⁹ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.12a-b.

CHINESE SCHOLAR: What do you think of this Supreme Ultimate that our Confucian scholars speak of?

WESTERN SCHOLAR: Although I have only recently entered China I have thoroughly and diligently studied the ancient classics; I have heard that the gentlemen of ancient times paid their respects to the High Lord of Heaven and Earth (t'ien-ti chih shang-ti), but I have never heard that they revered the Supreme Ultimate. If the Supreme Ultimate was the begetter (tsu) of the High Lord of all things, why didn't the ancient sages say so openly?²⁴⁰

When the Chinese scholar advances the usual explanation, that the doctrine is implicit in early Confucianism and is based on ancient diagrams, Ricci replies that the diagrams are nothing but 'weird designs', and, in any case, don't show t'ai-chi producing heaven and earth.²⁴¹ Furthermore, he goes on to argue, the Supreme Ultimate and Principle (li) with which the Neo-Confucians equate it, cannot be the causes of all things, because they are not 'substances' but 'accidents'. The li of a thing does not produce the thing itself, but merely determines what sort of thing it will be. A Creator is still necessary.²⁴²

Ricci's objections to the Neo-Confucian theory of t'ai-chi are, then, two-fold. On the one hand he preempts the Confucians' own ground by an appeal to the true ancient teaching before the accretion of metaphysical commentary; and on the other, he invokes his own metaphysical system to criticize that of the Neo-Confucians. The former argument is historically well-founded but rather specious in its interpretation of Confucian 'tradition' and Confucian 'orthodoxy'. Both of these are assumed to be static, or fixed in basic content. I suspect that, unconsciously at least, Ricci had before his eyes the model of the Catholic view of the development of Christian tradition: from initial revelation in Christ, through theological elaboration by the Fathers, to radical perversion by the Protestants and counter-renewal by the Catholic reformers. If this is so, one might

²⁴⁰ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.14b.

²⁴¹ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.15a. On this question, see Chow Yih-ching, La Philosophie Morale dans le Neo-Confucianisme, Paris, 1954.

²⁴² T'ien-chu shih-i, A.16a-18b.

object that Ricci is the Protestant in this case, advocating return to the roots, and abandonment of a corrupt 'tradition'. As for his own metaphysical arguments, they are based once more on a false, or at least dubious, equation, that of the Neo-Confucian li with the scholastic concept of 'form'. We do not possess Ricci's Latin version of the T'ien-chu shih-i prepared for the censors, and it is not certain that he would have translated li as 'form', but it does seem to be implied in his treatment of the relationship between existing things and their li. What is certain from his diagram of the 'Porphyrean tree' in chapter 4 is that he uses tzü-lai and i-lai as strict equivalents of 'substance' and 'accident'.²⁴³ Non-Chinese categories are being employed to locate and then refute Chinese conceptions. To assert that li is an 'accident', while excusable in the pioneer Western exponent of Chinese philosophy, was a very dangerous procedure.

In a note which Ricci wrote to the Jesuit General to accompany a copy of the first edition of his Catechism,²⁴⁴ he makes another essay in the comparative interpretation of t'ai-chi. He explains that he decided to attack the identification of t'ai-chi with li for tactical reasons, 'lest we appear rather to follow the Chinese theory, than to interpret and make Chinese authors follow our own teaching'. In fact, he says, although many Chinese interpret t'ai-chi as the 'reason of things' [li], it seems to be 'nothing else than that which our philosophers call "prime matter"'.^{244a}

²⁴³ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.43b cf. notes, pp.68 and 70 to the modern Chinese version.

²⁴⁴ The Latin text of this passage is given in Fonti Ricciane, II, pp.297-8 n.

^{244a} I know of only one other case of a Jesuit taking up this line of interpretation of t'ai-chi. Andreas Lubelli in his Chen-fu chieh-chih, c.1670, equates t'ai-chi with yuan-chih. See Chu Ch'ien-chih, 'Ye-su-hui tui-yu Sung Ju li-hsüeh chih fan-ying, in Ming shih lun-ts'ung, X, Taipei, 1968, p.152.

However, this is a controversial matter, and one likely to arouse the ire of 'the literati who govern China ... unless we attack the explanation of this principle rather than the principle itself'. He insists that what he is concerned about is not terminology, but substance of teaching. 'If', he says, 'they would understand t'ai-chi as the first principle, substantial, intelligent and infinite, we would assert that it is indeed God and nothing else'.

Once more we are reminded that this first Jesuit essay in the interpretation of Confucianism was a work of apologetics, seeking to use and interpret whatever presented itself in the Chinese tradition as amenable to interpretation in a Christian sense. The attitude to Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism adopted in the T'ien-chu shih-i was primarily due to Ricci's judgement that the basis of Neo-Confucian and Buddhist metaphysics was monistic, and therefore incompatible with Christianity. The Buddhists would make God one substance with all things, and confuse his nature.²⁴⁵ The Neo-Confucians would make man one substance with all things and destroy all sense of moral discrimination.²⁴⁶ The truth as taught by the ancient Confucians and the T'ien-chu-chiao is that God is distinct from both man and other things.

Ricci's attitude towards Buddhism was more hostile than that towards Neo-Confucianism. He regarded the most objectionable feature of Neo-Confucian philosophy, its monism, as derived from Buddhism, and he attempted to discredit it by stressing its Buddhist origin. He knew that any attack on Buddhism would be favourably received by many contemporary Confucians. Feng Ying-ching's Preface to the T'ien-chu shih-i strongly approves of this attack. Ricci, he says, has proved that the Emperor Ming of Han, was deceived by the envoys sent to the West to inquire about the 'sage from the West' he saw in

²⁴⁵ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.47a-49a.

²⁴⁶ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.54b-57b.

his dream. They stopped short of the real West (Ta-Hsi, 'the great West') and brought back from India the teachings of Buddha.²⁴⁷

In the old days scholars acknowledged Heaven and obeyed Heaven, but today they recite the name of Buddha and follow the way of Buddha.²⁴⁸

And now a man from the Great West itself has come to set the record straight. Although a foreigner, he teaches the doctrines of the ancient sages of China, the Three Emperors, the Five Rulers, the Three Kings, Duke Chou and Confucius, and attacks those of the Indian Prince, Buddha.²⁴⁹

Recent studies of the Jesuits' early conflicts with Buddhism have demonstrated that there were substantial issues at stake.²⁵⁰ Ricci was not simply taking advantage of Confucian hostility to Buddhism but attacking what he saw as fundamental errors about God, man and the world. Besides the monism of Buddhism he attacked their cosmology, their theory of the soul, their superstition and idolatry. I will not pursue here the question of the basis and accuracy of Ricci's critique of Buddhism. I have elsewhere²⁵¹ examined the view of Buddhism that appears in the Storia, and more work needs to be done on Ricci's contacts with Buddhists in Nanking and Peking.

However, my theme here is the Jesuits and Confucianism, not the Jesuits and Buddhism. There are a few passages in the T'ien-chu shih-i dealing with Buddhism which are also of crucial importance for understanding Ricci's interpretation of Confucianism. Most of these deal with his view of Buddhism

²⁴⁷ T'ien-chu shih-i, Preface, Ia-b.

²⁴⁸ T'ien-chu shih-i, Preface, 2a.

²⁴⁹ T'ien-chu shih-i, Preface, 2a.

²⁵⁰ See, for example, D. Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics in Seventeenth Century China', Church History, XXXVIII, 1969, pp.218-241; and Y. Raguin, 'Father Ricci's Presentation of Some Fundamental Theories of Buddhism', Chinese Culture, X, 1969, pp.37-43.

²⁵¹ Journal of Religious History, V, 1968, pp.117-122.

as a late intrusion into China. He does not state clearly in the T'ien-chu shih-i, as he does in the Storia, that the modern Confucians have adopted Buddhist doctrines or are excessively influenced by Buddhism. It is, however, implied in many places, and Feng Ying-ching certainly read the T'ien-chu shih-i this way. Rather, he concentrates on the return to the pure teaching of the ancients, Western as well as Chinese. India is the source of the corruption of these ideas. At the time when China got the doctrines of Sakyamuni from India, the latter was 'a small country, not to be compared with the great nations, uncultured, barbarous in its morals, even its existence unknown to many countries'.²⁵² Many of the ideas of Sakyamuni were, in fact, borrowed from the West. Transmigration²⁵³ was borrowed from Pythagoras, and whatever truth there is in Buddhism comes from the West.²⁵⁴ When, for example, the Chinese scholar objects to Ricci that only Buddhists speak of heaven and hell, Ricci's alter ego replies that Confucians are not Buddhists because they forbid murder, just as insects are not birds merely because they fly.

²⁵² T'ien-chu shih-i, B.2a.

²⁵³ Throughout Ch.5 of the T'ien-chu shih-i Ricci uses the Buddhist term hui-liu-tao, the 'six ways of return'. Although in primitive Buddhism there seems to have been no 'soul' to 'transmigrate' (the doctrine of anatta), the 'six ways of return' of Chinese Buddhism - as deva, man, asura, beast, hungry ghost or in hell - are usually presented in terms of the Chinese notion of 'soul'. Ricci's own translation of the title of this chapter in the copy of the T'ien-chu shih-i preserved in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. I,45, uses the term 'transmigration' (de transmigratione animarum) v. facsimile in Fonti Ricciane, II, Tavola XVIII, opp.p.292.

²⁵⁴ This point is developed by Yang T'ing-yün in his T'ien Shih ming-pien (T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, Taipei, 1966, I, pp.229-417), especially in the first section on 'origins' (pp.241-246). I have not however found in any of the Jesuit anti-Buddhist writings in Chinese the argument commonly used elsewhere that the Buddhists were apeing Christian rituals which they had borrowed in India from the converts of St. Thomas. See, for example, Daniello Bartoli, La Cina, Lib. I, cap.CXXVI, pp.279-281 in vol. I of the Ancona, 1843 edition.

Christianity is an ancient religion. The Buddhists must have stolen these ideas from Westerners. Generally speaking, if you wish to impart your own teaching, don't you use three or four orthodox sayings mixed in with what you yourself believe? The Buddhists have used the Christian teachings about Heaven and Hell in order to impart their own private views and heterodox doctrines. We teach an orthodox doctrine; should we reject it because the Buddhists also talk about it? Before the Buddha was born there were Christians. Those who speak of cultivating the Way, must bear witness to later generations that there is a Heaven of everlasting pleasure to be gained, and a Hell of inexhaustible punishment to be avoided.²⁵⁵

Needless to say, the Chinese scholar does not make the obvious retort that Ricci is treating Confucianism in the same way that he accuses the Buddhists of treating Christianity - using 'three or four orthodox sayings mixed in with what you yourself believe'. Nor does he object, as a modern scholar would, to Ricci's chronology. Ricci appears to believe that the Buddha was a contemporary of Han Ming Ti, although it is possible that he thought of the t'ien-chu-chiao as embracing the Old Testament as well as the New. Once more, however, we find the attempt to conflate early Confucianism with the T'ien-chu-chiao to form one all embracing orthodox Way (cheng-tao).

Ricci's attitude to Buddhism is one of uncompromising opposition. They are 'the sect of the idols'. corrupters of the ancient Chinese theism and purveyors of superstition to the masses. It would not be fair to Ricci, however, to accuse him of pandering to Confucian prejudices. The Chinese scholar remarks, in one place, that the 'gentlemen' of China oppose and 'have a deep hatred' for Buddhists and Taoists. Ricci replies:

It is better to argue against them than to hate them, and better to convince them by reasoning than to argue against them. The followers of the two sects are all made by the Father of the Lord of Heaven, and so are our brothers. If my younger brother goes mad and is led astray by wild stories would I act as a brother ought and show him sympathy, or would I hate him? Wouldn't I use reasoning to persuade him? In my extensive reading of Confucian books I have frequently come across expressions of hatred for the two sects, ranking them

²⁵⁵ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.26b-27a.

with barbarians, and accusing them of heresy, but I have not seen the application of first principles in order to refute them. We say they are wrong, and they in turn say we are wrong, and so our disputation is confused, and neither is convinced. This has gone on for more than 1,500 years and there can be no agreement. But if we both use reasoning in conducting our argument, then without harsh words the right and the wrong will appear, and the three schools will return to unity.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.12b-13a.

IV. MATTEO RICCI AND THE CHINESE RITES QUESTION

Matteo Ricci's faith in sweet reasonableness is touching, and in the light of the later history of the mission rather ironic. There was to be a great deal of hating and arguing against rather than convincing by reasoning in the matter of 'Chinese Rites'. It is to this question that we must turn to conclude our conspectus of Ricci's interpretation of Confucianism. The Chinese Rites controversy as it developed after Ricci's death was really over two separate issues which are often confused. From the beginning I wish to distinguish them, because, although they take root in the same basic attitudes, and in practice those who take a stand on one tend to take a similar stand on the other, they are logically distinct. In several crucial instances we shall find the expected pattern does not hold.

The first issue is more properly called the 'Terms' rather than the 'Chinese Rites' controversy. It is not primarily concerned with the permission or prohibition of private and public rituals, but with the use of Chinese terms to denote the Christian God. Ricci's position on this is unequivocal. He early adopted the use of t'ien-chu, 'Lord of Heaven', as the usual name for God, but in his Chinese and Western writings he does not hesitate to equate the ancient Chinese terms, t'ien or 'Heaven', and shang-ti or 'Lord on High', with the Christian 'God'. In the second chapter of the T'ien-chu shih-i he examines several passages from the classics and concludes that 'Shang-ti and t'ien-chu differ in name only'.²⁵⁷ As for t'ien, sometimes it is used to mean the physical heavens, the sky, and in this sense, of course, cannot be equated with the 'Lord of Heaven', t'ien-chu.²⁵⁸ But frequently it is used synonymously with shang-ti and in this sense is quite acceptable.²⁵⁹ As Ricci explained in the Storia, t'ien-chu

²⁵⁷ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.20b.

²⁵⁸ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.11a,21a.

²⁵⁹ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.21a: 'If t'ien is used to explain shang-ti it is acceptable'.

was adopted very early and more or less by chance, but he came to see its advantages. It was both similar to and distant from the terminology of the Chinese classics, and avoided the ambiguities of t'ien used alone.

It fitted well with our intentions since the Chinese adore 'Heaven' as their supreme God (supremo nume) and some even think that this Heaven is the material sky. By this name we have given to God, we clearly declare how much greater our God is than that which they hold as their supreme God, because He is the Lord of their Heaven.²⁶⁰

By its use in the T'ien-chu shih-lu and the T'ien-chu shih-i, the term t'ien-chu became the identification mark of Christianity, or more correctly, of Catholic Christianity, since the nineteenth century Protestant missionaries adopted a different terminology.²⁶¹ Once adopted as the name for God, and employed in liturgical and apologetic works, the question of its origins and suitability became largely academic. The debate after Ricci was over the use in Christian works of t'ien, shang-ti and other Chinese terms.

Pasquale M. D'Elia has tabulated Ricci's use of these terms in his Chinese works²⁶² and he finds a predominance of t'ien-chu, with shang-ti and t'ien or combinations used occasionally as synonyms. It is typical of Ricci's method that in his 'Eight Songs for the Western Lute' (Hsi-chin

²⁶⁰ Fonti Ricciane, N246, I, p.193 cf. T'ien-chu shih-i, A.3a, where Ricci argues that by simply looking at the heavens (t'ien) one can see the need for a Lord of Heaven (t'ien-chu) to govern them. This, he says, is he who is called in the West tou-ssü (Deus).

²⁶¹ Some characteristic contributions to the nineteenth century debate on the 'Terms Controversy' are W.H. Medhurst, A Dissertation on the Theology of the Chinese, Shanghai, 1847; W.J. Boone, Some Thoughts on the Proper Term to be employed to translate Elohim and Theos into Chinese, Shanghai, 1850; J. Legge, Notions of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits, Hongkong, 1852.

²⁶² 'Prima Introduzione della Filosofia Scolastica in Cina', in Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-sochi-k'an (Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica), XXVIII, 1956, pp.166-7.

ch'ü-i pa-chang) composed for the court, he uses only shang-ti, the term consecrated by ancient ritual use;²⁶³ while in liturgical texts and works exclusively for Christians, such as the T'ien-chu-chiao yao, he employs t'ien-chu throughout. For him, the terms question was essentially a practical one. T'ien-chu was an appropriate name for the Christian God who, once named, could be described in orthodox theological fashion. Where Chinese works ascribe to t'ien, shang-ti, or even t'ai-chi, attributes of the Christian God, one need not hesitate to employ these terms. Later missionaries were hesitant to use them and we find an attempt to revise Ricci's works, eliminating the suspect terms.²⁶⁴ Ricci could not afford to be a purist. He was concerned with convincing the Chinese that early Chinese beliefs and Christianity were in fact reconcilable, and that t'ien-chu was not just another foreign deity competing with the native ones. His approach was a practical one, well expressed in the opening exchange of the T'ien-chu shih-i, where he asserts that 'the Way of the Lord of Heaven is not the Way of any one person, any one school, any one country'.²⁶⁵

The heart of the Chinese Rites Controversy lay not in the debate about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of using certain terms for 'God'. This was always a secondary issue, although it serves as a convenient touch-stone for judging the openness of any individual missionary to accommodation to Chinese culture. Once a Chinese became a Christian in practice he acknowledged, believed in, prayed to t'ien-chu; and t'ien-chu acquired for him specifically Chinese connotations. He was not required to abandon his cultural heritage; to redefine it, perhaps, but not to reject it. And in public he could continue to behave as before. His monogamy might be regarded as accentric, and his moral code excessively strict, but in essentials he remained a ju, a Confucian scholar.

²⁶³ T'ien-hsueh ch'u-han, I, pp.283-290.

²⁶⁴ v. Fang Hao, 'T'ien-chu shih-i chih kai-ts'uan' in Fang Hao liu-shih tzü-ting kao, II, pp.1593-1603.

²⁶⁵ T'ien-chu shih-i, A.1b.

The matter of Confucian rites was more delicate. This was public, and affected his social standing and career prospects. The rites in question were the following: the public rites directed to Confucius himself together with certain rituals incumbent on a scholar in his official capacity; ancestor rites held within and on behalf of the family or lineage and funeral rites. There were, of course, many other customary domestic rituals associated with festivals and family events but if judged superstitious these could be dropped without too much public notice. It was the rites that defined and confirmed social status, those held to embody the Confucian code of right behaviour, or li, that were important. If Christianity meant abandoning these rituals, it in effect demanded a de-classing, a drastic break with family, career prospects and, in a fundamental sense, culture.

Matteo Ricci approached the rites question, as he approached other aspects of Chinese culture, cautiously. I have found nothing substantial on the subject in his Chinese writings although his silence together with his general approbation of Confucianism may be read as approval of the status quo. There are, however, several passages in his Storia which give us clues as to his interpretation of Confucian rites, domestic and public. And the general assumption by later writers, supporters and opponents of the rites, that Ricci allowed Chinese Christians to practice Confucian rites, may be taken as evidence in itself.

Ricci's starting point is a functional interpretation of the role of the Confucian literati in Chinese society. He sees Confucianism in practice as primarily a system of ethics, a social philosophy.

The aim of this law of the literati is the peace and quiet of the kingdom and the good government of households and their individual members. In these matters they give very good advice, completely in conformity with the light of nature and Catholic truth.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Fonti Ricciane, N180, I, p.120.

Confucianism is not really a 'sect' in the strict sense (una legge formata) but a learned society, an 'academy' which exists for the good of society, and, as such, Christians may freely belong to it.²⁶⁷ It is on this foundation that Ricci builds his interpretation of Confucian rites as social customs designed to promote good order in society and the state by recalling the teaching and example of the great men of the past. Note, however, that he does not say that they are purely secular or 'political'²⁶⁸ in nature as many later Jesuits interpreted them. To deny that Confucianism is una legge formata is not, I think, to deny that it has any 'religious' aspects. Such a position would make nonsense of Ricci's stress elsewhere in the Storia on the pure theism of early Confucianism. It was rather a system of 'natural religion' which was not overtly religious in the way that Buddhism and Taoism were. Unlike them it had no temples, no priests, no commandments, no religious leaders.²⁶⁹ And its rituals were not acts of worship of specific gods of the sect but celebrations of the natural and moral order of the universe.

267 Fonti Ricciane, N181, I, p.120. The corresponding passage in Trigault contains some significant alterations. Where Ricci states the view that Confucianism is not a sect as his conclusion, Trigault makes it their own claim, which is strictly untrue, since the Confucians did not disclaim the title of chiao. Ricci again says there is nothing essential (nel suo essenziale...niente) contrary to Catholic faith in their teaching, while Trigault qualifies this somewhat and changes the emphasis from the obligation of Catholics to support this 'academy' to the need for it to be 'developed and perfected' by Christianity. v. Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, pp.97-98, and Riquebourg-Trigault, Histoire, p.89.

268 The term 'political', somewhat wider in its Latin than its modern English sense, was first used by Trigault in his account of Ricci's funeral. v. Fonti Ricciane, N998, II, p.628.

269 Fonti Ricciane, N176, I, p.116. Note that almost immediately afterwards, Ricci ascribes a 'temple' to Confucius.

To consider first the rites to Confucius. In every city, says Ricci, there is a 'temple' of Confucius, attached to the Confucian 'school'. In it there is a statue of Confucius or a tablet containing his name, and on either side the statues or names of his principal disciples who are held to be 'saints'.²⁷⁰ Here, every new moon and full moon the officials (magistrati) and scholars (graduati) of the city come to pay reverence to him by genuflexions and by burning candles and incense. On his birthday and at certain times of the year they offer dead animals and food. The purpose of these exercises is 'to praise him for the good teaching he left in his books, by means of which they have obtained their posts and degrees, without however reciting any prayer nor asking any favour'.²⁷¹

Ricci seems to have had no objections to these ceremonies which involved, as he saw it, no false worship. Confucius, by this account, is clearly not a god.²⁷² In another passage, however, Ricci gives a more compromising account of the solemn sacrifice to Confucius in the 'Hall or Temple of Heaven' in Nanking. He witnesses a dress rehearsal for this ceremony and describes the temple itself, the dress of the Taoist priests who provided the music, and the musical instruments employed.²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Santi, clearly a rendering of the Chinese sheng-jen, perhaps better translated as 'sage' since the stress is on the wisdom and teaching rather than the morals of the alleged sheng-jen.

²⁷¹ Fonti Ricciane, N178, I, pp.118-119.

²⁷² D'Elia has demonstrated (Fonti Ricciane, I, p.119 n.2; and 'Ermeneutica Ricciana', Gregorianum, XXIV, 1953, pp. 671-2) how this very passage 'orribilmente trasformato' by a later French translator of Athanasius Kircher's reproduction of Trigault's Latin, has served as ammunition for anti-Jesuit commentators. In this version Confucius and his disciples become 'gods' making nonsense of the rest of the passage. Trigault himself is partly to blame in describing the disciples as 'gods, but of an inferior order', a gloss quite unwarranted on the basis of the original text.

²⁷³ Fonti Ricciane, NN553-4, II, pp.70-71.

This appears an exception to Ricci's general conclusion that the ceremonies in honour of Confucius are not religious rites. He calls the ceremony tout court a 'sacrifice'. Certainly Trigault was somewhat scandalized by this account and adds a number of glosses to the passage stressing that Ricci attended the ceremony because it was a mere rehearsal not the actual ceremony, and that 'the Chinese honour the great philosopher as a master, and not as a deity, and they are accustomed to use the word "sacrifice" in a broad and indefinite sense'.²⁷⁴ But Trigault has also misread the original. Ricci specifically points out that the priests present were Taoist priests (tausu) and that they were there because they were members of the royal orchestra. In Trigault they have become 'priests of the literary class',²⁷⁵ a contradiction in terms, and are described as priests of the Temple itself.²⁷⁶ Finally, where Ricci is content merely to describe the temple in detail, listing the altars outside dedicated to the sun, moon, stars and mountains, Trigault adds: 'They say that the God who is worshipped in the temple is the creator of all that is outside of the temple and that these things are not to be worshipped as deities'.²⁷⁷ No doubt Trigault when editing Ricci's manuscript was aware of what appeared to be dangerous inconsistencies between Ricci's generalizations about the rites to Confucius and this description of the Nanking temple and the ceremonies performed there. However I question whether he was true to Ricci's mind on the matter. Ricci seems to me to be justly noncommittal. He leaves open the question of the status of the Temple - calling it in one place simply 'Temple' and in another 'Hall or Temple' (later Jesuits were careful to translate the terms applied to Confucian 'temples' as 'hall', giving it a strictly secular connotation).

²⁷⁴ Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.335, cf, Riquebourg-Trigault, Histoire, p.314.

²⁷⁵ Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, p.336; Riquebourg-Trigault, Histoire, p.314.

²⁷⁶ Riquebourg-Trigault, p.315, has 'Templiers', and Gallagher, p.336, has 'priests'.

²⁷⁷ Gallagher, p.337 cf. Riquebourg-Trigault, p.315 .

He makes no bones about it being a sacrifice, but neither does he make any comments on its nature. Later missionaries who examined these ceremonies in detail decided that the solemn sacrifices to Confucius were superstitious in nature and should be forbidden. All we can say about Ricci's attitude to them is that he enjoyed the visit if not the music.²⁷⁸

There is another piece of evidence in relation to Ricci's views on Confucian rites which should be mentioned. In Ch'ü T'ai-su's Preface to the 1599 edition of Ricci's Treatise on Friendship, written at about the time of Ricci's visit to the Temple of Heaven,²⁷⁹ Ch'ü describes 'Mr. Li' (Ricci) as attracted to China by its glorious culture. He has become a true Confucian scholar:

He recites the texts of the Sages, and observes the laws of the kingdom. He wears a scholar's cap and belt, and he offers the spring and autumn sacrifices. He is chaste in his behaviour and walks in the paths of virtue. He respects and serves the commands of Heaven and promotes orthodoxy. Neither (Yeh-lü) Ch'u-ts'ai nor (Lien) Hsi-hsien could match the conversation of Mr. Li.²⁸⁰

I doubt very much that this passage may be invoked to prove that Ricci actually offered the spring and autumn sacrifices to Confucius. The language is too stereotyped and the context clearly an assertion that Ricci despite his foreign origin is an orthodox Confucian in his behaviour. It does, however, indicate that Ricci was not known to be opposed to these ceremonies.

Other sacrifices are mentioned in the Storia - the annual sacrifices offered by the Emperor to Heaven and Earth,²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Fonti Ricciane, N553, II, p.71 - 'all sounded at once with the greatest noise possible, and, to tell the truth, they appeared to be completely out of tune'.

²⁷⁹ v. Fonti Ricciane, II, p.70, n.5.

²⁸⁰ T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, I, pp.295-6, translated in P.M.D'Elia, 'Il Trattato sull'Amicizia...', Studia Missionalia, VII, 1952, pp.457-8. Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai and Lien Hsi-hsien were famous examples of Sinicized 'barbarians'. I am grateful to Dr. Igor de Rachewiltz for the identification of Lien Hsi-hsien.

²⁸¹ Fonti Ricciane, N176, I, p.117.

the sacrifices offered by high officials to the spirits of the mountains and rivers,²⁸² and those offered by magistrates to the local 'protector spirits'.²⁸³ Ricci makes no comment on the first two but in the last case he remarks that they do attribute power to reward and punish to these spirits, perhaps implying by this that the rite is superstitious. He is careful, however, to avoid labelling these spirits as 'gods' which is what Trigault in his version does.²⁸⁴ This question of sacrifices to the 'city god' (ch'êng-huang) was to loom large in the later development of the rites controversy. Being a part of the ceremonies associated with the assumption of office, it affected the eligibility of Christian scholars for office. Some Jesuits, taking a clue from Ricci's 'protector spirits' argued that the ch'êng-huang were the 'guardian angels' of Christian tradition, and so could legitimately be honoured. Others substituted a Christian rite, or insisted on a modification of the ceremony. There is no real evidence, however, as to Ricci's opinion on the matter, and I know of no instance during his lifetime when he might have been asked to give a decision about the practices.

From his commentary in the T'ien-chu shih-i on selected passages from the classics dealing with sacrifices, it would seem to have been Ricci's general view that the multitude of sacrifices described were ultimately directed to God, to shang-ti.²⁸⁵ For example, in commenting on the Doctrine of the Mean, XIX.6, 'the ceremonies of the altar of the god of the soil are directed to the service of shang-ti', he rejects on good grounds²⁸⁶ Chu Hsi's gloss attributing it to Hou-t'u, the God of the Earth. One sacrifice can be offered to one god only.²⁸⁷ The principle of 'interpreting in our favour anything left ambiguous' in the classics apparently extended to sacrificial rites.

282 Fonti Ricciane, N176, I, p.117.

283 Fonti Ricciane, N179, I, pp.119-120.

284 Gallagher, China in the Sixteenth Century, P.97; Riquebourg-Trigault, Histoire, p.88.

285 See T'ien-chu shih-i, A.20a-b.

286 See Legge, Chinese Classics, I, p.404.

287 T'ien-chu shih-i, A.20a.

Ricci is much more explicit in his treatment of ancestor rites. In a passage in the Storia²⁸⁸ he describes the offering of food, incense and silk or paper, to the dead ancestors, and goes on:

The reason they give for this observance on behalf of their ancestors is this, 'to serve the dead as if they were living'.²⁸⁹ Nor do they think that the dead come to eat these things, or have need of them; but they say they do it because they know of no other way of showing the love and gratitude they have for them. Some say that this ceremony was instituted more for the living than the dead, that is to teach the children and ignorant to know and serve their parents while alive, seeing that important people, once they are dead, perform for them the services they were accustomed to perform when they were alive. And since they neither recognize any divinity in these dead, nor ask anything of them, nor hope for anything from them, the practice is completely free from any idolatry, and perhaps could even be said to involve no superstition. Nevertheless, it would be better to replace this custom with giving alms to the poor for the souls of these dead, when they become Christians.

This passage has been subjected to a great deal of critical examination²⁹⁰ although I fail to see how it could be clearer. Ricci concludes that they do not believe that the dead are actually present,²⁹¹ nor that they are divine. The practice is certainly not idolatrous (sta tutto questo fuori di ogni idolatria) and perhaps (forse) not superstitious. His caution in the last instance is, I imagine, due to a reluctance to generalize about the actual beliefs of all Chinese. Ricci saw

288 Fonti Ricciane, N177, I, pp.117-118.

289 A reference to The Doctrine of the Mean, XIX, 5. Ricci also quotes this passage in the T'ien-chu shih-i, A.33a, in another context - to demonstrate an ancient Chinese belief in the immortality of the soul.

290 See, for example, Bernard (-Maître), Ricci, Pt.III, Ch.6, and D'Elia, 'Ermeneutica Ricciana', pp.669-679.

291 He argues in the T'ien-chu shih-i, A.40b-41b, after demonstrating at length the immortality of the soul, that the souls of the dead do not remain in their original home after death, because it is not the will of heaven.

that the orthodox Confucian view of such ceremonies as presented in the Four Books was not necessarily what people actually thought. Because of the danger of superstition, it was better to aim at eventually eradicating or rather replacing such customs. He was no casuist,²⁹² but a missionary with a practical pastoral concern.

The last area about which controversy raged in later times was Chinese funerary rites. Ricci describes these in Book I, Chapter 7 of the Storia, 'On the Courtesy and Other Rites of China'.²⁹³ Again it is a simple description with no attempt to minimize the religious aspects of the ceremonies, the customary participation of 'many priests of the idols', the offerings of food and clothing. He points out that the offerings are made 'as if' (come) the dead needed food and clothing, but makes no further comment. His position on these matters was presumably identical with that on ancestor rites. They must be purged of any overt superstition and may otherwise be tolerated, but gradually specifically Christian rituals should be introduced.

In a work dating from 1680, Giovanni Gabiani's De Ritibus Ecclesiae Sinicae permissis Apologetica Dissertatio,²⁹⁴ we find listed some documents then extant containing Ricci's instructions on the rites and other matters which were approved by Valignano in 1603. I have been unable to find any trace of these documents but I doubt if they would add anything to the picture that emerges from the Storia. Gabiani notes that 'the cult of Confucius and of the dead' was approved by

²⁹² The forse should not be read as a reference to the theory of 'Probabilism' invoked in this context by later Jesuit moralists. Bernard-Maitre has shown that (probably?) Ricci was unaware of this new development in moral theology. See Ricci, II, p.139.

²⁹³ Fonti Ricciane, NN132-3, I, pp.83-5.

²⁹⁴ Giovanni Domenico Gabiani was in 1680 Superior of the Chinese Vice-Province. In reply to the charges made against the Jesuits by the Dominican Navarrete, he collected material from the archives of the mission, and sent a treatise on the subject, presumably the one in question, to the Jesuit General on 22 September 1680 (v. letter of that date in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 199, I, ff.40r-41r). The Dissertatio was published in Liège in 1700 at the height of the Rites Controversy.

Valignano 'after deep inquiry and careful examination of each and every relevant particular, not only through the faithful account of Father Matteo (Ricci) and other of his companions, but by special confirmation of Father Emanuel Diaz Senior, delegated by the same Father Visitor to investigate the matter'.²⁹⁵ In other words, this first generation of missionaries was well aware of the issues raised by the Chinese rites, had discussed them at length and arrived at a policy of general approval. There was bound to be controversy over the details as the mission expanded and knowledge of the enormous variety of Chinese customs and rituals grew. The ambiguities latent in the view that Confucians were both proponents of an ethical theism, and utilitarian and secular in their ceremonial, were sure to create difficulties in minds less open and more theologically rigid than Ricci's. Yet, to the modern student of Chinese religion, Ricci's simple description of Chinese practices and hesitant judgements usually get closer to the Chinese reality than the endless theologizing and hair-splitting of many of his successors. He was fortunate to be able to interpret Chinese rites before they became Chinese Rites, a subject of controversy rather than the practices of actual living people.

²⁹⁵ See Fonti Ricciane, II, pp.273-4, n.I.

V. RICCI AND CONFUCIANISM: SYNCRETISM, ACCOMMODATION, ENCOUNTER?

I have attempted to describe Matteo Ricci's involvement with Confucianism in all its complexity, with all its nuances, and, so far as possible, in his own words. It might appear superfluous to add a postscript on the labels one should apply to those thirty years of active life. Yet labels are instructive, as much by their inappropriateness, the contents that do not match, as by their appropriateness. And in this case a number of contradictory labels have been applied. Confucius and Confucians have always insisted on the importance of labels, of 'names'. It is in the spirit of the Confucian 'rectification of names' that I approach this question.

Perhaps the least happy 'name' applied to Ricci's life's work is 'syncretism'. It is used, for example, by Joseph Levenson in his work on Liang Ch'i-ch'ao. I do not wish to set Levenson up as a chopping-block. I am too indebted to him in so many ways, and I have rarely felt impelled flatly to reject his ideas. It may be that 'syncretism', for Levenson, did not imply that reductionism or the blunting of claims to truth that I associate with the term.²⁹⁶ But his strictures on the Jesuits' methods, and the language he employs, suggest that he saw their attempt as, in some sense, dishonest or at least intrinsically contradictory. The Jesuits, he writes, attempted 'to syncretize Confucianism with a European tradition', 'to make a Western idea seem properly Chinese'.²⁹⁷ And a similar view underlies the more

²⁹⁶ Franz Schurmann, in his moving tribute to Levenson, 'In Memory of a Friend', prefacing Levenson's and his China: An Interpretative History, Berkeley, 1969, writes of Levenson's life-work as the progressive unfolding of 'the spirit of syncretism'. He sees this as a harmony within opposites, not a blunting of conflict and honesty, but a tolerance of difference. In this sense, I have no quarrel with the use of the term 'syncretism' as applied to the Jesuits. I cannot, however, reconcile this usage with Levenson's own use of the term in either his Liang Ch'i-ch'ao or Confucian China and Its Modern Fate.

²⁹⁷ Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China, Berkeley, 1967, p.84.

extended treatment given to the Jesuits in Levenson's Confucian China and Its Modern Fate. In this case I think that Levenson has been unduly influenced by Liang's own treatment of the Jesuits in his Chung-kuo chin san-pai nien hsüeh-shu shih.²⁹⁸ Liang saw the Jesuits as deliberately fostering the attitude of 'public Christians, private Confucians'.²⁹⁹ He writes that:

The earliest missionaries of the Society (of Jesus) used extremely clever methods in propagating their teachings; they penetrated deeply into the mentality of the Chinese. They realized that the Chinese are not fond of excessively superstitious religions, and so they confined themselves to introducing the Chinese to scientific knowledge where they were very conscious of their deficiencies, and to outwards appearances they seemed to have turned from being missionaries to sundry other pursuits. Those who believed in their religion were permitted as before to worship 'the Chinese Heaven' and their ancestors. These methods were pursued for some decades and would have been outstandingly successful if the Pope in Rome, not understanding the circumstances, had not suddenly issued what is called 'the 1704 decree' and enforced its provisions.³⁰⁰

We have already seen enough of Ricci's methods to realize the falsity of the claim that for Ricci his religious mission took second place, and that nothing further was demanded of converts than a continuance of their Confucian beliefs. As for the use of Western science, certainly it was employed as a bait, but there is no evidence that conversion was a pre-condition for learning it. As Ch'en Shou-i demonstrates in his critical analysis of Liang's charges,³⁰¹ Ricci and his successors at no time concealed their missionary aims, and

²⁹⁸ See Liang's Collected Works, Yin-ping-shih ho-chi, chuan-chi XVII, Shanghai, 1936, esp. chs.1-4.

²⁹⁹ Yang-Yeh yin-Ju. The phrase is not Liang's but that of Ch'en Shou-i criticizing Liang in his article 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih te Ju-chiao kuan chi ch'i fan-ying', reprinted in Pao Tsun-peng's Ming-tai tsung-chiao, Taipei, 1968, p.69. It is, in my opinion, a fair summary of Liang's comments.

³⁰⁰ Chung-kuo chin san-pai nien hsueh-shu shih (Yin-ping-shih ho-chi ed.), p.18.

³⁰¹ 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih...', pp.70-72.

there is no strict correlation between their teaching of science and their teaching of Christianity; some became Christians who were not interested in science, and many learnt Western science without become Christians. Li Chih-tsao studied science with Ricci for a considerable time before becoming interested in Christianity, while Hsü Kuang-chi's interest in science followed his conversion.

Western science was important to the Jesuits in gaining an audience and winning respect, but it was not central or indispensable. Certainly it could not be regarded as an element in a new syncretism. Western science plus Confucian ethics, or even a reinterpreted Confucian theism, do not add up to the t'ien-chu-chiao. All contemporary accounts agree that Ricci's most influential works were his treatise on friendship, his T'ien-chu shih-i and Chi-jen shih-p'ien. None of these so much as mentions science. The stress is rather on humanism, Confucian and European, and philosophical reasoning.

Levenson rightly describes Ricci as 'vaunting the western arts and sciences, (to shake) the Chinese bias against anything foreign and (make) it possible for Christianity not to be pre-judged'.³⁰² However, he seriously misquotes the Storia in this context, implying that Ricci was discounting Chinese ideas generally by his scientific revelations.³⁰³ In fact the original passage quite clearly deals specifically with Buddhist cosmological speculations, and recounts the advice of a friendly scholar that they should use mathematics to explore 'the falsity of the books of the idols'.³⁰⁴ Ricci continues:

³⁰² Confucian China and Its Modern Fate, I, p.121.

³⁰³ Levenson does not seem to have read any of Ricci's works, and in this instance relies on an extract from the Storia translated by Henri Bernard-Maitre in his Sagesse Chinoise et Philosophie Chrétienne, p.121. Even so, he omits parts of the passage which indicates that it is the Buddhist cosmology alone that is in question, not any 'fabulous fantasies' of 'the Chinese' as a whole.

³⁰⁴ Fonti Ricciane, N540, II, pp.54-5.

And in truth it thus happened that many, having learnt our mathematical sciences, laughed at the law and doctrine of the idols, saying that if they taught so much error in natural matters and those of this life, there is no reason to give them credit in supernatural matters and those of the other life.³⁰⁵

This is not, I think, to argue that the science is somehow part and parcel of the new religion. Joseph Needham in Science and Civilization in China³⁰⁶ sees the 'implicit logic' of the Jesuits' presentation of Western science as the claim that only Christendom could have produced it. 'Every correct eclipse prediction was thus an indirect demonstration of the truth of Christian theology'. Needham credits the Chinese with too much intelligence to be taken in by this line of argument, but he might also have credited the Jesuits with sufficient intelligence not to have attempted to argue this way. The only evidence that can be adduced for Needham's point of view is the indiscriminate use by some Jesuits after Ricci³⁰⁷ of t'ien-hsüeh, as a general term applied to both the study of the Christian religion and astronomy. In practice, however, they were distinguished; and in the T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han of 1629 a strict division is made between the sections dealing with doctrine (li-pien) and those dealing with science (ch'-pien).

The most convincing rebuttal of this whole interpretation is to be found in the profession of faith made by Ch'ü Ju-k'uei in 1605. Ch'ü is a striking case of a man who was attracted to the Jesuits by their science and later accepted their religion. In his profession he emphasises that he is turning away from Buddhism because it is 'a sect contrary to reason and false', and that reason has led him to a belief in the

³⁰⁵ Fonti Ricciane, N540, II, p.55.

³⁰⁶ Vol. III, p.449.

³⁰⁷ After 1615, according to D'Elia, Fonti Ricciane, II, p.68, n.I and p.293, n.1. It should be noted, however, that t'ien-hsüeh was often used in an exclusively religious sense. Li Tsu-po in his T'ien-hsüeh ch'uan kai [1664] begins by defining t'ien-hsüeh as t'ien-chu-chiao hsüeh (T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, II, p.1055).

God who governs heaven, earth and men. It is, he says in the text translated in the Storia, 'the things of God' which he has learnt from Ricci, Cattaneo and the other Jesuits.

I, having this day received the water of holy baptism that washes and cleanses me of all my past uncleanness, promise that the sect of the idols and words contrary to reason will be extirpated from my heart...I will obey the heavenly Father, and will be converted, following in all things the right path and controlling my senses so that I may perfect in myself the natural light of reason (il lume naturale) which was infused in me by God, who exists by himself and extends his goodness to others.

As for the articles of the Christian faith, although I cannot penetrate the depths of every mystery, with all my heart I submit and believe what is contained in it, and I pray to the Holy Spirit to enlighten me. Now I am beginning anew to believe and my heart is like a weak and tender reed. I beg the Holy Mother of the Lord of Heaven to deign to inspire and strengthen me and to pray to Him that my will may be firm, my mind strengthened and my spirit pure and clear; so that, with heart thus illuminated, I may adhere to truth and reason, and with mouth thus opened to the holy word, I may spread it through all China, so that all may come to know the holy law of God and be subjected to it.³⁰⁸

Unless this whole passage is a pious forgery, which is most unlikely given the circumstances and the language, it seems to me sufficient refutation of any charge of syncretism.

Ch'ü is no syncretist creating a new hybrid scientific religion, nor is he a 'public Christian private Confucian'. The only connection between science and his religious faith lies in his conviction that they have a common base in il lume naturale, the light of reason.

This is not to dispose completely of the question of syncretism. It was always a problem to the Jesuits. Trigault writing about the Shao-chou missions complains that it was much easier to get the Chinese to accept the Lord of Heaven than to get them to reject their other gods.³⁰⁹ The cultural instinct to absorb and assimilate was so strong as to be at

³⁰⁸ Fonti Ricciane, N756, II, pp.344-5.

³⁰⁹ Fonti Ricciane, N658, II, pp.217-8 (passage added in Portuguese by Trigault, possibly based on Longobardo's account).

times overwhelming.³¹⁰ Even Ricci himself was transmogrified into Li Ma-tou p'u-sa, the Bodhisattva Li Ma-tou, patron of clock-makers.³¹¹ There are no ready yard-sticks for judging the real beliefs of men and dogmatic formulae do not always (perhaps never) measure the dimensions of the human spirit. What we can be sure of, however, is that syncretism was not the intention of Ricci and his successors. To call him, as Levenson does, 'pioneer spokesman for a Christian-Confucian syncretism'³¹² is to accuse him of deliberately fostering ambiguity and confusion. His strictures on syncretism in the T'ien-chu shih-i³¹³ are so strong as to leave no doubt as to his intentions. When the Chinese scholar suggests that there might be something to be gained from worshipping the Buddhas, Ricci launches into a diatribe on behalf of orthodoxy.

In the case of heterodox doctrines, the more you reverence and respect them, the more serious is the crime. There is only one head in each family, and to have two is a crime. There is only one ruler to each state, and to have two is a crime. Heaven and earth are governed by one lord. How could it not be the greatest crime in the world to have two of them?³¹⁴

To show that he was not intentionally syncretistic does not, of course, exclude the possibility that the end product was a syncretism, an attempted harmonizing of de facto opposites. Ultimately this depends on the validity of Ricci's interpretation of Confucianism, a question I prefer to leave till later in this study. Even if this were to prove the case, however, I would hesitate to use the term. If the interpretation of a particular tradition leaves no doubt that it is the partial, fragmentary truth to be subsumed within the wider truth; and if that wider truth is explicitly related to a revelation

³¹⁰ See Ch. I, section III, 'Syncretism and Assimilation'.

³¹¹ L. Pfister, Notices Biographiques et Bibliographiques, I, p.29, n.1.

³¹² Confucian China and its Modern Fate, I, p.120.

³¹³ B.51b-56b.

³¹⁴ T'ien-chu shih-i, B.51b.

superseding all others; then 'syncretism' seems inappropriate. Was St. Paul a syncretist when he appealed in the Epistle to the Romans³¹⁵ to the revelation of God in the natural world? or when he used their beliefs and the literature of their poets to persuade the Athenians to worship his God?³¹⁶ Even with reference to the Buddhist tradition, where deliberate syncretism has certainly occurred, I think the term has been overused. As Alicia Matsunaga demonstrates in The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation,³¹⁷ as well as the usual combining or juxtaposition of new and old, Buddhism developed a philosophical justification for the assimilation of the older gods of India, China and Japan. In terms of this theory, the process could be reduced to a systematic unity in which Buddhism predominated. The Buddha was all in all. It is where the disparate elements are left unresolved, or opposites held to be equally true, that syncretism reigns. In this sense the Jesuits were not syncretists.

The term most commonly applied to Ricci's approach is 'accommodation'. Johannes Bettray S.V.D. has analysed his whole career in terms of his 'accommodation method',³¹⁸ external and intellectual. This is a convenient approach and it seems to correspond to a large extent to Ricci's own view of what he was doing. It preserves Ricci's sense of the centrality of Christianity - the missionaries accommodate or adapt themselves to all aspects of Chinese culture in order, as it were, to clothe the naked truth of the Christian message in Chinese dress. But it is more enlightening as a metaphor when applied to externals than to 'inner' processes. Language is culturally determined. Specific traditions are irrevocably conditioned by history. When an attempt is made to express one religion in the language and through the historical traditions of another, is there any true meeting of minds?

³¹⁵ Romans, I.18-23.

³¹⁶ Acts 17.22-34.

³¹⁷ Subtitled, 'The Historical Development of the Honji-Suijaku Theory', Tokyo (Monumenta Nipponica Monographs) 1969.

³¹⁸ Die Akkommodationsmethode des P. Matteo Ricci S.I. in China, Rome (Analecta Gregoriana, LXXVI) 1955.

It is here that Levenson's critique becomes disturbingly relevant. During the several years I have been reflecting upon the Jesuit experience in China I have again and again found myself reverting to Levenson's gnostic phrases:

Revelation, the emphasis on what was sui generis to the religion, was deliberately shadowed in mysticism, in the insistence that truth is free of temporal, historical context.

And so the Christians insist that western history, though in some sense, clearly, a Christian history, is just an embodiment (not the embodiment) of a supra-historical value.

Christian cultural relativism is a poor servant, in the last analysis, to the Christian religious absolute.³¹⁹

I would like to claim that these pieces of grit working away in my mind have been coated with pearls of wisdom. Alas, I am still uncertain what to make of them as general propositions. They presuppose a whole philosophy of religion - and, for that matter, a general philosophical position - the examination of which is quite beyond the scope of this study. I could point out that Levenson's notion of 'The Christian religious absolute' is one that few contemporary theologians would accept. I could add that there have been and still are non-Western Christian churches, and that in its origins Christianity is non-Western, or at least, non-European. In so far as his remarks are meant to describe the Jesuit approach to China I might object to 'deliberately shadowed in mysticism' since, as we have seen, it is rather an interpretation of Chinese intellectual history than an appeal to the unknowable that lies at the heart of Ricci's work. I could also refer, as Henri Bernard-Maitre does,³²⁰ to the scholastic distinction between philosophy and theology, Ricci's lume naturelle and revelation. On this reading, which receives much backing from Ricci's writings cited above, a refined Confucian philosophy was to serve as the starting point for a Chinese theology, in much the same way as Thomas Aquinas employed Greek philosophy in his theological Summa.

³¹⁹ Confucian China and its Modern Fate, I, pp.119, 120.

³²⁰ Sagesse Chinoise et Philosophie Chrétienne, Pt.II, Leçon II.

In the last analysis, however, I think Levenson has hit upon an important weakness in the Jesuits' position. I doubt whether it was a fatal flaw in the logic of their position. Rather I see it, as Levenson also does to a large extent, as a flaw in the psychology of the method. The more they accommodated, the greater the Confucian wrapping they placed on the Christian core, the less distinct became their message and the greater the possibility of misunderstanding. Many Confucians would not have been as impressed as the Chinese Scholar of the T'ien-chu shih-i with the necessity for going further, and would find their sense of cultural superiority merely confirmed from this unexpected source.

The 'accommodation' model is radically deficient in another way. Ultimately it rests on just one of those sets of false dichotomies that Levenson mercilessly exposes in his celebrated treatment of the use of t'i and yung by the late nineteenth century Chinese reformers.³²¹ When Christianity, or any other religion for that matter, is considered as an actual living religion and not as an abstract system, it becomes impossible to separate substance and function, inner reality and external appearance, revealed core and cultural expression. A revelation without words and concepts can be found only in the awful reality of a living God himself. To name Him is not only to claim control over Him as primitive men thought, but also to limit and denature Him. Yet we do name Him as men have always named Him. As Langdon Gilkey has demonstrated in Naming the Whirlwind,³²² the very universality of the attempt to name God points to a common basis in human experience. The plurality of language and the variety of cultural expressions of human experience does not necessarily invalidate a belief in the universality of that experience. Language, however, enters so immediately into the rendering intelligible of our experience, even to ourselves, that the notion of pure religious experience is chimerical.

³²¹ Confucian China and its Modern Fate, I, Ch.IV.

³²² Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language, Indianapolis, 1969.

Part of our religious experience itself is the language through which it is mediated. One religion cannot accommodate itself to the language of another without betraying something of itself. At best, it can offer an invitation to share its insights and encounter the same reality.

Where I part company with Levenson is over the excesses of his cultural relativism. If taken literally his rejection of 'supra-historical values' would deny the very possibility of communication and understanding between cultures not only in religion but in all respects. His own work in elucidating Chinese culture in general, and Confucianism in particular, to a Western audience, is the best refutation of this scepticism. Cross-cultural understanding itself has a history which transcends cultural particularities, and the Jesuit mission in China is a prime example of such understanding.

How, then, to characterize Ricci's engagement with Confucianism? Not 'syncretism' which implies a conscious combining of diverse elements into a new synthesis in which all the disparate parts have equal status. Not 'accommodation' which assumes a relationship between the core and cultural wrapping which grossly oversimplifies the reality of religious experience. If we must use a general term to describe his method I would suggest 'encounter'. Jacques Kamstra, in a recent study on the introduction of Buddhism to Japan,³²³ poses the alternatives in cultural intercourse as 'encounter or syncretism'. Where there is no real existential encounter, where neither side attempts sympathetically to engage with the personal and systematic beliefs of the other, syncretism is the only possible alternative to outright rejection. In encounter, on the other hand, of necessity something new comes into being, born of the exchange at the personal level between individuals, and at the systematic level between cultures.³²⁴ There is a sharing of experience in so far as cultural barriers permit, and the development of a new language drawing from both cultures to express this common experience.

³²³ Encounter or Syncretism?, Leiden, 1967.

³²⁴ Encounter or Syncretism?, pp.5-9.

There can be no question, I think, of the personal encounter, in the case of Ricci. His gift for friendship, his involvement with so many Chinese of talent and influence who reciprocated his regard, the reputation he acquired, all attest to the reality of the encounter. He appeared to them as one both familiar and strange; familiar in his knowledge of and facility within the Confucian tradition, strange in his beliefs and inner life. Many who were attracted by the familiar aspects and the new avenues in science opened up by Ricci came in time to appreciate and share his religious views. Christianity was presented to them not in the first place as a system, but as the deeply held values of a man who attracted and fascinated them as a person.

This is not to deny that there was also an encounter on the systematic level. Here there was a tentative process, a feeling of the way. It was a true encounter in so far as it was two-way, with each side attempting to grasp the other in its otherness. Ricci does, of course, attempt to translate Chinese reality into familiar terms, but he is notably wary, particularly in comparison with some of his confreres, and even in the Storia addressed to a European audience with no experience of China, he always prefers description to explicit comparison. In his Chinese works he shows an ever deepening grasp of the language and value system of Confucianism, and the approach to Confucianism which began as a tactic became, I believe, something much deeper.

The reality of Ricci's encounter with Confucianism is best tested by looking at the impact of Ricci and his colleagues on Confucian scholars, both those who became Confucian Christians and those who rejected the new religion. Did the Chinese see Ricci's T'ien-chu shih-i in the same terms as Ricci himself? Were they attracted, or alternatively repelled, by Christianity itself or by an ersatz Confucianism concocted by Ricci? What better witnesses could we call for the genuineness of the Jesuits' encounter with Confucianism than Confucians themselves. So, from the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism let us turn to the Confucian interpretation of the Jesuits.

CHAPTER 3. THE CONFUCIAN INTERPRETATION OF THE
JESUITS

Of all the people I have known there is none who can compare with (Matteo Ricci)...However, I do not know why he has come here...I think it would be too stupid of him to want to use his studies to change the teachings of our (sages, the Duke of) Chou and Confucius, so I suspect this is not the reason.

- Li Chih¹

The man who wrote thus to a friend was not at all a hidebound Confucian conservative. On the contrary, he was probably the most unorthodox and creative thinker of his time.² If even Li Chih found it incredible that Ricci should be attempting to reinterpret Confucianism, it is not surprising to find less original Chinese scholars reacting harshly to Ricci's views. We would expect to find Buddhists among the main opponents of Ricci and his companions. The Jesuits made no secret of their total opposition to the doctrines of Buddhism. The reaction of Confucians, however, depended on their understanding of what the Jesuits were at, and their acceptance or rejection of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. An examination of the Confucian interpretation of the Jesuits should, at one and the same time, elucidate the Jesuit approach to Confucianism and expose the reasons for its success and failure.

¹ Hsü Fen-shu, Peking, 1959 ed., p.36.

² See the section on 'Li Chih, the Arch-Individualist' in de Bary, Self and Society, pp.188-193; O. Franke, 'Li Tschì, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Chinesischen Geisteskämpfe in 16. Jahrhundert', Abhandlungen der Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Jahr.1937, Phil.Hist.Klasse Nr.10; T. Pokora, 'A Pioneer of New Trends of Thought in the End of the Ming Period', Archiv Orientalni, XXIX, 1961, pp. 469-75; K.C.Hsiao, 'Li Chih: an Iconoclast of the Sixteenth Century', T'ien Hsia Monthly, VI.4, April 1938, pp.317-341; Jung Chao-tsu, Li Chih nien-p'u, Peking, 1957. On Ricci's contact with Li Chih see the Fonti Ricciane, NN199,551,580, 635; and O. Franke, 'Li Tschì und Matteo Ricci', Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Jahr. 1938, Phil. Hist. Klasse Nr.5.

Li Chih's reference to changing the teaching of the sages lies at the heart of the problem. In a real sense the Jesuits were attempting to 'change' the teachings of Confucius, but they claimed not to be substituting a new doctrine for that of the classics and their Confucian interpreters but rather to be restoring, developing and supplementing the basic truths of the Confucian tradition. These are all senses which the term used by Li Chih, 1, legitimately bears in Chinese. In fact, one might argue that as used in the title of the I Ching or Book of Changes its central implication is development rather than alteration or substitution. Some Confucians, of course, rejected change in any form, but, as recent studies have shown,³ the stereotype of the rigidly orthodox change-resisting Confucian, if it was ever true, is certainly not true of the late Ming. There was a cultural resistance to foreign influences seen as foreign, and a bureaucratic opposition to independent thinkers especially when associated with political factions⁴ but Buddhism flourished both in overt and disguised forms and independent thinkers abounded. The problematic nature of the Jesuits' appeal lay not in the bare fact that it advocated change, but in the kind of change demanded.

Some of the Chinese whose opinions on the T'ien-chu-chiao are recorded, reacted simply to the personality of one or other of the missionaries, or to an isolated and perhaps atypical work - one of the Jesuit scientific writings, Ricci's Friendship, or his world-map. In this case, the Chinese interpretation of the Jesuits remained superficial and Christianity was judged partially if at all.⁵ We shall look at some of these responses because of their intrinsic interest

³ See especially the contributions to the Conference on Ming Thought, published in W.T.de Bary (Ed.), Self and Society in Ming Thought.

⁴ See John Meskill, 'Academies and Politics in the Ming Dynasty' in C.O.Hucker (Ed.), Chinese Government in Ming Times, New York, 1969, pp.149-174.

⁵ Most, if not all, of the poems in the collection entitled Hsi-ch'ao ch'ung-cheng chi (T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien, Taipei, 1965, pp.633-691) belong to this category, as do many of the prefaces to Jesuit works. They testify to bonds of friendship and respect, but not necessarily to deep understanding or commitment on the part of the writer.

and the light they shed on basic Chinese attitudes to new and foreign ideas. Much more significant, however, are the responses of those who appreciated the intentions of the Jesuits and the implications of their doctrines.

Ch'en Shou-i, whose long article on 'The Jesuit View of Confucianism in the late Ming and the Reaction to it'⁶ is the fullest and best-documented treatment of the subject, proposes a number of ways of classifying the reaction of Chinese scholars to the Jesuits' presentation of the relationship of Christianity and Confucianism. One should discriminate, he suggests, between scholars who had merely social relations with the Jesuits, and those who became students of Western science and/or Western religion.⁷ As for those who understood what the Jesuits were about, one should distinguish those whose response was positive from those who opposed the new interpretation. Of those who responded positively, some became Christians, others did not; while the negative response came partly from Buddhists, partly from Confucian traditionalists and eventually also from Christians opposed to the Jesuit accommodation with Confucianism.⁸ The last group will be considered in a later chapter since their views were mainly derived from missionaries of other orders who entered China well after Ricci's day, and I have mentioned in passing in the previous chapter many of Ricci's social contacts and friends.⁹ This leaves three main types of response to be examined - the Chinese, one might even say 'Confucian', Christians; favourable or friendly scholars who did not become Christians; and the opposition, Buddhist or Confucian.

⁶ 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih te Ju-chiao kuan chi ch'i fan-ying', originally published in Kuo-hsueh chi-kan, V.2, 1935, pp. 1-64, and reprinted in the Ming shih lun-ts'ung, X, Ming-tai tsung-chiao, Taipei, 1968, pp.67-123.

⁷ Ch'en Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih...', p.71.

⁸ Ch'en Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih...', p.110.

⁹ See the list in Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.60-62, and the very numerous references in the text and notes to the Fonti Ricciane.

To assess the Confucian response to the Jesuits some attempt must be made to characterize the main currents of thought in the late Ming and to locate the Jesuits' contacts in relation to them. In a very few cases it is possible to establish the precise intellectual grounds on which the encounter took place, but usually we have to be content with conjecture and generalizations. Nevertheless, the very complexity of Ming thought and the multiplicity of groupings of scholars produced a corresponding spectrum of response. A comparative study of the intellectual response to the Jesuits should shed light on Ming intellectual movements themselves, as well as on the intentions and achievements of the Jesuits.

Any account of the Chinese view of the Jesuits should begin with the 'authorized version', that of the Ming shih. The main account is found in the section dealing with Italy¹⁰ which is described as unknown till the advent of Ricci.¹¹ The Board of Rites at first reacted to his arrival in Peking by denying any knowledge not only of Italy but even of the Great Western Ocean in which it was claimed to be situated.¹² But the Ming shih admits, if somewhat reluctantly, that Italy exists:

(Ricci's) words are vague and unreliable, but since a man from that country has come to present himself in China, it cannot be disproved that his land really exists.¹³

¹⁰ Chüan 326, Lieh-chuan 214. I have used the annotated edition by Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih Fo-lang-chi Lu-sung Ho-lan I-ta-li-ya ssü chüan chu-shih, Peiping, 1934. The I-ta-li-ya chüan is translated in full by A.C. Moule in The New China Review, IV, 1922, pp.450-456, under the title, 'The First Arrival of the Jesuits at the Capital of China'. I have, in every case, made my own translation, but I also give references to Moule for convenience.

¹¹ On the reasons for Ricci representing himself as Italian rather than as a Fo-lang-chi see Ch.1.

¹² Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, pp.173-4; Moule, 'First Arrival...', p.451.

¹³ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, p.161; Moule, 'First Arrival...', p.451.

Ricci's arrival in Macao is recorded and his activities between 1581 and 1601 when he reached Peking are graphically described as 'infecting',¹⁴ China, presumably with heresy.

There follow two memorials of the Board of Rites recommending his removal from the capital. The grounds given in the first are basically the irregularity of his arrival; he comes from a land not officially noted and he has not followed the prescribed channels for presentation at court. There is also some aspersion cast on his orthodoxy. He has presented to the Emperor pictures of the Lord of Heaven and the mother of the Lord of Heaven, which is contrary to custom, and even worse, he has dared to present 'bones of the immortals' (i.e. relics of the saints). Everyone knows that immortals have no bones. And as the great T'ang Confucian Han Yü stated in a similar case, they are 'superfluous and unclean things not fit to enter the palace'.¹⁵ The Board then recommends that Ricci be sent honourably on his way home, but prevented from residing either in Peking or Nanking, and from having further contact with Chinese.¹⁶

When, after five months, the Emperor remained ominously silent, the Li Pu tried another approach. Ricci, like all foreigners, is homesick, and all he wants is peace and solitude. Let him, then, be sent off to the remote valley of Kiangsi.¹⁷ But, says the Ming shih, the Emperor's reply was to allow Ricci to stay, and 'everyone, from the highest to the lowest, respected him and was pleased to welcome him, so Li Ma-tou settled down and remained living there'.¹⁸

¹⁴ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, p.165; Moule, 'First Arrival...', p.451. The term chan-jan is not quite so strong as 'infect' in English, and can also mean to 'saturate' or 'steep'; but in this case I think the stronger and primary meaning is intended.

¹⁵ A reference to Han Yü's famous 'Memorial on the Bone of Buddha' v. W.T.de Bary (Ed.), Sources of Chinese Tradition, 2 vol. paperback ed., New York, 1964, I, pp.372-4. The passage cited is on p.373.

¹⁶ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, pp.173-4; Moule, 'First Arrival...', p.451.

¹⁷ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, p.176; Moule, 'First Arrival...', pp.451-2.

¹⁸ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, p.177; Moule, 'First Arrival...', p.452.

The Ming shih account of Ricci's career in China and of his death is followed by some remarks on the Jesuits' role in calendrical reform and their clash with the Nanking Board of Rites in 1616-18, as well as a listing of the Chinese names of those Jesuits who achieved renown in the last decades of the Ming. Its final summing up of the Jesuits is typically sinocentric. They provided some exotic novelties, and, with Chinese help, even produced some respectable writings.

The men from this land who came from the East, were mostly intelligent and accomplished scholars who were intent only on teaching, not on gaining rank or profit. The books that they wrote were mostly on topics that the Chinese had not heard of, and so those who quickly respond to new ideas adhered to them. Even high officials like Hsu Kuang-ch'i, Li Chih-tsao etc., first came to appreciate their teaching, then polished the style of their writings, so that their sect rapidly increased.¹⁹

The 'official' version of the impact of the Jesuits on Ming China is probably representative. The religious doctrine of the missionaries is noted but not seriously investigated. Their personal qualities are praised and their scholarship admired, but their teaching discounted. In the broad perspective of Chinese history, and from the Chinese point of view, the Jesuit mission is a minor episode. From the point of view of a Western historian, however, it is far more important. This first serious encounter of a developed European culture and Chinese culture is fraught with significance for the student of Sino-Western relations and modern Chinese history.

¹⁹ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, pp.212-213; Moule, 'First Arrival...' p.455. Moule invents a third eminent Chinese Christian, 'P'ei Shou', but I have followed Chang Wei-hua's punctuation and commentary in reading pei as a qualification - 'etc'. - and shou as the first word of the next phrase. Apart from the inherent improbability of the existence of a high official (shih-tà-fu) not mentioned elsewhere in the Ming shih, I can find no example of Pei (not P'ei as Moule reads it) used as a surname.

I. LATE MING CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism in the late Ming and early Ch'ing when the Jesuits came into contact with it, was far from being a rigid orthodoxy, a body of truth enshrined in final and definitive dogmatic formulae. The Jesuits, conditioned by their theological training, tended to see it this way, and the Counter-Reformation dichotomy of Scripture and Tradition provided some useful points of comparison. But the notion of orthodoxy in Confucianism was far more elusive than in the structured authoritarian Western ecclesiastical system. On the other hand, the political turmoil of the last days of a declining dynasty gave peculiar point and urgency to the social and politico-ethical theories which had always been the focus-point and strength of Confucianism. Late Ming Confucianism should not be accused of dilettantism or sterile intellectualism. As de Bary points out, their apparent 'escapism' was a desperate attempt to escape from very real dangers.²⁰

In the pages that follow I shall attempt no more than a few broad and tentative generalizations about the nature of the intellectual world Ricci and his companions entered. I claim no originality for them. They are derived from a necessarily superficial study of standard works on the period, both contemporary, like Huang Tsung-hsi's Ming Ju Hsüeh-an; and modern, such as Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's works on the early Ch'ing,²¹ Jung Chao-tsu's studies of Ming thought,²² and, for a Marxist perspective, Hou Wai-lou's Chung-kuo tsao-ch'i ch'i-meng ssu-hsiang shih. I owe more perhaps to the first-fruits of the revived interest in Ming studies amongst

²⁰ 'Introduction' to Self and Society in Ming Thought, p.3.

²¹ The appropriate sections of his Chung-kuo chin san-pai nien hsüeh-shu shih, and his Ch'ing-tai hsueh-shu kai-lun.

²² Ming-tai ssu-hsiang shih, and his work on Lin Chao-en, T'i-ch'ang san-chiao-ho-i te Lin Chao-en.

Western scholars, such as the Ming Thought Conference of 1966²³ and the studies of Ming government edited by C.O. Hucker.²⁴ And most of all, I gratefully acknowledge my debt to Sister Julia Ching for constant encouragement and stimulating exchanges, as well as access to her work in progress on Wang Yang-ming. She has convinced me anew of the difficulties of applying Western categories to Chinese realities and of the complexity and originality of Ming Confucianism.

Ming Confucianism was dominated by the ideas of the two great thinkers, Chu Hsi (1130-1200) and Wang Yang-ming (1472-1528), and their respective schools. We should not, I think, exaggerate the gulf between the two schools, nor imagine that it was impossible for any individual Confucian of the late Ming to be simultaneously influenced by both schools. The Ch'eng-Chu school's emphasis on scholarship and metaphysical systems, and the Lu-Wang school's emphasis on moral cultivation, were part of the common heritage of Ming scholars. When the Jesuits in their polemical writings objected to the 'atheism' or the 'Buddhizing' tendencies of modern Confucianism, they were not seeking to drive a wedge between the schools, but attacking what they regarded as a common and disastrous departure from primitive Confucianism.

While the extent and nature of the Neo-Confucian debt to Buddhist metaphysics and Buddhist, especially Ch'an, practices is too complex a question to discuss here, it does seem reasonable to regard the Lu-Wang school as more 'Buddhist' than the Ch'eng-Chu school. It was within the radical wing of the Wang Yang-ming school that the syncretistic 'combined practice of the Three Teachings' (san-chiao chien-hsiu) developed.²⁵ Professor Liu Ts'un-yan has shown how this attitude was implicit in Wang Yang-ming's own thought,²⁶

²³ Published as Self and Society in Ming Thought.

²⁴ Chinese Government in Ming Times, New York, 1969.

²⁵ v. Tadao Sakai, 'Confucianism and Popular Educational Works' in de Bary, Self and Society in Ming Thought, pp.338,344.

²⁶ Liu Ts'un-yan, 'Taoist Self-Cultivation in Ming Thought', in de Bary, Self and Society in Ming Thought, pp.316-318 cf. de Bary's Introduction, pp.22-3.

but it reached its fullest development precisely in the period when the Jesuits began their work in China.²⁷ Li Chih's favourable opinion of the Jesuits was not reciprocated, largely, it would seem, because of his Buddhist leanings and because of 'the new sect he had created',²⁸ presumably a reference to his adherence to the 'Three Teachings'.²⁹ On the other hand, the Tung-lin Academy, whose connections with the Jesuits we shall examine shortly, were generally opposed to Wang Yang-ming's school on grounds both of eclecticism and Buddhist tendencies. Ku Hsien-ch'eng's manifesto of 1604³⁰ stresses the dangerous tendencies in Wang Yang-ming's thought, its 'recklessness',³¹ its impracticality, its indiscriminate use of Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist literature. The Confucian scholar must know his real nature which is good rather than indifferent as Wang Yang-ming claimed; he must have a firm will, venerate the classics, and scrutinize his motives.³² This very conservatism,³³ however, with its reference to the Ch'eng-Chu school as arbiter in interpretation of the classics and Confucian books,³⁴ was an obstacle to any attempt at reinterpreting the Confucian tradition.

²⁷ See, for example, Jung Chao-tsu, T'i-ch'ang san-chiao-ho-i te Lin Chao-en, Peking, 1948, which deals with Lin Chao-en (1517-1598) and his 'Three Religion Sect' (san-chiao ch'eng-tsung) which proclaimed 'the unity of the three teachings' (san-chiao ho-i); Liu Tsun-yen's study, 'Lin Chao-en (1517-1598), the Master of the Three Teachings' T'oung Pao, LIII, 1967, ff.253-278, not only establishes the extent of Lin's influence, but traces the history of the 'Three Teachings' concept back through preceding dynasties.

²⁸ Fonti Ricciane, N551, I, p.67.

²⁹ See de Bary, 'Individualism and Humanitarianism in Late Ming Thought', in Self and Society in Ming Thought, esp.pp.210-212.

³⁰ Tung-lin hui-yueh, in Kao T'ing-chen (Ed.), Tung-lin shu-yüan chih, Taipei, 1968 ed., II, chuan 2, 1a-14b.

³¹ v. C.O.Hucker, 'The Tung-lin Movement of the Late Ming Period' in J.K.Fairbank (Ed.), Chinese Thought and Institutions, Chicago, 1957, p.145.

³² Tung-lin shu-yuan chih, II, chuan 2, 4a-8b, listing the 'four essentials' (ssü-yao).

³³ Ku Hsien-ch'eng himself, while aware of the dangers of a conservative position, chooses it as the lesser evil. See Hucker, 'Tung-lin Movement', p.145.

³⁴ Tung-lin shu-yuan chih, II, chuan 2, 7b-8a, 45a.

The Jesuits, then, found no natural allies in their attempt to selectively utilize Confucianism in the service of Christianity. Their attacks on the Buddhists found ready ears, as did their stress on good morals and respect for the classics. But there were aspects of their teaching that repelled both the Ch'êng-Chu traditionalists and the Wang Yang-ming school, while their opposition to syncretism cut them off from the adherents of the 'Three Teachings', yet the very diversity of late Ming schools was in their favour. Provided they did not reject out of hand the whole Confucian tradition, nor flamboyantly proclaim their unorthodoxy - perhaps Li Chih's fundamental mistake³⁵ - they could expect to get at least a hearing. Paradoxically, under the 'foreign' Manchu dynasty, the question of the orthodoxy of the T'ien-chu-chiao became a more serious issue than it had ever been under the Ming.

When Matteo Ricci, in the chapter of his Storia devoted to Chinese religions, was attempting to find the word which would best describe Confucianism, he finally lighted on 'academy': 'it is properly an academy, instituted for the good government of the state'.³⁶ This alerts us, I think, to a most important feature of Ming intellectual history, and to the sort of contacts the Jesuits had with Confucianism. Apart from the Confucianism of the schools, i.e. of the examination system, which was rigidly orthodox and repetitively traditional,³⁷ there were a large number of learned societies, some government inspired, most private, which both encouraged independent

³⁵ See de Bary's account of the reasons for Li Chih's 'martyrdom' and subsequent bad reputation in Self and Society in Ming Thought, pp.214-220.

³⁶ Fonti Ricciane, N181, I, p.120.

³⁷ For the views of the near contemporary and great authority on the Ming, Huang Tsung-hsi, on the defects of 'examination Confucianism', see his Ming-i tai-fang lu, and the summary and comments by de Bary in 'Chinese Despotism and the Confucian Ideal: A Seventeenth Century View', in Fairbank, Chinese Thought and Institutions, pp.180-184.

thought and provided a base for political and social criticism. They varied enormously both in the way they were formed and functioned, and in their political activism.³⁸ What they had in common was their respect for learning, encouragement of discussion and debate, and the possibility of support for new developments within the old traditions. Both Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming had been 'academy men',³⁹ and it was within academies rather than in the official schools that what de Bary calls the 'individualism and humanitarianism' of Ming thought was able to flourish.

Ricci's reference to the concern of the academies 'for the good government of the state' is particularly significant. The most active of late Ming academies in political matters was the Tung-lin Academy, so active that the men associated with it received the opprobrious title of 'Tung-lin Party'. There is considerable doubt as to the accuracy of this label. Huang Tsung-hsi dismissed it as an invention of its enemies, and claimed that they should rightly be regarded as 'scholars' forming an academy for scholarly purposes only.⁴⁰ Heinrich Busch, whose study of the Tung-lin Academy in Monumenta Serica is the most thorough account in a Western language,⁴¹ treads a middle course, seeing the Tung-lin shu-yuan, the Academy, as closely associated but not totally identified with the Tung-lin tang or Party.⁴² The political ideas of the Academy

³⁸ For details, and an account of government policy towards them, see J. Meskill, 'Academies and Politics in the Ming Dynasty', in Hucker, Chinese Government in Ming Times, pp.149-174.

³⁹ v. Meskill, 'Academies and Politics', pp.149-50, 156-159.

⁴⁰ Ming Ju hsüeh-an, ch.58, Ia, in the ssü-pu pei-yao ed. (the whole of chüan 58 is devoted to the Tung-lin hsüeh-an).

⁴¹ 'The Tung-lin Academy and its Political and Philosophical Significance', Monumenta Serica, XIV, 1949-1955, p.1-163.

⁴² See especially Section 3 of his study, 'Tung-lin and Politics', pp.42-66.

inspired members of the group who attempted valiantly but unavailingly to arrest eunuch influence and stem the tide of dynastic decay. But many supporters of the Party were not members of the Academy, at least not of the Tung-lin Academy.⁴³ Perhaps Charles Hucker's general label of 'Tung-lin Movement' is the best way to avoid the semantic problems and emotional overtones of the term 'Party' in traditional Chinese history.

We are not concerned here with the politics of the period, but solely with the alleged connection between the Tung-lin Academy and nascent Chinese Christianity. In this respect I have been unable to improve upon Busch's appendix on 'The Tung-lin Academy and the Catholic Church'.⁴⁴ The verdict must, I fear, be 'not proven'. We can find mutual friends of the missionaries and the Tung-lin leaders, Ku Hsien-ch'eng and Kao P'an-lung.⁴⁵ Yang T'ing-yün, one of the 'three pillars of the church' appears twice in the records of the Academy, once in a list of benefactors⁴⁶ and once as the writer of a letter praising the Academy and its activities and soliciting a donation from his examiner Sun Chi-kao, who was also an acquaintance of Ku Hsien-ch'eng.⁴⁷ We can associate the Jesuits with some of the tendencies of some members of the Academy, for example the criticism of Sung Neo-Confucianism on historical grounds.⁴⁸ What we cannot do, in the present state of the evidence, is establish direct influences either way.

⁴³ v. Busch, 'Tung-lin Academy', p.61.

⁴⁴ Appendix II to his article, pp.156-163.

⁴⁵ v. Busch, 'Tung-lin Academy', pp.159-160.

⁴⁶ Tung-lin shu-yüan chih, II, ch.I, 4a - he is recorded as making two gifts of money, under his hao of Ch'i-yüan.

⁴⁷ See his 'Letter to Sun Po-t'an' in Tung-lin shu-yüan chih, VII, ch.17, 3a.

⁴⁸ See Busch, 'Tung-lin Academy', p.163.

The only substantial piece of evidence for such a connection is a passage in the History of the Society of Jesus by the Jesuit, Daniello Bartoli, a mid-seventeenth century work compiled from Jesuit records in Rome and elsewhere. Bartoli writes:

A few years before there had been founded in Vusuie (Wu-hsi), a city near Nanking, a famous academy of literati, who used to gather to discourse either on the moral virtues, or on the means most appropriate and useful for the government of the people. Its advantage was so obvious and the reputation which spread about it so splendid that in a short while it multiplied in other cities. The academicians of all (these academies) considered themselves as one and the same body; and there was hardly a mandarin of name in the four provinces where the talents and the studies flourished most, namely Nanking, Chekiang, Fukien, and Kiangsi, who was not a member of it. Our Doctors Leo (Li Chih-tsao), Paul (Hsü Kuang-ch'i) and Michael (Yang T'ing-yün) presided at some of them. The Fathers approved of the institute because of the great profit which the faith drew from it; for almost all these academicians felt great affection for the Christian law, which professes and teaches the same moral virtues which they, too, are set to practice - though we do so by more illustrious works and by another more noble teaching.⁴⁹

Bartoli goes on to describe the conflict between the 'Academicians' and the partisans of the eunuch Wei Chung-hsien, resulting in the defeat and disgrace of the 'Academicians' and leaving the Jesuits exposed to their enemies:

Because the Academy was so favourable to the doctrine of the Christian Law, we found ourselves, with few friends to whose patronage we could resort for defence, on the downward slope of yielding ground where a host of idolatrous enemies stood eager to push us from behind, some by means of printed books, others by means of memorials presented to the king.⁵⁰

If Bartoli is reliable in this regard, the links between the Academy and the mission were strong and mutual. In general my experience, as that of George Dunne,⁵¹ has been that

⁴⁹ Translated by Busch in 'Tung-lin Academy', p.156 cf. La Cina, Ancona, 1843 ed., IV, p.74 (Lib.IV, cap.XVI).

⁵⁰ Busch, 'Tung-lin Academy', pp.157-8 cf. La Cina, IV, p.80.

⁵¹ Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.372 - 'In the style of his time he does not cite his sources, but checking his narrative against letters found in the archives almost invariably bears him out'.

Baroli is an accurate and painstaking historian drawing his material from the letters and reports at hand. Where I have checked him against archival material, he has always been true to his sources. However I have found no independent sources for these claims about the Tung-lin movement, and in many respects Bartoli's account seems improbable, and in a few cases clearly wrong. In general, he appears to have seen all academies as part of one great movement of 'academicians'. While this fits in with Ricci's description of Confucianism as 'an academy' it overlooks the enormous diversity in aims, activities and ideology of the late Ming academies.⁵² They can hardly be regarded as 'one and the same body'. Yang T'ing-yün certainly had ties with the Tung-lin Academy, but there is no evidence for similar connections in the case of Hsü Kuang-ch'i or Li Chih-tsao, and the academies they 'presided' over, if they existed, do not seem to have been among the direct branches of the Wu-hsi academy.⁵³ Most important of all, the claim that 'almost all these academicians felt great affection for the Christian Law' is belied by the attacks of many Tung-lin adherents on Christianity.⁵⁴ My conclusion is that Bartoli, perhaps misled by his missionary sources, confused a specific movement, that centred on the Tung-lin Academy, with the general movement in the late Ming towards moral regeneration and political reform. The prominent Chinese Christians can certainly be connected with that general movement,⁵⁵ and, as Busch says, 'it can be safely said that some of the best friends of the missionaries belonged to the Tung-lin Party, that their most dangerous enemies were

⁵² See Meskill, 'Academies and Politics', pp.163-8, which demonstrates the lack of common features even among the Academies suppressed under Wan-li.

⁵³ y. Busch, 'Tung-lin Academy', pp.158-9, 161-2.

⁵⁴ Busch, 'Tung-lin Academy', pp.160-1.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Monika Übelhor's study of Hsü Kuang-ch'i's political ideas in the first part of her article, 'Hsü Kuang-ch'i und seine Einstellung zum Christentum', Oriens Extremus, XV.2, December 1968, pp.191-257.

opponents of the Tung-lin officials, and that for these and other reasons the sympathy of the Catholic officials lay with the Tung-lin Party'.⁵⁶ It is useless, however, to look to the teachings of the Tung-lin Academy either for traces of Jesuit influence or for the sources of their peculiar interpretation of Confucianism. This is to exaggerate out of all proportion the significance of both the Jesuits and the Tung-lin movement in late Ming intellectual life. Henri Bernard-Maitre's picture of the Tung-lin Academy as Ricci's point d'appui, and Ricci's teachings as a sort of touchstone for late Ming philosophy in general,⁵⁷ does not seem to be borne out in the records of the period. If, as he alleges, 'all the literati of the late Ming, more or less consciously, took up a position in regard to the doctrines of Father Matteo Ricci',⁵⁸ it is strange indeed to find so many of them silent about Christianity, and the issues raised by Ricci.

A more accurate assessment of the Jesuits' position would be to see them as playing a minor role on the fringes of the intellectual life of the time. They attracted the attention of the less orthodox, perhaps one should say the more original, thinkers of the time both by their science and their religious teaching. The latter, with its characteristic interpretation of Confucianism, attracted some attention, and convinced a small but not uninfluential group. The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, to friend and enemy alike, did not appear wholly foreign. It found a place within a whole range of competing 'revisionist' interpretations of Confucianism. In some respects it was more traditionalist than many of its rivals, stressing the authority of the ancient texts as against the Sung commentators, and the pure doctrine of Confucius as opposed to the Buddhist-influenced Neo-Confucians. On the

⁵⁶ Busch, 'Tung-lin Academy', p.159.

⁵⁷ Bernard(-Maitre), Ricci, II, p.173.

⁵⁸ Ricci, II, p.173.

other hand it offered religious consolations and a religious world-view to those concerned with 'spiritual cultivation' as well as 'the investigation of things'. The variety of responses to the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism is a measure of the variety of Ming Confucianism itself.

II. THE CHRISTIAN CONFUCIANS

There is a tendency amongst historians, both Chinese and Western, to explain away the 'Christian Confucians' as imperfect Christians attracted by Jesuit science, misled by Jesuitical 'trickery', using the Jesuits for the advancement of their own careers. K.M.Panikkar, for example, describes the whole history of the Jesuit mission in China as 'no more than a sordid intrigue',⁵⁹ based on a deliberate underplaying of basic Christianity, and a concealment of their real intentions.⁶⁰ We have already seen enough of the early Jesuit writings in Chinese - written, it should be pointed out, in collaboration with the very Chinese Christian scholars alleged to have been kept in ignorance of Christian doctrines⁶¹ - to see the absurdity of this claim. These Chinese Christians wrote Prefaces to works of Christian doctrine, and in some cases wrote their own works on Christianity. The latter tended to be works of apologetics rather than treatises of theology, but this is understandable when it is recalled that they were laymen in an age when, even in Europe, theology was regarded as the exclusive province of the priest. Even if one accepts, as I do not, the label of 'public Christians, private Confucians' as applied to men like Hsu K'uang-ch'i, it must be admitted that their Christianity was public, and that

⁵⁹ Asia and Western Dominance, London, 1955, p.411.

⁶⁰ See Pt.VII of Asia and Western Dominance. Apart from several serious factual errors e.g. the claim that the Jesuits in the early period of their mission never mentioned the subject of religion, did not preach the crucifixion etc., Panikkar shows an insensitivity to the realities of traditional Chinese society. The normal social amenities become 'cringing and kow-towing to the great' (p.392) - who, it might be added, cringed and kow-towed back - the Jesuits are simultaneously uninfluential and undermining the state (pp.397 and 403) and their attitude to Buddhism is attributed to sheer expediency (p.394).

⁶¹ See Hsü Tsung-tse, Ming Ch'ing chien Yeh-su-hui-shih i-chu t'i-yao, p.13, on the nature of this collaboration.

they found warrant in the Jesuits' presentation of Christianity for continuing many Confucian practices and attitudes.

A more judicious critique is to be found in Teng and Fairbank's China's Response to the West.⁶² It is couched in the form of a series of questions which I believe are crucial if somewhat tendentious. The first is:

What element in Christianity was responsible for its friendly reception by certain scholars and members of the imperial family...? Did their baptism mean acceptance of basic Christian tenets, or were these converts won over by rationalism (as opposed to faith), because they believed Christianity to be less unworldly than Buddhism or Taoism? Both Hsü (Kuang-ch'i) and Li (Chih-tsao) were also interested in Western guns and cannon, and on his part Matteo Ricci accepted some Chinese phraseology (e.g. Shang-ti), and admitted the validity of ancient Confucian teachings. Do these signs indicate that, rather than a fundamental conversion to a new faith, the Chinese acceptance of the Christian religion was only a manifestation of tolerance?⁶³

What I regard as tendentious in this presentation of the problem are the dichotomies established between faith and reason, acceptance of science and of religion, and, most fundamentally, between Confucianism and Christianity. This is to beg the question completely. To Ricci the lume naturale was not opposed to faith but its precondition and foundation; and Christianity complemented the truths, scientific, ethical and metaphysical, accessible to reason. He may, of course, have been mistaken in this belief, but it cannot be denied that it was the belief of him and many of his contemporaries. When he preached Christianity, this is what he was preaching, and if we regard the Chinese who accepted it as crypto-rationalists, then so were the Jesuits themselves.

⁶² Ssu-yu Teng and J.K. Fairbank, China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923, New York, 1963, Ch. II, b., 'The Early Jesuit influence in China', pp. 12-17.

⁶³ Teng and Fairbank, China's Response to the West, pp. 13-14.

Teng and Fairbank's second question is, in my opinion, a more serious one.

Why (they ask) is so little trace of Christian doctrine to be found in the writings of Chinese scholars in the subsequent century? If this is to be explained by the fact that government suppression cut off contact and the relatively few professed converts had few successors, we still face the question why the minds of the non-Christian scholars were not more permanently influenced by Western knowledge or ideas.⁶⁴

As for the Christians, it is not surprising to me to find that few of their writings mention Christianity.⁶⁵ There were at most periods in the history of the mission good prudential reasons for avoiding overt propagandizing. Most of their writings, as of European writers who also happened to be Christians, naturally dealt with non-religious subjects; and we do not find anything equivocal in a Christian writings on, say, mathematics, without raising questions of theology. Again, editors tended to select writings of general interest when making their compilations. A modern editor, for example, has carried off the tour de force of a lengthy compilation from the writings of Hsü Kuang-ch'i⁶⁶ with not a single item on Christianity.⁶⁷ I am much more surprised at the large number of surviving Christian writings by Chinese of the 17th, and 18th centuries, than at their paucity.

⁶⁴ Teng and Fairbank, China's Response to the West, p.14.

⁶⁵ Ch'ên Shou-i in his 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih' article, p.100, cites Ch'ü Shih-ssu, grandson of Ch'ü Ju-kuei, as an example of a Christian whose Christianity is not evident from his writings. However, neither the biography in Hummel's Eminent Chinese (pp.199-201), nor the brief remarks in the Fonti Ricciane, I, p.296, n., list any writings of his except a Preface to a work by Aleni. He was actively associated with the missionaries in a number of ways, especially during the last stand of the Ming. In no sense could he be regarded as a secret Christian.

⁶⁶ Wang Chung-min (Ed.), Hsü Kuang-ch'i chi, 2 vols., Peking, 1963.

⁶⁷ If one excepts an account of the discovery of the Nestorian Monument of Sian.

Nevertheless, Teng and Fairbank raise a serious issue when they comment on the comparative lack of influence of the Jesuits on Chinese thought. They quite rightly speak of 'Western knowledge or ideas'. It is not so much a question of Christianity alone, as of Western ideas in general, and presumably precisely qua Western. Perhaps we shall find some clues to this phenomenon in the various Chinese reactions to the Jesuits recorded later in this chapter. On the religious level, as Teng and Fairbank go on to point out,⁶⁸ it is the historical parallel of the reception of Buddhism which may provide a key to the explanation. It is not my task here to unravel what they call 'the knotty problem of the Chinese religious consciousness', but we have already seen⁶⁹ that syncretism was an important factor in the sinicization of Buddhism. I do not find 'tolerance' a sufficient explanation for the adherence of some Chinese scholars to Christianity, but the doctrinal intolerance of the Christian missionaries goes far to explain their limited success in China.

Successes there undoubtedly were. In the course of this work we will come across many examples of committed Chinese Christians. For the present I will concentrate on the three best known Christians of the first generation of the Catholic Church in China - Hsü Kuang-ch'i, Li Chih-tsao and Yang T'ing-yün - and consider in particular their relationship to Confucianism. Were they truly 'Christian Confucians', and on what grounds did they come to accept the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism?

HSÜ KUANG-CH'I

Hsü Kuang-ch'i (1562-1633), known to the Jesuits as Doctor Paul, was certainly the most illustrious of the Chinese Christians. He held many high offices including those of head of the Calendrical Bureau, President of the Board of Rites,

⁶⁸ China's Response to the West, p.14.

⁶⁹ In Chapter 1, section III.

and Grand Secretary.⁷⁰ His biography in the Ming shih⁷¹ mentions his connections with the Jesuits, and his writings on Western scientific methods, but not his adherence to Christianity. However, even a recent Chinese mainland publication, which in general avoids the issue by concentrating on his scientific works, and especially his treatise on agricultural methods, admits that he was 'completely sincere in his belief in Christianity'.⁷²

His own account of his conversion to Christianity may be found in a Preface⁷³ that he wrote for Ricci's Twenty-Five Sentences of 1605, some two years after his baptism. He states that he first became aware of the missionaries through a picture of the Lord of Heaven, and later, Ricci's map of the world. Then in 1600 he met Ricci himself in Nanking and 'decided that he was the most learned and accomplished gentleman in the whole world'. Ricci's whole life was given over to the worship of Shang-ti. He was a paragon of virtue, practicing purity, loyalty and filial piety. Kuang-ch'i describes his reaction to the meeting with Ricci as like the dissipation of clouds. 'I, who was always subject to doubt...found that I need no longer remain in uncertainty.'⁷⁴

⁷⁰ For details of his career see J.C.Yang's biography in Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period, pp.316-319; Fonti Ricciane, II, pp.250-1, n.3; Juan Yüan, Ch'ou-jên chuan, ch.32; Ming shih, ch.251; Hsü Kuang-ch'i chi, II, pp.549-580; Monika Übelhor, 'Hsü Kuang-ch'i', Oriens Extremus, XV.2, 1968, pp.217-230.

⁷¹ Ch.251 v. Hsü Kuang-ch'i chi, II, pp.550-551.

⁷² Po Shu-jen's article on 'Hsü Kuang-ch'i's Works on Astronomy' in Chu Ho-chên (Ed.), Hsü Kuang-ch'i chi-nien lun-wen chi, Peking, 1963, p.128.

⁷³ Strictly a Postface (pa) or colophon, but in the T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han edition of the Erh-shih-wu yen it appears as a Preface immediately after that of Feng Ying-ching (1965 ed., I, pp.325-329).

⁷⁴ v. T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, p.327; translated in Fonti Ricciane, II, pp.288-9, n.3.

Further details are supplied by Matteo Ricci in the Storia dell'Introduzione del Cristianesimo in Cina. After brilliant early successes in the examinations, Hsü failed the doctoral examination in 1598 and was classed seventh in the 1601 examination only to be eliminated by lot from the final list when the examiners discovered they had accidentally classed one more than the regular three hundred candidates. Ricci claims that Hsü saw this as the hand of divine providence because, despite his initial attraction to Christianity, he would probably at that period have taken a second wife in order to ensure the continuance of the family line⁷⁵ if his career had prospered. This would, of course, have been an obstacle to his conversion.

It seems that this disappointment, however interpreted, was crucial in Hsü's conversion. Ricci describes him as 'molto sconsolato' on his departure from Peking after his first failure,⁷⁶ and it was during this period that he began seriously to investigate Christianity, finally asking for baptism in 1603 in Nanking. By this time Ricci was in Peking but Father Giovanni de Rocha gave Hsü Kuang-ch'i the manuscript of Ricci's Dottrina Christiana (T'ien-chu chiao-yao) and of the T'ien-chu shih-i, which apparently completed the process of conversion.⁷⁷

The Storia attributes some role in Hsü Kuang-ch'i's conversion to a dream he had after meeting Ricci in Nanking in 1601, which he later interpreted as a revelation of the Trinity.⁷⁸ It appears that the Jesuits played down the

⁷⁵ Fonti Ricciane, N680, II, pp.252-3. Ricci points out that Kuang-ch'i had only one son, Hsü Chi (Lung-yü), who was at that time childless. Later Hsü Chi, who was himself baptized in 1608, had ten children, including five sons. Many of the Hsü family are mentioned in the records of the mission, but perhaps the most famous was Kuang-ch'i's grand-daughter, Candida. The case of Chü Ju-k'uei, discussed in the previous chapter, illustrates well the obstacle that polygamy posed to conversion.

⁷⁶ Fonti Ricciane, N681, II, p.253.

⁷⁷ Fonti Ricciane, N682, II, p.254.

⁷⁸ Fonti Ricciane, N681, II, pp.253-4.

significance of the dream⁷⁹ and it does not seem to have been decisive for Hsü. Rather it indicates the state of indecision and spiritual crisis he was undergoing, graphically described by him as 'a state of constant doubt' (p'ing-p'u i).⁸⁰ This seems to have been more than a temporary phase, a mere reaction to his examination failure. The Storia, having praised Hsü Kuang-ch'i's virtue and learning, describes him as having tried many schools in search of spiritual peace.

Seeing that in the sect of the literati little was spoken about the other life and the salvation of souls, he had taken up many masters of the sect of the idols and other sects which promised paradise after death; but with none of them did he remain satisfied.⁸¹

This spiritual quest is described in more detail by Aleni in his life of Ricci.

The ta-tsung-po Hsü Hsüan-hu,⁸² erudite and talented, was desirous of penetrating the mysteries of life and death (shêng-ssü ta-shih), but found the Confucians unable to explain their significance. He went thoroughly into the teachings of the Profound Learning School (hsüan-hsüeh) and the Ch'an Buddhists, and there was no famous teacher he did not seek out, but still he saw no solution to the mysteries of life and death, and his mind was not at rest. In the 28th year of Wan-li (A.D.1600) he came to Nanking, met Ricci, and absorbed his ideas.⁸³

Such an intellectual biography does not seem to have been as uncommon as it might appear from some accounts,⁸⁴ and we

⁷⁹ Fonti Ricciane, N681, II, p.254. Hsu is alleged to have said nothing of it in 1603 because 'he had heard from the Fathers that it was not good to believe in dreams', but later he was pleased to find that Ricci thought God sometimes revealed himself in dreams.

⁸⁰ Preface to Ricci's Êrh-shih-wu yen, T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, I, p.327. See also Fonti Ricciane, II, p.252, n.5.

⁸¹ Fonti Ricciane, N680, II, p.252.

⁸² Ta-tsung-po was the title of a Senior Vice-President of the Board of Rites (Li pu), an office to which Hsü Kuang-ch'i was appointed in 1629. Hsüan-hu was Hsü Kuang-ch'i's hao or courtesy title.

⁸³ Aleni's Ta-hsi Li hsien-sheng hsing-chi, quoted in Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, p.178.

⁸⁴ See de Bary's remarks on the Ming quest for 'enlightenment' and its depreciation by recent historians in the Introduction to Self and Society in Ming Thought, p.13.

can establish at least one source for such interest on the part of Paul Hsü. Hsü Kuang-ch'i's examiner in the 1597 Peking examinations was Chiao Hung,⁸⁵ whom Ricci had met in Nanking in 1599. Chiao was a friend and associate of Li Chih, interested in Ch'an Buddhism and in the 'Three Teachings' movement,⁸⁶ and Hsü Kuang-ch'i seems to have been for a time a disciple of his.⁸⁷ Certainly, the account of their meeting in Nanking in 1609 suggests a master-disciple relationship, or rather the rupture of such a relationship.

(Hsü Kuang-ch'i) came there (to Nanking) to visit and to console⁸⁸ one of the most famous literati of this kingdom, his master, by name of Chiao, who since he was an extreme partisan of the sect of the idols, reproved our Paul for having embraced a foreign teaching, and exhorted him to abandon it. However, knowing that it was useless to try to convince him, Doctor Paul did not wish to argue with him and politely changed the subject.⁸⁹

We may, then, regard Hsü Kuang-ch'i's history as a sort of pilgrim's progress, differing from that of most of his contemporaries only in its end, Christianity.

What was it in Christianity that attracted him and made it seem the answer both to his personal problems and the political crisis of the times?⁹⁰ On the personal level Hsü seems to

⁸⁵ Fonti Ricciane, II, p.250, n.3.

⁸⁶ Fonti Ricciane, N550, II, pp.65-66, and esp. p.66, n.I. See also Ming shih, Ch.288, 7b-10a; Huang Tsung-hsi, Ming Ju hsüeh-an, ch.35, 8b-12a; Jung Chao-tsu, 'Chiao Hung ch'í ch'i ssü-hsiang', in Yen-ching hsüeh-pao, 23, June 1938, pp.1-45.

⁸⁷ The Storia describes Chiao Hung as Hsü Kuang-ch'i's 'master' (Fonti Ricciane, N912, II, p.489). This may be simply a way of describing the traditional relationship between examiner and successful candidate, but Chiao's praise of Hsü (quoted in Fonti Ricciane, II, p.250, n.3) as a 'famous scholar and great Confucian' and their later meeting (described in Fonti Ricciane, N912) suggests a closer bond between them.

⁸⁸ Chiao Hung was in mourning for his wife and son (Fonti Ricciane, II, p.489, n.7).

⁸⁹ Fonti Ricciane, N912, II, p.489.

⁹⁰ I agree with Monika Übelhor's judgement that the Jesuits merely provided answers to questions which Hsü had independently been asking ('Hsü Kuang-ch'i', Oriens Extremus, XV.2, p.194).

have found in Christianity a way of reconciling the Chinese past with the present, of satisfying the pull of tradition and the needs of his soul. In a brief note entitled Jottings on the True Religion (chêng-tao t'i-kang) he describes the development of Chinese culture as a heroic venture, but one which wandered from the truth, from the Author and Cause of all. In the teachings of Confucius and Mencius there was some sketchy knowledge of him, but in the magical practices of the Taoists and the empty ceremonies of the Buddhists, mere deceit. What is needed is a return to the Source.⁹¹

In Christianity, or to be more precise, in the Christians - for in typical Chinese fashion Hsü looks to the lives of the Jesuits for confirmation of the teaching - he found the combination of high morality and religious absolute, orthodox tradition and universal truth, that he had been looking for. In his Apologia of 1616, he gives the reasons why he and other 'gentlemen and scholars' have accepted Christianity.

Truly they are all followers of the holy sages. Their way is completely orthodox, their conduct very strict, their learning very extensive, their associations very refined, their hearts quite pure, their views quite definite. In their own country they are all outstanding men. They have travelled from the West several thousand miles for this reason. In their country everybody devotes themselves to self cultivation by serving the Lord of Heaven, They had heard of the teaching of the Chinese sages and that everybody (in China) practices self-cultivation and serves Heaven. Their principles were in agreement. So they endured hardships and difficulties, underwent perils and disregarded dangers, and came (to China) to examine our orthodoxy. They wanted to make everybody good by declaring the meaning of the love of exalted Heaven for men.⁹²

This account of Christianity might be discounted as self-defence and face-saving on the part of Hsü, and it certainly stresses the points of similarity between Christianity and orthodox Confucianism. It is, however, couched in quite

⁹¹ Quoted in Fonti Ricciane, II, p.252, n.4.

⁹² Translated from the P'ien-hsüeh shu-kao, in T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, I, pp.22-23 cf. the translation by E.C.Bridgman, and (a slightly different) text in The Chinese Repository, XX, 1850, pp.119, and 127-8.

general terms, and when he goes on to specify the teachings of the t'ien-chu-chiao they do appear distinctively Christian in their totality and emphasis.

According to them, the service of Shang-ti is fundamental, and the salvation of body and soul⁹³ are essential. Sincerity, filial piety, compassion and love are to be practiced. The first step is repentance and reform, and shame and purification are the beginning of virtue. The true happiness of life in Heaven is the reward for doing good, while the eternal misery of Hell is the punishment for doing evil. All their commandments and injunctions are congruent with the laws of Heaven and with human nature. Their precepts are capable of persuading men to do good invariably and avoiding evil completely. What they say about the bounty of the Lord of Heaven producing, nourishing and preserving, and their teaching about rewarding good and punishing evil, is easy to understand and completely true, and sufficient to move the hearts of men and inspire in them the loving confidence and careful concern which flow from inner rectitude.⁹⁴

What Hsü has done in this passage is to link Christian revelation and Confucian morality.^{94a} The former becomes the foundation and motivation for the latter. Hsü Kuang-ch'i is not a private Christian and public Confucian, nor vice versa, but a public Christian and public Confucian. The two are complementary.

⁹³ Bridgman makes a distinction between 'the protection of the body and the salvation of the soul' which is unjustified in the text. Both his own text and that in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien read pao-chiu shen-ling which links body (shên) and soul (ling) in a way consonant with both Confucian and Christian humanism.

⁹⁴ P'ien-hsüeh shu-kao, p.23 cf. Bridgman, p.119.

^{94a} Another example of this approach is the Wei-t'ien ai-jên chi-lun (1628) of (Philip) Wang Chêng. Wang Chêng's biographers, J.C. Yang and Wang Chung-min, interpret this work as syncretistic in aim - 'that Confucianism and Christianity might be merged into one system under the common principle "Respect Heaven and Love Mankind" (Hummel, Eminent Chinese, pp.808-809). On close examination, however, the aim of the work seems rather to demonstrate that Christian theology gives new depth and significance to Confucian ethical precepts. On Wang Chêng, see also Fang Hao, 'Wang Chêng chih shih-chi chi ch'i lun-ju hsi-yang hsüeh-shu chih kung-hsien', in Fang Hao liu-shih tzü-ting kao, I, Taipei, 1969, pp.319-378.

Hsü Kuang-ch'i's programme of complementing Confucianism and opposing Buddhism is well illustrated by the 1616 Apologia. Buddhism is rejected as based on false teaching, incompatible with the ancient traditions of China, 'placing Buddha above Shang-ti, and opposing the commands of the ancient rulers and kings, sages and worthies; while Christianity 'is truly able to implement good government, assist Confucianism and reform Buddhism'.⁹⁵ Buddhism and Taoism have corrupted good government and morals, and 1800 years⁹⁶ of Buddhism in the East have seen no improvement. On the contrary, 'where one law has been enacted, a hundred irregularities have resulted; the desire for good government has been frustrated, and schemes for reform of government have proved unavailing'.⁹⁷

The last passage brings us to an important aspect of Hsü Kuang-ch'i's adherence to Christianity, its political implications. A contributor to a symposium to celebrate the fourth centenary of Hsü's birth, published in Peking in 1963, see this as the prime aim of his life.

When he saw the corruption of the government of the time, the conniving, the social unrest, and the extremely dangerous situation on the borders, he sought means of changing the condition of society. He aimed at a peaceful, prosperous society in which the state would be strong and the people happy. Consequently, he was deeply impressed by the teachings of the Wang Yang-ming school, because it was primarily concerned with political morality. He considered that religion could help people to be good, and could be of use to the government. Hence the hypocritical efforts of the Jesuits, their doctrines about what they called serving Heaven and loving men, and even more their useful scientific methods, persuaded Hsu Kuang-ch'i to spread their erroneous teachings.⁹⁸

Leaving aside the imputation of deceit on the part of the Jesuits, I think this is a fair if incomplete statement of Hsu's position. It is clearly one-sided in ignoring the appeal to personal salvation in the teachings of both the

⁹⁵ P'ien-hsüeh shu-kao, p.25; cf. Bridgman, p.120.

⁹⁶ The figure is interesting since, unlike Ricci's computation of the comparative chronology of Buddha and Christ, it appears to give Buddha precedence.

⁹⁷ P'ien-hsüeh shu-kao, p.24; cf. Bridgman, p.120.

⁹⁸ Po Shu-jen, in Hsü Kuang-ch'i chi-nien lun-wen chi, p.139.

Wang Yang-ming school and Christianity. But for the upright Confucian scholar-official, 'self-cultivation' and good government were not separable in theory or practice. It is the emphasis on this aspect of Hsü's life that makes Monika Übelhor's recent study of his career⁹⁹ so much more satisfactory than earlier treatments in Western sinological literature. He was not just a Christian who happened to be an official and political reformer, but a Chinese scholar who found in Christianity confirmation and motivation for his political activities. In this, as in other respects, Hsü Kuang-ch'i appears the archetypal Confucian Christian.

LI CHIH-TSAO

Li Chih-tsao, like Hsü Kuang-ch'i, was an official. His political and scholarly allegiances were in many respects similar to Hsü Kuang-ch'i's but the offices he held were less exalted and mostly concerned with technical matters - waterways, animal breeding, the calendar.¹⁰⁰ The reasons for his initial attraction to the Jesuits seem to have been scientific and he is usually regarded as foremost in the introduction of Western science.¹⁰¹ He became interested first in Ricci's map which contrasted so strongly with a Map of the World he himself had prepared as a young man.¹⁰² Li collaborated with Ricci on

⁹⁹ Her two-part article in Oriens Extremus, XV.2, 1968, and XVI.I, 1969, is based on her Hamburg doctoral dissertation of 1967. The full title of the dissertation reveals the emphasis of her study: 'Hsü Kuang-ch'i (1562-1634) und seine Einstellung zum Christentum - Studie zur geistigen Haltung der chin. Beamtenschaft Ende der Ming Dynastie'.

¹⁰⁰ For details of Li's career, see Hummel, Eminent Chinese, pp.452-4; Fonti Ricciane, N168, II, pp.168-171, n.3; Juan Yuan, Ch'ou-jên chuan, ch.32 (pp.387-390 of the Shanghai, 1955 ed.); Fang Hao, Li Chih-tsao yen-chiu, Taipei, 1966.

¹⁰¹ Juan Yüan, the nineteenth century historian of Chinese science, in his biography of Li Chih-tsao, says 'Chih-tsao was the first to introduce to China the knowledge of Western books and instruments. Hsü Kuang-ch'i and Li T'ien-ching were later' (Ch'ou-jên chuan, p.390).

¹⁰² Fonti Ricciane, N628, II, pp.169-170.

the third edition of the map which appeared in 1602, and later on several scientific works. He also produced a second edition of Ricci's T'ien-chu shih-i with an adulatory preface by himself in 1607.

The reader of this preface would, I think, assume that Li Chih-tsao was by this time a Christian. In fact, he was not baptized till March 1610, a few months before Ricci's death. The reason for this delay is given by Ricci in the Storia.

He is well instructed in the things of our Holy Faith, and decided to be baptized, but the Fathers discovered that there was an impediment in his polygamy. He has promised that he will get rid of it. However, he holds our Holy Religion to be true, and preaches it and exhorts others to it, as if he were a Christian. And already many of his household have received holy baptism and are amongst the best Christians of them all.¹⁰³

It might appear from this account that Li Chih-tsao's approach to Christianity was independent of the Jesuit views on Confucianism. However, Li was as much of a Confucian scholar as Hsü Kuang-ch'i. Among his major works, besides the great collection of Western religious and scientific works, the T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han of 1629, was a history in 10 chüan of the rites to Confucius (the P'an-kung li-yüeh shu)¹⁰⁴ which was included in the great Ch'ing Ssü-k'u ch'uan-shu collection; and a commentary on the Confucian Four Books.¹⁰⁵ There is no reason for regarding the constant references to Confucian teachings in his prefaces to Christian works as merely conventional, although we cannot document the precise role of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism in his conversion.

A most interesting statement of Li Chih-tsao's position vis-à-vis Confucianism is the preface he contributed to an account by his friend Yang T'ing-yün of the latter's conversion to Christianity, the Record of the Holy Water (of Baptism):

¹⁰³ Fonti Ricciane, N632, II, pp.178-9.

¹⁰⁴ See Fonti Ricciane, p.170n., and Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p.454.

¹⁰⁵ Ssü-shu tsung-chu v. Fonti Ricciane, II, p.170n.

This teaching (Christianity) reveres the Lord of Heaven, while we Confucians speak of acknowledging Heaven, serving Heaven, serving Shang-ti. These phrases do not refer to ti but to a 'Lord' (chu). Chu Hsi says, 'Ti is the lord and master (chu tsai) of Heaven', and so he who is said to give birth to heaven, to give birth to earth, and to give birth to all things is their lord, and the most accurate name for him is 'Lord' (chu)...There is a common saying that the main source of the Way is Heaven. If the Way of the Western sages is quite different from Buddhism and Taoism, it is rather similar to the precepts of Yao, Shun, (The Duke of) Chou and Confucius. Compared with the Buddhists and Taoists, it is contemporaneous with the Hundred Schools and the Nine Traditions, and does not contradict our great Chinese (thinkers); and compared with the teachings of Yao, Shun, (the Duke of) Chou and Confucius, there are not a few points of comparison with what the six classics say about Heaven and Shang-ti. What is there to be suspicious of here?¹⁰⁶

The context of these remarks is avowedly apologetic, but however specious the textual arguments, the impression is one of a simultaneous commitment to Confucianism and Christianity. The two are not simply identified but related through their language and key concepts in terms of a single truth, or in western terms, a theology drawing on two traditions. As Li said in his Preface to Ricci's T'ien-chu shih-i, 'In the East and the West minds and ideas are the same. Where there are differences, when you examine the contexts of the sayings and passages you find the differences come from the editors'.¹⁰⁷ Truth is one and indivisible, whether found in Confucius or Christ.

YANG T'ING-YÜN

Yang T'ing-yün, or 'Doctor Michael', provides yet a third variant on the theme of Confucian and Christian. He, too, was a chin-shih or holder of the highest degree, a scholar from a well-known scholar-official family, and filled many important offices including those of Viceroy of Szechwan

¹⁰⁶ Preface to the Shêng-shui chi-yen, quoted in Ch'en Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih...', p.98.

¹⁰⁷ T'ien-chu shih-i, Preface, 3b.

and Kiangsi, and Vice-Governor of Peking.¹⁰⁸ His published writings included works on textual interpretation and the first collection of writings on Western science and religion, the Chüeh-chiao t'ung-wen chi, of 1615. It would appear, however, that Yang's approach to Christianity was neither through science nor a desire for political and social reform (although he was, as we have seen, a Tung-lin Academy supporter). Yang was first and foremost a religious man, a seeker after truth.

In a work by the Jesuit Giulio Aleni, the Chinese title of which has been suggestively rendered as The Spiritual Odyssey of Yang Ch'i-yüan,¹⁰⁹ Yang's quest for religious enlightenment is described in detail. He had met Matteo Ricci in Peking, and discussed philosophical questions with him.¹¹⁰ In 1609, after some 17 years of distinguished government service, he retired to his native Hangchow, where, at the Governor's invitation, he lectured on philosophy. He seems to have been deeply interested in Buddhism at this period, holding discussions with Ch'an Buddhist monks and contributing to their monasteries. He also founded a philosophical society which he called characteristically the Truth Society (chên-shih she). In 1611, Li Chih-tsao, a relative of Yang's, returned to Hangchow to observe the period of formal mourning on the death of his father. Li invited the Jesuits to Hangchow, and at his house Yang T'ing-yun met Lazzaro Cattaneo, Nicholas Trigault and the Chinese Jesuit brother, Sebastian Fernandez (Chung Ming-jen).

108 See the biography by Wang Chung-min in Hummel, Eminent Chinese, pp.894-5; Fonti Ricciane, III, pp.13-14, n.3; and Yang Ch'ên-o, Yang Ch'i-yüan hsien-sheng nien-p'u, Shanghai, 1946.

109 Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.114. The work was entitled Yang Ch'i-yüan hsien-sheng ch'ai-hsing shih-chi.

110 See the extract from his Preface to Ricci's Arithmetic in Fonti Ricciane, III, p.114n.

Aleni, whose account was drawn from Yang T'ing-yün himself, and put into Chinese by Ting Chih-lin, describes a series of discussions on Christianity held between Cattaneo and Yang at Yang's house, which lasted for nine days.¹¹¹ The issues which particularly bothered Yang are of great interest, since on the one hand, they show that the Jesuits made no attempt to water down the central dogmas of Christianity, and, on the other, they point to the areas where Chinese intellectuals found special difficulty. Yang's main problem was with the whole notion of the Incarnation, a God who became man, suffered and died. It is interesting to note that another friend of the Jesuits, Yeh Hsiang-kao, the Grand Secretary, who supported the Jesuits in many ways, encouraging their preaching, helping secure the Chiala burial-ground for Ricci, praising Aleni as 'the Confucius of the West', found this an unsuperable obstacle.¹¹² As he wrote in a poem in praise of Aleni,

I believe that Heaven and Earth are infinite,
This is enough to satisfy my weak intellect.¹¹³

Yang T'ing-yün did not succumb to this Confucian agnosticism but his acceptance was only after a long struggle. He embraced Christianity despite rather than because of his Confucian instincts. Once convinced, however, he had no reservations. In his Tai-i p'ien there is a full exposition of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and an account of the crucifixion of Christ. He accepts the Trinity as a revealed mystery, commenting, 'If you ask how there can be three persons who are one, even the cleverest tongue cannot describe it'.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Another account, presumably based on letters no longer extant, is given in Bartoli, La Cina, Lib.III, cap.XVIII, vol.III, pp.95-98 of the Ancona, 1843 edition.

¹¹² See Fonti Ricciane, II, pp.42-3, n.1.

¹¹³ Text and translation in Fonti Ricciane, II, p.42, n.1.

¹¹⁴ Tai-i p'ien, B.6a, p.593 of the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien edition, Taipei, 1965.

Yang, unlike Confucius, was prepared to speak about what he had not experienced.

Another question at issue was the status of the sages of China. In what sense could a Christian regard them as shêng, an ambiguous term used by Chinese Christians to translate the Western 'saint' but in Confucianism bearing more the sense of wise man, moral teacher, authoritative source of doctrine and model of behaviour? The difficulty here was that according to one, perhaps the dominant school of theological opinion at the time, they could not be regarded as saved, let alone in any sense models. The Jesuits generally tried to avoid the issue by concentrating on the value of the teaching of the 'sages', rather than on their personal salvation, and leaving the latter question open.¹¹⁵ We do not know precisely how Cattaneo satisfied Yang T'ing-yün in this regard, but apparently he was successful.

Yang's other main problem was much more practical. He had a concubine as well as a principal wife, and if he were to become a Christian, he would have to send her away. At first Yang tried to evade this and Aleni reports that he thought it unfair that the Jesuits would not make an exception for him as his Buddhist monk friends would have done, Li Chih-tsao, who had, just previously to this, done the same, was not sympathetic. 'That just goes to show', he said, 'that these Western gentlemen are not like the bonzes.'¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ In the Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi, Huang Chen records a conversation on this question with Aleni. When pressed about the fate of King Wen who, contrary to Christian teaching, had many wives, Aleni says hesitatingly, 'I fear that King Wen too has entered hell', but quickly adds, 'Let us talk about principles instead of personalities'. v. D. Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics in Seventeenth Century China', Church History, XXXVIII.2, 1969, p.231-2. Daniello Bartoli in La Cina, originally published in 1663, asserts that the Jesuits refused to regard Confucius as irreparably damned 'because the Holy Spirit has not revealed the damnation of any man and, as is clear from his own writings, (Confucius) disapproved of idolatry and recognized one sole God'. (Lib.I, Cap.LXXII, Ancona, 1843 ed., I, p.173). The date of this work, however, precludes its being taken as evidence for attitudes in the early part of the century.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Fonti Ricciane, II, p.178, n.3.

There is a notable lack of sympathy in the Jesuit sources for the unfortunate wife or wives affected by these conversions, although they usually insisted that generous provision be made for them. Once more, however, it is clear that conversion to Christianity was not taken lightly. It involved not just a readjustment of ideas and beliefs but a serious change in life-style. The private Christian could not remain the private Confucian, at least in all respects.

Yang T'ing-yün was baptised on Easter Sunday 1613, and from this date, till his death in 1627, spent most of his time in activities related to Christianity. He wrote several books on religious matters alone or in collaboration with the missionaries, as well as contributing Prefaces or stylistic improvements to other writings of the Jesuits. His major religious work was the Seven Victories (Ch'i k'ê), in which, in collaboration with Diego de Pantoia, he discussed the seven deadly sins and the seven virtues.¹¹⁷ He also wrote a series of polemical works against the Buddhists which display his knowledge of Buddhism as well as his antipathy to its tenets.¹¹⁸ They show a considerable extension of Ricci's arguments and provided material for later Christian controversialists. It is to the former Buddhist devotee more than to any other that we owe the decisive anti-Buddhist stance of the Christian church in China, and its insistence that Buddhism and Christianity have nothing in common. The owl and the phoenix not only did not sing together¹¹⁹ they screeched at each other.

¹¹⁷ Published in Li Chih-tsao's T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, Taipei, 1965 ed., II, pp.689-1126. Pantoia is described (p.717) as the 'compiler' and Yang T'ing-yün as 'revisor'.

¹¹⁸ They include the Tai-i p'ien of 1621, republished in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien, Taipei, 1965, pp. 471-631; the T'ien Shih ming-pien, and the Hsiao luan pu ping-ming shuo, both included in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, Taipei, 1966, I, pp.229-417 & 39-47.

¹¹⁹ The title of the Hsiao luan pu ping-ming shuo may be translated as 'The Owl and the Phoenix do not sing together'.

III. THE BUDDHIST REACTION

It may be useful to spend some time examining the Buddhist counter-attack on the Jesuits and their Christian collaborators before considering the Confucian reaction. This is necessary partly because the line between Confucians and Buddhists is not easy to draw in the late Ming¹²⁰ and partly because the Jesuits themselves exploited anti-Buddhist feeling amongst Confucians. Many men who considered themselves ju, or Confucian scholars, to our analytic Western minds appear clearly as Buddhist in orientation. They belonged to a social class whose prestige and power came to a large extent from their acceptance as orthodox Confucians, and, as long as they aimed at furthering their official careers, continued to appear publicly in that guise. To become a Buddhist monk, as Li Chih did, was a declaration that one was opting out of this official world. Private devotion, however, or a scholarly interest in Buddhist philosophy, was no bar to promotion.¹²¹

It is, then, not always possible clearly to distinguish between Buddhist and Confucian critics of the Jesuits. The difficulty is well illustrated by the most important collection of anti-Christian writings of the Ming dynasty, the Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi. The compiler, Hsü Ch'ang-chih, got most of his material from a Buddhist monk, Fei Yin, and the work contains attacks on the Jesuits from both a Confucian and a Buddhist point of view, as well as on common anti-foreign grounds.¹²²

¹²⁰ See K.S.Ch'en, Buddhism in China, Princeton, 1964, Ch.XVI, esp. pp.439-441, 445-447.

¹²¹ Ch'en, Buddhism in China, p.439, points out that among the twenty laymen listed as followers of the monk Chu-hung, a critic of Ricci, nine were chin-shih or 'Doctors', and two so prominent that they appear in the Ming shih. See also pp.447-8 of Ch'en's history on the 'Lay Movement in Buddhism' in the late Ming.

¹²² See the description of the contents of the Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi in Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp.219-220.

Even the avowed Buddhists use arguments based on the Confucian Classics and the Four Books, where it suits their purposes.¹²³ On the other hand, most of the first two chüan of the P'o-hsieh chi are devoted to the memorials of Shên Ch'ueh, Vice-President of the Board of Rites in Nanking, in 1616, against Christianity. Shên's position, and the arguments he presents, seem thoroughly Confucian, yet according to contemporary Jesuit sources one of his motives was friendship with a Buddhist monk who was worsted in debate by Hsü Kuang-ch'i.¹²⁴

What was crucial in determining the reaction of many, both Confucian and Buddhist, to the Jesuits, was precisely the Jesuit attempt clearly to distinguish the two schools. By driving a wedge between Confucians and Buddhists they hoped to, and did, attract sympathy in some Confucian quarters. Conversely, it made the Jesuits the prime target of the syncretists and Buddhist sympathisers. The most important of Ming attacks on Christianity is a work called the Collection for the Refutation of Heresy (P'i-hsieh chi)¹²⁵ by the lay Buddhist,¹²⁶ Chung Shih-sheng. In a preface by the monk Kao An, we find an ad hominem argument against the Jesuits. They are attempting to label Buddhism as heresy whereas it is they themselves who are unorthodox. Buddhism is the original truth which has been perverted into the 95 varieties of heterodoxy (wai-tao).

¹²³ See, for example, the third essay of the monk Chu Hung, summarized in Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', p.236.

¹²⁴ See Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.128; Bartoli, La Cina, Lib.III, cap. LXVI, vol.III, p.243 of the 1843 ed.

¹²⁵ Published in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsu-pien, Taipei, 1966, II, pp.905-960. On the reasons for the inclusion of an anti-Christian treatise in a collection of Christian works, see Fang Hao's Preface, *ibid.*, I, pp.29-30.

¹²⁶ He is described (p.909) as a chu shih, a term which means 'retired scholar', but also has the technical Buddhist sense of 'householder', lay Buddhist devotee. It seems certain from the context (the title of a letter to a Ch'an master) and from the contents of the work, that he was a committed Buddhist.

In our own day, the law of Buddhism itself has almost come to be regarded as heretical. Along come Li Ma-tou (Matteo Ricci), Ai Ju-lüeh (Giulio Aleni) and the like. They claim to come from the Great West. They take over the name of Confucians in order to conceal the truth, but really they are the Lord of Heaven Religion (t'ien-chu-chiao) or the Teaching of Heaven (t'ien-hsüeh). All the Buddhists refute and revile them, but still they circulate their slanders.¹²⁷

It is clear that the Jesuits had touched a sensitive spot. And the reasons for the sensitivity are revealed in a letter of approval for Chung Shih-sheng's book from the Ch'an master, Chi Ming.

Confucianism and Buddhism are two schools (chia). They are identical and yet different, different and yet identical. Only the wise man can fully understand this. It is not heretical (hsieh) to combine them together. Only the true Confucian is able to know Buddha and it is also true that only he who studies Buddhism can begin to know Confucianism.¹²⁸

For men of this persuasion, the Jesuits were preempting their own ground and setting themselves up as rivals in a competition for the attentions of Confucian scholars.

For those who opposed this syncretic tendency, however, the Jesuits might appear as allies. In the Storia Ricci recounts the discomfiture of the Buddhists at the Court, beginning with a memorial of the President of the Board of Rites, Feng Ch'i, in early 1602.¹²⁹ Feng Ch'i blames Buddhism for the decline in morals. The Buddhists, because of a certain similarity between their teaching and that of Confucius, have succeeded in seducing many of the literati. When we look at Chinese history we find that decline from the prosperity of the ancient period coincides with the introduction of Taoism and Buddhism, and some of the adherents of the two schools of Sung Confucianism have ended up by placing Buddhism above

¹²⁷ P'i-hsieh chi, Preface, Ia-b.

¹²⁸ P'i-hsieh chi, pp.911-912.

¹²⁹ Fonti Ricciane, N636, II, pp.184-7. The memorial is translated in the notes, pp.184-6.

Confucianism. Feng suggests a series of harsh measures to be applied against any official or examination candidate who reveals in his words or behaviour Buddhist tendencies. The result was a decree of the Emperor, dated 18 May, 1602, approving Feng's suggestion.

Anti-Buddhist measures of this kind are a recurrent feature of Chinese history.¹³⁰ What is interesting about Feng's memorial, however, is the historical argument which is similar in so many respects to Ricci's in the T'ien-chu shih-i. In the second chapter of the Ten Paradoxes (Chi-jen shih-p'ien), Ricci claims that Feng before his death in 1603, was on the point of becoming a Christian, and implies that his memorial against the Buddhists was due to his acceptance of Ricci's views on the supremacy of Shang-ti.¹³¹ Even if this claim is exaggerated, the Jesuits were obviously placing themselves firmly and publicly in the anti-Buddhist camp.

The Storia goes on to describe the involvement of two leading Buddhists, Ta Kuan and Han-shan, in a court intrigue and, with some relish, recounts their downfall: the death of Ta Kuan at the hands of the investigators and the banishment of Han-shan and his supporters.¹³² Again, Ricci sees these events as a victory for Christianity, and concludes his account.

Our Christians and our friends, who were at court, and others outside it, when they heard this news, noted that all had happened in favour of Christianity which then commenced to be preached at the court, the chief of the kingdom, where that sect (Buddhism) had for so many years hitherto flourished.¹³³

It is in such a context, intellectual and political, that we should place some of the expressions of appreciation for Christianity in late Ming literature. They do not necessarily

¹³⁰ See J.J.M.DeGroot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China, Amsterdam, 1903. For some necessary qualifications to DeGroot's thesis, see D. Bodde, China's Cultural Tradition, New York, 1957, pp.23-24.

¹³¹ T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, I, p.133.

¹³² Fonti Ricciane, NN637-639, II, pp.187-191.

¹³³ Fonti Ricciane, N640, II, p.191.

imply acceptance of the whole of the Jesuits' teaching, or even understanding of it, but merely a recognition of the value of the Jesuits' arguments against the Buddhists. Such, in my opinion, is a frequently cited¹³⁴ passage from Hsieh Chao-chih's Wu-tsa-tsu.

The Land of the Lord of Heaven is to the West of the Land of Buddha. Its people are very cultivated and the refinement of its scholars (ju) does not differ from that of China. There was a certain Li Ma-tou who came from this land, and took four years to arrive at the borders of Kwangtung. His religion honours the Lord of Heaven in the same way as Confucians honour Confucius and Buddhists the Buddha. One of his books is called 'The True Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven' (T'ien-chu shih-i) and it frequently makes comparisons with Confucianism but totally rejects the teachings of Buddhism and Taoism on 'Emptiness', 'Nothingness', 'Bitterness' and 'the Void'. I am very pleased with the things he says which are similar to Confucianism, since he persuades people to be sincere, and does not, like the Buddhists, use obscure and abstruse terminology to befuddle and frighten the common people.¹³⁵

For a man like Hsieh Chao-chih, Christianity could be tolerated because of its opposition to Buddhism, but it would never have occurred to him that his Confucianism needed complementing. Paradoxically, some sense of the deficiencies of the Confucian tradition, and a sensitivity to the spiritual values of Buddhism, seem to have been more likely to bring the Chinese scholar seriously to investigate Christianity, than uncompromising anti-Buddhism. The latter, at best, led to an alliance based on expediency, rather than understanding.

Whatever the considerations that led the Jesuits initially to an anti-Buddhist position - their Japanese experience, the zeal of converts from Buddhism like Yang T'ing-yün, their connections with Confucian reformers of Tung-lin variety - their encounters with leading Buddhists turned on major doctrinal issues. When Ricci disputed with the monk San-hui in Nanking in 1599, there was a head-on collision between the

¹³⁴ For example, by Ch'ên Shou-i in his 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui shih', p.107; and in translation, by Teng and Fairbank in China's Response to the West, pp.12-13.

¹³⁵ Wu-tsa-tsu, Ch.4, Ti-pu 2, section on the T'ien-chu-chiao, Shanghai, 1935 ed., I, pp.171-2.

monk's idealist epistemology and Ricci's Aristotelean realism;¹³⁶ between Buddhist monism and Christian theism.¹³⁷ Their philosophical presuppositions were so far apart that there was no possibility of fruitful debate. It is interesting to note, however, that both Ricci and San-hui regarded the main topic of conversation, the perennial Confucian debate as to whether human nature was good or evil, as irrelevant. Both were concerned with what to them was an even more fundamental issue, the nature of reality itself.¹³⁸ As Kenneth Ch'en notes, the Jesuits 'unerringly' chose Buddhism as their main rivals on this common battle ground.¹³⁹

Another eminent Buddhist monk with whom Ricci came into contact was Shen Chu-hung.¹⁴⁰ It is not absolutely clear whether Ricci actually met Chu-hung. The Pien-hsüeh i-tu which purports to recount an exchange between them was not published till 1629¹⁴¹ when it was included by Li Chih-tsao in his T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han. It has been argued¹⁴² that it was probably put into writing by Hsü Kuang-ch'i after 1615, which still leaves open the question whether they met face to face. Ricci is answering charges made against his T'ien-chu shih-i in a work by Chu-hung entitled Four Talks about Heaven from a Bamboo Window (Chu-ch'uang t'ien-shuo ssü-tuan) which

¹³⁶ Fonti Ricciane, N558, II, pp.76-7.

¹³⁷ Fonti Ricciane, N559, II, pp.77-79.

¹³⁸ See Fonti Ricciane, N559, II, pp.77-78.

¹³⁹ Ch'en, Buddhism in China, p.444.

¹⁴⁰ Chu-hung was his posthumous name. His original name was Shen Lien-chih. He is also commonly referred to as Yun-ch'i after the monastery near Hangchow over which he presided. For biographical details see Fonti Ricciane, II, p.306, n.I (with portrait on the opposite page); and Ch'en, Buddhism in China, pp.443-445.

¹⁴¹ Hsü Tsung-tse in his Ming Ch'ing chien Yeh-su-hui-shih i-chu t'i-yao, Taipei, 1958, p.120, claims, on the authority of Ricci himself, that the work was 'published' in 1609. Since he gives no reference I assume that this is an inference, unjustified in my opinion, from the text of the Pien-hsüeh i-tu itself.

¹⁴² See Fang Hao, Fang Hao liu-shih tzü-ting kao, Taipei, 1969, I, p.262.

must therefore have been published between 1603 when T'ien-chu shih-i appeared, and 1610 when Ricci died. A disciple of Chu-hung, Chang Kuang-t'ien, enraged by an epilogue to the Pien-hsüeh i-tu by Yang T'ing-yün, which claimed that Chu-hung had retracted his views on his death-bed, later argued that Chu-hung's essays on Heaven were not published till 1615 and that Ricci, therefore, could not have answered them. I suggest the simplest explanation is that Ricci and Chu-hung did not, in fact, meet; that Ricci had read, and commented on an earlier version of Chu-hung's essays on Heaven, which were later enlarged and published in Chu-hung's collected works under a different title;¹⁴³ that in 1629 the Pien-hsüeh i-tu which recorded Ricci's reply to Chu-hung was published and that Chang Kuang-t'ien, replying to this in 1635 in his Chêng-wang Chi, understandably overreacted and denied Ricci's authorship as well as attacking the arguments presented.¹⁴⁴

Chu-hung's essays, in their final form, were incorporated into the Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi, published around 1640, but their basic arguments remain the same as those discussed in the Pien-hsüeh i-tu.¹⁴⁵ Some of these are specifically Buddhist. In the first essay an attempt is made to prove that the Christian Lord of Heaven (t'ien-chu) is nothing more than a minor Buddhist deity, the Lord of the Tao-li Heaven (tao-li t'ien chu),¹⁴⁶ and as such but one amongst one thousand

¹⁴³ Chu-ch'uang san pi, 'Three Essays from the Bamboo Window', a curious title since in fact there are four points made, corresponding to the 'four points' (ssü-tuan) in the Pien-hsüeh i-tu.

¹⁴⁴ For an exhaustive discussion of this question, see Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp.232-5.

¹⁴⁵ The discussion that follows is based on Ricci's presentation of Chu-hung's arguments and on the summary of the Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi essays by Douglas Lancashire in his 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp.235-237.

¹⁴⁶ Svarga, who presides over Trayastrimśās, 'the heaven of the 33 devas'. See W.E. Soothill and L. Hodous, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, London, 1937, p.188.

million Lords of Heaven.¹⁴⁷ And in the second and fourth essays the Jesuits' attacks on transmigration and the total prohibition on killing living things are refuted.¹⁴⁸ In this case, Ricci argued on Confucian grounds that if transmigration were true one might inadvertently marry one's father or mother or take them as slaves, thus transgressing filial piety and right relationships, and that the prohibition on killing would prevent the carrying out of the prescribed ritual sacrifices. Chu-hung's reply, too, is on Confucian grounds. Divination should be employed to prevent improper marriages or employment of slaves, and vegetable sacrifices are preferred in the commentaries to animal victims. Again, in the fourth essay, Chu-hung invokes Confucian arguments against the Jesuits' theory of the immortality of the soul.

Since the soul continued to exist why did not the (sage kings) Yu, T'ang, Wen and Wu give at least one warning to the (later bad kings) Chie and Chou concerning their evil ways?¹⁴⁹

The Buddhist refuses to be cast as an opponent of 'Yao, Shun, Chou and K'ung'.¹⁵⁰ The whole of the third essay is devoted to the Confucian writings on Heaven (t'ien) which he contrasts with the innovations of the Jesuits. Ricci replies that it is not the words that matter but their meaning¹⁵¹ and repeats his argument about the Buddhist influence on later Confucian interpretations.¹⁵² This, however, does not really counter

¹⁴⁷ Pien-hsüeh i-tu in T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, p.651; Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', p.235. I suspect it was this same line of argument, misunderstood by the Jesuit, that the monk San-hui used when he told Ricci he accepted that the Lord of Heaven existed, but that 'non era cosa molto grande' (Fonti Ricciane, N558, II, p.76).

¹⁴⁸ Pien-hsüeh i-tu, p.664; Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp.236-7.

¹⁴⁹ Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', p.237.

¹⁵⁰ Pien-hsüeh i-tu, pp.643-4, 674.

¹⁵¹ Pien-hsüeh i-tu, p.673.

¹⁵² Pien-hsüeh i-tu, p.677.

the textual arguments of the Buddhist. Paradoxically, the third essay of Chu-hung is the strongest case made by any of Ricci's opponents against his interpretation of Confucianism, and certainly stronger than his specifically Buddhist arguments.

Other Buddhists represented in the Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi, as well as Chung Shih-sheng in his P'i-hsieh chi, concentrate on arguments against an incarnate t'ien-chu and a creator extrinsic to his creation. Both notions were, of course, repugnant to Buddhist metaphysics, which proceeded from totally different logical and systematic assumptions. In the supporting arguments, however, we find an attempt at reinterpreting the Confucian classics which is in many ways analogous to the Jesuits' own approach. Ju Ch'un, for example, rejects Ricci's arguments from the Shu ching¹⁵³ in favour of hunting, by claiming that Yu the Great controlled the floods in order to provide a haven for the animals, safe from hunters.¹⁵⁴ And if rebirth is not specifically mentioned in the classics it is there implicitly.¹⁵⁵

As Douglas Lancashire points out in his perceptive article on 'Anti-Christian Polemics in Seventeenth-Century China', sheer xenophobia and fear of foreign intrusion played a quite minor role in the Chinese reaction to the Jesuits in the late Ming.¹⁵⁶ The Chinese were too assured in their political isolation, too confident of their cultural superiority, to regard Christianity as a serious threat. One group in China, however, did see the Jesuits as a threat, and were in turn so regarded by the Jesuits - the Buddhists and Buddhist-influenced syncretists. They were rivals precisely in so far as they aimed at answering the same spiritual needs, at complementing Confucian humanism with 'religious' doctrines. The Jesuits sought to counter the Buddhists by labelling them 'foreign' and 'anti-Confucian', and the Buddhists tried to turn the same arguments against the Jesuits. What they had in common was a recognition of the need to reinterpret Confucianism in order to achieve purposes that went beyond Confucianism.

¹⁵³ See, for example, Legge, Chinese Classics, III, p.77, where Yu speaks of 'showing the multitudes how to get flesh to eat'.

¹⁵⁴ Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp.239-240.

¹⁵⁵ Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', p.240.

¹⁵⁶ 'Anti-Christian Polemics', p.241.

IV. THE CONFUCIAN REACTION

The vast majority of Chinese scholars of the late Ming who had contacts with the Jesuits were not committed Buddhists, nor did they become Christians. In the case of these men, whom we may call 'Confucians' in the sense already defined for the period, there was a wide spectrum of reactions, ranging from total rejection to qualified approval. They can be arranged in a variety of patterns as Ch'ên Shou-i, Chu Ch'ien-chih, Ch'ên Yüan, Fang Hao and others have done.¹⁵⁷ The patterns themselves are fairly arbitrary since they are often based on a brief passage in a literary miscellany, a memoir or a preface. I am not concerned here to characterize adequately any individual's position but simply to illustrate a few recurrent themes which illuminate late Ming thought as well as the Jesuits' approach to it. There is, as we would expect, no common Confucian interpretation of the Jesuits.

I exclude from the discussion those who recorded reactions were purely personal, i.e. responding to the man rather than to his teachings; and those interested purely in the Jesuits' scientific ideas. The non-Christians who wrote Prefaces to Jesuit writings must, I think, often be placed in the first class, even when they use Confucian categories to express their approbation. Wang Chia-chih, for example, in his Preface to Ricci's Chi-jen shih-p'ien, uses typically rhetorical language. Ricci, to reach China, had passed through places infested by crocodiles, dragons, sirens and man-eaters - exotic details probably drawn from Ricci's maps. He has adapted himself to Chinese ways, and is a paragon of virtue. 'His teaching', says Wang, 'respects the good, promotes the relationships, and serves Heaven, and his words never oppose

¹⁵⁷ Ch'ên Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih...', Ming shih lun-ts'ung, X, pp.67-123; Chu Ch'ien-chih, 'Yeh-su-hui tui-yü Sung Ju li-hsüeh chih fan-ying', ibid., pp.125-180; Ch'ên Yüan, 'Ts'ung chiao-wai tien-chih so chien Ming-mo Ch'ing-ch'u chih t'ien-chu-chiao', in Pei-p'ing t'u-shu-kuan kuan-k'an, VIII.2, 1934, p.1-31; Fang Hao, 'Ming-mo Ch'ing-ch'u t'ien-chu-chiao shih-ying Ju chia hsüeh-shuo chih yen-chiu' in Fang Hao liu-shih tzü-ting kao, I, esp. pp.219-229, and 'Ming-mo Ch'ing-ch'u lü-hua Hsi-jen yu shih-ta-fu chih chin-chieh', ibid., pp.255-272.

(the teachings of) Yao, Shun, (the Duke of) Chou and Confucius'. The account of that teaching, however, is restricted to the vague statement that there cannot be two Lords of Heaven, and concludes simply that Ricci is an extraordinary man.¹⁵⁸ There is no evidence of a real engagement with Ricci's ideas.

The question of the reception of Western science is a special issue which has been exhaustively treated elsewhere.¹⁵⁹ Some aspects of the reaction to Jesuit scientific ideas may be attributed to the Confucian value system. Several authors in the Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi invoke the Confucian depreciation of 'skills' and 'instruments' as against pure learning, and the emphasis on morality over utility.¹⁶⁰ These arguments, however, sound like special pleading, and the Jesuits were the last to divorce science from morality.

The real question at issue was the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. Were the Jesuits correct in claiming, as Chao Fu-chung puts it, that 'talk about the Lord of Heaven was different in words (ming) but the same in substance (shih).¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Text in T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, I, pp.111-113. See also extracts and comments in Ch'ên Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih', p.106, and a translation, or rather in many places a paraphrase, in the Fonti Ricciane, II, p.305, n.

¹⁵⁹ Especially in Joseph Needham's Science and Civilization in China. See also G.H.C. Wong, 'China's Opposition to Western Science during the late Ming and Early Ch'ing', Isis, LIV, March 1963, pp.29-49, and N.Sivin's comments, 'On "China's Opposition to Western Science during the Late Ming and Early Ch'ing"', Isis, LVI, 1965, pp.201-5. Wong's treatment of the reception of Western science is more reliable than his article on 'The Anti-Christian Movement in China: Late Ming and Early Ch'ing', Ch'ing-hua hsüeh pao (Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies), n.s.III.I, 1962, pp.187-220. Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp.232-5, demonstrates that Wong has confused the chronology of the anti-Christian writings. I would add to this critique Wong's defective understanding of the theological problems involved, for example, his attribution to the Jesuits of a Calvinist-style theory of predestination ('The Anti-Christian Movement', p.213, n.13).

¹⁶⁰ v. Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp.220-222.

¹⁶¹ T'ien-hsüeh shuo, in T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, I, p.II.

And could it be accepted that there were ways in which Confucianism required complementing or even explication?

Many examples could be cited of acceptance, in at least a superficial way, of the first proposition, by those who did not become Christians.¹⁶² The very fact that they did not take this step, however, immediately throws doubt on their position. There are, of course, many possible reasons for such behaviour, including intellectual acceptance of Christianity combined with hesitation over the social and domestic consequences of open adherence. But it is also quite possible that such supporters were reading into the Jesuits' works their own assumptions; that they, like the Jesuits, were 'interpreting in their favour whatever was left ambiguous in the writings' of their friends. Their basic reasons for support of the Jesuits may simply have been the utility to society of their ideas and instruments. Wang Ying-lin, Governor of Peking, in the inscription he wrote for Ricci's tomb at Cha-la,¹⁶³ mentions his teachings on 'the mysteries of life and death', but immediately moves on to discuss the usefulness to farmers of his calendrical reform, and to the people in general of his works on hydraulics. 'Who could say that this has been of little value to our China'.¹⁶⁴ The practical Confucian administrator was less inclined than the armchair Confucian theorist to despise the useful.

Another kind of usefulness some officials saw in the teaching of the Jesuits was its moral influence, especially as it affected ordinary people. Chou Ping-mu,¹⁶⁵ in his Introduction to the T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han edition of Ricci's Chi-jen shih-p'ien, compares Ricci's views favourably, not only with the diffuseness of the Buddhists and Taoists, but also with Confucianism which is too abstruse for the ordinary people.

¹⁶² See Ch'ên Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih', pp.105-110.

¹⁶³ Text and translation in Fonti Ricciane, III, Appendix II, pp. 9-19 cf. S. Couvreur, Choix de Documents, 3rd. ed., Ho-kien-fou, 1901, pp.525-533.

¹⁶⁴ Fonti Ricciane, III, pp.17-18.

¹⁶⁵ For a biographical sketch see Fonti Ricciane, III, p.12, n.3.

The learning of the West is based on improving the ordinary run of stupid people through the practice of its teaching, and it is capable of making the ordinary person understand, and helping everybody observe the precepts of Heaven. When we compare it (with Confucianism) we find them similar in some respects and dissimilar in others. Although the sacred works of our country are many, there are many men who grow evil, decline and cannot be roused from the time they are born to the time they die. How many are there who study them in their youth and when they are old still do not know their fundamental features? Now, I have received and studied this work once more, and its spiritual principles have become clear. If you examine it, how could you not be awakened; and if you ponder over it, how could you not be affected?¹⁶⁶

This is close to Hsü Kuang-ch'i's views on the social utility of Christianity, but Chou, unlike Hsü, does not seem to have thought that he personally had anything to learn from the Jesuits. The sanctions of belief in a future life were useful for the common people, but not necessary for the enlightened Confucian scholar. For a man like Chou Ping-mu, the Jesuit writings on 'deep mysteries' and 'the principles of primeval Heaven',¹⁶⁷ were merely intellectual curiosities with some points of contact with Confucianism, and some possible benefits to society. They might be savoured in an eclectic spirit, but did not constitute an invitation to go beyond the bounds of Confucian rationalism which 'puts people before spirits'.¹⁶⁸

This same Confucian rationalism was the reason why many rejected Christianity. The Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi contains many attacks on specific teachings of Christianity which are seen as incompatible with Confucian morality or Confucian tradition.¹⁶⁹ Underlying them all, however, is the rejection of the principles of interpretation employed by the Jesuits. Where the Jesuits interpret references to t'ien and Shang-ti

¹⁶⁶ Cited in Ch'ên Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih', p.106.

¹⁶⁷ Ch'ên Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih', p.105.

¹⁶⁸ Hsien min yü shen - Ch'ên Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih', p.105.

¹⁶⁹ See the analysis in Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp.222-232.

as confirming their own teaching, these authors see no need to read them in any but a neo-Confucian sense. Confucianism for them is Neo-Confucianism, the classics and their Sung commentators are not separable.¹⁷⁰ They do not reject the notion that the ancient texts have to be developed and interpreted, but the particular development and interpretation advocated by the Jesuits is unacceptable. Feng Ts'ung-wu, one of the Tung-lin leaders, in his Discussions in the Capital (Tu-men yü-lu), writes of the Lord of Heaven,

Of course we consider Heaven as Lord. But, on the other hand, we never talk exclusively of Heaven, without accepting and developing the heritage of Yao and Shun, because we want to follow in the footsteps of Confucius. To accept and develop the heritage of Yao and Shun and to want to follow Confucius - that is precisely the way to honour Heaven. Those people, however, put aside Yao and Shun, Confucius and Meng-tzu, and talk exclusively of the Lord of Heaven...Master Chang says: 'Our way is by itself sufficient; what business do we have to search elsewhere?' I also say: 'Our way is by itself perfect; what business do we have to search elsewhere?'¹⁷¹

Feng recognizes the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism for what it is, a highly selective use of the classics combined with a totally new, non-Chinese doctrine. Unlike many of his contemporaries he finds the Confucian Way still viable and feels no need to perfect it, and certainly not by equating it with a foreign mythology.

The last point, the foreignness of the Lord of Heaven religion, lies at the very heart of the Confucian reaction to the Jesuits. Even after nearly 1500 years of Buddhism in China, and its assimilation in so many respects, it could be and still was attacked as 'foreign'. No matter how thorough the utilization of Confucianism in the presentation of Christianity, its characteristic doctrines appeared as new and foreign, the two chief hates of a conservative Confucian. Huang Chen, one of the contributors to the Sheng ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi, compares the orthodox explanation of the classics with the barbarian superstitions of the Jesuits. How can

¹⁷⁰ See Lancashire, 'Anti-Christian Polemics', pp.225-7.

¹⁷¹ Translated from the Feng Shao-hsü chi, ch.15, 11a-b, in Busch, 'Tung-lin Academy', pp.160-1.

the Chinese 'heaven' be equated with the barbarian Jesus, Lord of Heaven? This is like comparing the twittering of a sparrow or the squeal of a mouse with the call of the phoenix.¹⁷² Huang makes no serious effort to refute the Jesuits on textual grounds. It is sufficient to demonstrate the foreignness of the new teaching to refute it.

The major attack on the nascent Christian Church of China in the Ming was the so-called 'Nanking Religious Incident' of 1616-17,¹⁷³ led by the Vice-President of the Nanking Board of Rites, Shên Ch'üeh. According to the Ming History the movement began as a reaction against the successful preaching of Alfonso Vagnoni who 'came to live in Nanking, and influenced many people by his preaching of the Lord of Heaven religion, ensnaring high officials, as well as ordinary people'.¹⁷⁴ Hsü Ju-k'o, who ordered the inquiry, is said in the Ming shih to have been motivated by dislike for Vagnoni and his companions 'bragging that their own land and its ways were far superior to China',¹⁷⁵ and the text of Hsü's memorial confirms the grounds of the attack as sheer anti-foreignism.

According to Wang Feng-su (Vagnoni) and the remnants of the Ricci clique, who teach the foolish ideas of the Lord of Heaven Religion, they have been living in China for twenty years, yet their beliefs are hundreds and thousands of years old. They do not give due reverence to Shang-ti, but say that he was born of a barbarian woman and according to a picture of him they have brought, he really looked like a doll. They do not revere the ancestors, and say it was not the ancient custom to do so; whatever the sacrifices and prayers we offer, they are no different to other men. They take our incomparable China and oppose it to their Great Western Land, as if

¹⁷² Quoted in Ch'ên Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui-shih', p.116.

¹⁷³ See Dunne, Generation of Giants, Ch.VIII, 'Typhoon', pp. 128-146; Chang Wei-hua, 'Nan-ching chiao-an shih-mo' in Chung-kuo chin-tai-shih lun-ts'ung, 1st series vol. 2, Taipei, 1956, pp.201-226; Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, pp. 189-202 (from the Ming shih, ch.326).

¹⁷⁴ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, p.183.

¹⁷⁵ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, p.189.

there were two great countries in the world; and so they create disturbances in our country, so overbearing is their insolence. They take the Chinese 'Heaven' and misleadingly compare it with their 'Lord of Heaven', who mysteriously dwelt in this world as an immortal and has published a sacred book, so wild is their imagining.¹⁷⁶

The reports of Shên ch'üeh and Yen Wen-hui, confirmed this line of investigation. They are 'Fo-lang-chis in disguise' and should be expelled from the country.¹⁷⁷ Their Lord of Heaven, says Yen Wen-hui, was one Jesus, born in the time of Emperor Ai of Han, and his mother's name was Maria.¹⁷⁸ He is said to have died nailed to a cross by an evil official. 'Can this ghost of a dead criminal from the West be the Lord of Heaven! Is there one heaven for China and another for the West? Was there no Lord of Heaven before the Han, yet a Lord of Heaven beginning in the Han? This is clearly trickery, and a kind of black magic. Confucius says on the subject, "to study strange doctrines is very harmful"¹⁷⁹ and now is the time to correct and wipe out these ideas.'¹⁸⁰

Some of this line of attack is familiar, and can be regarded as based on deep-rooted Confucian principles. On the whole, however, it appears as sheer xenophobia. Jesus cannot be accepted as Lord of Heaven because he is from the West. These foreigners have the temerity to equate their homeland with China. It is significant that it was this sort of argument that provoked a response from the Court and caused a severe if temporary, set-back to Christianity. And it is these arguments that are given pride of place at the beginning of the Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh chi. Where the appeal to orthodoxy had failed, the appeal to Chinese cultural pride succeeded.

¹⁷⁶ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, pp.189-190.

¹⁷⁷ Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, pp.190-191. It is ironical that this passage appears in the chapter on 'Italy' in the Ming shih, which gave official sanction to the Jesuits' distinction between themselves and the Fo-lang-chi or Portuguese.

¹⁷⁸ The original text has Ya-li-ma, obviously a mistake for the Ma-li-ya of the Jesuit religious writings.

¹⁷⁹ Analects, 11.16.

¹⁸⁰ In Chang Wei-hua, Ming shih, p.198.

V. THE ALLEGED JESUIT INFLUENCE ON LATE MING-EARLY CH'ING THOUGHT

The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism made more impact on Confucian scholars than one might have expected given the sort of attitudes outlined in the preceding pages. Partly this may be explained by the personalities involved - Ricci himself, Hsü Kuang-ch'i on the Chinese side, and a number of others, European Jesuits and Chinese Christians, who would appear as outstanding men in any company. Partly, too, it was due to the unstable, confused condition of the times. It was hard for thoughtful scholar-officials to retain their confidence in the old Confucian formulae, and many turned to Buddhism, or syncretic philosophies for answers. A few of these eventually found their way to Christianity. On the other hand, some scholars at the time, and more after the fall of the dynasty, regarded this very search as cause rather than symptom of the Ming decline. They turned to a renewed Confucianism based on practical learning, exact textual criticism and a concentration on ethics rather than metaphysics.

Such a man was Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682), Ming loyalist and founder of the 'School of Han Learning' (Han-hsüeh p'ai).¹⁸¹ In a letter to a friend¹⁸² he outlines his views on late Ming scholarship and his remedies for its deficiencies:

It is a matter of great regret to me that for the past hundred odd years, scholars have devoted so much discussion to the mind and human nature, all of it vague and quite incomprehensible. We know from the Analects that "fate and humanity were things which Confucius seldom spoke of" (IX.1) and that Tzu-kung "had never heard him speak on man's nature and the way of Heaven" (V. 12)...But gentlemen of today are not like this. They gather a hundred or so followers and disciples about them in their studies, and though as individuals they may be as different as grass and trees, they discourse with all of them on mind and nature...

¹⁸¹ See the biography by Fang Chao-ying in Hummel, Eminent Chinese, pp.421-426; Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Chung-kuo chin-san-pai-nien hsüeh-shu shih, ch.6, and his Ch'ing-tai hsüeh-shu kai-lun, section 4 (Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period, pp.29-32).

¹⁸² Translated in part in de Bary, Sources of Chinese Tradition, New York, 1964, I, pp.553-5.

Ku's remedy is a return to 'extensively studying all learning' and to a simple system of ethics based on shame and concern for others. Instead of the elaborate metaphysical systems of the Sung and Ming Confucians he advocated philological and text-critical methods which might recover the real meaning of the texts, just as the Han scholars, closer to the ancients themselves, had studied the texts without overlaying them with vague speculation.

Some authorities have seen this movement of returning to the texts and recovering the classics free of Neo-Confucian accretions as due at least in part to the influence of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism.¹⁸³ Sometimes this is seen as a direct influence. Fr. Henri Bernard-Maitre, for example, describes the Han Learning School as 'more or less consciously inspired by the method of exegesis inaugurated by Père Ricci'.¹⁸⁴ Others see it as an indirect effect of the Jesuit science, the experimental method resulting in a new critical approach to the texts.¹⁸⁵

183 See, for example, H.G.Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way, New York, 1960, p.259, who describes the 'Han learning' as 'considerably though indirectly indebted to the Jesuits'; H.Bernard(-Maitre), 'L'Eglise Catholique des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles et sa place dans l'évolution de la civilisation Chinoise', Monumenta Serica, I, 1935-6, pp.155-167, and the same author's 'Christian Humanism during the Late Ming Dynasty', T'ien-hsia Monthly, VII, 3, 1938, pp.256-267.

184 'L'Eglise Catholique...', p.161.

185 See, for example, Paul Demiéville, 'La pénétration du Bouddhisme dans la tradition philosophique Chinoise', in Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale, III, 1956-7, p.36: 'Les sciences issues de notre Renaissance, avec tout ce qu'elles impliquaient d'esprit expérimental, contribuaient de manière indirecte à déclencher en Chine un mouvement critique qui, confiné d'abord dans l'érudition philologique et historique, allaient imperceptiblement saper les fondements de la tradition pour atteindre bientôt les oeuvres vives'. Demiéville admits the obvious objection to this thesis that it implies a delayed reaction of two or three centuries, but invokes the historical analogy of the reception of Buddhism in China with its delayed influence on Confucianism.

I admit to having severe reservations about this line of argument. In the first place, there is no convincing direct evidence of such an influence. None of the authors who maintain this opinion have brought forward any evidence to show that the creators of the Han hsüeh school knew, far less were influenced by, the Jesuits' writings on Confucianism. Ch'ên Shou-i characterizes the investigation of this question with a graphic Chinese expression, 'to scratch an itchy foot through one's boot', in other words to attempt the impossible.¹⁸⁶ On the other hand, there is evidence for the beginning of this movement of return to the text and to the Han commentators amongst late Ming Confucians before the advent of the Jesuits. Textual and philological investigation was not new to Chinese scholars, and the Jesuits were not alone in criticizing the Ch'êng-Chu school's interpretation of the classics.¹⁸⁷

Further confusion is caused by an uncritical use of such terms as 'science', 'critical spirit', and 'enlightenment'. In the European Renaissance and Enlightenment textual criticism and the physical sciences were related, but, it seems to me, through common social and cultural roots rather than through direct influence one on the other. In scientific matters the humanist text-critic was often quite traditional, an arm-chair scientists, invoking classical texts against the new experimentalists. Even in the European context, then, the two critical activities, the one experimental, the other equally inductive, but tied to the past by its textual bias, were not strictly or causally related. The Renaissance was first of all classical; the cultural energy, the psychological stimulus it released, ultimately resulted in the development of theoretical and experimental science.

¹⁸⁶ Ch'ên Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Yeh-su-hui...', p.68.

¹⁸⁷ See the list of Ming and early Ch'ing scholars working along these lines in Busch, 'Tung-lin Academy', p.163.

In the Enlightenment, on the other hand, there was a reaction against tradition itself, enabling a much more radical questioning of texts and the beginning of the rise of science to a position of dominance.

Chinese scholars, when they apply the terms 'Renaissance',¹⁸⁸ or 'Enlightenment',¹⁸⁹ to Chinese intellectual history are often doing no more than claiming cultural equivalence, establishing the existence, and at an earlier date than in Europe, of the 'scientific spirit', rational inquiry and historical criticism. But as Hu Shih admits in his lectures on The Chinese Renaissance, Chu Hsi's 'investigation of things' was not the equivalent of Western scientific method: the Chinese Neo-Confucian philosophers 'had the scientific spirit; but they had no method'.¹⁹⁰ And the 'new scholarship' of Ku Yen-wu, thoroughgoing as it was in critical method, was limited to humanistic and historical studies.¹⁹¹ There were no seventeenth century Chinese equivalents to the Galileos, Harveys and Boyles, and no eighteenth century Chinese philosophes, consciously abandoning the sacred books of their tradition.

Leaving aside the question of general equivalence, I fail to see that the influence of the Jesuits can be seen as extending from science to other fields, as, for example, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao argues.¹⁹² Even in science, their influence was mainly through the mathematical and theoretical rather than the experimental sciences, and the scientific method they taught in their treatises on mathematics and astronomy had nothing to do with the critical use of evidence employed by Ku Yen-wu, Hu Wei and Yen Jo-chu. Finally, and perhaps

¹⁸⁸ e.g. Hu Shih, The Chinese Renaissance, Chicago, 1934.

¹⁸⁹ See Hou Wai-lou, Chung-kuo tsao-ch'i-meng ssü-hsiang shih, Peking, 1956.

¹⁹⁰ The Chinese Renaissance, p.67.

¹⁹¹ The Chinese Renaissance, pp.69-70.

¹⁹² 'At first only astronomers and mathematicians credited (the new method) but later on it was gradually applied to other subjects' - Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Intellectual Trends in the Ch'ing Period, p.46.

most importantly, the Jesuits employed their critical interpretation of Confucianism precisely in order to speak of 'man's nature and the Way of Heaven' which Ku Yen-wu deprecated.

The Jesuits did undoubtedly make contributions to the criticism of the classics that could have had some influence on the school of Han Learning. They pointed repeatedly to the gaps between the texts themselves and the accumulated Neo-Confucian commentary. They gave a new historical and geographical perspective to the study of the classics raising the question of Buddhist influence and citing equivalents from other cultures. They applied Western philological techniques to the Chinese language.¹⁹³ Above all they brought to the Chinese what Demiéville calls 'l'étonnante révélation d'une culture pour eux quasi-martienne'.¹⁹⁴ What is lacking, however, is any proof that these contributions were appreciated or utilized.

Perhaps the problem is really one of a false perspective on the part of modern scholars. In the light of the decisive shattering of Chinese cultural assumptions during the last century of Sino-western relations, we readily presume that the earliest serious contacts between Western science and Confucian scholarship must have had considerable impact. I am inclined to think that this was not so. It is noticeable that where influences are found, where Chinese scholars responded to the Jesuits in some way or another - at the levels of science or religion or even personal friendship - this seems to have occurred at points where the Chinese was already disposed to respond.¹⁹⁵ The Christian religion filled a spiritual vacuum, Western science was seen to be useful, the

¹⁹³ See, for example, Nicholas Trigault's Hsi-Ju êrh-mu tzu, a pioneering work on Chinese pronunciation, a field of special interest to Ch'ên Ti and to Ku Yen-wu.

¹⁹⁴ 'La Pénétration du Bouddhisme...', p.36.

¹⁹⁵ A significant example is the case of Wang Ch'i-yuan who enthusiastically greeted Christianity as fitting in with his own attempt to establish Confucianism as a state religion. See Ch'ên Shou-i, 'San-pai nien ch'ien te chien-li K'ung-chiao lun' in Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu so chi-k'an, VI.2, 1936, pp.133-162.

Jesuits themselves appealed to the dilettante collector of exotic specimens. The Jesuits were a marginal group but essentially within rather than outside the intellectual world of the late Ming. They, too, had been interpreted and absorbed into the Chinese oikoumenē.

CHAPTER 4

A POINT OF FACT: THE DEBATE OVER
TERMS AND RITES (1610-1688)

Toute la question aboutit à un point de fait, qui est de sgavoir ce que pensent les Chinois de leur Confucius et de leurs Ancestres; ce qu'ils prétendent par les cérémonies dont ils les honorent.

The whole question boils down to a point of fact: to know what the Chinese think about their Confucius and their ancestors, and what they intend by the ceremonies with which they honour them.

- Prejugez Legitimes en faveur du
decret de N.S.Père le Pape
Alexandre VII et de la Pratique
des Jésuites au sujet des Honneurs
que les Chinois rendent à
Confucius et a leurs ancestres...¹

The history of the Jesuit mission in China from the death of Ricci till the suppression of the Society of Jesus towards the end of the 18th century is a complicated story of expansion, numerical and geographical, despite checks and set-backs. Some of these checks and set-backs were due to 'persecution', to officially or locally inspired attempts to suppress the growth of heterodoxy and foreign ideas. Others were due to internal strife within the mission and decisions imposed on the mission from Europe. The most important of these concerned the question of Chinese Rites, the continuing debate, growing increasingly acrimonious towards the end of the 17th century and culminating in a series of papal decrees in the first half of the 18th century, which definitively rejected the Jesuit interpretation of these rites. In the remaining chapters of this work I shall attempt to discuss the development of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism against this background of an expanding mission, and conflict with both Chinese and Western opponents. The background must, however, remain very sketchy indeed, and will be filled in only where absolutely necessary for the elucidation of some new turn or modulation of the Jesuit approach.

¹ Paris, 1700, p.2.

It may seem disproportionate to devote the first half of this work to the first 30 odd years of the mission, and the remaining half to some century and a half. However, apart from the 'Figurists' of the early 18th century, who were, in any case, only marginally concerned with Confucianism, the interpretation of Confucianism adopted by the Jesuits in China right to the end of the 18th century remained essentially that of Matteo Ricci. As the Jesuits' knowledge of Confucianism grew in range and depth they were able to develop and modify the details of Ricci's basic orientation of the mission. Under pressure of circumstances, and criticism from outside the Society, an increasingly oversimplified and insufficiently qualified party-line emerged in publications intended for the European public; but what was being defended was always, in the last resort, Ricci's view. Even the decisions of Rome in the early 18th century which overturned Ricci's interpretation of Chinese rites were regarded by most of the Jesuits as affecting their public presentation of Christianity but not their private views. They preserved what they could of the Confucian-Christian alliance founded by Ricci, remained silent as far as possible on the specific questions raised by Rome - the significance of t'ien and shang-ti, the status of ancestor and funerary rites - and continued to present themselves as 'scholars' (ju) in the Confucian tradition. Even before the final condemnation by Pope Benedict XIV in 1742, the accession of the Yung-cheng Emperor and subsequent expulsion of many of the missionaries had so limited the apostolic activities of the Jesuits that the interpretation of Confucianism was no longer an all important issue to the mission. Work among the scholar-official class was restricted to scientific activities and the pockets of Christians who remained throughout the Empire were concerned with survival rather than expansion. Those Jesuits who remained in Peking had more leisure for scientific and sinological studies and their reports to Europe, both published and manuscript, served as the basis for the development of the scientific study of Chinese culture. These works had much to say about Confucius and Confucianism, but they were less concerned with interpreting Confucianism than with translating Confucian works and presenting the Chinese view of Confucius in its own terms.

The tone was still one of admiration for the Confucian value-system but the concern was sinological rather than missiological.

In the present chapter I shall treat the development of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism from Ricci's death in 1610 to the arrival of the first members of the French mission in Peking in 1688. There had been Frenchmen, as well as many other nationalities, among the members of the mission before 1688, but they had all entered China under the auspices of the Portuguese, following the approved route from Lisbon to Goa and Macao, and accepting the Portuguese padroado or right of patronage and jurisdiction over the churches of the East. 1688 marks a new departure, a distinctive and would-be independent mission, preserving close links with France and bringing characteristically French attitudes to the encounter with Chinese civilization. By drawing a line through the history of the mission in 1688 I do not intend to imply that the French made a new beginning. They clearly owed a great debt - often unacknowledged - to their predecessors going back to Ricci, and their writings which deal with Confucianism follow the well-worn track of the earlier Jesuit interpreters. Nor, certainly, do I wish to depreciate the achievement of non-French missionaries after 1688. The historian is, however, dependent on the availability of sources, and the French Jesuits were remarkably productive of letters, treatises, polemical works and massive compilations on China. Their arrival marks a new era in the documentation of the fortunes of the mission, and their relations with the intellectual capital of the world of the time, Paris, gave China an altogether new significance in the intellectual history of Europe.

Another reason for ending this chapter in 1688 is that this year marked the end as well as the beginning of an era. On January 28th, 1688, a few days before the arrival of the French group in Peking, died the last of the great figures of the early history of the mission, Ferdinand Verbiest. Verbiest, as Adam Schall and Ricci before him, had exercised great influence over the fortunes of the mission from Peking and played a role in court affairs that gained him an honourable entry in the Ch'ing history.² After Verbiest no individual

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Ch'ing shih kao, lieh chüan 59, which also contains a biography of Adam Schall.

Jesuit was to loom so large nor play so crucial a role in protecting and fostering the nascent Chinese Christian Church.

In another respect too, this period marks the end of a stage in the development of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. In 1687 in Paris appeared Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, the first full translation of any of the Confucian books³ to be published in Europe. This was the culmination of a long process of translation beginning, as we have seen, with Ruggieri and Ricci. Ignacio da Costa and Prospero Intorcetta had published in China, in 1662, a Latin translation⁴ of part of the Analects of Confucius and the Great Learning, and a translation of part of the Doctrine of the Mean by Intorcetta had appeared in 1667-9.⁵ The rarity of these works in European libraries demonstrates their limited circulation. Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, however, was widely circulated, translated, and analysed. It was the basis of the popular image of 'Confucius, the Philosopher of China' which haunted European thought for a century or more. Even the portrait of Confucius was plagiarised by countless works of the late 17th and early 18th century. Its publication marks the beginning of the vogue for chinoiserie in art and literature as well as the serious impact of China on the intellectuals of Europe.

The most conspicuous feature of the fortunes of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, 1610-1688, is the developing criticism of Matteo Ricci's position which eventually erupted at the end of the century in the Chinese

³ It included three of the Confucian Four Books - the Analects (lun-yü), Doctrine of the Mean (chung-yung) and Great Learning (ta-hsüeh).

⁴ Entitled Sapientia Sinica.

⁵ Sinarum Scientia Politico-Moralis a Prospero Intorcetta Siculo Societatis Jesu, in lucem edita. It appears that part was printed in Canton in 1667 and a Preface and Life of Confucius added in Goa in 1669. This curious publication history was due to the difficulties of the mission in the late 1660s and Intorcetta's mission to Europe in 1668. It was reprinted in Thévenot's Relations de Divers Voyages Curieux, Pt.4. Paris, 1676.

Rites Controversy. This criticism came, at first, from within the Society of Jesus, and was resolved at a conference of the missionaries held at Kiating⁶ in 1628, which adopted a common policy, in essence that of Ricci himself. Then, in 1631 the Dominicans, and in 1633 the Franciscans, arrived, bringing with them attitudes and methods of evangelization tried and successful in the New World and the Philippines. These attitudes and methods conflicted with those of the Jesuit mission, and so began the debate about the missionary approach to China which was soon referred to Rome for decision. Rome decided in 1645 in favour of the newcomers; on representation by the Jesuits, in 1656, in favour of their approach; and in 1669, in defiance of logic but not of common-sense, in favour of both. The compromise of 1669 was to last till the arrival of yet another group, the French missionary bishops, or Vicars Apostolic, upset the status quo. It would be misleading, however, to see this period in the history of the mission purely in the light of the debate on this subject. It was for most of the time, and certainly for most of the members of the China mission, marginal. Communications with Europe were poor, and the practical problems of dealing with local officials and providing pastoral care for an ever expanding Christian flock were predominant. The 17th century was marked for the China mission more by steady growth in knowledge of, and adaptation to local conditions, the production of a substantial body of Chinese Christian literature, and development along the lines laid down by Ricci. The debate began, but most of the missionaries were too preoccupied with making a practical accommodation to China, the China of peasants and merchants, as well as the Confucian China of the scholars and the court, to participate in it.

⁶ Thus in most of the literature. Chia-ting is the more correct romanization of the name of this town, situated near Shanghai.

I. THE JESUIT DEBATE OVER TERMS

As long as Matteo Ricci lived, his personal qualities, as much as his position as Superior of the mission, guaranteed that his ideas prevailed in the mission. I have found no evidence of any dissent from his views, and the practice of the mission was a direct application of the positions Ricci took on accommodation to Chinese upper-class society, a cautious but positive attitude to Confucianism, and permission for Chinese converts to continue to perform public and private Confucian rites.

After Ricci's death, however, dissension arose from two sources. The Jesuits of the Japanese mission, which had a common base with the China mission in Macao, and which made use of some of the Chinese works of their colleagues in China, became disturbed at the policy of that mission. They felt that the use of Chinese terms for the Christian God was dangerous, and that the distinctiveness and integrity of the Christian message was compromised by an identification, even partial and critical, with Confucianism.⁷ At the same time, the man Ricci had designated as his successor as Superior of the mission, Nicolo Longobardo,⁸ began to have scruples about aspects of Ricci's interpretation of Confucianism. Since it

⁷ Camillo Constanzo, one of the Jesuits of the Japanese mission who initiated the attack, describes the beginning of the controversy in a letter to the Jesuit General, dated Macao, 25 December 1618, translated in A.S.Rosso, Apostolic Legations to China of the Eighteenth Century, S.Pasadena, 1948, pp.93-96. It is clear from this that the initiative came from Japan and that Longobardo was drawn into the controversy through the Jesuits from Japan. On the other hand, the members of the Japanese Province working in the more sinified context of Indo-China, seem to have supported the China mission. See Francisco Buzomi, Trattato dell nome Thienchu scritto italice Thienchiu idest Signor del Cielo (Rome:ASJ, Jap.Sin. 150a).

⁸ I use throughout this form for his name rather than the, perhaps more common, 'Longobardi'. In all the manuscripts I have seen he signs himself 'Longobardo'. See on this point, Fonti Ricciane, I, p.385, n.5.

is often alleged that Longobardo became an opponent of Ricci's position on Chinese Rites,⁹ I think it is important to stress that his difficulties were not over the Rites, in the strict sense, i.e. over ancestral and funeral ceremonies, or those in honour of Confucius; but over the terms used for 'God' and the dominance of Neo-Confucian interpretations of the classics. His views on the last point certainly, and to some extent his views on the terms question, made him an opponent of Ricci's interpretation of Confucianism. But I have found no indications either in his own writings, or other documents of the period, that he ever doubted either Ricci's general approach to Confucianism, or the permissibility of Confucian rites. In fact, his uncompromising assertion of the 'atheism' of the Confucian literati confirmed rather than destroyed the argument that these rituals were purely social in nature.

The objections of the Japanese mission to the policies of the China mission are well represented by a letter from João Rodriguez to the Jesuit General, Claudio Acquaviva, written from Macao on 22 January 1616.¹⁰ Rodriguez, according to Pfister,¹¹ was primarily interested in polemics against the

⁹ See, for example, Pfister, Notices, p.61, and the majority of anti-Jesuit writers on the Rites Controversy. Dunne, Generation of Giants, Ch.XVII, 'A Question of Rites', more accurately links Longobardo's objections with the question of terminology.

¹⁰ Ms. in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 16,I, ff.284-8.

¹¹ See the brief biography in Pfister's Notices, No.71, pp.214-5, and also the Addenda and Corrigenda, pp.23*-25*, which correct Pfister's confusion of this João Rodriguez, known in Japan as Tguzzu, 'the interpreter', with another João Rodriguez. (See also, G. Schurhammer, 'Doppelgänger in Portugiesisch-Asien', in his collected Orientalia, Lisbon-Rome, 1963, pp.124-7). The signature on the letter in question is identical with the quite distinctive signature of João Rodriguez Tguzzu on the end-papers of Michael Cooper's The Southern Barbarians, Tokyo, 1971. For a brief biographical sketch of João Rodriguez and some comments on his contribution to Japanese linguistic studies, see C.R. Boxer, 'Padre João Rodriguez Tguzzu S.J. and his Japanese Grammars of 1604 and 1620' in Miscelanea de Filologia, Literatura e Historia Cultural a Memória de Francisco Adolfo Coelho (1847-1919), II, Lisbon, 1950, pp.338-363.

Japanese Buddhists.¹² He came to China from Japan in order to investigate the sources of Japanese Buddhism and from 1613 to 1615¹³ pursued his studies of 'the sects of the philosophers which existed here in the Orient in ancient times'.¹⁴ He adds, significantly, that he planned to prepare a common catechism for the missions of China, Japan and Cochinchina. While his remarks about the common use of Chinese characters in all three lands are accurate enough, he seems to be totally unaware of the divergent cultural and social contexts in each of them. Both his polemical intent and his lack of discrimination between the cultures of East Asia were an unfortunate basis for a serious investigation of Chinese religion.

Rodriguez tells the General that he has come to the conclusion that Ricci and the fathers of the China mission

¹² 'He came to China a first time in 1612, in order to study the secret doctrines of the bonzes in their own books' (Notices, p.214). Pfister does not seem aware of the fact that his coming to China, or at least to Macao, was not voluntary, but due to his expulsion from Japan by Tokugawa Ieyasu. However his activities in Japan, and his own account in the letter, confirm the purpose of his tour of the China mission.

¹³ There is considerable confusion about the date of Rodriguez's arrival in Macao. Pfister originally gave 1612 but this was corrected by Father Bernard-Maitre in the Additions (p.23*) to 1614. Boxer dates his expulsion from Japan in 1612 (The Christian Century in Japan, Berkeley, 1951, p.246) and Michael Cooper (The Southern Barbarians, p.119) in 1610. He would most likely have proceeded immediately from Japan to Macao, headquarters of the Japanese mission in exile, and base for both the Province of Japan and the mission (later Vice-Province) of China. This letter specifically states (f.284r) the period of his visit to 'China' as June 1613 to June 1615, but since he was at the time of writing, January, 1616, in Macao, it is clear that he did not regard Macao as part of 'China'. The letter at least establishes his presence in Macao before June 1613. It is to be hoped that Father Cooper's forthcoming biography of Rodriguez will resolve this and other questions about his movements.

¹⁴ f.284r.

were deceived in adhering to the 'doutrina civil e fabulosa popular' - a curious description which seems to confuse unnecessarily and misleadingly Confucianism and Chinese popular religions. The major reason why they are incompatible with Christianity is that 'in fact and in theory' (em seu e speculativo) all the sects of China are atheistic'. They do not believe in the creation, but derive the Universe from 'external matter or Chaos'.¹⁵ They seem to have borrowed their ideas from Plato - the idea of two souls, one good, one bad, and the Platonic 'world soul' - and from Pythagoras - the concept of two principles, one good, one bad.¹⁶ This account is sufficiently garbled and dominated by Western preconceptions to be unrecognizable as a description of any Chinese philosophical or religious system. One is astonished, however, to find that it is intended as a description of Confucianism, because he goes on to distinguish from this 'civil and fabulous popular doctrine' another sect, that of 'Xaca' or 'Xekia', in other words, Buddhism. This is 'very close' to the Gymnofistos' of India 'well known to our ancestors'.¹⁷

Confident that he has perceived the errors in the approach of Ricci and his colleagues, he then set himself 'to remedy the situation'.¹⁸ He made a thorough examination of the works of Matteo Ricci and Alfonso Vagnoni, and with the permission of the Provincial in Macao, set out with Emanuel Diaz¹⁹ on a tour of the mission. It might be noted that this tour by Diaz had as its prime aim the publication of a prohibition by

¹⁵ f.284v.

¹⁶ f.285r.

¹⁷ f.285v.

¹⁸ The letter clearly implies that he had reached this decision before his trip to China, or at least before he left Macao. I interpret this as meaning that his antagonism to Ricci's methods was based, at first, purely on an examination of those Chinese works of Ricci which had been sent to Japan.

¹⁹ Rodriguez refers to 'Manuel Dias de Castellobianco' i.e. Emanuel Diaz Junior, so-called to distinguish him from another Emanuel Diaz, his senior in years and in the Society.

Father Carvalho, the Provincial of the Japanese Province,²⁰ on the teaching of mathematics and science.²¹ Another pillar of Ricci's method was under attack from the unsympathetic Japanese missionaries. Rodriguez claims to have consulted all the Jesuits 'well versed in the language', yet to have concluded that they were all wrong, a conclusion not at all surprising given the circumstances of his inquiry.

Rodriguez's recommendations to the General were that all the books produced by the members of the China mission should be revised and that their methods should be changed. The early fathers of the mission were well intentioned but they had been misled and in their ignorance allowed many customs that were 'scandalous to the natives'. They allowed ceremonies for the dead, including lighting candles, burning incense and 'coming before the dead to perform a certain adoration', which are certainly 'superstitious ceremonies'.²² As for their Chinese books, they should be submitted to the Inquisition and corrected, not by Chinese literati like 'Doctor Paul' (Hsü Kuang-ch'i) or 'Doctor Michael' (Yang T'ing-yün) who are ignorant of these matters, but by 'Japanese clerics'.²³ His final recommendation is that 'the Italian fathers' of the China mission be brought firmly under the control of the Japanese mission and a Visitor be appointed, preferably Emanuel Diz Jr., to bring them into line with the practices of Japan.²⁴

²⁰ Until the creation of the separate Vice-Province of China in 1618, the China mission was dependent upon the Province of Japan.

²¹ See Pfister, Notices, pp.106-7, and Bartoli, La Cina, Liv. III, cap. LXIII, expressively entitled 'Ordine d'un superiore poco savio, e molto dannosa alla Missione Cinese'. Bartoli notes that 'Father Valentin Carvalho had never entered China to see for himself what conditions were like' (III, p.234).

²² f.286r.

²³ f.286v.

²⁴ ff.286v-287r.

In many respects this letter needs no commentary. The bias, superficiality, and inter-mission jealousy is apparent in even a most cursory summary such as the above. The policy and methods which Rodriguez wishes to foist on the China mission are clearly those of the Japanese mission, direct and vigorous evangelization with little concession to the indigenous religious traditions. These were, in the short run, extremely effective and the rate of conversion in Japan far outstripped that in China. Ironically, the very next year began the great persecution of Christianity in Japan which to some extent may be attributed to the aggressive methods of the mission.

However, there was some substance in Rodriguez's criticisms. Even his labelling of Confucianism as the 'civil and fabulous popular doctrine' points to an unresolved ambiguity in Ricci's position. There was a 'popular' aspect to Confucianism which was effected more by the pressure of local customs and popular practices than by a conscious policy of syncretism. In so far as the rites were 'civil', that is public expressions of basic ideas about political and social relations, they necessarily embraced a variety of attitudes and beliefs. The repeated attempts by Emperors and their ministers to purify Confucian rituals from contamination by Buddhist and Taoist practices, demonstrates the persistence and strength of such popular syncretism.²⁶ Ricci had been more concerned with the intentions of Christians participating in domestic and public ceremonies, and with what he understood to be their inner meaning and purpose, than with the common understanding of them.

Moreover, in his remarks about what one assumes was Neo-Confucianism, misleading though the Platonic and Pythagorean analogies were, Rodriguez pointed to another ambiguity in Ricci's legacy to the mission. If the Confucians, that is the

²⁵ See Boxer, The Christian Century in Japan, Ch.VII, esp.pp. 323-4, 333, 337-9.

²⁶ See, for example, J.K.Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, on the practices of various dynasties, including the Ming (Ch.XII), and the 'protestant' or reform movements they engendered.

real Confucians and not some idealized type of the ancient 'pure' Confucian, were in fact 'atheists' or 'pantheists' (Rodriguez's comments on the doctrine of the 'world soul' contradict his 'atheist' label) then a Christian-Confucian accommodation would be a reconciliation of opposites, an uneasy and ultimately unviable alliance. We have already seen the grounds upon which Ricci sought to avoid this impasse - a return to the pure, uncontaminated doctrine of the classics and the four books. But it was very difficult in practice to achieve this tour de force, given the Chinese system of classical education, the editions of classical works used in the schools and the opacity of the texts themselves. The Chinese ching, like the sacred texts of any religion, were not easily detached from their traditional interpretation, and by the Ming period this tradition was unequivocally Neo-Confucian. Ricci sought to take advantage of the intellectual ferment of the period and to attract those already disenchanted by the sterile rationalism of some aspects of Neo-Confucianism. Moreover, his hesitations and cautious statements about Neo-Confucianism seem to indicate an awareness that it could not be dismissed simply as 'atheism'. However, he had used the term,²⁷ and those seeking to attack his method could turn his own statements back on his head. If Confucians were atheists, their terminology was unsuitable to convey the Christian mysteries. The fact that this strengthened the argument in favour of the 'civil' nature of Chinese rites and rendered unlikely, if not absurd, the charge that they were superstitious, does not seem to have bothered Rodriguez.

Niccolo Longobardo, for his part, was more consistent. His disagreement with Ricci's methods was purely over the interpretation of Confucianism. If the clear distinction between the text and the commentators could not be maintained, if Neo-Confucianism was unequivocally atheistic and materialistic, with no concept of 'spirit', then Confucian terms such as

²⁷ Fonti Ricciane, NN170, 199, I, pp.110, 132.

Shang-ti and t'ien must be abandoned, and Confucianism in all its forms added to the list of false and pernicious doctrines to be attacked at all times.

It is possible to trace Longobordo's opposition to Ricci's methods back to the period before he became superior of the mission.²⁸ From his arrival in 1597 to 1611 when he came to Peking, he laboured in Shao-chou. Shao-chou was hardly, as the title of Father Bernard-Maitre's chapter on these years suggests, the backwoods of China,²⁹ but it was perhaps 'the bush' by comparison with the two metropolises of Nanking and Peking where so many of the Jesuits worked. A Letter written shortly after his arrival shows traces of animus against the sophisticated techniques of the mission to the Chinese upper-class. All we need here, he wrote, are simple books and pious objects, not glass prisms and scientific instruments.³⁰ Another letter (18 October 1598) shows a greater appreciation of the peculiar conditions of the China mission. He repeated his objections to 'spheres, maps, visits and other human means' but he admits the necessity for studying and using Confucian books. Recently he had been congratulated by a Chinese scholar on his proficiency in the Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean and such studies were very profitable. But, he adds, significantly, although the scholars observe six commandments, they completely neglect the first since they are atheists.³¹

Longobardo's experiences in evangelizing the villages around Shao-chou, as well as in the city itself, soon convinced him of the importance of the friendship of the mandarins. The Annual Letter for 1602 relates how some Christians were

²⁸ For details of this career, see Pfister, Notices, No.17, pp. 58-64; Bernard-Maitre, Ricci, II, pt.3, Ch.3; and Fonti Ricciane, NN641-673, II, pp.192-244 (on the Shao-chou mission) and I, p.358, n.5 (a general biographical note).

²⁹ Bernard-Maitre, Ricci, Pt.3, Ch.3, 'L'Appel Irrésistible de la Brousse'.

³⁰ Letter of 4 November 1598 in Tacchi-Venturi, Opere Storiche, II, p.475 cf. translation in Bernard-Maitre, Ricci, II, p.55.

³¹ Bernard-Maitre, Ricci, II, pp.56-7. This letter was published in English translation in Purchas His Pilgimes (Glasgow, 1906 ed., XII, pp.314-318).

protected from their enemies by a friendly official,³² and several other examples are given in the account of the Shao-chou mission in the Storia which, D'Elia argues plausibly, must be the work of Longobardo.³³ In 1604 he rehearses Ricci's apologetic arguments in the T'ien-chu shih-i which had just been printed, and appears to be in complete agreement with his approach to Confucianism.³⁴ Up till the time that Longobardo became Superior, then, it would seem that he adhered to Ricci's methods, differing from him only in his preference for the direct apostolate amongst the lower classes to the long-term and indirect work amongst the literati. George Dunne argues that his experiences in the South had made Longobardo even more optimistic than Ricci about the future of the mission and the prospects of success along the lines laid down by the founders of the mission.³⁵ Ricci, for his part, although he appears never to have met Longobardo, thoroughly approved of his activities, and as early as 1606 he recommended Longobardo to the General as the most suitable person to govern the mission.³⁶ The dying Ricci's nomination of Longobardo as his successor suggests that, up to that time, Longobardo had expressed no serious dissent from the agreed policy of the mission.

In 1613, when Nicholas Trigault was being sent to Europe as 'Procurator' to secure reinforcements and backing for the mission, Longobardo prepared some instructions for him, detailing the questions he was to raise with the church authorities in Rome.³⁷ These might be read as marking the

³³ Fonti Ricciane, II, p.196, n.2.

³⁴ Letter of 13 November 1604, reprinted in F.Guerreiro, Relação Anual da Coisas que fizeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus nas suas Missões do Japão, China, Cataio, II, Lisbon, 1607 (Coimbra, 1931 ed., p.125).

³⁵ Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.110-111.

³⁶ Letter to Acquaviva, Peking, 15 August 1606 (No.37 in Tacchi-Venturi, Opere Storiche, II).

³⁷ 'Appontamentos a cerca da Ida do nosso P.e Procurador a Roma', 'Nanhium' (Nan-hsiung), 8 May 1613, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 113 (Annuae Sinarum, 1595-1616), ff.301-9.

beginning of the Rites Controversy but it should be noted that they merely pose problems without necessarily indicating Longobardo's own position, and that only one of the questions raised is concerned with the question of 'rites'. This is the second of the four 'cases' to be presented by the Procurator.³⁸ It concerns the obligation of mandarins to take part in ceremonies to the local god on taking office. Longobardo asks whether a Christian mandarin might place an image of the angel who is the guardian of the place, or of the Saviour, above the altar, and so fulfil his duty to the satisfaction of the people, while explaining to the Christians what he is doing, to avoid scandal. (This subterfuge was later frequently attributed to Christian mandarins by opponents of the Rites. I have not found any unequivocal evidence that it was the practice, and there are several denials that it was the case in Jesuit sources. It is possible that it was considered, but rejected, at this time, and that reports of the discussions on the subject gave rise to the idea that it was common practice.) What is most interesting about Longobardo's reference to this in the document, is a note in the margin which appears to indicate his mind on the subject: 'There is no question of Idolatry here since the Chinese acknowledge neither the true God, nor his angels. And so the statue is more likely to be that of a mandarin than a representation of a spirit'.³⁹ Once again, Longobardo appears on close scrutiny a defender rather than opponent of the Jesuit position on the rites question.

Where Longobardo did differ from the majority of his colleagues was on the question of terminology, and soon after coming to office, he opened a war of words that was not resolved finally till after 1628. Of the several treatises he wrote on the subject, only one has survived, and that by

³⁸ See Cap.3, 'Dalgus casos e dispensacoes q se haõ detratar pollo P.e procurador'. The first deals with polygamy, the third with Christian participation in religious processions, and the fourth with the scandal to Chinese of uncovering the head at mass as provided in the Roman ritual.

³⁹ f.306v.

a curious accident. According to the account of the history of the work given by J.S.Cummins in his edition of the Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete,⁴⁰ the Reposta breve sobre as controversias was written in 1623-4, and was ordered destroyed at a later date⁴¹ by the Vice-Provincial, Francisco Furtado; a single incomplete copy escaped destruction,⁴²

⁴⁰ Hakluyt Society, Second series, No.CVXIII, 1962, pp.xliv-xlv. Cummins' Introduction contains many tendentious statements, some of which I will discuss later. For the present I will note four which occur on these two pages alone. 1. He praises Joao Rodriguez as 'an excellent linguist who had been in the East since the age of sixteen'. That he was a noted linguist is true, as his soubriquet 'Tguzzu' (Tsuji) 'the interpreter', as well as his close relations with both Hideyoshi and Ieyasu testify (v. Boxer, Christian Century in Japan, pp. 153, 179-180, 195-197, 244-246). But there is no evidence that he knew any Chinese before coming to Macao, and his experience in 'the East' had been confined to Japan alone. When he raised his objections to the Rites he had been at most three years in China. 2. Longobardo's opponents, the 'Riccionistas', did not maintain that this opinion was 'a spark of hope', but at two full-scale conferences in Macao (1621) and Kiating (1628) thoroughly discussed the question and decided against Longobardo (see Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.284-5). 3. Furtado's 'domestic auto-da-fé' was, therefore, inspired by the quite defensible desire to prevent Longobardo's lone dissenting voice from disturbing the peace of the mission. 4. I find it frankly incredible that the Jesuits could, as Cummins maintains, have held 'no fewer than 74 meetings' before 1665 on the subject of the rites, in a mission widely scattered and seriously undermanned (Cummins gives no source for this statement). The most serious error of perspective in Cummins' account is his complete failure, here and elsewhere, to distinguish between the issues of 'terms' and 'rites'. Navarrete was an opponent of the Jesuits on both counts, Longobardo a dissenter on the first alone.

⁴¹ Furtado was Vice-Provincial 1635-1641 and remained in charge of the northern part of the mission till 1650. See Pfister, Notices, p.152. Here, as elsewhere in this work, I have profitably consulted Mr. J.M. Braga's manuscript Handbook which includes a list of Superiors of the China mission and the dates of their holding office.

⁴² No-one appears to have questioned Navarrete's account on this point, but the treatise is not noticeably incomplete, and there is no reason why there should have been more than one copy in the first place. Navarrete does not satisfactorily explain why Furtado should have destroyed the work after twenty years or more, nor how, after another twenty years, he learnt of the act.

and eventually came into the possession of the Dominican Navarrete who published it in his Tratados historicos, politicos, ethicos y religiosos de la monarchia de China, Madrid, 1676. A French translation was published in Paris⁴³ at the height of the Rites Controversy and a version annotated by Leibniz was included in the latter's works.⁴⁴ The original manuscript, deposited by Navarrete in the Archives of Propaganda Fide, still exists there.⁴⁵

The full title of Longobardo's treatise indicates very well its scope - A short Reply concerning the controversies about Shang-ti, T'ien-shên, and Ling-hun, and other Chinese Names and Terms; to determine which of them may or may not be used in this Christian community. Shang-ti, as we have seen, was a term commonly employed in the classics, which Ricci argued was, in some respects at least, the equivalent of the Christian 'God'. T'ien-shên, 'heavenly spirits', was coming to be used as a translation of 'angel', and the Chinese ling-hun for 'soul'. Longobardo opposes all three terms on the same grounds - the Chinese are atheists and materialists; an examination of Neo-Confucian metaphysics reveals that they have no concept of 'spirit', hence such Confucian terms as shang-ti, shên, and ling-hun represent material beings, and may not be employed without serious misunderstanding as equivalents to the Christian concepts of spiritual beings.

43 Traité sur quelques points de la religion des Chinois, published together with Antonio de Sanata Maria's treatise on the rites under the general title, Anciens Traitez de Divers auteurs sur les Cérémonies de la Chine in 1701. It appears from Louis de Cicé's Lettre...aux RR.PP. Jesuites..., Paris, 1700, p.27, that de Cicé, a M.E.P. missionary and Vicar Apostolic of Siam, was the translator.

44 Gothofredi Guillelmi Leibnitii Opera Omnia, Ed. L. Dutens, Geneva, 1768, IV, pp.89-144.

45 Rome:APF, SR Congr. I, ff.145-168, together with a Latin translation by Antonio de Santa Maria O.F.M., ff. 171-197.

The author explains in his Preface⁴⁶ that he had misgivings, from the very beginning of his mission in China about the use of Shang-ti because of the divergence between the explanations of the commentators on the Four Books⁴⁷ and the Christian idea of the divine nature. But he deferred to the experienced fathers of the mission and thought that the problem must have arisen from the error of 'some of those expositors...being but particular authors who did not consent to the ancient doctrine'.⁴⁸ After assuming office in 1610, he received a letter from Father Francesco Pasio, the Visitor, about the doubts some of the Jesuits of the Japanese mission held on the works in Chinese emanating from the mission.⁴⁹ Then began a major investigation in which the members of the mission took sides, Longobardo, Sebastiano de Ursis and Camillo de Costanzo agreeing with the Jesuits of Japan while Diego de Pantoia and Alfonso Vagnoni replied on behalf of the

⁴⁶ Traité, p.89. I refer throughout to the French text of the Traité in Dutens' edition of Leibniz's Works, vol.IV, pp.89-144. On occasion I also refer to the English translation in Navarrete's Account of the Empire of China. I have used a rare edition, undated and without place of publication, in the possession of Associate Professor O.B. van der Sprenkel, but the translation is that found in Churchill's Collection of Voyages and Travels, Vol.I, London, 1704, pp.1-424.

⁴⁷ Longobardo specifically mentions the 'Four Books of Confucius', but according to Legge's Character Index to the Four Books in Vols. 1 and 2 of his Chinese Classics, there are only 5 references to Shang-ti in the whole of the Four Books, none at all in the only work probably emanating from Confucius himself, the Analects. Longobardo is more likely thinking of Classics such as the Shu Ching and Shih Ching.

⁴⁸ Navarrete, Account, p.165 cf. Traité, p.89.

⁴⁹ Longobardo's account (Traité, p.90) implies that this letter was received some time between the death of Ricci and his own transfer to Peking from Shao-chou i.e. late 1610 or early 1611. The objections from the Japanese mission must, then, have preceded Rodriguez's arrival in 1612, and he may have been commissioned to conduct an investigation by his colleagues in Japan. Longobardo describes Rodriguez's arrival as providential, in the sense that it revived a debate already decided against him.

majority position.⁵⁰ A conference at Macao in 1621 reaffirmed Ricci's position but Longobardo continued to press his point of view in writings such as this Reposta breve.

Longobardo makes some curious admissions in the course of his exposition of the debate. He states that all of the Chinese Christians consulted, including Hsü Kuang-ch'i and Yang T'ing-yün, urged adherence to the text, and ignoring the commentators. Longobardo and de Ursis were dissatisfied with this since 'the learned Chinese Christians generally suit their sentiments to ours, and explicate their doctrines according as they think corresponds with our holy faith, without regarding of how great consequence it is to have the truth of these controversies brought to light'.⁵¹ I think that this comment is particularly revealing since it indicates the acceptance by the Chinese Christians of Ricci's principle of interpreting favourably Confucian texts, and its rejection by Longobardo. He admits that there was no difficulty in practice over a 'correct' theological understanding of the terms in question, but gives primacy to an abstract 'truth' unrelated to usage and context. As Leibniz noted in his copy⁵² this is to create an artificial difficulty where none really exists.

Longobardo's exposition of Confucianism which opens his treatise contains many inaccuracies and tendentious comments which I shall not pause to discuss here. Some of his assumptions are, however, relevant and important. He claims that all the commentators on the Confucian books for 1600 years, from the burning of the books in the Ch'in period to the compilation of the Ming editions of the classics, are in

⁵⁰ For details of the line-up of Jesuits on either side and a sketch of the discussions held from 1611 to the 1630s see Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.284-5.

⁵¹ Navarrete, Account, p.166 cf. Traité, p.91.

⁵² Traité, p.91,n.2.

complete agreement, 'not unlike our holy doctors in the exposition of scripture';⁵³ a grossly misleading claim in the light of the sort of fundamental reassessment of the Confucian tradition which was occurring as he wrote.⁵⁴ He adds an argument which he attributes to João Rodriguez, to the effect that 'Fo Hi', the originator of all Chinese philosophy,⁵⁵ must be Zoroaster, Head of the Chaldean Magis, and founder of all the erroneous sects of the West. Hence, he says, we should expect to find in the ancient books of China all the errors which the devil used to mislead the 'Gentiles of the West'.⁵⁶ Even making due allowance for the fact that Longobardo was hard-pressed and on the defensive, it is difficult to sympathise with his debating tactics and impossible to accept his methodological assumptions.

It is ironical, but, I think, true, that Longobardo's arguments on close examination appear to err in favour of, rather than against, the Jesuit position on the rites question. He notes the presence of an abundance of spirits - spirits of heaven and earth, mountains, rivers etc. in the ancient texts. Instead of arguing, as he might plausibly have done, that this evidence of animism and polytheism makes conclusions about ancient Chinese monotheism embodied in the concepts of t'ien and shang-ti untenable or at least dubious, he instead proposes that these texts should be read in the light of the commentators who universally agree that t'ien, shang-ti and the human soul are all one 'celestial substance'.⁵⁷ Where passages in the texts appear to indicate otherwise, we must,

⁵³ Navarrete, Account, p.169 cf. Traité, p.96.

⁵⁴ See Ch.3 of this work.

⁵⁵ This 'fact', which Ricci wisely never mentioned in any of his works, was to play a central role in much later debate, not only about Confucianism, but also about Chinese chronology. Longobardo is the first, to my knowledge, to point out that the Chinese version of their history appears to place the founding of the Empire before the Deluge, which is contrary to the Bible account which appears to make the Deluge universal (v. Traité, p.96).

⁵⁶ Traité, p.96.

⁵⁷ Traité, p.97.

in the end, follow the commentators, since the Chinese agree that the commentators are never contrary to the text. If the Chinese follow the commentators when the text is obscure, so much the more should foreigners.⁵⁸

To the obvious objection proposed by Pantoia and Vagnoni that the text is always more important than the commentator, Longobardo replies that this is to regard the text as infallible,⁵⁹ an argument which Leibniz neatly turns on its head by asking whether Longobardo thought that scholastic theologians should take precedence over the Bible.⁶⁰ However, Longobardo's main contention was not a trivial one. He rightly points out that everything in Confucianism difficult to reconcile with Christianity cannot be attributed to Buddhist influence, and that, even if it could, it is not easy to persuade Chinese scholars that what they regard as Confucianism is not really so.⁶¹ The great weakness of Ricci's position was its failure to come to grips, except negatively, with the real Confucianism of the commentators. 'To rely on the texts expounded completely at variance from the commentaries, is to build upon sand'.⁶²

It would be tedious, and beyond the scope of this study, to undertake a detailed exegesis of the interpretation of Neo-Confucianism proposed by Longobardo in the course of his treatise. As we would expect from the methodological assumptions propounded at the beginning, Longobardo frequently argues anachronistically, conflating Han and Sung commentators, the classical philosophy of the hundred schools and their Ming interpreters.⁶³ There is also a constant constriction

⁵⁸ Traité, p.99.

⁵⁹ Traité, p.101.

⁶⁰ Traité, p.99, n.17.

⁶¹ Traité, p.101.

⁶² Traité, p.102.

⁶³ An extreme example of this is the attribution to Confucius himself of the Neo-Confucian li-hsueh v. Traité, p.117.

of Chinese material within the strait-jacket of European philosophical terminology, and the attempt to identify an ancient system of materialism, common to China and Greece, and derived from a common source in Zoroaster,⁶⁴ which justifies the interpretation of the one in terms of the other. All points in one direction, the conclusion that 'the Chinese' are materialists;⁶⁵ that the apparent multiplicity of the Gods and spirits is an illusion;⁶⁶ that they have no notion of an immortal soul;⁶⁷ and that 'the most able of the Chinese Literati are atheists'.⁶⁸ He dismisses Ricci's basic argument that the 'moderns' are atheists, but the 'ancient philosophers' were not, with a bald assertion:

To prove that the ancients were atheists, it is enough to say the modern Chinese are so, because these are but the mere echo of the ancients, on whom they build, and whom they quote in their discourses, as well relating to sciences as virtues, but chiefly in matters of religion.⁶⁹

The last section⁷⁰ of Longobardo's Reposta breve consists of the opinions of 'several learned men of note', both non-Christian and Christian, on the subject under discussion. The non-Christians' objections to Christianity are substantially identical with those discussed in the previous chapter, and may be easily related either to orthodox Neo-Confucianism (Shang-ti = t'ai-chi, t'ien-chu = li etc.)⁷¹ or to late Ming

⁶⁴ See, for example, Traité, p.113.

⁶⁵ Traité, p.116 (Section 10).

⁶⁶ Traité, p.117-133 (Sections 11-14).

⁶⁷ Traité, pp.133-5 (Section 15).

⁶⁸ The title of Section 16 of the Traité, pp.135-6.

⁶⁹ Navarrete, Account, p.196 cf. Traité, p.136.

⁷⁰ i.e. the last section extant. Navarrete concluded his extract with the comment that 'the treatise remains lopt and imperfect' (Account, p.200), on the grounds, presumably, of the concluding remarks of Longobardo's text, that he intends to add some 'reflections' of his own. It is quite possible, however, that Longobardo never completed the treatise which, as it stands, covers the ground announced in the title.

⁷¹ Traité, pp.136-140.

syncretism (the Confucian Shang-ti = the Taoist Yu Huang and the Buddhist Fo).⁷² Most of the 'Christian literati' according to Longobardo, follow Ricci in his distinction between the modern atheists and the true doctrine of Confucius.⁷³ Some, however, when caught unawares,⁷⁴ made what Longobardo regarded as damaging admissions.

Considerable space is devoted to an interrogation of Yang T'ing-yüñg, most of which is again the pure Ricci line. Yang appears to identify the Sung commentators with 'the meaning of the Ancients' but in a context that strongly suggests he is expounding their position rather than accepting it as his own.⁷⁵ Longobardo concludes his account of Yang T'ing-yüñ's views with an allusion to 'several treatises on various matters', including an explanation of the ten commandments,⁷⁶ composed by Yang and shown by him to the Jesuits of Peking. The views attributed to Yang are so far

⁷² Traité, pp.138-139.

⁷³ Thus Li Chih-tsao ('Doctor Leo'); 'Doctor Athanasius' whom I have not been able to identify; and 'the Licentiate Ignatius' (presumably the convert of Shao-chou mentioned in the Storia, Fonti Ricciane NN786, 789, 792) - Traité, p. 144.

⁷⁴ Longobardo describes this as a 'methodical interrogation'. However the opinions attributed to Yang T'ing-yüñ and Hsü Kuang-ch'i are so much at variance with their published works that one wonders whether the 'method' was not to cite replies out of context. The constant shifts in questions between 'the literati' and 'the Chinese', the 'classic books' and 'the doctrine of the literati', suggests Longobardo is assuming just that denial of distinction between texts and commentaries that is in question.

⁷⁵ Traité, p.141.

⁷⁶ This seems to be the Hsi-hsüeh shih-chieh ch'u chieh hsü referred to by D'Elia (Fonti Ricciane, II, p.42, n.1). Like the work in question it had a Preface by Yeh Hsiang-kao, and its title, 'Preface to the First Explanation of the Western Ten Commandments', explains the apparent confusion in Longobardo's text between Yang's Preface and Yeh's Preface. I have been unable to locate this work and it is not certain that it was ever published. If even part of what Longobardo says about it is true, it may well have been suppressed by the Jesuits.

from those of any of his extant works - at least of those I have seen - that I suspect serious misrepresentation. Yang is claimed by Longobardo to have advocated an absolute monism, which leads logically to atheism, in which 'all things are really one substance';⁷⁷ and to hold that the ancient sages of China were 'Spirits or angels incarnate' (Longobardo reconciles the apparent contradiction by noting that - 'according to the sentiments of the Chinese' - they were all expressions of the one li or principle).⁷⁸ As for the three sects of China:

He endeavours in this treatise to speak well of them all, shewing that all of them have the same end and design, which is to assign a principle to the universe; and that therefore they border upon our holy faith, and come to be the same thing with it in essentials. And if any man should object the many errors there are in the sects, all of them very opposite to our holy law: He answers, There were not at the beginning, when the sects flourished in their pure and true doctrine, but that they crept in afterwards by means of the comments made by disciples, who did not reach the design of ancient authors; therefore he often advised us in explicating things, to use a two-fold, or amphibological method, which may be easily apply'd to either part of the controversy; and thus, he says, we may please, and so gain all.⁷⁹

This representation of Yang's views is quite incredible. All three extant religious works written by Yang T'ing-yün are in fact devoted to an attack on just this sort of syncretism. Two, 'The Owl and the Phoenix do not sing Together' (Hsiao luan pu ping-ming shuc), and 'Explanation of the Differences between Christianity and Buddhism' (T'ien shih ming-pien) were probably published after Longobardo's Reposta breve was written. But the Tai-i p'ien which was published two years before, in 1621, is equally outspoken in its anti-Buddhist line. If Yang ever held the views attributed to him by Longobardo, it was at a period long before Longobardo wrote his treatise.

⁷⁷ Traité, p.142.

⁷⁸ Traité, p.142.

⁷⁹ Navarrete, Account, p.199 cf. Traité, p.143.

The most damaging evidence cited by Longobardo is a Preface written for the same work by 'Ie Ko Lao', presumably the Yeh Hsiang-kao whose relations with Ricci and the other missionaries have already been mentioned. Longobardo claims that Yeh's Preface defended the Incarnation of Jesus by arguing that Shang-ti had become man several times - as the sage kings Yao and Shun, as Confucius, and as several other famous individuals in Chinese tradition. Hence, it was not surprising to find him becoming man as Jesus, sage of the West. Longobardo then attempts to associate Yang T'ing-yün with these ideas by claiming that 'complete Christian, as he is, he is still full of this Chinese idea, or to speak more accurately, of this idea which resembles the confusion of Babylon'.⁸⁰ He does not point out that Yeh Hsiang-kao was not a Christian despite personal sympathy with the Jesuits; and what is more, according to Bartoli, the obstacle to his conversion was precisely that he could not believe that it was worthy of God to become man.⁸¹ Once more we are faced with a curious discrepancy between the evidence we have from other sources for the views of Yang T'ing-yün and Yeh Hsiang-kao. The only way of reconciling them is to assume that both Yang and Yeh had briefly flirted with these ideas and later rejected them. Some weight is given to this argument if, as seems to be the case, this particular work of Yang's was never published. On the other hand, Longobardo is rather vague in the whole of this passage about the nature of the 'incarnations' that Yeh directly, and Yang indirectly, are supposed to have expounded. If it is simply the belief that 'sages' are mouth-pieces of the divine, or that they have 'sparks of the divine', 'divine illumination', etc., one could find many parallels in the orthodox theological and mystical literature of the West. Without an examination of the text of Yang T'ing-yün's 'Preface to the First Explanation of the Western Ten Commandments', and Yeh Hsiang-kao's Preface to this work, the question must be left unresolved. What is

⁸⁰ Traité, p.142.

⁸¹ Fonti Ricciane, II, p.43, n.

perfectly clear, however, is that Longobardo is not attacking Yang T'ing-yün's defence of the sacrifices 'to Heaven, to earth, to Doctors, and to the dead', but the alleged doctrinal base for these practices, the belief 'that all things are one and the same substance'.⁸²

The last, and perhaps most important, piece of evidence cited by Longobardo in favour of his view, is the testimony of 'Doctor Paul', Hsü Kuang-ch'i. I give this passage in full since, if true, it would throw considerable doubt on much I have said about Hsü in the previous chapter, and undermine his credibility, if not as a sincere Christian, at least as a sincere advocate of Ricci's interpretation of Confucianism:

I put the same question to Doctor Paul, who answered very ingeniously, that he was of opinion, the king of the upper region could not be our God, and he believ'd neither the antient nor modern Chinese had any knowledge of God. But since the fathers upon good motives call that king God, that the learned Chinese might make no objections, and because this epithet was decent, he judged it good and requisite to give him the attributes we give to God. As for the soul, he said, he fancied the Chinese had some knowledge of it, but imperfect.⁸³

If these were truly the opinions of Hsü Kuang-ch'i, one must impute to him constant and deliberate prevarication in all his religious writings. These equate the Christian t'ien chu with shang-ti, describe the Jesuits as followers of shang-ti and preachers of the way of ancient China, and proclaim Christianity as complementing Confucianism.⁸⁴ I hesitate however to give much weight to Longobardo's evidence over against the testimony of Hsü's own writings and his reputation for integrity. Longobardo gives just one side of the conversation where it is particularly important to know precisely what was the question asked. Ricci himself would

⁸² Traité, p.143.

⁸³ Navarrete, Account, p.200; Traité, p.144.

⁸⁴ See the section on Hsü Kuang-ch'i in Ch.III.

have agreed that shang-ti was not unequivocally the Christian God, and that the Chinese notion of the soul was 'imperfect' in relation to his theology. But he insisted that there was an historical and textual basis for his interpretation of Confucianism, as well as pressing practical reasons for an identification with Confucians rather than their rivals. He did not believe, and it is hard to imagine that Hsu did either, that one could convince Confucian scholars of the truth of an interpretation which had no historical foundation and went against the textual evidence.

It is ironical that the one Chinese work of Longobardo's I have examined apparently involves its author in just the position he attributed to Hsü Kuang-ch'i. Longobardo argues in his Reposta breve that the Chinese had no notion of an immortal, immaterial soul, and one of the avowed purposes of the work is to attack the use of the Chinese term ling-hun as equivalent to 'soul' in Catholic theology. Yet his most important work in Chinese uses the term in its title, Ling-hun tao-t'i shuo, 'On the Substance of the Soul', and throughout, in precisely the sense attacked in the treatise. The edition I have seen⁸⁵ is undated, but it clearly postdates the Reposta breve by at least several years.⁸⁶ It is possible that it was amended⁸⁷ by the addition of the commonly used term ling-hun, but this could hardly have been done without Longobardo's knowledge, and it would have required major rewriting since the whole work is built around the usual Jesuit method of

⁸⁵ In Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 1, 115.

⁸⁶ It was edited by Adam Schall and Giacomo Rho, the former of whom entered China in 1622 and the latter in 1624. They had been together briefly in Macao where they jointly directed the defence against a Dutch invading force in June 1622, but their Chinese studies can hardly have been sufficiently advanced at that time for them to undertake this task. They were together after 1630 in Peking where they collaborated on the reform of the Chinese calendar, and this joint work of editing Longobardo's treatise probably dates between 1630 and 1638 when Rho died (v. Pfister, Notices, pp.162-182 and 188-190).

⁸⁷ A note on the title-page names T'ang Jo-wang (Schall) and Lo Ya-k'o (Rho) as 'censors' and 'editors' but the latter phrase (kung ting) is ambiguous and could mean anything from seeing the work through the press to totally rewriting it.

starting with a commonly accepted notion and demonstrating that its true nature must be interpreted in a Christian sense. By far the most economic explanation is that Longobardo had changed his adherence to this central premise of his objections to Ricci's methods - that the Chinese have no notion of a spiritual or immaterial substance.

The letters from this period of the mission's history and compilations based on them, such as that of Bartoli, all indicate that Longobardo was an opponent of Ricci's methods, but on the question of terms only.⁸⁸ The Reposta breve should be seen in its context, the intra-mural dispute over 'terms'. It was circulated and exploited much later by Navarrete and others in the context of a wider and different debate, thus giving rise to the notion that Longobardo was totally opposed to the methods of his colleagues, and that his dissent had been silenced and his views suppressed by the other members of the mission. He was not, however, opposed to the practical position adopted by the mission on the Chinese rites in the broad sense; and even if his ideas had been accepted, they would have strengthened rather than weakened, the case for the liceity of Confucian funeral, ancestor and civic rituals.

Longobardo's treatise did, however, raise some fundamental queries about Ricci's basic method, by reappraising Neo-Confucianism and its de facto dominance of Chinese philosophy. He did not, in fact, differ from Ricci on the nature of Neo-Confucianism, but rather in his assessment of primitive Confucianism, and in the viability of Ricci's distinction between this primitive Confucianism and that of the modern Confucians. The former was open to controversy;⁸⁹ the latter a matter of experience and practice. What must have told

⁸⁸ See, for example, Bartoli, La Cina, Lib.I, cap.CXIX, 'Opposizione del P. Longobardi al Nome di Dio usato dal P. Ricci'.

⁸⁹ See Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.286. I do not, however, agree with Dunne's argument that it was merely 'a speculative controversy'. If Ricci's view of early Confucianism was untenable, the very corner-stone of his accommodation method was removed.

most strongly against Longobardo's reiterated objections was the practical success of Ricci's method, together with the increasingly dangerous attacks on the 'unorthodoxy' of Christianity.

We do not know for certain whether Longobardo ever came to accept either the validity or the expediency of the mission practice in regard to the use of Chinese terminology. As late as 1633 he was still attacking the use of shang-ti and even arguing that instead of t'ien-chu Chinese Christians should pray to tou-ssu, or Deus.⁹⁰ The use of t'ien-chu and ling-hun in the Ling-hun tao-t'i shuo may indicate a change of heart before his death. More likely, he simply accepted that he had lost his case and ceased to object to what had become the agreed policy of the mission.⁹¹ It should be noted moreover that Longobardo's treatise, as those of other Jesuits for and against his position, were all private documents, circulated only within the mission or, in some cases, sent to the Jesuit authorities in Rome, but never intended for publication. It is doubtful, even, if many of the Chinese Christians came to know of them. There is considerable difference between such a 'position paper' and a published treatise, and the excesses of Longobardo's arguments, as those of his opponents, should be viewed in this light. The Reposta breve may not be used as unequivocal evidence for Longobardo's attitude, even in 1623, let alone up till his death in 1654.

⁹⁰ See Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.285. In the Ling-hun tao t'i shuo, t'ien-chu is used throughout, although the author notes that 'in the West t'ien-chu is called tou-ssu'. (1a).

⁹¹ I am assuming that Dunne (Generation of Giants, p.301,n.5) is right in his rejection of Navarrete's account of the Kiating conference as spurious. According to Navarrete's suppressed Controversias antiguas y modernas de la gran China, Madrid, 1679, the Conference decided in favour of Longobardo. The many documents regarding the 1627-8 Conference that I have seen all prove the contrary. If Navarrete's sources were so misleading in this case, it seems to me that some considerable doubt is also thrown on the text of Longobardo's Reposta breve which comes from Navarrete. The whole question of Navarrete's sources badly demands investigation.

The main effect of Longobardo's reiterated attacks was a series of discussions and conferences which decided against his views and confirmed Ricci's policies. The most important of these were conferences called by the Visitor, Jerónimo Rodrigues at Macao in 1621 and at Kiating in December-January 1627-8. I have found no detailed report of the 1621 Conference, but there are many extant documents dealing with the circumstances of the Kiating Conference and its aftermath.⁹² It was apparently convened by Rodrigues as one of his last acts as Visitor, in an attempt to prevent further damaging

⁹² In addition to the letters and reports I cite below there are the accounts in Bartoli, La Cina, and the manuscript histories of Father Thomas Dunyn-Szpot S.J., both compiled from documents in the Jesuit archives in Rome, some of which are now lost. Dunyn-Szpot, a Pole, was a papal penitentiary, based in Rome, who seems to have begun to write a history of the China mission as a leisure occupation, using documents available in Rome. His works are found in Rome:ASJ, Jap.Sin. 102-105, and 109-111. They consist of the Historia Sinarum Imperii (Jap.Sin.102,103); Collectanea Historiae Sinensis ab anno 1641 ad annum 1700 (Jap.Sin.104,105); and Collectanea pro Historia Sinica (Jap.Sin.109,110,111). The exact relationship of these three works is not completely clear. From internal evidence, it seems to me that the earliest is the Collectanea pro Historia Sinica which covers the period 1664-1700 and was conceived as a sequel to Bartoli's history, beginning where that work ended (See note Ad Lectorem, Jap. Sin.104, f.1r); that the Collectanea Historiae Sinensis is an expanded version; and the Historia Sinarum Imperii a polished history based on the documents collected in the two previous works. A letter from Dunyn-Szpot to the Jesuit General, Tamburini, dated 23 January 1710 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 173, ff.22-23) suggests that only the first Collectanea was in existence at that date. He promises to produce a fuller compendium which may be of use in the current controversies and the second work, Collectanea Historiae Sinensis ab anno 1641 ad annum 1700 appears to fit his description. The only one of the three works to be dated, it bears the inscription - Opus huiusmodi (i.e. Dunyn-Szpot) proprio ejus caractere exaratum absolvit ipsemet Pater anno 1710'. The Historia Sinarum Imperii consists of a Part I covering the history of China to c.1707, and concentrating on the Ch'ing Dynasty; and Parts II and III dealing with the history of the Jesuit mission to 1687. It is clearly unfinished and ends in mid-sentence at the bottom of Jap. Sin.103, f.250r, indicating perhaps that it is a copy from a rough draft no longer extant. I postulate that the Historia was compiled during the last three years of Dunyn-Szpot's life, after 1710. All three works are of great interest, not only for the history of the mission, but also for the general history of China in the early Ch'ing, and the Historia at least is well worth publication in an annotated edition.

disputes on the question of terms. The Conference concentrated on the use of shang-ti and t'ien in the Chinese classics and Chinese philosophy, and quickly became a dispute between Longobardo and his followers on the one hand, and Alfonso Vagnoni⁹³ and the other defenders of Ricci such as Nicholas Trigault⁹⁴ on the other. The Vice-Provincial, Emmanuel Diaz Jr. presided.⁹⁵

Longobardo's case was presumably still that advanced in his Reposta breve. Alfonso Vagnoni, for his part, defended Ricci's position. A document in the Jesuit Archives in Rome,⁹⁶ presumably dating from this period,⁹⁷ gives Vagnoni's exposition of the case for the use of terms such as t'ien and shang-ti.

⁹³ Both Bartoli (La Cina, Lib.IV, cap.LXXXIV, IV, p.238) and Dunyn-Szpot (Historia Sinarum Imperii, Jap. Sin. 102, p.226) agree in naming Longobardo and Vagnoni as leaders of the opposing factions.

⁹⁴ Nicholas Trigault is cited by Bartoli as 'one of the defenders of Shang-ti' (La Cina, IV, p.238). Trigault, who had returned from Europe in 1620, seems to have been a victim of this dispute. He died on 14 November 1628 at Hangchow, according to Bartoli, 'having gone out of his mind' from the straining of the studies he had undertaken 'in defence of the term Shang-ti' (La Cina, Lib.IV, cap.XIII, IV, p.254). There are two enigmatic references to this event in the reports of the Visitor, Palmeiro (Rome:ASJ, Jap.Sin.161, II, ff.116-117 and f.119v), the former including a passage in code. This seems to indicate that he committed suicide by hanging himself. Whatever the cause of death it is clear from the documents that, as Lazzaro Cattaneo is said to have remarked, 'Shang-ti killed him' (ibid. f.117).

⁹⁵ From a letter of Diaz to the General, Nanchang, 20 February 1627 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 161, II, ff.97-8) it appears that the idea of a conference to resolve 'the scruples' of some of the missionaries, may have originated with him. He also notes that Vitelleschi has already forbidden any changes in the Chinese works of Matteo Ricci (ibid., f.97v).

⁹⁶ 'Breve Informacao sobre o nome Xam ti, e Tien em lugar di Deos p.e os Sup.res', Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 161, II, ff.225-6.

⁹⁷ It is concerned purely with the 'terms' question with no reference to the questions which arose in the 1630s and it refers to submissions to the Visitor and the General which fit the events of the 1620s.

It is basically the position developed over thirty years before by Ricci - the distinction between the ancient and modern Confucians, the appeal to 'the better part of the Literati', and the argument from expediency. There are, however, a few new twists to the argument. One seems to me a very strong point, the example of the early Church taking over words for 'God', 'spirit' etc. from their contemporaries, and transforming rather than abolishing pagan festivals and customs.⁹⁸ Another feature of Vagnoni's argument, however, is more disturbing. Again and again he begins points with the assertion, 'It is certain that...'. In this controversy, as in the Chinese Rites Controversy later, there was a tendency to convert cautious generalizations about Chinese beliefs and practices into flat unqualified general statements. If it was indeed 'certain' that Shang-ti implied a creator God, exercising providence over all, rewarding and punishing, then presumably the controversy would never have arisen. Ricci's argument for the probability of a Christian interpretation of the ancient texts, has become an appeal to the certainty of such a reading of them.

The conclusions of the Conference after a month's deliberations were in favour of Vagnoni. Shang-ti and t'ien might be used freely, as in the past, as an equivalent for 'God'. However, since these terms, and t'ien-chu itself, might be misunderstood by the uninstructed, they should be used cautiously and explained fully.⁹⁹ Ricci had been vindicated. But Longobardo was still not satisfied, and when a new Visitor, Palmeiro, was appointed, he once more reopened the question. He went on an extensive tour of the mission during 1628-9, and his reports to the General at the end of the visit show him on the whole satisfied with the progress made.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Jap. Sin. 161, II, ff.225v-226r.

⁹⁹ Dunyn-Szpot, Historia Sinarum Imperii, Jap. Sin. 102, f.226v.

¹⁰⁰ Four letters dated Macao, 20 December 1629, are in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 161, II, ff.109-117. There are in addition a full report of the Visitation (Jap. Sin. 161, II, ff.118-133) and a copy of the Instructions (Ordinationes) he drew up, dated 15 August 1629 (Jap. Sin. 100, ff.20-39).

Palmeiro admits to having been disturbed at the beginning about the comparative lack of progress of the mission - only 6,000 converts at the most - and about the time spent on cultivating the mandarins, the use of fine clothes etc. But he is now satisfied that they are necessary in the peculiar conditions of the mission.¹⁰¹ As for the disputes between the missionaries, he finds that they have not caused disunion but it is important to resolve them. He then gives an account of the teaching of the 'letrados' which clearly derives from Longobardo,¹⁰² stressing their atheism and their corruption by the pernicious doctrine of the 'pagodes' (Buddhist bonzes).

In the light of this judgement, it is not surprising to find Palmeiro leaving instructions to the mission prohibiting the terms shang-ti and t'ien. Once again, the argument resumed. Vagnoni appealed to Rome pointing out the scandal to the Christians which would result if they were told that Shang-ti was not really the Christian God, that all the books used on the mission were incorrect, and that the founders of the mission had preached a false god.¹⁰³ The General, and Palmeiro's successor as Visitor, Emanuel Diaz the Elder, reversed the decision, and reaffirmed the established practice of the mission.

From this time on, the Jesuits closed ranks on the question. On the 'terms' as on the larger issue of Chinese Rites, they maintained a common policy, which became all the more rigid as, in the early 1630s, outside criticism began. There are hints in many of the letters of the period before 1630 that the members of the China mission already felt themselves under fire.¹⁰⁴ As Franciscan and Dominican missionaries from the Philippines arrived on the scene the 'party-line' became firmer,

¹⁰¹ Jap. Sin. 161, II, ff.109 r-v.

¹⁰² Jap. Sin. 161, II, f.113r.

¹⁰³ Letter of 18 December 1629 to the General, Vitelleschi, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 161, II, ff.107-108.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Vagnoni's reference in the letter cited above (f.108v) to the calumniators of the mission in Cochinchina, Manila, Macao, Japan and elsewhere.

leading to exasperation on the part of their opponents and to lack of flexibility and candour on their part. In a sense they were victims of their own success, because, as Vagnoni pointed out, once Christianity was preached on Confucian guise and language, it could not be changed without grave damage to the nascent Church. What had begun as tentative guidelines for the encounter with Chinese culture had hardened into dogmatic and immutable rules.

II. THE ARRIVAL OF THE FRIARS AND THE BEGINNING OF THE DEBATE OVER CHINESE RITES

In all the documents I have seen dealing with the discussions in the period between Ricci's death and the arrival in China of members of other religious orders, I have found no suggestion of disagreement on the part of Jesuits of the China mission with Ricci's basic accommodation policy. Even Longobardo, who challenged the basis of accommodation with Confucianism, did not deny the necessity for some sort of engagement with Chinese ideas and Chinese values, and for a practical accommodation to Chinese society. Nor have I found any evidence of concern about the question of Chinese Rites in the strict sense. It was only with the arrival of Dominicans and Franciscans that the accommodation policy itself was called into question, and that controversy about the participation of Chinese Christians in traditional ceremonies arose.

The reasons - theological, cultural and political - that brought about the clash between the orders, are questions that lie quite outside the scope of this study. By concentrating on the Jesuits, and avoiding as far as possible detailed evaluation of the views of their opponents, I do not wish to imply that the Jesuits were necessarily right or that their opponents were less experienced or less knowledgeable. These are questions, important in themselves, that demand much fuller treatment. I feel that it is less unfair to the opponents of the Jesuits to, except where absolutely necessary, prescind altogether from their arguments, than to discuss them only as foils to the Jesuits. I plead simply that my theme is the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, and that the views of those outside the Society of Jesus are only relevant to that theme in so far as they precipitated modifications or changes in the Jesuit approach.

The history of the entry of other orders into China and of their activities is likewise beyond the bounds of this

work.¹⁰⁵ It should be noted, however, that it was their activities rather than their ideas which made most impact on the Jesuits in the beginning. The Rites Controversy, like the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, arose directly out of practical decisions taken in regard to missionary activity. The divergence of interpretations of that missionary experience was the beginning of the controversy.

The difference of approach between the orders is reflected in a series of letters and reports to Rome written between 1636 and 1640 by the Superior of the Jesuit mission in China, the Vice-Propaganda, Francesco Furtado. The first of these is a letter dated 10 November 1636. Although it was later published as part of the Jesuit defence in the Rites case,¹⁰⁶ it was originally written for the eyes of the General alone and not as a public apologia. The picture it gives of Jesuit practices in regard to the rites, as well as of the reaction of the Jesuits and the Chinese Christians to the methods of the mendicant friars, is all the more valuable because of this, and because of its early date. In the letter¹⁰⁷ he describes the activities of 'the religious of St. Dominic and St. Francis' in Fukien since their arrival from Manila,

¹⁰⁵ See Dunne, Generation of Giants, esp. Chs. XIV-XVII, for a general treatment of the relations between the orders in the late Ming and early years of the Ch'ing. The historians of each order have written abundantly on the China mission and I will mention no more than a few absolutely indispensable works: the continuing documentary series, Sinica Franciscana, Quaracchi, 1929-, on the Franciscans; J.M. Gonzalez's 4 vol. Historia de las Misiones Dominicanas de China, Madrid, 1955-1964, and his Misiones Dominicanas de China (1700-1750), Madrid, 2 vols., 1952-58, for the history of the Dominican mission in China; and, on the Augustinians, M. Merino, Misioneros Augustinos en el Extremo Oriente (1565-1780) an edition of A.M. de Castro, Osorio Venerabile, 1780. For a complete bibliographical treatment of contemporary material, see Vols. IV, V and VII of the Streit-Dindinger, Bibliotheca Missionum.

¹⁰⁶ In Informatio Antiquissima de praxi missionariorum Sinensium Societatis Jesu, Paris, 1700.

¹⁰⁷ I have consulted both the Portuguese original in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 161, II, ff.164-5, and the Latin translation in Informatio Antiquissima, pp.8-18.

their initial setbacks and their agreement in 1635 to follow the Jesuits' methods. Now complaints are being received from the Christians in Fukien - perhaps unfounded, notes Furtado - that the friars are claiming that the Jesuits from the time of Ricci on have deceived the Christians, and that they have been sent by God and the Pope to undeceive them. Furtado then lists the questions raised by the mendicants the previous year in Foochow, and his replies, which he had thought satisfied their scruples.

The first of these deals with the problem of the application of church law to China. The Jesuits frankly admit to not having promulgated the positive law of the church which they regard as premature and they have done so with permission from the appropriate church authorities. Similarly in answer to the sixth and last complaint, they admit to making special provision for women, omitting the ceremony of anointing the body at baptism, and not insisting on the women coming to church. The friars apparently thought that canon law should be applied in all its rigour from the beginning and that no concessions should be made to Chinese mores. The fifth charge, that the Jesuits concealed the crucifixion, is one we have already examined. Furtado answers simply that the crucifix is not displayed in public, but that the crucifixion of Christ is constantly preached, written about, and included in the devotional practices of the church.¹⁰⁸ Once again, we see a clash over the importation of European customs directly into China. Dunne gives several more examples of the 'Europeanism' of the friars - horror at a portrait of Christ wearing shoes¹⁰⁹ and at the presence in the Jesuit chapel of a tablet in honour of the Emperor;¹¹⁰ public display of the crucifix,¹¹¹ and public

¹⁰⁸ See Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.275-280, for evidence of the Jesuit practice.

¹⁰⁹ Generation of Giants, p.248. I suspect that the psychological importance of the old argument between 'calced' and 'discalced' friars was involved here.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp.248-9.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp.250, 252, 257.

preaching without permission of the magistrates.¹¹² All these are understandable as initial reactions of men whose previous experience of 'the Indies' was in the Philippines or Mexico. And there is abundant evidence of the way many of them learnt from their experiences and adapted themselves to the peculiar conditions of the China mission. But there remained an irreducible residue of difference between the Jesuits and the friars on matters of principle that prevented harmony on the mission. Dunne may be right in attributing it to national rather than to theological differences or inter-order rivalry¹¹³ but, whatever the cause, it persisted and even intensified with the passage of time.

Three of the six charges made by the mendicants relate directly to the question of rites - funeral ceremonies, ancestor rites and rituals in honour of Confucius - the earliest mention to my knowledge, and apparently dating from some two years after the landing of the friars who made them.¹¹⁴ Furtado's reply to the charge that these ceremonies were superstitious is the standard one which goes back to Ricci and was to continue to be the Jesuit answer. Funeral rites are purely 'political', showing respect for the dead; the use of incense and prostrations before the corpse are not per se religious; in Europe special reverence is shown to the dead, even to a heretical king.¹¹⁵ On ancestor rites, Furtado gives the earliest statement I know regarding the Jesuit practices. All those signs of respect commonly given to the living may also be given to the dead. Offerings of food are probably not

¹¹² Ibid., pp.257-8.

¹¹³ Generation of Giants, p.236.

¹¹⁴ Furtado does not identify the friars in question but they were probably the Franciscans, Antonio de Santa Maria and Francisco de la Madre de Dios, and the Dominicans, Antonio de Morales and Francisco Dias. These four drew up in late 1635-early 1636 two Informaciones which Dias and Santa Maria carried to Manila in February 1636. Morales and Santa Maria had landed in June 1633, and Dias and Francisco de la Madre de Dios in November 1634. (See Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.238, 245, 246, 269).

¹¹⁵ Jap. Sin. 161, II, f.164v and Informatio Antiquissima, pp. 12-13. Furtado's reply suggests that one of the arguments used by the friars was that a dead pagan must be in hell, and the case of the heretical king was brought in to answer it.

superstitious, but Christians are encouraged to abandon the custom. Anything resembling a sacrifice is never permitted.¹¹⁶ As for the rites to 'Cum cu' (Confucius), 'he was a wise and prudent man so full of the moral virtues that the Chinese honour him as a Saint, and so learned in his writings that all the Kingdom take him as their master... and so the Kings laid down certain rites to honour him as Master of the Kingdom'. But 'since they seem to contain an element of superstition, we only permit the Christians to make the same reverence to him that they make before the dead, that is, as we have said, the same that they make to the living; and to light candles with the intention of thanking him as a disciple to his master, without making any prayer of petition'.¹¹⁷

Much of the same ground is covered in two later documents emanating from Furtado, a report to Pope Urban VIII, dated 5 November 1639,¹¹⁸ and a detailed reply to twelve charges made by J.B. de Morales O.P., dated 8 February 1640.¹¹⁹ Furtado protests at the imprudence and hasty judgements about Chinese practices of the friars. They claim that Confucius is in Hell because he died before the coming of Christ, and that honours paid to him are therefore blasphemous as well as superstitious. But there is no idolatry in the ceremonies and, apart from the rashness of openly preaching that Confucius is in Hell, it is not necessarily so, since the evidence of his good life suggests that he lived according to the law of nature.¹²⁰ They are unnecessarily aggressive, publicly confronting the mandarins

¹¹⁶ Jap. Sin. 161, II, f.164v; Informatio Antiquissima, p.14.

¹¹⁷ Jap. Sin. 161, II, f.165r; Informatio Antiquissima, pp.15-16.

¹¹⁸ 'Informacao p.a Sua Santidade do estado desta Missam da China' in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 161, II, ff.221-3; another copy is in Jap. Sin. 123, ff. 75-78, together with a Latin translation, ff.69-74.

¹¹⁹ I have not located the original of this document which is claimed, in the Preface to the Informatio Antiquissima, to be found in the Jesuit Archives in Rome. A Latin translation, entitled 'Responsio...ad duodecim quaestiones a P.F. Joanne Baptista de Morales Ordinis S. Dominici Manilensi, propositas Patribus Societatis Jesu laborantibus in praedicatione Sancti Evangelii in Imperio Sinarum anno 1640', is given in the Informatio Antiquissima (separately paginated 1-52).

¹²⁰ Jap. Sin. 161, II, f.222r cf. Informatio Antiquissima, Q.11, p.34.

and courting martyrdom.¹²¹ Two Spanish friars¹²² have even boasted that 'the Catholic King' could conquer China with 4000 men. Furtado concedes that this is just loose talk but it could easily ruin Christianity in China and cause distrust in Macao, on whose merchants the mission depends for support.¹²³

In his Reply to Morales, Furtado outlines the Jesuit policy regarding another disputed ceremony, that to the City God (ch'êng-huang). This ceremony has never been permitted by the Fathers, and if any Christian mandarin takes part in it, it is against the instructions of the Jesuits and on the conscience of the mandarin. In fact, he says, it is not difficult to avoid it, and he quotes the cases of 'Doctor Michael' (Yang T'ing-yün) and 'the licentiate Ignatius', both of whom in time of drought refused to offer sacrifices to the City God and successfully prayed for rain to the Christian God. There is, however, a rather defensive tone to Furtado's remarks which suggests that some Christian magistrates did in fact take part in this ceremony, arguing, with Yang T'ing-yün, that the City God was simply the guardian spirit of the place and thus equivalent to a 'guardian angel'.¹²⁴

In his 9th and 10th replies Furtado gives some illuminating details on the ceremonies for the dead and ancestors, and the Jesuit attitude to them. Not only the Chinese Christians but the Jesuits themselves customarily perform the tiao or ceremony of condolence. Literally, says Furtado, tiao means 'to inquire about a death',¹²⁵ and is simply a matter of good manners (urbanitas) and custom, instituted for the consolation of the living rather than for any alleged benefit to the dead. The Chinese do not believe that the souls of their ancestors reside in the ancestral tablets 'like worms in the wood or birds perched upon them'. There follows an interesting

¹²¹ Jap. Sin. 161, II, f.223v-r.

¹²² Gaspar Alendra and Francisco de la Madre de Dios.

¹²³ Jap. Sin. 161, II, f.222v.

¹²⁴ Informatio Antiquissima, pp.9-13.

¹²⁵ 'De morte interrogare' or 'ven chun'. Wen chung is the definition of tiao given in the Shuo-wen dictionary.

excursus on Chinese ideas about the soul in which he distinguishes between: the 'atheists' who do not believe in survival after death; the 'Pagodes' who believe that souls transmigrate after death or go to some 'Indian Elysian fields in the homeland of Buddha'; and the 'Literati' who believe that souls are dissipated. In all three cases, they cannot be said to believe the souls are actually present, but rather that they are revered 'as if they were present'.¹²⁶ And he concludes:

From all that has been said, it appears that it is not a sin to possess nor to permit the tablets. Nevertheless, we desire and endeavour to see that these and like customs are dropped, so that there may be made one beautiful church, without any defect at all.¹²⁷

The logic of the conclusion might be questioned, but it represents a simple application of Ricci's policy of gradually replacing indigenous ceremonies of doubtful antecedents, with specifically Christian rituals.

Furtado concludes his 1640 'Reply' with a point that sums up neatly the Jesuit attitude to the evangelization of China and their sixty years' experience of Chinese conditions. The friars say they want harmony on the mission. So, he says, do we. We want charity and cooperation. But when they say we 'should join together with them in creating a single body or army to attack idolatry in order to convert this country' we must reject it. Our whole experience teaches that such aggressive methods do not work.

The first published comment relating to the Rites Controversy that I know of is a brief reference to the experiences of the Dominicans in China in Diego Aduarte's Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores,

¹²⁶ He cites the Confucian explanation that they are 'ju cai' (ju tsai). This is a reference to Analects, III.12, 'He sacrificed (to the dead), as if they were present. He sacrificed to the spirits, as if the spirits were present' (Legge, Chinese Classics, I, p.159).

¹²⁷ Informatio Antiquissima, 'Reponsio...', p.33.

published in Manila in 1640.¹²⁸ The charges it makes appear to have been general, and to specifically exempt the Jesuits themselves from complicity in the practices described.¹²⁹ But the publication of this work, together with the circulation of the charges of Antonio de Santa Maria O.F.M. and J.B. de Morales O.P., drew forth a Reply from the Jesuit Visitor, Antonio Rubino S.J. His Riposta as Calumnias que os Padres de S. Domingo e de S. Francisco impoem aos padres da Companhia de Jesus, que se occupão na conversação do reino da China¹³⁰ is dated 1641, but it was not published till 1665 in an Italian translation by Giovanni Filippo de Marini S.J.¹³¹ It was condemned in 1678 by the Congregation of

128 I have not seen the original work, but an English translation was published by E.H. Blair and J.A. Robertson in The Philippine Islands 1493-1803, Vols. 30-32. Unfortunately the sections on the Rites question (Liv.II, Chs.LIII and LIV) in Vol. 32, pp.246-8, are given in synopsis rather than in translation.

129 From Blair and Robertson's paraphrase, it appears that the sacrifices to the City God and to Confucius were the chief objects of concern. They add: 'It is affirmed by the Chinese that the fathers of the Society of Jesus permitted them to render this sacrifice, but this is not the case'. (p.24)

130 A manuscript, possibly the original, of the Riposta is in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 155, and another in Rome:BVE, Fondo Gesuitico 1249, n.4. The ASJ copy has a note on the title-page, 'Composta pelloos Santos Martires Pe Ant. o Rubino Visitador, e Pe Diogo Morales da Comp.a de Jesus' which appears to attribute joint-authorship to Rubino and his fellow-martyr in Japan, Diego Moralez. Marini's Preface to his 1665 translation claims the work for Rubino but adds that it was examined and approved by 'Padre Diego Moralez, insigne Maestro di Theologia nella nostra Universita de Filippine' (p.iii). A further note indicates that the ms. was sent by the Provincial of Japan to Rome to be deposited in the 'Archive of the Professed House of the Society of Jesus'.

131 Metodo della Dottrina che i Padri della Compagnia di Giesu insegnano a' Neofiti, nelle Missioni nella Cina, Lyon, 1665.

Propaganda Fide and placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by the Holy Office in 1680.¹³²

What is most significant about Rubino's treatise is the evidence it provides of the increasing remoteness of the controversy from Chinese reality. Rubino had little, if any, first-hand experience of China.¹³³ His purpose in writing was purely apologetic - to defend the practices of the mission, then under attack, by as many arguments as he could muster. Theological propositions, casuistry, historical analogies, are all invoked in such abundance that the facts of the case are often obscured. In this respect, his Reply is typical and symptomatic of the whole of the subsequent discussion of the Rites question on both sides.

In comparison with Furtado's reports, Rubino seems often to concede too much; to argue that the Jesuits do not allow certain practices, but that even if they did, they would be legitimate. I suspect that Rubino's work was a source for many of the later charges against the Jesuits, and this his ingenious defence later rebounded against the people he was defending. It is interesting to note that the Metodo della Dottrina was not condemned on its appearance in 1665, but several years later, after the publication of Navarrete's Tratados, and at a time when Navarrete's attacks on the Jesuits were being widely canvassed.

It would be tedious, and not at all germane to our understanding of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, to rehearse all of Rubino's arguments. One example will suffice, both to illustrate Rubino's method, and to demonstrate its dangers to the Jesuits on the mission. We have seen that Furtado, after nearly twenty years on the mission, emphatically denied that the Jesuits permitted their converts to participate in ceremonies to the City God. Rubino, too, supports this:

¹³³ Rubino was Visitor of Japan and China from 1639-1643, but, according to Pfister (Notices, p.248) he never entered China. His information must, then, have been culled entirely in Macao. He was killed in Nagasaki on 22 March 1643.

The Fathers of the Company do not consent to, nor approve, that (Christian) mandarins adore, nor offer sacrifice to, the Idol Cim Hoam.¹³⁴

Furtado implied that Christian magistrates, against the instructions of the Jesuits, sometimes attended the temple. Rubino goes further and defends, on theological grounds, their right to do so. However, he confuses the issue considerably by failing to distinguish between the original charge - that Christians offered the sacrifice, having first concealed a crucifix among the flowers or engraved on a candle-stick¹³⁵ - and the legitimacy of a Christian magistrate praying in a pagan temple to the Christian God.¹³⁶ Aduarte's Historia had explicitly dissociated the Jesuits from the practices described.¹³⁷ Rubino now appeared to repudiate this. It is legitimate, he says, for Christians to adore the Holy Cross and the Lord of Heaven in the Temple of the City God;¹³⁸ and it is no disrespect for a Christian to place a cross on a table in the temple, and pray before it.¹³⁹ It is clear from the context that he is not referring to the association of this with the regular ceremonies to the ch'êng-huang; nor does he claim that this was in fact done by Chinese Christians, and certainly not with the permission of the Jesuits. But it was not at all difficult for ill-disposed readers to read this defence in principle of the liceity of praying before a crucifix in the temple of the City God, as an admission that it was the approved practice, and to associate it with the description

¹³⁴ Metodo, p.22. Cim Hoam is, of course, Ch'êng huang, the City God.

¹³⁵ Blair and Robertson, The Philippine Islands, vol.32, p. 248; Rubino, Metodo, p.21.

¹³⁶ Metodo, p.24.

¹³⁷ Blair and Robertson, The Philippine Islands, Vol.32, p.248.

¹³⁸ Metodo, p.27.

¹³⁹ Metodo, pp.29-30.

given by the Dominicans and Franciscans of such a custom.¹⁴⁰

On most of the disputed issues, however, Rubino's position is the standard Jesuit one, going back to Ricci. On ceremonies in honour of Confucius, he cites Trigault and Furtado¹⁴¹ to demonstrate that Confucius is honoured as 'a Master'. Some Chinese even regard him as 'a Saint', and since it is not an article of faith that he died a gentile, nor that he is in Hell, it is not unreasonable to regard him as a saint. 'It could be that many through ignorance regard Confucius as an Idol, but that doesn't greatly matter, because something good is not vitiated by the bad use it is put to, as the law says...'.¹⁴² Again, on rites for the ancestors, while some Chinese believe the souls of the dead reside in the tablets, the Christians do not, and simply adapt the rites for Christian use.¹⁴³ In all things, we should follow the practice of the Roman church of allowing customs that are not openly superstitious.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ The Jansenists, especially, circulated and ornamented this story, which came to them by way of the Salamanca Professor, Tomas Hurtado. Its most famous expression was in the Fifth Letter of a Provincial of Pascal: 'comme ils ont fait dans les Indes et dans la Chine, où ils ont permis aux Chrétiens d'idolâtrie même, par cette subtile invention, de leur faire cacher sous leurs habits une image de Jésus-Christ, à laquelle ils leur enseignent de rapporter mentalement les adorations publiques qu'ils rendent à l'idole Chacim-coan [Ch'eng-huang] et à leur Keum-facum [Confucius]' (Pascal, Oeuvres Complètes, Pléiade ed., Paris, 1954, pp.705-706). For a critical examination of Pascal's sources, see M. Hay, The Prejudices of Pascal, London, 1962, pp.18-19; A. Brou, Les Jésuites de la légende, Paris, 1907, pp.53-54; and L. Pastor, The History of the Popes, XXX, London, 1940, pp. 203-204.

¹⁴¹ Metodo, p.38.

¹⁴² Metodo, p.50.

¹⁴³ Metodo, pp.57-65.

¹⁴⁴ Metodo, p.66.

Rubino's treatise may be regarded in many respects as the archetype of Jesuit Rites Controversy literature. It presupposes and defends the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, but its main concern seems to lie more with the defence of the Jesuits against their opponents than with the facts of the case. Increasingly, the question of Chinese Rites became subordinate to ecclesiastical and theological politics. Two general theological issues raised by Rubino were to play an important part in the later history of the controversy. One was the use of 'mental reservation' which Rubino discusses in relation to the question of swearing by idols. He argues that it is licit to swear apparently by an idol but actually by the Holy Cross; and that this opinion was supported by many Jesuit theologians and approved by Pope Clement VIII.¹⁴⁵ It was 'mental reservation' which first brought the Jansenists into the controversy.¹⁴⁶ The other - much more pertinent - was the doctrine of 'probabilism'. Rubino saw that it was impossible to say with certainty that many Chinese customs were completely free from superstition. It was sufficient to show that they were probably so. This was, of course, the position that Ricci had adopted, but on grounds of common-sense

¹⁴⁵ Metodo, p.28.

¹⁴⁶ Antoine Arnauld in La Morale Pratique des Jésuites and elsewhere, uses examples of Jesuit behaviour on the China mission to bolster his charges of moral laxity. The work of Tomas Hurtado, Martyrdom for the Faith, cited by Pascal in the passage from the Provincial Letters cited above, was mainly an attack on the Jesuit doctrine of 'mental restriction' as its title shows - Resolutiones Orthodoxae-Morales ... de Vero, Unico, Proprio et Catholico Martyrio Fidei ... quibus juguntur digressiones ... de restrictione mentali, tam in verbis, tam in factis Similarly, the Jesuit counter-attack, the Missi Evangelici ad Sinas ..., Antwerp, 1659, is mainly concerned with a defence of the views of the Jesuit theologian Leonard Lessius, on 'mental restriction'. (The catalogue of the Vatican Library identifies the author of the Missi Evangelici, who describes himself as 'Leodogarius Quintinus Heduus S.T.D.' as Theophile Raynaud S.J., and states that the work was actually printed in Lyon - an example of 'mental restriction' in practice?)

rather than theological principle. Rubino erects it into a principle; moral certainty is not required, merely probability, and one may always follow 'the most common opinion'.¹⁴⁷ Much later discussion of the rites question got lost in a wilderness of argument about opinions that were 'probable', 'more probable' and 'common',¹⁴⁸ and the tendency of later Jesuit authors to claim that their interpretation of Chinese customs was 'certain', should be seen as a counter to those who would deny that probability was enough. In Rubino's treatise of 1641 the process of 'theologization' of what was essentially a dispute over facts rather than doctrine, had already begun.

The concerns expressed in Rubino's treatise were in most respects ahead of their time. Neither the Rites Controversy, nor even the dispute over Chinese terminology, were of central importance to the mission in the last few decades of the Ming dynasty. There was first of all the problem of survival and extension of the mission. The adjustment to an increasingly turbulent and fragmented political situation, and, after 1644 to the new Manchu rulers, required delicate and sustained effort. Adam Schall survived the Manchu conquest of Peking to be appointed Director of the Astronomical Bureau by the Regent, Dorgon. In the provinces many of the Jesuits were caught up in the death-throes of the dynasty. In Szechwan Luigi Buglio and Gabriel de Magalhaes became prisoners first of the bandit general Chang Hsien-chung, then of the Manchu Prince Haoge.¹⁴⁹ Others became associated with the Ming loyalists in the South; several leading Christians, and some of the Jesuits were attached to the court of the Ming Pretender, the Prince of Kuei, who was pronounced Emperor at Chao-ch'ing

¹⁴⁷ Metodo, p.77. One might add that, for Rubino, the very fact that the Jesuits held a certain position, seems to have sufficed for him to regard it as 'probable'. See his remarks in Metodo, pp.75-76.

¹⁴⁸ See the New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol.9, p.1133, for a discussion of 'probabilism', 'probabiliorism' etc.

¹⁴⁹ See Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.325-7; and J.B.Parsons, 'Overtones of Religion and Superstition in the Rebellion of Chang Hsien-chung', Sinologica, IV, 1956, pp.175-176.

in 1646. Michael Boym S.J. in late 1650 was entrusted by the Dowager Empress, Helena, who with the mother and wife of the Pretender had become Christians, with a letter to Pope Innocent X asking for support for the Ming cause. His mission was a political failure but proved a boon to the nascent European science of sinology through his writings.¹⁵⁰

Most of the members of the mission were engaged in the less spectacular work of extension of the mission along the lines we have already examined. Some were prolific writers in Chinese on religion, science and mathematics. Giulio Aleni, for example, produced at least twenty-four works in Chinese¹⁵¹ ranging from an illustrated life of Christ to a complete world geography. He wrote a Christian primer, or 'Four Character Classic',¹⁵² in imitation of the standard 'Three Character Classic' (San-tzŭ-ching). Where the latter has the story of Mencius and his mother, the former begins with the three Magi visiting King Herod. He wrote a treatise on the six liberal arts of the West,¹⁵³ and a Chinese style dialogue on the nature of God.¹⁵⁴ In all these works he shows himself a faithful adherent to the Ricci method, presenting the Western missionaries as scholars, in both the Chinese and Western sciences; and Christianity and Western culture as equivalent to,

¹⁵⁰ See Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.340-347 on the association between the Jesuits and the Ming court in exile. On Boym and his writings see the notice in Pfister, Notices, pp.269-276; the article, 'The Writings of Michael Boym' by B. Szczesniak, in Monumenta Serica, XIV, 1949-55, pp. 481-538; and Archbishop Lo Kuang's study, Chiao-ting yü chung-kuo shih chieh shih, Taipei, 1969, ch.3, pp.49-73. Boym was one of the major sources for the popular compilation of the Jesuit polyglot, Athanasius Kircher, China monumentis qua sacris qua profanis...illustrata, Amsterdam, 1667 (on which see B. Szczesniak, 'Athanasius Kircher's China Illustrata', Osiris, X, 1952, pp.358-411).

¹⁵¹ See Pfister, Notices, pp.131-135.

¹⁵² T'ien-chu shêng-chiao ssŭ-tzŭ ching-wen, Peking, 1642.

¹⁵³ Hsi-hsüeh fan, in T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han, I, pp.9-59.

¹⁵⁴ San-shan lun hsüeh-chi, in T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien, I, pp.419-493.

yet intriguingly different from, Chinese values. Mathematics and astronomy, he insists, are not the main purpose of the mission, but the study of the Way (tao) and the ultimate things.¹⁵⁵ And the Western tao is not substantially different from that of China.

What (asks his interlocutor in the Hsi-fang ta-wen) are the ceremonies in sacrificing to the ancestors in your country? Ceremonies for the ancestors are very important in my native country. As for slaughtering animals for sacrifices, that was done in ancient times only in God's honour. Since God's reincarnation amongst men in this world, the sacrifice of the mass has been established, and animal sacrifices are no longer used. Whoever reveres his ancestors, has masses said for them, praying God to protect their souls and grant them rest. This is of real benefit to the ancestors and increases their happiness in the other world. Their portraits are also painted and hung up in the house to serve as examples to their descendants, so that by looking at them they may be induced to imitate their ancestors' virtues. Sometimes food and drink are placed on the ancestors' graves; when the ceremony is over, the offerings are given to the church for distribution among the poor.¹⁵⁶

In other words, as presented by Aleni, Christianity preserves all that is best in Confucianism, while adding a new dimension. As another work of the period, João Monteiro's T'ien-hsüeh lüeh-i¹⁵⁷ puts it, in terms that echo many of his predecessors:

When (modern Confucians) condemn the Lord of Heaven, still more do they turn their backs on the injunctions of Confucius and Mencius. If you ask whether Christianity is the same or different from Confucianism, I say, examine the preceding work and judge for yourself. Hsü Wen-ting (i.e. Hsü Kuang-ch'i) of Wu-sung says, 'Christianity supersedes Buddhism and complements Confucianism' and Prime Minister Sui An-ch'ien of Wu-t'ang also says: 'By replacing what our Confucians have lost, Christianity is unique, and conserves and reforms the other sects...'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ See J.L.Mish's translation of Aleni's Hsi-fang ta-wen, in Monumenta Serica, XXIII, 1964, p.70.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp.61-62.

¹⁵⁷ 'A Short Sketch of Christian Doctrine', published in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, II, pp. 839-904.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp.899-900.

Monteiro's work, written about 1640¹⁵⁹ indicates that at the very end of the Ming and despite the controversies of the preceding years, the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism was still substantially that of Matteo Ricci.

¹⁵⁹ Pfister, Notices, p.264, dates it 'vers 1642'; but one of the Jesuit signatories to the title-page was 'Hsü Jih-sheng', identified by Pfister himself as Nicolas Fera, who died in 1640 (v. Pfister, Notices, pp.246-7). Although Monteiro only entered China in 1637, he had spent several years previously in Macao as Professor and later Rector of St. Paul's, and the Annual Letter of 1637 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 115, I, pp.371-435) which was written by him shows considerable acquaintance with Chinese ideas and literature.

III. LEGITIMATE PREJUDICES?

The compilers of the aptly named Legitimate Prejudices in Favour of the Decree of Our Holy Father Pope Alexander VII and the Practice of the Jesuits cited at the beginning of this chapter, maintained that the question of rites was simply a question of fact: what do the Chinese really believe about the ceremonies to Confucius and their ancestors? In a sense, of course, they were right. Yet 'facts' do not exist in a vacuum, but in mens' minds where they are filtered, interpreted and assembled into mental constructs labelled 'Confucianism', 'Chinese Rites' etc. Perhaps, if the Chinese Rites Controversy had been thrashed out in China where statement and counter-statement could be assessed against experience and actual observation, it might have been possible to resolve the question definitively, at least in the form of a working compromise or common policy, although the actual course of the debate even within China makes one hesitate to claim this. But, once Chinese Rites had been claimed to be a theological question and referred to the supreme arbiter of all theological questions within the Catholic Church, the See of Rome and the Congregations and Offices of the Papal Curia, it was inevitable that prejudices and facts should come into conflict.

To disentangle the prejudices from the facts involved in the series of decisions emanating from Rome over nearly a century - the earliest in 1645, the last in 1742 - is a

task I leave to some future historian.¹⁶⁰ Let it suffice to say that the mid 17th century decrees, those of 12 September 1645¹⁶¹ in favour of the arguments of J.B. de Morales O.P., and of 23 March 1656 in favour of the representations of Martino Martini S.J., procurator of the Jesuit mission of China,¹⁶² left the main questions undecided. Morales had

¹⁶⁰ A definitive history of the Chinese Rites Controversy is long overdue, although it is, perhaps, only in very recent times that the theological climate, as well as the opening of the relevant archives to researchers, has made such a work possible. Father Francis Rouleau's forthcoming study of the key episode, the legation of Cardinal de Tournon, should provide the foundation for a full history of the controversy, which would be as much a contribution to the ecclesiastical history of the 17th and 18th centuries as to missiology and sinology. Meanwhile, apart from the voluminous contemporary sources, printed and manuscript, which are catalogued in Cordier's Bibliotheca Sinica (II, cols.869-926) and, chronologically, in the Streit-Dindinger Bibliotheca Missionum, vols. 5 and 7, the following works may be usefully consulted: Ludwig Pastor, The History of the Popes, Vols. XXIX-XXXV; E. Preclin and E. Jarry, Les Luttes Politiques et Doctrinales aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siecles (t.19 of the Histoire de l'Eglise, Eds. A. Fliche and V. Martin), Paris, 1955; R. Etiemble, Les Jésuites en Chine: La Querelle des Rites (1552-1773), Paris, 1966 - based exclusively on French sources; A.S. Rosso, Apostolic Legations to China of the Eighteenth Century, S. Pasadena, 1948 - well-documented and drawing heavily on Chinese sources, but decidedly anti-Jesuit and frequently inaccurate; M. Hay, Failure in the Far East, London, 1956 - equally biased in the Jesuits' favour; H. Bernard-Maitre, 'The Chinese and Malabar Rites: An Historical Perspective', in Concilium, VII.3, September 1967, pp.38-45, For brief but judicious comments see the articles on Chinois (Rites) in the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, II, Paris, 1923, cols. 2364-91 (by J. Brucker S.J.); and in the Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclesiastique, XII, Paris, 1953, cols. 731-741 (by H. Bernard-Maitre S.J.).

¹⁶¹ See Pastor, History of the Popes, Vol.XXX, Ch.IV, pp.201-3; Etiemble, Les Jesuites en Chine, pp.90-92; Rosso, Apostolic Legations, pp.110-114; and for a full text of the decree itself, Quaesita Missionariorum Chinae, seu Sinarum Sacrae Congregationi de Propaganda Fide exhibita, cum Responsis ad ea, Rome, 1645; and a translation in Navarrete, An Account of the Empire of China, Bk.VII, pp.332-7.

¹⁶² See Pastor, History of the Popes, Vol.XXXI, Ch.IV; Etiemble, Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.92-3; Rosso, Apostolic Legations, pp.119-120; Navarrete, Account, pp.337-40.

claimed that the Jesuits were not observing church laws regarding the administration of the sacraments; were allowing the Chinese to loan money at usurious rates of interest; and, above all, were permitting ancestral rites, funeral rites, and ceremonies to Confucius and the City God, that were idolatrous and superstitious. The resolutions of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, approved by Pope Innocent X, were generally in his favour, but qualified 'until His Holiness or the Holy See will provide otherwise'.¹⁶³ The Jesuits' counter-claim was presented to the Congregation of the Inquisition by Martini in 1654-6, and Pope Alexander VII approved his interpretation of the rites as purely civil, this time with the qualification that the decree was 'according to the facts as presented above'.¹⁶⁴ In other words, the church authorities in Rome, on the central issue of the Chinese Rites, took the very sensible position that Rome was too far away from China for a definitive judgement about the facts of the case, differently presented by the two parties, to be pronounced.

The Dominicans were not satisfied with this compromise and demanded an interpretation of the status of the two decrees. On 13 November 1669, the Roman Inquisition gave its decision, which was confirmed by Pope Clement IX on the 20th of November.

The most eminent fathers declared, that the decree of the holy congregation de propaganda fide, passed the 12th of September 1645, according to what is there made out in the doubts, is in full force, and not in the least invalidated by the decree of the sacred congregation of the holy inquisition, passed the 23rd day of March 1656, but ought to be fully observed as it lies, according to the questions, circumstances, and all things mentioned in the said doubts.¹⁶⁵

Navarrete, in reporting this decree, regards it as a decisive rebuff to the Jesuits who had claimed that the 1656 decision superseded that of 1645. In fact, it was obviously a continuation of the policy observed hitherto. 'The questions,

¹⁶³ Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.113.

¹⁶⁴ Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.119; Navarrete, Account, p.340.

¹⁶⁵ Navarrete, Account, p.354.

circumstances, and all things mentioned' in the submissions of both Morales and Martini were questions of fact which could be determined only on the spot.

It was at this very time, 1669, that a thoroughgoing attempt was made to reach agreement amongst the missionaries in China itself. The occasion for the conference of missionaries that met in Canton at the end of 1667 was not a happy one. They were, in fact, forcibly gathered in Canton due to a violent wave of anti-Christian sentiment sparked off by one Yang Kuang-hsien. Yang had had a chequered political career¹⁶⁶ and in 1659 joined with some disgruntled Muslim astronomers who were jealous of the European astronomers in an attack on Christianity and Western astronomy and calendrical calculation. Till the death of the Shun-chih Emperor, who was closely attached to Adam Schall,¹⁶⁷ these attacks proved fruitless. But after the accession of the infant K'ang-hsi Emperor in 1661, Yang found receptive ears at court, especially

¹⁶⁶ For a biography of Yang Kuang-hsien, see Hummel, Eminent Chinese, pp.889-892; and (significantly coupled with Adam Schall and Ferdinand Verbiest) in the Ch'ing shih kao, lieh chüan 59.

¹⁶⁷ See Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p.256; and R. Attwater, Adam Schall, London, 1963, pp.95-125. Schall's own account of his relations with the Emperor, in his Historica Relatio, confirms their intimacy. The young Emperor visited him frequently and would leave his entourage outside in order to talk with Schall and examine his scientific instruments. When Schall complained that he no longer could use his chairs since the Emperor had sat on them all and by custom no-one could use them afterwards, the Emperor replied: 'Are you also superstitious, ma fa (grandfather). Do as I do and sit where you like'. (See the text and French translation of the Historica Relatio in Lettres et Mémoires d'Adam Schall S.J., Ed. H. Bernard, Trans. P. Bornet, Tientsin, 1942, pp.255, 259).

those of one at least of the Regents,¹⁶⁸ and the Manchu President of the Board of Rites, Engedder. Yang's Pu-te-i,¹⁶⁹ 'I could not do otherwise', sent to the Board of Rites in September 1664, resulted in the arrest and imprisonment of Schall, Ferdinand Verbiest who was the assistant to the ageing and ailing¹⁷⁰ astronomer, Luigi Buglio and Gabriel de Magalhaes. Verbiest conducted a vigorous defence, and the Jesuits' astronomy was vindicated by a successful prediction of an eclipse which was miscalculated by the Muslims, but Schall and his Chinese collaborators were condemned to death.¹⁷¹ An earthquake, which was interpreted as an omen, saved Adam Schall and his Jesuit colleagues from execution, and they were allowed to remain in the capital; but all the other missionaries in China, apart from three Dominicans who went into hiding in Fukien, were banished to Canton and kept under

¹⁶⁸ Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.361, names Prince Oboi as Yang's patron at court. Fu Lo-shu denies this and names Su-k'o-sa-ha (Prince Suksuha) as his sponsor (A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations, Tucson, 1966, II, p.452, n.67). But this comment, which is given in an explanatory note to the Memorial condemning Yang Kuang-hsien, in fact is counter-explanatory. Why did the memorializing officials explicitly accuse Yang of 'siding with Ao-pai (Oboi)' ? (See Documentary Chronicle, I, p. 45). It is possible that the reference to Oboi who had fallen from power a few months previously was gratuitous and part of the campaign against him. But Oboi had certainly been responsible for the initial harsh sentences on the Jesuits, and was the dominant force throughout the whole of the period of Yang's ascendancy.

¹⁶⁹ Reprinted in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, III, pp.1069-1332.

¹⁷⁰ He had suffered a stroke shortly before (on 20 April 1664) which left him unable to speak in his defence.

¹⁷¹ For the history of the persecution of Yang Kuang-hsien, see Dunne, Generation of Giants, pp.360-363; Fu, Documentary Chronicle, 1966, I, pp.35-38, 42, 44-46; Attwater, Adam Schall, pp.143-153; Rosso, Apostolic Legations, pp.120-123; Pfister, Notices, pp.174-176.

house-arrest there. It was this unfortunate circumstance that brought together Jesuits, Dominicans and Franciscans in late 1667 to analyse their successes and mistakes and hammer out a common policy on mission practices and methods.

Although the motives behind Yang's attack seem to have been largely personal¹⁷² and its success due mainly to political factors,¹⁷³ the Pu-te-i also mounted a formidable attack on the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. Yang was particularly incensed at a work published in 1664 by the Christian official and student of Schall, Li Tsu-po, entitled T'ien-hsüeh ch'uan-kai.¹⁷⁴ Li's is the first Chinese work I know to attempt to link early Chinese history with biblical history, and his treatment of the relationship of the Old Testament to Chinese tradition anticipates by some forty years the theories of the Jesuit Figurists.

The first Chinese (he writes) really descended from the men of Judea who had come to the East from the West, and the Teaching of Heaven is therefore what they recalled. When they produced and reared their children and grandchildren, they taught their households the traditions of the family, and this is the time when this teaching came to China.¹⁷⁵

It is difficult to establish whether this view of the origin of Chinese traditions was Li's own invention, or had become the common teaching of the Jesuits, but in many respects it was a logical consequence of current views on biblical chronology. If the biblical Deluge was universal as was commonly believed, the beginnings of Chinese civilization must postdate the Deluge, and, if Chinese history was very ancient, it must date from close after the flood itself.

¹⁷² Dunne, Generation of Giants, p.360, ~~denies~~ this, but all he succeeds in demonstrating is that his motive was not to succeed Schall in the Bureau of Astronomy. It is difficult to explain his vehemence and persistence without an element of personal animosity and the Pu-te-i is directed quite specifically against Li Tsu-po and Schall, with fatal results for the former and near-fatal for the latter.

¹⁷³ See Hummel's biographies of Kang-hsi (Hsüan-yeh), and Oboi (Eminent Chinese, pp.328, 600).

¹⁷⁴ 'Summary of the Propagation of the Teaching of Heaven'. See the text in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, II, pp.1043-1068.

¹⁷⁵ T'ien-hsüeh ch'uan-kai, p.1058.

Hence the founder of the Chinese Empire, usually taken to be Fu Hsi, must have been an immediate descendant of Noah.¹⁷⁶

Yang refutes Li Tsu-po by claiming that Fu Hsi was not the first Chinese Emperor, since the histories give a whole series of previous rulers including Pan Ku, the Three Emperors, and the Heavenly Emperor (T'ien-huang). In fact, he says, if we calculate the period from T'ien-huang to the third year of Ming T'ien-ch'i (1623 A.D.) we find that 19,379,460 years have elapsed.¹⁷⁷

But Li Tsu-po, as we have seen, claimed more than that the Chinese people postdated the Deluge. What makes him a proto-Figurist is his claim that the Chinese classics embody the same primitive revelation as the Christian classics (i.e. the Bible). Yang trenchantly remarks:

Formerly Li Ma-tou used the Chinese sacred classics and commentaries of the sages as texts to adorn his heterodox teachings. Today (Li) Tsu-po cites the Chinese sacred classics and commentaries of the sages as passages from the scriptures of the heterodox teaching itself. Tsu-po's crime deserves the greater punishment.¹⁷⁸

It is unlikely that Li Tsu-po would have presented these views to the public independently of the Jesuits. Yang Kuang-hsien, in his memorial to the Board of Rites, states that T'ang Jo-wang (Adam Schall) had inspired the work and Li Tsai-

¹⁷⁶ Very early in the history of the mission, this problem had been perceived. In 1634, Adam Schall sent a memorandum on the question to Rome, urging the official adoption in China of the longer chronology of the Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament, rather than the shorter Vulgate (Latin) or Hebrew chronology; thus giving a date for the Deluge of c.2950 B.C. (See Appendix to H. Bernard-Maitre, 'L'Encyclopédie Astronomique du Père Schall', Monumenta Serica, III, 1938, pp.483-493) Martino Martini's Historiae Sinicae Decas Prima, 1658, dates the beginning of Chinese chronology in 2697 B.C. with Huang Ti, but notes that his predecessor Fu Hsi must have reigned from 2952 B.C. (SEE V. Pinot, La Chine et la Formation de l'Esprit Philosophique, Paris, 1932, pp.200-201).

¹⁷⁷ Pu-te-i, p.1085. See also Fu Lo-shu, Documentary Chronicle, I, p.35.

¹⁷⁸ Pu-te-i, p.1087.

k'o (Luigi Buglio)¹⁷⁹ had asked Hsü Chih-chien to write the Preface.¹⁸⁰ It has even been claimed that it was, in fact, written by Buglio and Magalhaes and simply put into good Chinese by Li.¹⁸¹ But, whatever the true story of the authorship of the work, its reception by Yang Kuang-hsien apparently persuaded the Jesuits to avoid this line of argument in the future, at least in their Chinese books. Luigi Buglio in his reply to Yang, the Pu-te-i-pien,¹⁸² conspicuously fails to take up this section of the argument of the Pu-te-i. In works intended for a European audience, however, the Jesuits frequently advanced arguments aimed at reconciling Chinese and biblical chronology. Even here, it was only slowly, and against considerable opposition, that the argument for vestiges of the primitive revelation in the Chinese classics began to appear. And perhaps the strongest of all the counter-arguments was the simple appeal to the effect of such a claim on Chinese scholars if they came to hear of it. It always remained much more an attempt to resolve essentially European problems - the difficulty of a revelation outside Christendom and the scandal of the antiquity of China - than part of a programme of accommodation to Chinese culture.

Most of the Pu-te-i is devoted to what by now were the common currency of anti-Christian literature. The Jesuits have misinterpreted Confucianism by regarding Shang-ti as a personal God, rather than as identical with the Neo-Confucian li.¹⁸³ Their 'Lord of Heaven', Jesus, was a common criminal, 'a plotter against the state',¹⁸⁴ and his portrait, as given by Adam Schall in one of his works, is that of a man executed by crucifixion.¹⁸⁵ The Jesuits have misled the Chinese by

179 Tsai-k'o was Buglio's hao. He was usually known as Li Lei-ssu.

180 Fu, Documentary Chronicle, I, p.35.

181 Fu, Documentary Chronicle, II, p.447, n.27.

182 T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien, pp.225-332.

183 The third and fourth essays, the P'i-hsieh lun-shang and P'i-hsieh lun chung, Pu-te-i, pp.1103-1120.

184 Pu-te-i, p.1137.

185 Pu-te-i, pp.1129-1134.

compiling erroneous maps of the world.¹⁸⁶ The last half of the Pu-te-i is devoted to an attack on the Jesuits' astronomical calculations, an attack which was to prove Yang's undoing. He was forced to accept the post of Director of the Astronomical Bureau in place of Schall, and he and his assistants made so many errors in compiling the calendar that the Western method of calculation was restored, and Ferdinand Verbiest appointed Associate Director in April 1669. Yang died on his way into exile and Schall was posthumously¹⁸⁷ restored to his titles and ranks.¹⁸⁸

In the memorial condemning Yang Kuang-hsien, the Prince of K'ang (Giyesu) and the other officials suggested that Yang should be executed and his family banished. They add,

Concerning their (the Westerns') worship of the Lord of Heaven, they only follow the old custom of their own country. So far they have demonstrated no trace of evil-doing. Therefore their old sentences must be removed.¹⁸⁹

It is interesting to note that the Emperor,¹⁹⁰ while approving of the main provisions of the memorial, did not follow the suggestion that the Western missionaries in exile in Canton should be summoned back to Peking.

The twenty-five missionaries, including Li An-tang (Antonio de Santa Maria) and others, should not be summoned back to the capital. Only Nan Huai-jen (Verbiest) and the other (Europeans in the capital) may practice Catholicism as before. However, we fear that in the provinces (the Europeans) may again set up churches and convert people to their religion; therefore, we order that this practice be strictly prohibited.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Pu-te-i, pp.1129-1134.

¹⁸⁷ He had died on 15 August 1666.

¹⁸⁸ For a contemporary account of the vindication of the Jesuits see Innocentia Victrix sive Sententia Comitiorum Imperii Sinici pro Innocentia Christianae Religionis late juriduce per annum 1669, Canton, 1671.

¹⁸⁹ Fu Lo-shu, Documentary Chronicle, I, p.45 (from the Ta-ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen Huang-ti Shih-lu, ch.31, 5a.)

¹⁹⁰ After the imprisonment of Oboi in June 1669, K'ang-hsi reigned in fact as well as name. (v. Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p.328)

¹⁹¹ Fu Lo-shu, Documentary Chronicle, I, p.46.

In fact, in the years that followed, the Jesuit and other missionaries did return to their churches in the provinces and the next serious persecution, in 1691, resulted in an edict of religious toleration.¹⁹² But in late 1669, the situation of Christianity in China must have looked decidedly grim.

Two years earlier, when the Canton Conference opened, the future must have seemed even more dubious. On 18 December 1667, twenty three missionaries¹⁹³ gathered in Canton to discuss a uniform policy for the whole of the China mission. Their submissions and decisions, as well as the subsequent correspondence with Rome, and the renewed controversy in Europe, cover a wide range of subjects. Some points dealing with administration of the sacraments of the church, liturgy and ecclesiastical discipline need not concern us. Others relate to the rites controversy in the broadest sense - questions of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, canon law etc. - which are better left for discussion in the next chapter.¹⁹⁴ For the present,

¹⁹² See Fu Lo-shu, Documentary Chronicle, I, pp.104-106.

¹⁹³ Thirty priests had been arrested in 1664 and imprisoned in Peking. The two Jesuits connected with the Astronomical Bureau, Schall and Verbiest, and the two others normally stationed in Peking, Buglio and Magalhaes, remained there, while the other twenty six were sent to Canton. One of the four Dominicans, Domingo Coronado, soon died, leaving Domingo Navarrete, Domenico Sarpetri (San Pedro) and Filippo Leonardo as the representatives of the Order of Preachers. Antonio (Caballero) de Santa Maria was the only Franciscan. The remaining twenty one were all Jesuits (see Pfister, Notices, pp.175-6, n.2, for a complete list of those in Peking). Ignacio da Costa died in May, 1666, and Michael Trigault in September 1667. Hence the 'twenty three Fathers' referred to in the documents of the conference.

¹⁹⁴ It was at this time, for example, that the first attempts were being made to replace the Portuguese hierarchy in the East with Vicars Apostolic directly appointed by Rome. See the apostolic constitution, Speculatore Domus Israel, issued on 13 September 1669, giving the Vicars Apostolic of China control over members of all religious orders, 'even the Society of Jesus' (Magnum Bullarium Romanum, VI, Pt.6, Rome, 1762 (165 reprint), No.CXVIII, p.355 ff.). Although Mgr. Francois Pallu M.E.P. was nominated Vicar Apostolic of Tun-king and administrator of five Southern Chinese Provinces as early as 1659, he did not enter China till January 1684. See G. Mensaert, 'L'Etablissement de la hierarchie catholique en Chine de 1684 a 1721' in Archivum Franciscanum Historicum, XLVI, 1953, pp.369-416, for the complex details of the establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in China.

I shall confine myself to comments on the questions relating to Confucianism and the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism.

The gathering at Canton in 1668-9 was hardly representative of the whole mission in China, given the preponderance of Jesuits. But it must have been the first occasion in the history of the mission when a majority of the missionaries, even of the Jesuits, had been able to gather in one place. And the strongest critics of the Jesuits - Navarrete and Antonio de Santa Maria - were participants in the discussions. According to one of those present, Francesco de Ferrariis S.J., the initiative for a formal conference came from the Dominicans.

Given the opportunity, when we were all here, with time on our hands, and at the insistence of the Fathers, especially those of St. Dominic, Father Provincial, with the consent of all our Fathers, resolved to hold a sort of Synod, in which we would discuss all together the matters in dispute between us and the other Religious, and strive for a uniformity necessary for the preaching of the Holy Gospel. Father Domingo Navarrete several times told me and others of our fathers that he had orders to this effect from his superiors.¹⁹⁵

It was, then, a perfect sounding board for all shades of opinion on the mission.

We do not have a full record of the discussions,¹⁹⁶ but, as we shall see, the decisions, in 41 articles,¹⁹⁷ are recorded in a document entitled Praxes quaedam discussae in pleno coetu 23 Patrum, quorum nomina in fine describuntur, statutae et directae ad servandum inter nos in Sinica Missione Uniformitatem

¹⁹⁵ De Ferrariis to the Jesuit General, Oliva, Canton, 5 October 1668 (ms. in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, f.210r).

¹⁹⁶ The only easily accessible account of proceedings at Canton, is that given in Appendix I of J.S.Cummins' edition of Navarrete's Travels and Controversies. It is an admirable work of synthesis, and although I disagree with Dr.Cummins' interpretations at some points which I shall indicate later, I am greatly in his debt for establishing the sequence of events.

¹⁹⁷ There are two versions of this document, one in 41 points, and another revised version in 42 points, in which Nos.20 and 21 are expanded into nos.20, 21 and 22. The sections changed are not substantial - they deal with the question of saying mass and attending mass with head uncovered - and were probably amended in response to the objections of the Visitor in Macao, Luis da Gama. The 41 point version seems to be that approved and signed by the assembly. I have used the copy in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, ff.253-8.

of which several copies are extant.¹⁹⁸ It is dated 26 January 1668, presumably the terminal date of the Conference proper.

The two items of greatest interest are those dealing with funerals, and rites for Confucius and the ancestors. On funerals, it is agreed that the greatest possible ceremony is to be observed, both the customary Christian funeral liturgy and those practices sanctioned by local custom. As for the latter, 'no certain law can be given; but it is left to the prudence (of the minister) taking into account the place, circumstances and people involved'.¹⁹⁹ On the other rites, the decree of 1656 is invoked:

Regarding the ceremonies by which the Chinese honour their master Confucius, and the dead, the replies of the Holy Congregation of the Universal Inquisition approved by His Holiness Alexander VII in the year of Our Lord 1656, are to be followed in all respects, since they are founded on a very probable opinion, to which no contrary evidence can be found. By invoking this probability, the door of salvation is not closed to the innumerable Chinese who would be excluded from the Christian religion if they were prohibited from doing these things which licitly and in good faith they can do, and which they could only with the greatest difficulty be persuaded to give up.²⁰⁰

The Jesuits, as we would expect, all agreed to these propositions. So, too, did the members of other orders, except for Navarrete and Antonio de Santa Maria. It is worth examining the responses of the non-Jesuits in order to uncover the grounds for their disagreement with the Jesuit view, as also the cases and reasons where they agreed with the majority view.

¹⁹⁸ I have seen copies in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 150, ff.16-19; Jap. Sin. 162, ff.253-258 and 259-263; Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 523, ff.149-151. I presume that Acta Cantonensia Authentica [Paris?], 1700, which I have not seen, is a printed version of the Praxes.

¹⁹⁹ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, f.261r (no.34).

²⁰⁰ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, f.261v (no.41).

Domenico Sarpetri, a Dominican, adhered to the Jesuit view, as a series of letters and treatises, written at the same time, demonstrate.²⁰¹ According to a later Jesuit account²⁰² he had been specially deputed by the Dominican Provincial of the Philippines to study the rites question, and in a document dated 9 May 1667, i.e. before the Canton Conference, he gave his wholehearted approval to Ricci's T'ien-chu shih-i.²⁰³ It is not surprising, then, to find him approving the decisions of the Canton Conference which follow logically from Ricci's basic interpretation of Confucianism. He followed up his signature to the Conference decrees with a document²⁰⁴ in which he attested that after eight years of study of the rites, he was convinced that the Jesuit practice was 'not only safe...but also if we examine the principles of the chief sects (of China) more probable than the opposite opinion, and very useful, not to say necessary, for opening the door of the Gospel to the local people'. Confucius did not adore any God 'except the living Heaven, whatever that may be'.²⁰⁵ In a letter to the Congregation of Propaganda, he attacks Antonio de Santa Maria for reviving the old argument about the rites and terms, but interestingly on Longobardo's old grounds that the Chinese are materialists and, therefore, incapable of adoring Confucius and their ancestors.²⁰⁶

201 They were reprinted later at the height of the Rites Controversy in the Apologia pro Decreto S.D.N. Alexandri VII et praxi Jesuitarum circa Ceremonias, quibus Sinae Confucium et Progenitores mortuos colunt, ex Patrum Dominicanorum et Franciscanorum scriptis concinnata, Louvain, 1700; and in a xylographed work produced in Peking in 1704, reproduced in facsimile in C.R. Boxer, A Proposito dum Livrinho Xilografico dos Jesuitas da Pequim (Século XVIII), Macao, 1947. For other printed versions, see the Bibliography.

202 Apologia pro Decreto, Praefatio.

203 Apologia pro Decreto, pp.1-2. Dr. Cummins implies in his discussion of Sarpetri that his adherence to the Jesuit position was unexpected and probably influenced by his uncle, the Jesuit Brancati. (Travels and Controversies, II, p.415) This document indicates that his 'conversion' was not so sudden.

204 Dated Canton, 4 August 1668, and printed in Apologia pro Decreto, pp.3-7.

205 Apologia pro Decreto, p.4.

206 Apologia pro Decreto, pp.12-19 (letter dated 12 November 1668).

Finally, in a long Treatise,²⁰⁷ dated 30 September 1670,²⁰⁸ he defends his position with a series of arguments that show a keen and discriminating mind. He points out that the 'sacrifices' in the Chinese classics, especially in the Shu Ching, are offered to such a wide variety of beings, and on such a variety of occasions, that it is ridiculous to lump them together. The crucial point is not the form of the ritual, but its object; Shang-ti, the inferior spirits, or the ancestors? As offered to Confucius and the ancestors, in a special context, they are not a religious cult.²⁰⁹ On the other hand, the sacrifices described in the Li Chi as offered to Shang-ti and to 'certain spirits (genii) and kings whom the Chinese once regarded as saints', are, of course, religious.²¹⁰ He does not dogmatically hold the distinction between the two kinds of rites as absolute. Some Chinese do seek favours from the dead, just as some Jews adored false gods, some Englishmen are not heretics, and some Christians are superstitious.²¹¹ Commentators differ on the significance of these ceremonies, and the Chinese themselves give different interpretations on them. The point is whether a favourable face can be put on them, and a probable opinion arrived at.²¹²

From this sensible and soundly based argument, showing a discrimination and common sense all too often absent in the Apologias of the Jesuits and their opponents, we may turn to the objections of Antonio de Santa Maria O.F.M. I shall not attempt here to deal adequately with this active missionary and prolific writer.²¹³ It is to some extent misleading to deal with a few of his ideas in isolation from his whole career and experience. But even the most superficial examination

²⁰⁷ In Apologia pro Decreto, pp.21-68.

²⁰⁸ 'Quam-tum seu Cantoniensi pridie Cal. Octobris anno 1670'.

²⁰⁹ Apologia pro Decreto, p.29.

²¹⁰ Apologia pro Decreto, p.51.

²¹¹ Apologia pro Decreto, pp.49-50, 52.

²¹² Apologia pro Decreto, pp.52-55.

²¹³ See the bibliography in Sinica Franciscana, II, pp.332-344.

of his writings reveals a basic orientation diverging from that of the Jesuits; and his opposition to the Canton programme is both predictable and symptomatic.

Antonio's specific objections to the decrees were directed to articles 6, 20, 22 and 41. Article 6 dealt with the problem of 'fasters', i.e. Chinese who had taken a vow to observe Buddhists fasts. Antonio was totally opposed to allowing such people who became Christians to continue their fasts, and in this he was supported by some of the Jesuits.²¹⁴ He was opposed, too, to any accommodation with Chinese practice by covering the head at mass. His arguments on this subject, were supported by the Jesuit Visitor in Macao, Luis da Gama,²¹⁵ and he may have been right in claiming that the Jesuits had different practices in different parts of the mission.²¹⁶ But his reasons were supported by a most revealing appeal to 'experience'. The Jesuits tell us, he says, that we must always pay attention to Chinese sensibilities. On the contrary,

²¹⁴ De Ferrariis in his letter to the General of 6 November 1668 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, ff.213-214) notes that Fathers Valat and Greslon had written a treatise against the practice and that the assembly finally decided to allow it only 'in certain extraordinary circumstances where there will be no scandal and it is otherwise agreed that there is a right intention in fasting'. (f.213r)

²¹⁵ See the letter of Francois de Rougemeont S.J. to the Jesuit General, Oliva, dated Canton, 18 December 1668 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, ff.249-250). De Rougemont wrote that da Gama 'wanted to lay down the law in an arbitrary manner on matters of which he had neither experience nor knowledge'; and he adds, scornfully, that 'the Father Visitor did not even hesitate to say that to pray to God with head covered was neither Catholic nor religious' (f.249v)

²¹⁶ This was his argument in a letter to the Jesuit General, Oliva, dated from Canton, 14 November 1668 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, ff.232r-v). On the other hand, Francesco de Ferrariis in a letter written a few days earlier, 8 November 1668, claims that all the older fathers he had consulted - with the exception of Schall who was unable to speak after his stroke - agreed that the ancient practice of the mission was to cover the head at mass (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, ff.227-229).

as we have shown by promulgating and implementing the positive law of the Church in China, it does no harm to insist on conformity to European customs. 'Experience has shown that since we published it in 1663, Christianity has greatly grown and augmented, flourishing intensively and extensively, much more than before, and this has been my whole experience from the year 1633 to the present day'.²¹⁷ This is a very strange argument indeed to advance in 1668, with Christianity proscribed, the missionaries under house-arrest or in hiding, and the very fate of the Church in China in the balance.

It was, however, consistent with Antonio de Santa Maria's attitude since he first entered China. His initial experience, 1633-1636, had ended with his trip to Manila to present the Manila theologians and the superiors of his order with his Informaciones against the Jesuit practices. He does not seem to have been motivated by jealousy or inter-order rivalry. And his experience on his return to China in 1649 brought him into close and friendly contact with the Jesuits. He wrote to his Provincial on 6 December 1655 that he could not have survived in Tsinan, his mission in Shantung Province, without financial help from Schall and Francesco de Ferrariis.²¹⁸ But these close relations did not prevent him from taking a strong stand against the Jesuit methods. A brief account of the history of the China mission which he wrote in 1662²¹⁹ is full of a spirit of opposition to Chinese customs and beliefs. The Chinese, he says, have the 'gigantic presumption' to regard their sciences and 'their (so absurd) philosophy' as the only ones in the world.²²⁰ And the Jesuits have supported them in their prejudices.

²¹⁷ Jap. Sin. 162, f.232r.

²¹⁸ Sinica Franciscana, II, p.433.

²¹⁹ Brevis Relatio de Ingressu Societatis Jesu Aliorumque Religiosorum in Sinicam Missionem ac de aliquibus vestigiis nostrae Sanctae Fidei antiquis, quae inventa fuerunt in Sinis, edited after the ms. in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 112, ff.1-12, by A. Vath S.J., 'P.F. Antonio Caballero de Santa Maria über die Mission der Jesuiten und anderer Orden in China', in Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu, I, 1932, p.291-302.

²²⁰ ibid., pp.294, 295.

So, the Fathers of the Society have gone to great pains to hide their errors under the cloak and guise of words with a heavenly tinge, whereas in reality beneath is concealed the pallor of hell.²²¹

On the other hand, the Dominicans have remained true to their vocation.

The Fathers and the sons of the Holy Order of Preachers, kindling with their speech a torch with which they turn the shadows of the world into light by burning heretics and extirpating heresies, have always had a great affection for the conversion of the gentiles.²²²

Antonio de Santa Maria, then takes the part of the Dominicans in their quarrel with the Jesuits over accommodation to Chinese customs. In a long treatise addressed to the Jesuit Visitor, Luis da Gama, he protested against the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism and of Confucian ceremonies.²²³ The Jesuits draw a distinction between Confucius and 'the two other idols' of China, Fo (Buddha) and the Old Man (Lao-tzu). But in reality, they are all adored as gods, and in the end are all demons.²²⁴ The Confucian miao is a 'temple' not a 'hall', and the ceremonies performed there true sacrifices.

²²¹ ibid., p.295.

²²² ibid., p.297.

²²³ The original treatise, Tratado sobre algunos puntos tocantes a esta mission de la gran China is, according to A. van den Wyngaert, Sinica Franciscana, II, p.343, in the archives of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, Rome, Scrittura originali, 1677. I have used the French translation published in 1701 in the Anciens Traitez de Divers Auteurs sur les Cérémonies de la Chine. (It was also published with Leibnitz's comments in Kortholt's edition of Leibnitz's Epistolae ad Diversos, II, Leipzig, 1735.) Antonio de Santa Maria appears first to have sent the treatise for comment to da Gama who replied diplomatically that there were grounds for disagreement on the matters raised (de Ferrariis to Oliva, 5 October 1668, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, f.210r). He then added a section (dated 9 December 1668, pp.109-152 in the Traité cf. the date on the body of the text, 9 April 1668) and sent it to his superiors (de Ferrariis to Oliva, 6 November 1668, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, f.213r) who presumably forwarded it to Rome.

²²⁴ Traité, p.5.

All this is supported by a wealth of descriptive detail, but the centre-piece of the argument is linguistic. Invoking a naive, but not un-Chinese theory of language, he argues that all ceremonies which share the same name are essentially the same, hence the Confucian ceremonies are 'sacrifices' in the same way as the Buddhist and Taoist rites.²²⁵ The Jesuits claim that Confucius is not 'invoked', that no prayers are directed to him. But is it possible that young Chinese can be taught such reverence for the Master and his words without acquiring 'a desire and a habit of invoking Confucius'?²²⁶

This is not the place to examine in detail the ceremonies discussed by Antonio de Santa Maria. One may readily concede that they were ambiguous in nature, that there were regional and local variations, and that the standard Jesuit exposition of them suppressed many overt 'religious' features in order to emphasise their civil character. One must also add, however, that it seems to have been Jesuit practice to prohibit Christians attending the solemn twice-yearly ceremonies to Confucius because of the superstitious concomitants and 'religious' honours described by the Franciscan. What is most significant, to my mind, in Antonio's treatment of the rites question, is the basic attitude to Chinese culture that underlies his arguments. Where the Jesuits looked for points of resemblance, for continuities and analogies, in order to build on them a Chinese Christian theology, he regards them as prima facie evidence of religious rivalry and a threat to the uniqueness of Christianity.

Their veneration for this Philosopher goes so far, that they are accustomed to say to us missionaries, that Confucius and his teaching greatly resembles Jesus Christ and his morality; the latter dogmatizes in Europe, as the former does in China; that the two legislators and their laws are the same, or at least similar. You can judge from that what ideas not only the pagan Chinese but also the Neophytes attach to this cult, and to these sacrifices, under the name of respect and civility. I have heard with my own ears what I have told you. What, then, will the future hold, if we tolerate and authorise this cult, as a simple sign of some vague sort of affection or recognition?²²⁷

²²⁵ Traité, pp.9-10.

²²⁶ Traité, p.13.

²²⁷ Traité, p.15.

Even in his description of the rites, moreover, Antonio de Santa Maria is guilty of question-begging. This is particularly the case in his treatment of 'the solemn cult of the ancestors'. He claims to have observed this in detail in Fukien together with Juan-Baptista de Morales O.P., 'and having seen it in one place, is to have seen it everywhere in China'.²²⁸ What he describes, however, is not a neutral description of what he observed. In the beginning he commits just the error he castigates in the Jesuit accounts by translating t'ang as 'the chapel of the ancestors'.²²⁹ The participants are 'three Ministers, or, as we would say, a Priest, Deacon and Sub-deacon', together with 'acolytes'.²³⁰ The hymns they offer are prayers to the ancestors, the rewards they expect come from their ancestors.²³¹

A similar persistently western interpretation pervades his description of domestic ancestor ceremonies,²³² and funeral rites. The Chinese make offerings before the corpse, which is clearly superstitious. Admittedly in Spain and Portugal offerings are made at funerals; these, however, 'are addressed directly to God for the salvation of their soul...but this cannot occur in the case of Gentiles for whom Christianity does not permit either prayers or offerings'.²³³ In other words, the question of facts takes second place to dogmatic theological judgements.

²²⁸ Traité, p.33. The reason he advances for this highly dubious assertion is that 'the same Ritual is observed throughout the Kingdom' - by analogy, no doubt, with the Rituale Romanum. Two pages further on he undercuts this whole argument by criticising those who presided at the ceremony he observed for departing from the Ritual (Traite, p.35, on the offering of wine).

²²⁹ Traité, p.33. Its normal translation is 'hall', 'reception room', 'meeting-place', 'court of justice' (Matthews' Chinese English Dictionary, no.6107; and F.S.Couvreur, Dictionnaire Classique de la Langue Chinoise, 3^e éed., Ho Kien Fou, 1911, p.786).

²³⁰ Traité, p.35.

²³¹ Traité, pp.35-36.

²³² Traité, pp.37-38.

²³³ Traité, pp.45-46.

Apart from his 'Europeanizing' bias, Antonio de Santa Maria's Treatise reveals a persistent misunderstanding of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. He accepts, for example, Longobardo's strictures on the use of terms such as Shang-ti, but he misunderstands Longobardo's evidence and his conclusions. Longobardo has, he says, demonstrated that Chinese philosophers are materialists and reduce everything to li or 'invisible matter',²³⁴ a curious term indeed, and certainly not Longobardo's. The Chinese, then, sacrifice to and adore this li whom all believe 'conducts and governs all and responds to their appeals'.²³⁵ Antonio does not seem to have thought this a strange activity for atheists.

Again, a lot of his difficulty over the Jesuit policy appears to stem from a naive correspondence theory of language. The Jesuit approach to the terms question, from Ricci on, had been to employ t'ien-chu as a name for 'God' and to use Shang-ti for apologetic purposes, equating this conception of early Confucianism with a developed Christian concept, and selecting passages from the classics that appeared to confirm their reading. For Antonio de Santa Maria, terms and their corresponding referents had an invariable relationship. Unless one was absolutely certain that Shang-ti was the Christian God, the term must be avoided for fear of 'preaching the creature in place of the Creator'.²³⁶ Ironically, one of his own works in Chinese, the T'ien Ju yin²³⁷ of 1664, was later condemned for its use of t'ien and Shang-ti.²³⁸

²³⁴ Traité, pp.62-63.

²³⁵ Traité, p.77.

²³⁶ Traité, pp.101-102.

²³⁷ Published in T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, II, -p.981-1042.

²³⁸ See Carlo Castorano O.F.M., Parva Elucubratio super quosdam Libros Sinenses, Rome, 1739 (ms. in Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 530), pp.2-3. Castorano condemns the work, but not its author, a fellow Franciscan, to whom he attributes 'a good intention'. He does, however, praise another work of Antonio's, the Chêng-hsüeh lo-shih, which I have not seen, for its 'religiously motivated attacks on the Chinese literati and the Fathers of the Society of Jesus'.

It seems that Antonio's practice was not altogether consistent with his theory and that the exigencies of his pastoral work had led him to an approach that, on later reflection, he disavowed.

It should be noted that although the T'ien Ju yin cites many passages from the Four Books, they are used in a different way from their common use in the Jesuits' works in Chinese. Instead of commenting on the usual Jesuit proof-passages, Santa Maria argues from the moral teachings of Confucians to the necessity of a t'ien-chu for their full implementation. In other words, he is not interested in Confucianism as such, but in demonstrating the superiority of Christianity. This, he avows in his Treatise, is what he sees to be the role of Christian missions.

What does it matter to our mission whether the ancient Chinese knew God, or didn't know him; whether they named him in one way, or in another? The question is completely indifferent. We have come here to announce the Holy Gospel, and not to be apostles of Confucius.²³⁹

Such was clearly his honest conviction. Christianity, he says in the conclusion to the work, must be preached in its (Western) purity, without concessions. The grosser superstitions of Confucians - and amongst them he numbers 'the cult of Confucius and the ancestors' - must be totally opposed and others allowed to die out gradually. And, again, he points to the great flowering of Christianity he had observed since the promulgation of Church Law in 1662. Admittedly a secret judgement of God had led to apparent disaster in the few years since then but it should be clear to all that only the purity of the gospel will prevail. One must admire the indomitable spirit of the old man²⁴⁰ even if one does not share his principles.

I must admit to feelings far from admiration for the other chief opponent of the Canton decisions, Domingo Navarrete.

²³⁹ Traité, p.104.

²⁴⁰ In 1668 he was 66 years old, and he was to die on 13 May 1669, still in exile from his mission.

Despite the eulogies of the editor of the recent edition of his Travels,²⁴¹ and in contrast to what I have said about Antonio de Santa Maria, I cannot regard his role in the Rites Controversy as merely that of an honest attempt to right what he saw as evils. The best proof of this would be an impartial examination of the full texts of his Tratados historicos, politicos, ethicos y religiosos de la monarchia de China published in Madrid in 1676, and the rare suppressed Controversias antiguas y modernas entre los Missionarios de la gran China, partly printed in Madrid in 1679 and partly in manuscript.²⁴² I have not seen the latter,²⁴³ and to discuss adequately even the Tratados demands much more space than I have at my disposal. Once more, I have compromised by isolating a few issues, those relating to Confucianism and

²⁴¹ J.S. Cummins (Ed.), The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete, 1618-1686, Cambridge (Hakluyt Society, 2nd. s., Nos. CXVIII and CXIX) 1962. Most of the Introduction (Vol.I) and the Appendices (Vol.II) are devoted to an elaborate defence of Navarrete against his detractors. Much of it is, I think, justified, but the comments on 'The Controversy over the Chinese Rites (Introduction, Ch.II) are often misplaced. His description of Neo-Confucianism as 'looking-glass language lifted into the sphere of metaphysics' (p.lxv) and his agreement with Navarrete's views that 'their philosophy (was) mostly rhetoric and belles-lettres' (p.lxvi) is a travesty that no Sinologist would accept. His linking of the Jesuit converts with the San chiao movement is belied by all the extant Chinese Christian works, and Cummins dismisses Verbiest's objections with the remark that 'he could not have denied the Chinese tendency to syncretism' (p.lxix). What was at issue was whether any Chinese Christian had, in writing, argued for syncretism. Cummins has, I think, been misled by Navarrete, whose cumulation of argument has, at times, an almost hypnotic effect.

²⁴² Cummins located the manuscript of the unprinted conclusion bound in with a copy of the Controversias in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid (Raros, 2012).

²⁴³ Apart from the numerous extracts in two works by C.R.Boxer, his A propósito dum Livrinho Xilográfico, and his 'Portuguese and Spanish Rivalry in the Far East during the 17th Century' in Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1946, pp.150-164, and 1947, pp.91-105.

the Jesuit policies in regard to it, as presented in the Tratados,²⁴⁴ and attempting to analyse the grounds for his opposition to the Jesuit line. I will not discuss the vexed question of whether or not, and for what reasons, he may eventually have signed the Canton 'concords', nor whether he was justified in secretly leaving Canton for Europe.²⁴⁵ I will, however, give some reasons for casting doubts on his objectivity and credibility.

What is in question here is not Navarrete's character so much as his accuracy and reliability in describing the facts of Chinese beliefs and customs; not his personal integrity nor his theology, but his sinology. Unfortunately none of Navarrete's Chinese works have survived, so it is

244 To be precise, in the English translation, An Account of China, and, for Book VI, Cummins' edition.

245 See Cummins on 'Canton: Internment and Flight', Appendix I to the Travels and Controversies, II, pp.413-424. I will simply note here the way in which Cummins obscures the points at issue in the two cases.

1. Cummins admits that Navarrete failed to get permission from the Chinese authorities to leave Canton. Whatever the machinations of the Jesuits in this regard - and we have only Navarrete's word for this - it did involve an element of danger to the other internees, and his attempts to pass secretly through Macao indicates some guilt in the matter (See letter of Miguel dos Anjos O.S.A., 18 January 1670, in Boxer, A Propósito dum Livrinho Xilográfico, ff.94-12v; and translation in Boxer, 'Portuguese and Spanish Rivalry', Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1947, pp. 99-102).

2. Navarrete in his letter to Gouvea (his name is spelt thus in all the documents I have seen, never Cummins' 'Gouveia') agreed not only to the decisions regarding 'los defunctos, tablillas, tiao o pesanes' taken at the 'Junta de Hamcheu' in 1642, but also to permit the rites to Confucius according to the Jesuit practice, and to follow the Jesuit decisions regarding terms pending a definitive judgement from Rome (See Boxer, A Propósito dum Livrinho Xilográfico, 1v-2v and edited copy in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, f.291). This proves the point at issue - Navarrete's agreement to the Jesuit position. His motives are not really relevant.

impossible to assess his proficiency in Chinese.²⁴⁶ However, he spent only eleven years in China, six of these in confinement, and our knowledge of the length of time it took the Jesuits to master the language suggests that his Chinese could not have been very good. This did not, however, inhibit him from making such sweeping statements as:

It is most certain that nation has not attained to the knowledge of any other God or nobler object, than the material heavens. What others have writ, though some persist obstinately in it to this day, is not so much as probable.²⁴⁷

No attempt is made to demonstrate this, and similar assertions, from Chinese sources, apart from a general appeal to 'the masters and teachers of their sciences (who) understand their own books incomparably better than we do'.²⁴⁸

It is clear that in general he is following Longobardo's interpretation of Confucianism. He includes the whole of Longobardo's Treatise in Bk. V of the Tratados and cites him frequently. In this way, Confucius becomes 'an absolute atheist',²⁴⁹ who, very curiously, is 'worshipped' by his

²⁴⁶ The testimony in Cummins' Introduction to the Travels and Controversies, p.cxiv, is hardly conclusive, especially the 'rare Jesuit tribute' of a writer of this century, belonging to the Indian mission (Henry Heras S.J.). In Book III of the Tratados he gives extracts from the Confucian Four Books, apparently drawn from Intorcetta and da Costa's Sapientia Sinica (see remark in Account, p.114, Bk.III, beginning of Ch.II), since he quotes only from the Ta hsüeh and Lun yu which were translated in that work. Book II, Chs. IX and X, contain miscellaneous Chinese sayings from unspecified sources. Book IV contains a translation of snippets from a popular Ming work, the Ming hsin pao chien. The few passages I have checked against the Ming edition are translated reasonably accurately, but they are interspersed with commentary drawn from Western sources which is often misleading, and based upon the very dubious proposition that 'all the sects in China...in the main agree in the same principle, yet they differ in some measure in the manner of delivering themselves'. (Account, p.137, Bk.IV, Ch.1.)

²⁴⁷ Account, p.20 (Bk.I, Ch.IX).

²⁴⁸ Account, p.85 (Bk.II, Ch.XIII).

²⁴⁹ Account, p.113 (Bk.III, Ch.I).

'down-right atheist' followers.²⁵⁰ This apparent contradiction is carried over into his discussion of Chinese Rites. They are superstitious and idolatrous, even though those who perform them are atheists. When considering the question of whether the Chinese, 'being as they are really atheists, and having no knowledge of God, angels, rational soul, reward or punishment in the life to come, are capable of oaths or the like', he decides that they are, on the grounds that they 'sacrifice, pray to and beg of heaven, the sun, moon etc.', that they 'honour, reverence, and fear them' and hence may take an oath by them.²⁵¹

Despite the muddle-headedness of this argument, which is due to some extent to an attempt to mate Longobardo's materialist interpretation of Neo-Confucianism with the logically contrary interpretation of Chinese Rites as idolatrous and superstitious, it would be possible to regard Navarrete's opinions as honest but confused. What inclines me to reject this, in favour of the stronger judgement that a good deal of sheer malice entered into his presentation of China, is my examination of the last part of his Tratados. In this section Navarrete lists the Doubts that he presented to the Roman Inquisition in 1674, together with the replies. A sample of these will, I believe, indicate the extent to which prejudice has overtaken facts.²⁵²

Among his twenty five doubts about Chinese mandarins, he argues that since 'the Chinese unanimously agree that the Tartar now reigning is a tyrant',²⁵³ no Christian official or soldier may serve him²⁵⁴ (a principle which apart from its very dubious basis in fact, could be applied with equal

250 Ibid., and Account, p.74 (Bk.II, Ch.IX).

251 Account, pp.201-202 (Bk.V, Prelude 17).

252 For a full reply by the man perhaps best qualified to comment on them see the 'Responsum Apologeticum P. Ferdinandi Verbiest Societatis Jesu ad aliquot dubia a P.F.Dominico Navarrete S.Congregationi proposita, in quibus Patres Societatis Jesu Pekinensis potissimum sugillare videtur', in Correspondance de Ferdinand Verbiest, Eds. H. Jossion and L. Willaert, Brussels, 1934, pp.279-342.

253 This displays extraordinary ignorance of the facts of the Manchu conquest as well as of the practical import of the theory of the Mandate of Heaven.

254 Account, p.355 (Bk.VII, Doubt NO.4).

force to almost any monarchy of Europe). The Inquisition, I am happy to note, rejected this argument; but they did, according to Navarrete, agree that no Christian might lawfully accept the office of mandarin,²⁵⁵ presumably in the light of his presentation of the ceremonies that would be incumbent upon him.²⁵⁶ To his displeasure, they refused to absolutely prohibit Christians from holding the position of 'masters in public schools, who are vulgarly called HIO KUON',²⁵⁷ on the grounds that it was not clear whether the ceremonies to Confucius were 'political' or 'religious',²⁵⁸ and on similar grounds, refused to give judgement on funeral rites.²⁵⁹ To his 22nd Doubt, the Inquisition replied that Christians were obliged publicly to pull down any official notices which 'defame our faith'.²⁶⁰ It does not require much imagination, nor much knowledge of Chinese political institutions, to envisage the fate of a Chinese Christian Church reorganised on the model proposed to the Inquisition by Navarrete. It would be drawn entirely from the non-official class, politically suspect, unprotected and alien, a European transplant with absolutely no future.

On the 'Worship given to Confucius',²⁶¹ Navarrete is evasive. Clearly the Congregation did not give him the answers he expected; as he notes in one place, 'I could have wished the answer had been plainer, and suitable to the reasons I proposed for making the doubt'.²⁶² But he must have been fully satisfied with their last reply under this head:

²⁵⁵ Account, p.357 (Doubt, No.12).

²⁵⁶ Account, pp.356-357 (Doubts, Nos.6-9, as well as his explanation of No.12).

²⁵⁷ HIO KUON is presumably hsüeh-kuan, the Director of Schools at the hsien or district level (v. S. Couvreur, Dictionnaire Classique de la Langue Chinoise, p.218).

²⁵⁸ Account, p.357 (Doubt No.13).

²⁵⁹ Account, pp.358-359 (Doubt No.20).

²⁶⁰ Account, p.359.

²⁶¹ Account, pp.360-363.

²⁶² Account, p.362 (Doubt No.12).

21. The missionaries of the society have an order for their mission, which expressly forbids them by any means to affirm, that our holy law agrees with the sect of Confucians in the whole, or in any part: the holy congregation may, if it pleases, order the same upon this point. For such an order is very material for the honour of the evangelical law.

Answer to the 21. All missionaries are obliged to say the same concerning the law of Confucius, that was prescribed by the Jesuits, as is instanced by the holy congregation.²⁶³

Leaving aside the facts that there is no evidence of such a decision anywhere else than in the pages of Navarrete, and that it is contradicted by nearly every Jesuit work in Chinese that has survived, it is difficult to read this answer, as Navarrete does, as evidence that it was the Inquisition itself which had issued it in the first place. It is also at variance with the other decisions in this section which seem to indicate a desire on the part of the Congregation, as in the 1669 decisions, to keep the options open.

A similar caution is shown in the replies to Navarrete's 'Twenty five Doubts concerning the Worship the Chinese give to their dead'.²⁶⁴ The Congregation is prepared to assert theological propositions about the salvation of Gentiles²⁶⁵ and to support tautologous propositions which beg the question by assuming the idolatrous or superstitious nature of the custom.²⁶⁶ But when he confronted them at the end with the demand that they revoke the 1656 decree, the Congregation evaded the issue:

I desired a fuller answer, but it was not given me; they are governed at Rome by more elevated causes, and I do not question but they are just and righteous, though neither I nor some others comprehend them.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Account, p.362.

²⁶⁴ Account, pp.365-370.

²⁶⁵ Account, p.369 (Doubt No.21).

²⁶⁶ E.g. Nos.II (on ancestor rites), No.14 (on ancestor tablets), and No.16 (on sacrifices to the spirits of the place).

²⁶⁷ Account, p.371.

Nothing daunted, he goes on to beg the question by arguing that the Pope and the Congregations can do no wrong, and that therefore his opponents must have misunderstood the decree of 1656.

As for Confucius's ceremonies, some are of opinion they are good, politically; others, that they are bad. These last said, the holy congregation did not approve of them, because an approbation must be a good thing; but that it tolerated them though bad, as the civil government tolerates lewd women.²⁶⁸

From this point on, Navarrete's tone becomes even more heated. The Jesuits 'think to govern the world'.²⁶⁹ They should be condemned for building sumptuous churches, wearing costly apparel, giving presents etc.²⁷⁰ Christian merchants may in no circumstances carry arms, and may not teach 'infidels' the arts of war.²⁷¹ And suddenly, in mid flight, come the signatures of the consultors of the Inquisition, followed by a note from Navarrete to the effect that he stopped presenting his doubts at this point 'because I would not be too troublesome to those most reverend fathers, and because I was myself indisposed'.²⁷² But, he says, there is a whole volume of further doubts to follow,²⁷³ and he gives two more as a sample.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁸ Account, p.371.

²⁶⁹ Account, p.371.

²⁷⁰ Account, p.374.

²⁷¹ Account, pp.326, 377.

²⁷² Account, p.377.

²⁷³ i.e. the unpublished Controversias.

²⁷⁴ One of these is of some interest, since it pours scorn on those Jesuits who argue that 'certain books in China called KIA IU, that is, family discourses, or household doctrine' are not the work of Confucius. Confucius' name is on the title-page and all Chinese claim it as his (Account, p.377). The debate amongst modern scholars hinges on the date of the Chia yu - whether it was written in the 3rd century B.C. or the 3rd century A.D. There is no question, however, that it is late, legendary, and contradicts the Analects at many points. (See H.G.Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way, pp.205-206; and R.P.Kramers, K'ung Tzu Chia Yu: the School Sayings of Confucius, Leiden, 1950) A simple reading would certainly prove that it was not the work of Confucius himself, and the very title implies this - 'Discourse of the School of Confucius'.

A complete disentangling of fact from prejudice in the writings of Domingo Navarrete would be a near impossible task. A very high proportion of the Tratados is devoted to hearsay - what Father X said to him on such and such an occasion. Perhaps, as Verbiest suggests, the over-serious Navarrete failed to appreciate a joke at times.²⁷⁵ One, at least, of the persons quoted in the Tratados was later to indignantly deny that he made the statements alleged - indeed to deny that he was in Macao at the time the conversation was alleged to have taken place there.²⁷⁶ This too may be explained away on grounds of haste in writing and faulty recollection. I am prepared, also, to make allowance for his European prejudices,²⁷⁷ his irritating text-chopping,²⁷⁸ and his tendentious translations.²⁷⁹ But, the overall impression made by his Account

275 Correspondence, p.316.

276 Dom Vasco Barbosa de Mello in his Exemplar Attestationis, dated 16 December 1680, in Boxer, A Propósito dum Livrinho Xilográfico, 12a-14a; translated in Boxer, (Portuguese Spanish Rivalry...', pp.102-104).

277 See, for example, his dismissal of Chinese painting in Account, p.53 (Bk.II, Ch.I) as 'very mean'.

278 e.g. He quotes St. Anthony as an authority on Chinese moral philosophy (Account, p.111, Bk.III, Ch.I).

279 Compare, for example, his summary of Yang Kuang-hsien's Pu-te-i, in Account, pp.253-256 (Bk.VI, Ch.XV) with the original text in the T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsu-pien, III, pp.1069-1332. The summary, concentrating on the P'i-hsieh lun sections (p.1103-1134 of the Chinese) suggests that he was personally acquainted with this earlier part only. Even here there are several serious misinterpretations of Yang's arguments. For example, Navarrete's version of Yang's first two charges is a travesty of Neo-Confucian metaphysics, even as expounded by Yang. And in Nos.23 and 27, he misses the point of Yang's charges; not that Ricci and his colleagues suppressed the passion of Christ, but that they concealed the fact that he was a condemned criminal and rebel like the White Lotus rebels of China (Pu-te-i, pp. 1129-30). The title too is mistranslated as 'Take heed of false Prophets'. P'i means to refute, to controvert; hsieh means 'unorthodox teaching'; and lun, to discuss. The notion of 'prophecy' is quite foreign to Chinese thinking. I might add that Cummins by omitting, apparently at random, about half of the clauses of the original summary (Travels and Controversies, II, pp.246-249) gives an even more misleading impression of Yang's charges. He omits, for example, the compromising No.15 which accuses the missionaries of commanding the Christians 'to break the tables of heaven, earth, the king, parents and masters'. And he adds to Navarrete's list charges that I cannot find in the Pu-te-i e.g. that the Jesuits were unwilling to show the cross in public (Introduction, p.lxi).

is that of an anti-Jesuit tirade in which every possible argument is marshalled to smite the enemy with little regard for logic, consistency, or above all, for Chinese reality. On some issues, the Jesuits, too, were guilty of highly selective use of Chinese evidence, and part of Navarrete's annoyance no doubt spray from his realization that the facts were complex than they admitted. 'There are some', he wrote in the Controversias, 'who are so taken up with excusing the Literary Sect of China of idolatry, that they seem to me to prefer losing their lives to changing their opinions...I say that the Chinese from the beginning have held to idolatry and in their deceit, have conserved it to the present day'.²⁸⁰ Neither attitude was a promising basis for a real and lasting religious encounter. It would be absurd to demand of a 17th century missionary the objectivity and outlook expected of a 20th century sinologist, but one can surely demand a respect for facts and the avoidance of purely polemical positions. Whatever his later relations with the Jesuits²⁸¹ or his personal motives, Navarrete was largely responsible for the increasingly bitter tone of the Controversy and the shifting of the grounds of debate from questions of Chinese fact to wider grounds of theology and ecclesiastical polity.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Quoted in Boxer, A Propósito dum Livrinho Xilográfico, p.14.

²⁸¹ See Cummins' Introduction to the Travels and Controversies, pp. lxxviii-lxxxiii on Navarrete's good relations with the Jesuits of San Domingo when he became Archbishop of the island diocese.

²⁸² One is tempted to regard Navarrete's meeting in Madagascar with Francois Pallu, the newly appointed Vicar Apostolic of Tunkin, as a handing over of the mantle of chief scourge of the Jesuits of China. See Cummins' Appendix II, 'Navarrete and Pallu', Travels and Controversies, II, pp.425-432.

IV. LULL IN THE STORM

While the departure of Navarrete for Rome after the Canton Conference transferred the focus of the Rites Controversy to Europe,²⁸³ in China a period of peace and expansion once more ensued. A number of documents from this period suggest that the Canton agreement was generally observed, and that a series of practical rules were promulgated for the mission, embodying safeguards against superstition and misinterpretation.

A Chinese work entitled, 'Regulations for the Holy Church' (Sheng-chiao kuei-ch'eng), dating probably from this period,²⁸⁴ gives detailed instructions on many aspects of religious observance. These regulations show just that sort of development of specifically Christian customs on a traditional base that Ricci had planned for. The Buddhist Fo-k'an or niche for the Buddha image is to be replaced in each home by a mu-k'an, or wooden shrine for the image of Christ.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ As the debate in Europe hotted up after the publication of Navarrete's Tratados in 1676, testimony was called for from members of the China mission. Detailed replies were sent to Europe by a number of Jesuits but none of them were published at the time and they belong rather to the Rites Controversy proper c.1700. Such, for example, was F.X.Filippucci's, Praeludium ad plenum narium Societatis Jesu in Regno Sinarum ad Cultum Confucii, et Defunctorum pertinentes, completed in Macao in February, 1683, and published in Paris in 1700 under the title De Sinensium Ritibus Politicis Acta. The manuscript of the Praeludium is in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 150, ff.159-212.

²⁸⁴ It was edited and translated into French by H.Verhaeren C.M., in Monumenta Serica, IV, 1939-40, pp.451-477, under the title of 'Ordonnances de la Sainte Eglise', after the original manuscript in the Pei-t'ang Library, Peking. Verhaeren identified the author as Feliciano Pacheco S.J., and dated the work c.1670. The author appears to be the Superior of the mission, writing on behalf of his confreres. Pacheco and Philippe Couplet were the only members of the mission whose Chinese names included the character li by which the author refers to himself, and Pacheco had two terms as Vice-Provincial in the period around the Canton Conference, 1665-9, and 1672-3, according to J.M. Braga's manuscript Handbook. (I am indebted to Mr. Braga for access to this work which lists and dates the terms of office of Portuguese officials, ecclesiastics and superiors of religious orders in the Far East. When published it should prove a valuable tool to the researcher)

²⁸⁵ 'Ordonnances', No. 1, p.453.

Ancestor tablets may be retained but the reference to the 'spirit' (shên or ling) of the deceased should be avoided.²⁸⁶ Funeral ceremonies for parents should follow 'the ancient ceremonies' with the exception of burning paper money and goods and the participation of Buddhist or Taoist priests.²⁸⁷ All should attend church on feast-days, but men and women should attend separately.²⁸⁸ Non-Christians should be persuaded to become Christians by good example and prudent instruction, but there is no need to publicly flaunt one's faith.²⁸⁹ It is better to proceed cautiously, talking to people about 'the great Father and Mother' (ta fu-mu) of all things, and proceeding to explain the nature of God, of the soul, of heaven and hell, than to begin by attacking the gods and Buddhas.²⁹⁰

The forty-fifth, and last, regulation is a kind of encapsulation of the developed Jesuit interpretation of Chinese tradition, and is worth quoting in full.

To instruct the ignorant and to form the younger generation according to the way of the sages is the greatest of virtuous tasks. Before the Three Dynasties, men acted in accordance with the teachings of their nature and their true natures prevailed. But since the burning of the books in the Ch'in dynasty, Buddhism and Taoism have wrongly been admitted, Neo-Confucianism (li hsüeh) has confused matters, and since people cannot purify the source, and are further confused by talk of 'principle' (li), 'matter' (ch'i) and 'nature' (hsing), the tradition has been corrupted. Orthodox and enlightened scholars must make clear distinctions in order to disabuse later generations. If they help Christian youth understand the natural law, they will not only be rewarded by God, but will have done a great service to the morals of our time.²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ 'Ordonnances', No. XXVII, p. 460.

²⁸⁷ 'Ordonnances', No. XXVIII, p. 461.

²⁸⁸ 'Ordonnances', Nos. II and XXXIII, pp. 454, 463.

²⁸⁹ e.g. The name of Jesus should be honoured within the family, but there is no need to post it up on the doorposts (No. IX, p. 455).

²⁹⁰ 'Ordonnances', No. XVI, p. 457.

²⁹¹ Translated from the text on p. 476 of the 'Ordonnances', with reference to Verhaeren's translation on pp. 466-477.

The Regulations for the Holy Church might be taken as marking a high-point of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, a blue-print for a truly Chinese Christian church. It is difficult to determine to what extent it remained a Jesuit blue-print, and to what extent its approach was accepted by members of other orders. There is evidence that other Dominicans besides Sarpetri supported the general position of the Jesuits. Juan de Paz O.P., an eminent Dominican theologian, lecturer in theology and later chancellor of the University of S. Tomé in Manila,²⁹² wrote in 1679 a reply to some queries from Dominican missionaries in China²⁹³ on the rites question. His position is substantially that of the Regulations; and the preguntos or questions he is replying to, are clearly based on current Jesuit practice, perhaps on the Regulations themselves. Ancestor tablets, amended to avoid any implication that the souls of the dead actually reside there, are permissible. The replies of the Inquisition to Polanco and Navarrete were based on the assumption that the Chinese really believe the souls are present. If this is not so, as the 'better informed literati' are alleged to hold, then they are licit.²⁹⁴ Similarly, candles and incense may be used before the tablets, although Christians should not associate themselves with those who may be guilty of superstition in this regard.²⁹⁵ De Paz is less liberal in regard to offering of

²⁹² See Prejugez Legitimes, pp.58-70 for biographical details.

²⁹³ I have seen three copies of this document, one manuscript and two published. The manuscript copy is in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 163, ff.78-88, and is indexed as Tractatus de Ritibus Sinen-sibus (pro Andreo Lopez, Mis. in Sinis), thus implying that the questions de Paz is answering originated in the China mission. References in the treatise suggest he is replying to queries posed by 'P.Fr. Arcadio (del Rosario O.P.)' and to 'P.Fr. Andres Lopez (O.P.)', both of whom were active in the China mission (according to Foucquet's Catalogus they entered China in 1676 and 1677 respectively). The two printed versions, in the Anciens Mémoires de la Chine touchant les honneurs que les Chinois rendent a Confucius et aux Morts, Paris, 1700, pp.194-213; and in Apologia pro Decreto S.D.N. Alexandri VII, pp.86-94, are both labelled as 'Questions from the Missionaries of Tunking'. It is possible that Arcadio and Andreas Lopez were working in Indochina where many of the same problems were encountered as in China proper but I suspect that the title is erroneous.

²⁹⁴ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 163, ff.78r (Pregunto) and 79r-v (de Pax's reply).

²⁹⁵ Ibid., ff.78v and 80r-81r.

food and drink to the dead. Although Alexander VII allowed it, 'provided there is no superstition involved', it seems impossible to avoid all danger of idolatry and the replies of the Inquisition to Navarrete are to be followed in this matter.²⁹⁶ On the ceremonies for Confucius, however, de Paz again adopts the Jesuit position. The solemn rites are to be avoided by Christians because of the superstitious concomitants and the sacrificial ritual, but genuflections, candles and other signs of respect for Confucius as a 'master' are certainly licit.²⁹⁷

In the last section of his Treatise, in which he replies to some difficulties proposed by Andreas Lopez O.P., Juan de Paz makes two points which appear perfectly obvious to the outsider, but were commonly confused by disputants in the Rites Controversy. It is very strange that 'the infidel literati of China', whom all missionaries assert to be atheists, should be accused of offering 'divine' honours and genuine sacrifices to him. If he is really regarded as a god, why have the missionaries been allowed freely to deny his divinity for a century? It is also strange that it is commonly the newly arrived missionaries who question 'the ancient Fathers' of the mission. They may not always be right and where conscience demands, or a clear evil exists, their practices should be challenged, but there is a presumption in their favour.²⁹⁸ If these sound methodological principles had been observed by all the missionaries of China, there might have been no Rites Controversy.

The most prominent Dominican to support, in general terms, the Jesuit position on Chinese Rites, was the Chinese friar, later Bishop, Gregory Lopez (Lo Wen-tsao). My knowledge of Lo's views is derived solely from a number of letters and excerpts from his works published by the Jesuits in 1700.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Ibid., ff.78r-v and 79v-80v.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 78v and 81r.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., ff.82-87.

²⁹⁹ In the Apologia pro Decreto S.D.N. Alexandri VII..., Louvain, 1700; and Anciens Mémoires de la Chine touchant les honneurs que les Chinois rendent a Confucius et aux morts, Paris, 1700. I refer throughout to the text in the Apologia. For cross-references to other editions, see the Bibliography.

They may be unrepresentative³⁰⁰ and were certainly carefully selected as part of the defence of the Jesuit position in the Rites Controversy, but they indicate clearly that on some key issues at least, the only native Christian prelate of the 17th and 18th centuries agreed with the Jesuit interpretation.

The earliest of these letters recount Lo's conflict with members of his own order over the rites issue.³⁰¹ When the Bishop-elect visited Manila in 1684, he found the Dominican Provincial, Antonio Calderon, so opposed to his 'Jesuit opinions' that, as he wrote to Pope Innocent XI, 'he virtually put me in confinement in one of the convents of my order', and threatened to deprive him of the habit and recall all Dominicans from China.³⁰² Another letter, to the Cardinals of Propaganda,³⁰³ recounts his troubles at the hands both of the Portuguese of Macao, who were opposed to his consecration which they held to be in breach of the Portuguese padroado, and of his fellow-Dominicans in the Philippines. Although the latter claimed to be objecting to his acceptance of the episcopacy without consulting them, the real difficulty was that

I am inclined to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus in China, and agree with certain opinions and judgements of these Fathers regarding the controversies about the cults, the behaviour, the religion and the idolatry, of the Sects of the Literati.³⁰⁴

In the end, he writes, he was forced to place himself under the protection of the Spanish authorities who found him a place in the convent of the Augustinians.

300 They are, however, the only works of Gregory Lo included in the standard Dominican bibliography, Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum, edited by J. Quétif and J. Echard, II, p.709.

301 Letter to Philippe Couplet S.J., 10 November 1682 and to the Dominican Master General (undated), Apologia, pp.1-6.

302 Letter from Manila, 10 June 1684, in Apologia, pp.7-8.

303 Manila, 'III Idus Junii', 1684, Apologia, pp.9-16.

304 Apologia, p.12.

I do not presume, without examining the Dominican records of the period, to make any but a tentative judgement on the truth of these charges. I see no reason, however, to question Lo's account. He was quite familiar with the Spanish language and with Manila, having studied and worked there for several years, so there is no reason to suspect mutual misunderstanding.³⁰⁵ His consecration as Bishop was certainly delayed till 1685, when he returned to Canton, despite the patents he had received from Rome in late 1683³⁰⁶ appointing him Bishop of Basilea and Vicar-Apostolic of Nanking. By 1684, Navarrete's Tratados, and probably the contents at least of his Controversias, must have been widely known in Manila. Although Navarrete took credit for Lo's appointment,³⁰⁷ Lo's views, it now appeared, were diametrically opposed to his; and it is not surprising that the Dominicans of the Province of the Holy Rosary should fear that his appointment would prove ammunition for their opponents. The later use made of Lo's letters proves that their fears were well placed.

The fullest statement of Lo's views in the documents I have consulted is a treatise dated 18 August, 1686, from which the Jesuit editor has selected five propositions for comment.³⁰⁸ Even if they are taken out of context, they seem to establish beyond question Gregory Lo's adherence to the central thesis of the Jesuits regarding the rites, their essentially civil and social character. With abundant citations

³⁰⁵ See the brief note in Pfister, Notices, pp.361-362; and A.C.Moule, 'Gregory Lopez, Bishop', New China Review, I, 1919, pp.481-482.

³⁰⁶ 16 December 1683. See Apologia, p.9. Latourette, A History of Christian Missions in China, p.123, discusses the details of the delays over the consecration.

³⁰⁷ Travels and Controversies, II, p.371.

³⁰⁸ There is further possibility of distortion in the fact that the treatise is described as 'in meliorem formam redactum et auctum, et ... latine scriptum' by 'Fr. Joannes Franciscus a Leonessa, Ord. Min. Strict. Observantiae Notarius Apostolicus ac Provinciarius Generalis' (Apologia, p.17). On the history of the Tractatus see A.C.Moule, 'Gregory Lopez', New China Review, I, 1919, p.485, translated from Quétif and Echard, Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum, II, pp.708-709.

from the classics, the Confucian Four Books and such works as the Chia Li of Chu Hsi, Lo attempts to establish that the term 'ci' (chi) does not necessarily mean 'sacrifice', that a miao is not always a 'temple', that 'xing' (shêng) refers to the wisdom, not the sanctity, of the person thus labelled. The customary offerings to Confucius and the dead are also made to the living who are highly respected; and the dead are not prayed to in the hope of receiving favours.³⁰⁹ This is a reading of Chinese practices by the most eminent Chinese Christian of his day, in precisely the same terms as Ricci a century before.

There are indications that Gregory Lo's views were not completely in accord with those of all the Jesuits. A letter of the Jesuit Francesco Saverio Filipucci, dated 20 February 1686,³¹⁰ complains of a recent instruction of the Bishop of Basilea on the amendement of the inscriptions on the ancestor tablets. Lo appears to want to prohibit the use of the expressions shêng chu and ling wei which do not mean 'seat of the soul' but respectively 'he, in whose honour or on whose behalf the dead are recalled' and 'the epitaph, memorial, representation, or substitute for the dead'.³¹¹ However, Filipucci's reading of these characters is rather eccentric and, as we have seen, Article 27 of the Regulations for the Holy Church had earlier prohibited such inscriptions on prudential grounds. On this head, it seems to be Lo rather than Filipucci who was presenting the agreed view on the tablets.

The position taken up by Gregory Lo raises once more the question of fact or prejudice as the determining element in the Rites Controversy. There is a very revealing passage in the standard bibliography of Dominican writers, published in 1721, which draws a distinction between Lo's expertise in Chinese affairs and theology.

³⁰⁹ Apologia, pp.17-35.

³¹⁰ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 163, ff.325-328, to Alessandro Ciceri S.J.

³¹¹ Ibid., f.326r.

As to his contention in his letter to the Master of the Order that as a Chinaman he knew more about the language and rites of the Chinese than his Brothers could do; even if it is allowed it proves nothing. For he ought at the same time to have shown that he was more skilled than they were in Holy Scripture, tradition, the Canons, history, sacred and profane, and theology, and one who after a comparison of all the points involved would be able to see and decide more easily than the others what should be tolerated and what forbidden. But that assuredly no one thought of him, so that at best he could claim to describe the Chinese rites, and so too his little effusion was regarded as of small weight.³¹²

This seems to me to be a perfect example of prejudgement and a closed mind. The Jesuit interpretation of Chinese Rites involved prejudice, too, to some extent, in the sense of a bias towards the legitimacy of the practices. But at least the Jesuits regarded the question of fact as central. To dismiss it as irrelevant, as proving nothing, is to claim that European theologians should pronounce a priori on Chinese realities. The Rites Controversy was the triumph, in principle, of prejudice over facts.

³¹² Quétif and Echard, Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum, II, p.709, translated by A.C.Moule in New China Review, I, 1919, p.486.

V. CONFUCIUS SINARUM PHILOSOPHUS

Despite the publication of Navarrete's work and the controversy it aroused, the 1670s and 1680s were marked, for the China mission, by consolidation and expansion.³¹³ The uneasy compromise of the 1669 decrees of the Inquisition and the de facto partition of the mission, with the different orders working according to their own methods in separate areas, prevented the rites question from becoming explosive. When Prospero Intorcetta reported to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide in 1672, he presented a picture of a flourishing church recovering from persecution.³¹⁴

Intorcetta was sent to Rome in 1668 as Procurator for the Vice-Province of China, but his concern was not, as in the case of Martini before him, with the Chinese Rites issue, but rather with domestic affairs of the mission.³¹⁵ One of

³¹³ A manuscript catalogue of 1663, signed by the Visitor, Luis da Gama, gives a total of 110,100 Christians, and 34 churches (see Havret, La Stele Chrétienne de Si-Ngan-Fou, II, pp.99-100, n.1. By the 1690s, according to Le Comte, there were close to 300,000 (Nouveaux Mémoires, II, p.181).

³¹⁴ Compendiosa Narratione dello stato della missione Cinesi cominciando dell'anno 1581 fino al 1669, Rome, 1672. See also Philippe Couplet, Relatio de statu et qualitate missionis Sinicae post reditum Patrum e Cantonensi exilio sub annum 1671 in the Bollandists' Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Maii, Antwerp, 1685, p.126ff.

³¹⁵ Intorcetta had been elected by the 1666 Congregation of the Vice-Province of China as their Procurator, to go to Rome and represent the views of the China mission on certain issues. The Visitor, da Gama, prevented him from departing in that year on the grounds that the Province of Japan was sending their own Procurator and the General would not tolerate two Procurators from the Far East in the same year (De Ferrariis to the General, Oliva, Canton, 5 October 1668, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 162, ff.209v-210v). A document in the Jesuit Archives in Rome, signed by Intorcetta, 'ex Sinis', 20 August 1668, listing a number of the Postulata of the Chinese Vice-Province, makes it clear that his mission to Rome was not primarily concerned with the Rites question, but mainly with disputes between the Vice-Province and the Japanese Province. He mentions, in No.7, disputes over the Canton decisions, but his concern is solely with the right of the Visitor in Macao to override decisions taken by a majority vote in China ('Confirmationes Postulatorum et Quaesits missa e V.e Provincia Sinensi per Procuratorem Patrem Prosperum Intorcetta, anno 1668', Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 124, ff.59v-69v). On his arrival in Rome in 1671, however, he held discussions with the Congregation of Propaganda, and it is possible that the Rites issue was discussed.

the by-products of his trip was the publication of his translation of the Doctrine of the Mean which was partly printed in Canton in 1667, and augmented in Goa in 1669. This work, the Sinarum Scientia Politico-Moralis, was not widely circulated,³¹⁶ but it received some notice in Europe through its republication in Thévenot's Relations de divers Voyages curieux,³¹⁷ thus becoming the first translation of a Chinese work to appear in Europe.³¹⁸

It was not, however, the first translation of a Confucian work to be published in a Western language. This honour belongs to an earlier translation by Intorcetta and Ignacio da Costa, the Sapientia Sinica, published in Chien-ch'ang in Kiangsi, in 1662,³¹⁹ which included parts of the Analects of Confucius and the Great Learning. These in turn were probably based in part on the manuscript translations by Ricci which

³¹⁶ On the rarity of this work, and of the earlier Sapientia Sinica, see C.R. Boxer, 'Some Sino-European Xylographic Works 1622-1718', Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1947, pp.199, 200, 202; and H. Cordier, Essai d'une Bibliographie des ouvrages publiés en Chine par les Européens au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècles, Paris, 1883, pp.13-16.

³¹⁷ Pt.4, Paris, 1676.

³¹⁸ Navarrete's translation of the Ming hsin pao chien appeared in the same year but some copies of Intorcetta's work must have circulated in the early 1670s. In the 'Advertissement' to Michael Boym's Briefve Relation de la Notable Conversion des Personnages Royales, Paris, 1654, the publisher, Sebastien Cramoisy, refers to a number of works which Boym hopes to publish in the near future. One of these is described as 'Moralis Philosophia Sinarum, seu libri Cum Fu Cu Magistri Sinensis, qui floruit ante Christum quingentis et amplius annis, Sinicis et Latine characteribus explicati'. The work does not, however, appear to have been published, and probably was never written. See B. Szczesniak, 'The Writings of Michael Boym', Monumenta Serica, 1949-55, pp.485-6.

³¹⁹ Sapientia Sinica, exponente P. Ignacio a Costa Lusitano Soc. Jesu a P. Prospero Intorcetta Siculo eiusd. Soc. orbi proposita, 'Kiam cham in urbe Sinarum Provinciae Kiam Si, 1662'.

had circulated in the mission and been used in the language training of newly arrived missionaries.³²⁰

The most important and most influential of the translations of the Seventeenth Century was undoubtedly the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus³²¹ published in Paris in 1687. This, like Intorcetta's earlier translation, was a product both of the Canton Conference which brought together the collaborators³²² and of a visit to Europe. It was published, and probably edited by Phillipe Couplet,³²³ who was elected as Procurator

320 Another translation which appears to have circulated in the mission was Trigault's version of the five classics. This work, to which Sommervogel gives the title Pentabiblion Sinense quod primae adeo Sacrae Auctoritatis apud illos est, Latine paraphrasi explicuit (Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus, VIII, col.243), was, according to Fang Hao, 'printed' in Hangchow in 1626 ('Shih-ch'i-pa shih-chi lai-hua Hsi-jen tui wo-kuo ching-chi chih yen-chiu', in Fang Hao liu-shih tzu-ting kao, I, p.190). I suspect that Pfister was right in regarding it as remaining in manuscript, and never having been sent to Europe (Notices, p.119).

321 Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive Scientia Sinensis, latine exposita, studio et opera Prosperi Intorcetta, Christiani Herdtrich, Francisci Rougemont, Philippi Couplet, Patrum Societatis Jesu, Paris, 1687.

322 F. Bontinck, La Lutte autour de la Liturgie Chinoise aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles, Louvain, 1962, discusses the origins and contents of the work in a note (p.224, n.95). He cites letters of Rougemont and Intorcetta, dated 5 November 1670 and 11 March 1671, on their collaboration in Canton.

323 Couplet seems to have edited the work and written the Proemialis Declaratio. The Confucii Vita is that of Intorcetta, reprinted from the Sinarum Scientia Politico-Moralis. The translations were the work of Intorcetta, Herdtricht and Rougemont. Ignacio da Costa is not mentioned on the title-page but presumably his and Intorcetta's version of the first half of the Analects and the Great Learning was the basis of the translations of these works. Da Costa died a few days after arriving in Canton in May 1666 which explains the omission of his name from the list. I have not had the opportunity of systematically comparing the texts of the various translations, but the opening lines of the translations of the Great Learning and the Analects in Sapientia Sinica, appear to have served as the basis for the corresponding but revised translations in Confucius Sinarum Philosophus. Rougemont had been dead five years when Couplet left for Europe so the collaboration must have long preceded this date. According to Navarrete, 'Intorcetta and three others of his standing' had translated the works of Confucius some time before the Canton Conference met but there was opposition from several of the Jesuits to the publication of the translation (Account, p.114, Bk.II, Ch.2). This may account for the delay in publication.

of the mission in 1679 and left Macao for Europe in late 1681. It incorporated, in revised form, the two earlier published translations, thus presenting three of the Four Books to the European learned world. The fourth, the Mencius, did not appear in translation till 1711 in Francois Noel's Sinensis Imperii Libri Classici Sex.³²⁴ However, perhaps because it appeared in Prague rather than in Paris, the intellectual capital of the world of the time, Noel's work never supplanted the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus. For over a century, when European scholars and publicists referred to Confucius, as they frequently did, they were referring to 'Confucius, the Philosopher of China' as presented in this work or in one of its many translations.³²⁵

As far as the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism to Europe goes, then, the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus is the key work. It represents the cumulative and collaborative fruit of more than a century of Jesuit investigation of Confucianism. And it also marks an important source for that extraordinary vogue for things Chinese that left such a deep mark on eighteenth century art and thought.³²⁶ Couplet's visit

324 The six works translated by Noel were the Four Books (Analects, Doctrine of the Mean, Great Learning and Mencius), the Hsiao Ching ('Classic of Filial Piety') and the Hsiao hsueh, a kind of primer.

325 For example, in La Morale de Confucius, Philosophe de la Chine, Amsterdam, 1688, reprinted Paris, 1783 (the title-page of the British Museum copy of the 1783 edition has 'Londres', but bibliographers usually attribute it to Valande in Paris); and its English translation, The Morals of Confucius, A Chinese Philosopher, London, 1691. This work was essentially a popular abridgement rather than a translation of the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus.

326 Despite the enormous literature on this subject, there is still need for a sound overall survey of 'China' and the Enlightenment. The best work remains Virgile Pinot's La Chine et la Formation de l'Esprit Philosophique en France (1640-1740), Paris, 1932, which unfortunately stopped short of Voltaire and the late 18th century social and political theorists. René Etiemble's L'Orient Philosophique au XVIIIe Siecle, (Cours de Sorbonne, 1956-8) is lively and provocative, but clearly not a polished or definitive work. Basil Guy, The French Image of China before and after Voltaire (Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, XXI, 1963) is comprehensive but inaccurate. All three, however, perceive the importance of Confucius Sinarum Philosophus in the sinophile movement.

to Paris in 1684 with a young Chinese companion³²⁷ aroused enormous interest. He was presented to Louis XIV and from this contact arose the project of sending 'mathématiciens du roil' to the court of K'ang-hsi. But he also introduced to many Frenchmen for the first time, Confucius, the Chinese Sage. The Mercure Galant for September 1684 carried the account by 'the learned M. Comiers, Parisian' of a visit to the Jesuit Maison Saint Louis where he met Couplet and 'the young Chinese' and saw 'the Portrait of Doctor Confucius with his great black Moustaches, who is to the Chinese what Aristotle was for the Greeks'.³²⁸ The publication of Confucius Sinarum Philosophus a few years later confirmed the reputation of Confucius.

What, then, were the lineaments of this Jesuit Confucius? The portrait engraved specially for the work³²⁹ stands as a significant symbol of the whole. It is a Confucius, in Chinese dress certainly, but with European features. The books on the shelves of the library in the background are a curious compromise between Chinese sewn and boxed books and European leather-bound volumes, and the titles appear in Chinese and Latin. K'ung-tzu has become Confucius.

Couplet's Proémialis Declaratio³³⁰ presents a recapitulation of the Jesuit interpretation of Chinese religion and philosophy in general, and Confucianism in particular, up to this point. He expounds the reasons for the Jesuit adoption of the guise of literati, their attempt to 'complement and perfect' Confucius, and its success, and adds his hopes that this ancient and sound politico-moral doctrine will prove of value to Europe too.³³¹ Then in successive paragraphs he outlines the contents and authority of the Chinese classics and the teachings of

327 (Michael) Shen Fu-tsung.

328 Quoted in J. Dehergne, 'Voyageurs Chinois venues à Paris au Temps de la Marine de la Marine à Voiles...', Monumenta Serica, XXIII, 1964, p.376.

329 On p.cxvi, opposite the beginning of the Life of Confucius.

330 The full title is, 'Operis et Scopus nec-non Sinensium Librorum, Interpretum, Sectarum, et Philosophiae, quam Natutalem vocant, Proemialis Declaratio', and it occupies pp.ix-cxiv of the work.

331 pp.ix-xiv.

Taoists and Buddhists. The latter are atheists as well as idolators³³² and the teachings of the Buddha who was born in India in 1026 B.C., eventually in the Han period reached China and infected the country. In later times, the teaching of the ancient sages was lost or misinterpreted, and the 'new interpreters' of the Sung, basing themselves on the mysterious diagrams of the I Ching which only a Confucius could explain, got lost in the 'gloomy and useless exercise or labyrinth' of the hexagrams.

The explanation of Neo-Confucianism which follows is the fullest and most accurate hitherto published. In place of the vague statements and misleading terminology of Longobardo, Couplet traces the characteristic li-hsueh principles back to their source in the commentaries on the I Ching. He invokes scholastic philosophical terminology but as an explanatory device or familiar standard against which the statements of Chinese philosophers about t'ai-chi and li can be measured, not as an end to inquiry. By this means he discovers some passages that appear to imply pure materialism, but others that seem to involve the Western concept of 'spirit'. And he concludes that we should be very cautious in applying labels such as 'Atheism' to systems in which the western philosophical categories and distinctions are unknown.³³³ It was the very confusion and multiplicity of interpretations of Confucianism that gave Matteo Ricci the opportunity to introduce his Christian interpretation based firmly on the texts themselves.

Couplet's introduction to the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus also raises what were to become much debated questions amongst European scholars. He asserts that despite a superficial similarity between Egyptian hieroglyphics and Chinese characters, there is no evidence of influence from Egypt,

³³² Couplet solves the dilemma of the atheist/idolator combination by claiming that there are two doctrines, the exoteric or 'exterior' which is a popular idolatry and the esoteric or 'interior' which is an atheistic philosophy. (pp.xxx-xxxiii)

³³³ See esp. pp.lvii-lviii.

Assyria or anywhere else on Chinese customs or society. Chinese history goes back very close to the date of the biblical Deluge and Fu Hsi, the founder of the Chinese Empire, is alleged to have reigned some 200 years after the date of the Deluge according to the Septuagint computation.³³⁴ Hence, the ancient Chinese must have been near contemporaries and descendants of the sons of Noah and, like Noah, have had knowledge of the true God, and worshipped him.

This last point established, Couplet proceeds to expound under several heads³³⁵ the primitive Chinese notion of God as found in the classics. The modern atheopolitici have misinterpreted the clear statements of the ancient books, and it is extraordinary that certain European missionaries should prefer their interpretation of the classics to 'the beautiful light shed by the author of nature on the Chinese of the Golden Age', especially since the use of the classics has been so successful in opening up China to the Gospel.³³⁶ The last point, with its clear reference to Navarrete and his ilk, reminds us that Couplet's work, no less than any other Jesuit writing of the 17th century, is not a work of pure scholarship, but part of a continuing missionary programme. However, the time of publication of the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus was a kind of lull in the Rites Controversy storm, and it is not dominated, as many later works were, by apologetic aims.

³³⁴ This point is elaborated in the Tabula Chronologica Monarchiae Sinicae which was published as an appendix to the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus (it has a separate title-page with the date 1686). The Table itself begins with Huang Ti in 2697 B.C. but Couplet's commentary carries Fu Hsi's reign back to 2952 B.C. The fact that Couplet specifies the Septuagint chronology which was longer than that of the Hebrew or Vulgate texts, indicates his awareness of the problem of comparability of the Chinese and biblical chronologies which was to be seized upon by Bayle and the 18th century philosophes. Couplet provides an escape-clause by noting that some Chinese regard Fu Hsi as 'apocryphal', and that a chronology beginning with Yao in 2360 B.C. is perfectly compatible with the Vulgate (p.lxxv).

³³⁵ Part II, Paragraphs 6 - 11, pp.lxxvii-cvi.

³³⁶ p.xcvii.

The most important part of Confucius Sinarum Philosophus is, of course, the translation itself. I can do no more here, than comment on the method and general presentation, with a few examples to illustrate these. Unfortunately, Couplet did not succeed in printing an accompanying Chinese text as he announced was his intention.³³⁷ In the First Book, the Ta hsüeh or 'Great Learning', and in part of the third, he used a system of numbers to indicate the characters translated, but this was not followed in the rest of the work, thus suggesting the abandonment of his plans for a Chinese text. It was, in fact, not till the 1740s, when Etienne Fourmont had a special fount of Chinese characters made for his grammar and projected dictionary, that such work was possible in Europe.

Couplet's method is to give a translation of the text - or rather, as we shall see, a paraphrase, or expansion of it - followed, where necessary, by the 'explanation of the Interpreters' and some comments of his own. The 'Interpreters' he follows are, he says, 'especially Cham the Colao and Royal Master'. This indicates that he used the commentary by Chu Hsi which was based on the commentary of his master, Ch'êng I³³⁸ i.e. the standard edition of the Chinese schools.

The translation of the very first sentence of the First Book will serve as an example of the method. I give first the fairly literal translation of the passage by James Legge:

What the Great Learning teaches is - to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence.³³⁹

This is already a slight expansion of the original sixteen characters, but it follows closely the structure as well as the sense of the original. Compare it, however, with what Couplet calls a literal (ad litteram) version.

³³⁷ Liber Primus, p.1.

³³⁸ Ch'êng I had been tutor to the young Sung Emperor Chê Tsung, and is invoked at the beginning of the Chu Hsi commentary as 'my master Ch'êng-tzu' (v. Legge, Chinese Classics, I, p.355).

³³⁹ The Chinese Classics, I, p.356.

Magnum adeoque virorum Principium, sciendi institutum consistit in expoliendo, seu excolendo rationalem naturam a coelo inditam; ut scilicet haec, ceu limpidissimum speculum, abstergis pravorum appetitum maculis, ad pristinam claritatem suam redire possit. Consistit deinde in renovando seu reparando populum, suo ipsius scilicet exemplo et adhortatione. Consistit demum in sistendo firmiter, seu perseverando in summo bono.³⁴⁰

(Or, to translate the translation)

The great purpose, especially of men of princely rank, in knowing, consists in refining or cultivating the rational nature granted them by heaven; so that it, like the clearest of mirrors, wiped clean of the stains of depraved appetites, can return to its pristine clarity. It consists, next, in renewing or restoring the people, through his own example and encouragement. And, finally, it consists in standing firm or persevering in the highest good.

What we have here is not at all a literal translation of the text. It is an amplification of the original, partly derived from Chu Hsi's commentary, but mainly drawn from European moral philosophy. The 'mirror' metaphor, for example, although common in Chinese philosophy, is not employed in the Ch'êng-Chu commentary, and may have found its way here via the European 'Mirror of the Soul' devotional literature. 'Depraved appetites' is a reference to Aristotelean ethics which has few points of contact with Chinese moral philosophy; while 'the highest good' (summum bonum) is a Thomistic concept with theistic overtones out of place here.

340

Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, 'Scientiae Sinicae Liber Primus, p.1 (each of the three books is separately paginated). This may be compared with the first sentence (corresponding to the first eight characters) of the da Costa-Intorcetta 1662 version: 'Magnum virorum sciendi institutum consistit in illuminando virtutibus spiritualem potentiam a coelo inditam, nempe animam, ut haec redire possit ad originalem claritatem, quem appetitus animalis obnubilaverunt'. (Sapientia Sinica, p.1) The Italics are in the original to distinguish the literal translation from the amplification. The filiation of the texts as well as the greater prolixity of the later version are clear.

Couplet (or the Jesuit translator whoever he was) concludes the passage with two comments. He sums up the meaning of the passage, according to the 'Interpreters' as 'the greatest conformity of all actions with right reason'; and he adds that the passage is a kind of summary of the whole book. Both comments are found almost verbatim in Chu Hsi's commentary.³⁴¹ And to these he adds a textual note explaining that the ninth character is normally read as cin (chin) which literally means 'love of neighbour or relatives', but that the commentators agree in reading it here as sin (hsin) 'to renew'.³⁴²

My overall impression of this passage and the commentary is one of cultural transposition. The Jesuit authors have gone far beyond what a modern sinologist would regard as the bounds of translator's license. Confucius³⁴³ speaks not only in the language, but also with the thoughts of the medieval scholastic philosophers and theologians. There is some relation to the Chinese text, but only the reader who already knew enough Chinese to read it for himself, would be capable of judging the extent to which K'ung-tzu has been transformed in becoming Confucius.

For a second example, we might look at a passage from the Doctrine of the Mean, which figured prominently in the Rites Controversy, in order to assess the extent to which the image of 'Confucius' was modified by the need to conform

341 See Chu Hsi, Ssu-shu chi-chu, Hong Kong, 1968 ed., p.1.

342 The editor has, I think, misunderstood Ch'eng-tzu's note. Couplet (or whoever was the Jesuit commentator on this passage) presumes that it is a question of the meaning (nomen et significatum) of ch'in, whereas it is clearly a question of a textual corruption, the substitution of one character for another of similar pronunciation and appearance.

343 Modern commentators, of course, agree that the Ta hsüeh which is part of the Li Chi or Book of Rites was certainly not the work of Confucius. Couplet follows the traditional attribution to Confucius ('auctore Confucio, Commentatore cem-cu eiusdem secundo discipulo').

to the Jesuit party-line on the question. Once more I take Legge's translation as a control, although I think that there are grounds for modifying it slightly. Legge translates the passage, at the end of Ch.19 of the Chung yung as follows:

Thus they served the dead as they would have served them alive; they served the departed as they would have served them had they been continued among them. By the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth they served God, and by the ceremonies of the ancestral temple they sacrificed to the ancestors.³⁴⁴

The Jesuit would, of course, have objected to Legge's translation of ssu hu ch'i hsien as 'sacrificed to the ancestors' on grounds we have already examined. The modern sinologist would reply that the term ssu is used, for example, for the 'sacrifices' to the kitchen god; that its primary meaning is 'sacrifice' in the normal sense, and that it should be translated this way, then qualified if necessary.³⁴⁵ On the other hand, most sinologists would, I think, query Legge's translation of Shang-ti as 'God'.

The Jesuit version, however, on close examination, proves to be more an elaborate piece of parti pris than a translation in the usual sense of the term. They gave a quite literal translation of the first part about serving the dead, which admirably suited their purpose and was, in fact, a key text in their Chinese as well as Western language writings on the subject of rites. Lest anyone should miss the point, they added a long commentary to the effect that these ceremonies arose purely from 'natural piety and polite observance'.³⁴⁶

344 The Chinese Classics, I, pp.403-404 (Legge's chapter division differs slightly from that of the edition of Chu Hsi already referred to, in which this is Ch.18.

345 Legge, in his commentary on this passage, actually cites Confucius Sinarum Philosophus as evidence of the Jesuit use of the text 'in defence of their practice in permitting their converts to continue the sacrifices to their ancestors'. He dismisses it, however, as 'ingenious reasoning' which does not allow for the historical context which is precisely the extension to the ancestors of rites hitherto reserved for those of clearly divine status (Chinese Classics, p.404).

346 '...naturalem pietatem et politicum obsequium erga defunctos exerceat' (Lib.II, p.58).

and that despite the appearance of worship, they were precisely those observed towards parents during their lifetime.

The second part of the passage, however, could not be allowed to stand in the stark and compromising terms of the original. Instead it is embedded in an elaborate exegesis:

Confucius, wishing to imply that the brothers King Wu and the Duke of Chou followed a very beautiful way of governing, says that he who acquits himself of the appropriate duty of piety towards Heaven first, then to his ancestors, shall rule the Empire successfully. The chiao was that which was offered to Heaven, on a round hill. The shê, however, was that which was offered to the earth, in a place that was low-lying and square (they thought that the earth was square). Quite different from these were the parental rites³⁴⁷ offered to the ancestors, denoted here by the two terms Ti and ch'ang. Ti was that which the Emperor offered to his ancestors with solemn rites once every five years. The ch'ang were those parental rites which were performed for the same in each of the four seasons of the year. Hence Confucius says: the rites and services of sacrifice to heaven and earth were that (ceremony) in which they actually honoured the supreme Emperor of heaven and earth, who is aptly as well as literally signified by the two letters Shang ti. The rites and services of the royal ancestral hall were those (ceremonies) in which later kings paid their respects to their dead ancestors.

The commentary which follows points out that the text clearly indicates that the sacrifice is to one supreme God, 'even though Chu Hsi, the Atheopolitical commentator falsely says that the name of the god of earth³⁴⁸ has been omitted for the sake of brevity'. In this respect our translator has modern commentators on his side.³⁴⁹ On the other side, it is impossible to accept his further comment that this text should

347 The term used, parentalia, actually refers to the Roman festival in honour of deceased parents, a not inappropriate analogy.

348 The Chu Hsi commentary says that the name of Hou t'u has been omitted after Shang-ti (Ssu-shu ch'i-chu, p.14).

349 Chu Hsi's gloss is omitted in many modern Chinese editions. According to C.T.C. Werner's Dictionary of Chinese Mythology, New York, 1961, p.160, 'sacrifices to Hou T'u, the God of Earth, were not instituted till 113 B.C. under Han Wu Ti. In any case, as Legge notes, this view does not affect 'the judgement of the Sage himself, that the service of one being-even of God- was designated by all these ceremonies' (Chinese Classics, I, p.404).

be used as a guide to interpretation in other contexts where Heaven and Shang-ti are mentioned. The text is a 'locus illustris' for Ricci and Christian commentators precisely because of its uniqueness.

Once again we find the Jesuit translators guilty of the very methodological sin they impute to the Neo-Confucian commentators, confusing the text and the commentary. The European reader had no way of knowing where text finished and commentary - Jesuit or Chinese - began. In fact the passage beginning 'Hence Confucius says ...' is a fairly close translation of the text and the introductory remarks are reasonably accurate,³⁵⁰ but text and commentary have been conflated into one synthetic statement. I was indeed 'Confucius' not the Chinese K'ung-tzu who was presented.

As my third, and last, example, I take some passages from the translation of the Analects. On the whole this is the most successful and most literally accurate of the three translations. The problems encountered are principally those of equivalent terminology. How, for example, to render the key Confucian concept of jen? The Jesuit translators, like Legge and others after them, use a range of terms - virtus, mutua fides et amor, benevolentia, sometimes successfully, sometimes less so. Where Legge invariably translates chün-tzu as 'superior man', the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus uses a number of different terms - perfectus vir, probus, verus philosophus, in my opinion more effectively. Perhaps the operative factor is simply the resources of the Latin language. It seems to me better, for example, to translate the famous passage from the beginning of Bk.VII of the Analects, as 'Praeco sum, seu relator, et non author doctrinae',³⁵¹ rather than Legge's familiar,

³⁵⁰ One might question whether it would be more accurate to describe the Ti sacrifice as that to the Founder of the dynasty rather than the 'ancestors' of the Emperor, and the Ch'ang sacrifice as specifically the Autumn sacrifice (see Legge, Chinese Classics, I, notes on pp.404 and 158).

³⁵¹ Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, p.36.

'a transmitter and not a maker'.³⁵² And I prefer 'Coelum tumulavit me!' in XI.8,³⁵³ to 'Heaven is destroying me!'³⁵⁴ since it accurately conveys both the tense (a reference to a past event, the death of Yen Yüan) and the implications of death and burial. The conciseness and lack of articles in Latin match similar features in Chinese, as in 'Rex sit Rex', compared with 'when the prince is a prince' in XII.11.³⁵⁵ And it could be argued that the elegance and dignity, some might even say stuffiness, of the Latin, matches that of the original.

On the whole, Confucius Sinarum Philosophus is at its best in the translation of the Analects. The humanistic moral and political philosophy of this work was closer to European ethics and the Renaissance philosophy of man than were other aspects of Chinese philosophy. It makes up by far the greater part of the work; and when European thinkers wrote about the ideas of Confucius, it was usually to this Third Book of the Jesuit translation that they referred. Although Couplet and his collaborators do not seem to have realised it, the Analects also represented the views of the genuine historical Confucius more accurately than the textually dubious Great Learning, and Doctrine of the Mean. To this extent, then, Confucius Sinarum Philosophus does present the real 'Confucius, Philosopher of China'; and despite its many and obvious defects, remains a corner-stone of the edifice of Sinology as well as a fitting conclusion to the first century of the Jesuit encounter with Confucianism.

³⁵² Chinese Classics, I, p.195.

³⁵³ Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, p.71.

³⁵⁴ Chinese Classics, I, p.234.

³⁵⁵ Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, p.81 cf. Chinese Classics, I, p.256.

CHAPTER 5 SON OF HEAVEN AND VICAR OF CHRIST:

THE CHINESE RITES CONTROVERSY (1688-1742)

Ce n'était pas assez pour l'inquiétude de notre esprit, que nous disputassions au bout de dix-sept ans sur des points de notre religion, il fallut encore que celle des Chinois entrât dans nos querelles. Cette dispute ne produisit pas de grands mouvements, mais elle caractérisa plus qu'aucune autre cet esprit actif, contentieux et querelleur, qui règne dans nos climats.

As if it was not enough to disturb our peace of soul that after seventeen centuries we still dispute over points of our religion; now, that of the Chinese has entered into our quarrels. This dispute produced no great effects, but it characterised better than any other, that active, contentious and quarrelsome spirit that reigns in our part of the world.

- VOLTAIRE¹

Voltaire was surely right in seeing the Chinese Rites Controversy as a case of China being drawn into European religious quarrels. This is true to some extent of the events described in the previous chapter, and it is almost completely true of the Rites Controversy proper, the debate conducted in Europe from the 1690s through to 1742 and even later. Unfortunately the historian of the Jesuit mission in China and of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism in particular, is not thereby absolved of the task of discussing the issue. Even if, as Voltaire says, it produced no great effects in Europe, it had enormous repercussions on the mission and ultimately completely undermined the Christian-Confucian rapprochement of the Jesuits. And although it was primarily a European quarrel, it affected everything the Jesuits wrote, in Chinese as well as in European languages; it diverted their energies into its narrow channels; and it forced partisans on either side into gross over-simplifications. In short, it is inescapable.

In this chapter I offer no more than a few marginal comments on the Rites affair, with particular attention to

¹ Le Siècle de Louis XIV, Ch.XXXIX, 'Disputes sur les cérémonies chinoises', Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire, Paris, 1878, t.15, p.76.

its effect on the Jesuits' presentation of and relationship to Confucianism. I will attempt to disentangle from the literature of the subject the comparatively few issues genuinely relating to Confucianism. Even this is, perhaps, overly ambitious. I have merely sampled the proliferation of writings on the Rites question around 1700, and concentrated on the Jesuit and pro-Jesuit material, since it is the effect of the controversy on the Jesuit propaganda about China that is my prime concern. Father Henri Bernard-Maître S.J., who probably knows better than any other authority on the subject the extent and complexity of the documentation, describes the problems without exaggeration when he says:

In truth, what is most liable to mislead us in this matter, is certainly not the absence of documents, but on the contrary their overabundance. The result is a lack of chronological perspective. All those who have tried, even by looking at the high points from afar, to sort out this confused mass of texts have experienced immediately a feeling of total disorientation; and in a short time have felt themselves submerged beyond saving in an ocean of contradictions. Those who have the boldness, not to say temerity, to try to cut a path through this thick jungle, can only approach the problems by following a limited and oblique approach, by concentrating on one point only all the light they can bring to bear, without seeking to master in a more general way the changes and the evolution of the ideas.²

My 'limited and oblique approach' is through the fate of the image of Confucius and Confucianism in the Jesuit controversial literature.

The route by which the Chinese Rites controversy 'entered into our (European) quarrels' lies by way of Paris and Rome. French Jesuits and the French missionaries of the Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris brought the Rites question to the attention of the Sorbonne where it became a pawn in the struggle between Jesuit and Jansenist,

² 'De la Question des Termes à la Querelle des Rites de Chine: Le Dossier Foucquet de 1711', in Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft, XIV, 1958, p.179.

Gallican and Papalist. The newly established church hierarchy in China, especially the Vicars Apostolic, and the introduction of missionaries directly responsible to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, provided a new direct channel to the church authorities in Rome. This in turn brought to China papal legates with instructions to implement on the spot decisions made in Rome, thus projecting into China issues of ecclesiastical politics which the barriers of distance and the Portuguese padroado had hitherto kept at bay.

It has been suggested³ that the key to the whole Chinese Rites controversy lies in Jansenist influence, even a Jansenist conspiracy, in the Congregation de Propaganda Fide. This is, I am certain, exaggerated. Jansenism may partly explain the bitterness of the French exchanges, and there is truth in Montesquieu's comment: 'Les Jésuites et les Jansénistes vont porter leurs querelles jusques à la Chine'.⁴ Jansenists certainly used anti-Jesuit material about China⁵ and they must have found a certain satisfaction in the refusal by Rome to allow just such a distinction between questions of fact and questions of doctrine in the case of China, that the Jesuits had denied to them in the case of the propositions of Jansenius.⁶ There are, moreover, isolated passages in Jesuit letters from China

³ Principally by Malcolm Hay in Failure in the Far East, London, 1956.

⁴ Pensées, No. 55, in Oeuvres Complètes, Ed. Masson, Paris, 1950, II, p.20.

⁵ See, for example, Pierre Jurieu, La Religion des Jésuites, La Haye, 1689, which compares the 'idolatry' of the Jesuits of China with their 'idolatry' of Louis XIV (pp.34-36).

⁶ The distinction between facts and doctrine is the principal argument in the pro-Jesuit Caduceus Sinicus, Cologne, 1713. The anti-Jesuit Père Norbert (P. C. Parisot alias Platel) in his Mémoires Historiques ... sur les Missions Orientales, Lucca, 1744, II, pp.191-193, points out that this is the same argument as the Jansenist distinction between 'fait' and 'droit' which had been condemned.

alleging Jansenist collusion with the Paris missionaries.⁷ But other factors were also at work. Portuguese influence in the East was clearly in decline and a realignment of ecclesiastical as well as political spheres of influence seemed called for. Whatever the reality of the influence of Jesuit confessors over Louis XIV, the apparent predominance of the Jesuits at court naturally produced an anti-Jesuit reaction at Rome as well as in France. And there were many other theological controversies besides that over Jansenism in which the Jesuits had taken sides and made enemies⁸. In some respects the Roman discussions in the Rites Controversy were the first success of the curious alliance of secular and ecclesiastical forces that eventually brought about the temporary destruction of the Society of Jesus.

Malcolm Hay is on the right track, however, in looking to the personnel and policies of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide for an explanation of the shift against the Jesuit accommodation policy in China. Initially, the Congregation supported a policy identical in almost all respects with that of the Jesuits. In its well-known Instruction of 1659 issued to the Vicars Apostolic there is a classic statement of the principle of accommodation to local conditions.

Do not attempt in any way to persuade these peoples to change their customs, their habits and their behaviour, as long as they are not evidently contrary to religion and morality. What could be more absurd, indeed, than to transport France, Italy or some other European country to the Chinese? Do not bring them our countries but the faith, which does not reject or

⁷ E.g. Pierre de Goville to Nyel, undated but probably c.1722, in Pastor, History of the Popes, XXXIV, London, 1941, Appendix 16, pp.571-573; Joseph Suarez to the Portuguese Assistant, Peking, 9 October 1713 in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 175, ff.18-19; João Mourão to the Patriarch Mezzabarba, 4 December 1732, translation in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 198, ff.318r-320r. Similar charges against the M.E.P. missionaries in Cochinchina are made by G.B.Sanna S.J. in letters of 1721 and 1722 in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin.198, ff.51v-56v

⁸ See E. Preclin and E. Jarry, Les Luttres Politiques et Doctrinales aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles, Paris, 1955

harm the customs and habits of any people, so long as they are not perverse; but, on the contrary, wishes to see them preserved in their entirety.

And since it is as it were written into human nature that every man, in his judgement and in his heart, puts his customs and his country above all others, there exists no more powerful motive for hatred and revulsion than changing ancestral customs, especially those that men have always practiced as far back as the memories of their forefathers go, and even more so if, in place of the practices abolished, one substitutes from outside those of another country. So, never make invidious comparisons between the practices of these peoples and European practices; but rather adapt quickly to theirs.⁹

It might be objected that other directives in the instruction are contrary to the Jesuit policy, such as the recommendations to refuse all gifts¹⁰; to avoid all entanglements with kings, magistrates and powerful men¹¹; and to decline all official positions¹². Yet we find missionaries of Propaganda, like the Jesuits, eventually doing all these things which were apparently unavoidable in the Chinese context, at least at the court.

What is noticeable as an effect, or perhaps cause, of the Rites Controversy, is an abandonment by the Congregation of its central tenet of accommodation. Canon Law was rigidly enforced in the missions of the Far East. Attempts to establish a Chinese liturgy were frustrated¹³; and the Chinese clergy were increasingly 'Europeanized' in their training and outlook.¹⁴ One possible source for this change of attitude is to be found in the Monita ad Missionarios de Propaganda Fide of 1669, in Ch. III, 'On the

⁹ Translated from E. Duperray, Ambassadeurs de Dieu à la Chine, Tournai-Paris, 1956, p.48.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.47.

¹¹ Ibid., p.47.

¹² Ibid., p.48.

¹³ See F. Bontinck, La Lutte autour de la Liturgie Chinoise, esp. Chs. III, VI, VII, VIII.

¹⁴ Ibid., esp. Chs. X and XI.

Right Use of Human Means'. Bishops Pallu and Lambert de la Motte¹⁵ adopt a rigid puritanical approach to the question, rejecting not only 'purely human means' and the 'heresy' of engaging in any form of commercial transactions¹⁶, but the 'corrupting' influence of sciences and the arts¹⁷. Accommodation was hardly possible on these terms, at least in the form in which it had been developed by the Jesuits of the China mission. This rejection of 'human means' together with the centralizing tendencies of the Roman Congregations had by the end of the 17th century betrayed the vision of a Chinese Church embodied in the 1659 Instruction.

The fact that the first Vicars Apostolic were members of the M.E.P. (Missions Etrangères de Paris) was one link between China and the French religious situation. Another was the establishment of the French Jesuit Mission. The full story of the beginnings of the French mission and the conflict between French and 'Portuguese' missions, is yet to be told.¹⁸ The very bulk of the correspondence on this subject in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus¹⁹ indicates how large the issue loomed in the eyes of the members of the mission. It created disagreement at a time when unity was particularly important, and at one point the

¹⁵ I am assuming that they are the authors of the Monita. They are the cosignatories of the Introductory Letter to Pope Clement IX and of the Introduction.

¹⁶ Monita ad Missionarios S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide. 4th ed., Rome, 1886, p.32. I have assumed that this edition does not differ substantially from the original 17th century edition. It is, unfortunately, the earliest I have available for reference.

¹⁷ Ibid., cap.III, art.VI, 'De Ceteris Humanis Mediis', p.43.

¹⁸ Father John Witek S.J. of Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., is currently engaged on a study of this subject. I am indebted to him for many interesting discussions in the congenial atmosphere of the Jesuit Archives in Rome in mid 1970.

¹⁹ Especially Jap. Sin. 132 and 133 (entitled 'PP. Galli et Lusitani in Sinis. Controversiae 1684-1734'); the Epistolae Sinarum series for the appropriate years i.e. Jap. Sin. 164-178 (covering 1687-1720); and Jap. Sin. 199, I, ff.201-221.

General had to write to admonish them that while they were bickering amongst themselves, in Rome the very fate of the mission was being decided.²⁰ The French Jesuits brought to the mission a peculiarly French approach, a French intellectual formation, a sense of the superiority of all things French²¹, even French cuisine²². Reaction from the Jesuits of other nationalities was only to be expected. Some of the Jesuits of the old mission resented the French Jesuits concentrating on the intellectual apostolate instead of manning the mission stations in the provinces²³,

²⁰ In a circular letter dated 1700 in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.428-9, the General, Thyrsus Gonzalez, asks for authenticated testimony from the mission on the Rites issue, and concludes: 'Yet while the house is burning, our Fathers in China are still deep asleep, and continue to sleep, occupied with domestic dissension and national divisions which are very well known now all over Europe' (f.429v).

²¹ For example, Pierre Jartoux S.J. boasts in a letter to the Jesuit General, 20 August 1704 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.123v) that, within six years, French missionaries had made so much progress in the language and letters of China that they are 'far superior in virtue, zeal, knowledge and experience of things Chinese' to all other missionaries. See also the note of racial superiority in a letter of de Chavagnac, 30 December 1701: 'Les Chinois ne sont pas capables d'ecouter en un mois, ce qu'un Francois est capable de leur dire en une heure' (Lettres Edifiantes, III, 1703, p.156).

²² One of J. F. Foucquet's Notebooks in Rome: BAV, Borgia Cinese 377, has a considerable section devoted to recipes (ff.7-48). And one of the works in the Peking Library of the French Jesuits was Le Nouveau Cuisinier royal et bourgeois, ou cuisinier moderne. Qui apprend a ordonner toute sorte de Repas en gras et maigre ... Par M. Massialot ... augmentée de nouveaux Ragouts par le Sieur Vincent de la Chapelle, Paris, 1739 (Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Pe-t'ang, No.481, col.130).

²³ See, for example, a letter of the Visitor, Gozani, to the General, Peking, 21 November 1712, in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, f.285: 'A PP. Gallis parum sperare possumus, quamdiu separati a V. Prov. a vivunt in suis domibus separatis, in quibus ut plurimum otiantur a vineae cultum, fallentes tempus cum libris sinicis, et multum inter se visitationibus, dum aliis sociis gemunt sub pondere diei et aestus in cultura animarum'. The letter provides its own best refutation when it lists four French Jesuits working in the missions of the Vice-Province as well as those working in missions belonging exclusively to the French.

a complaint that Matteo Ricci would hardly have approved. Until the French mission was formally separated from the Vice-Province of China in November 1700, there was constant conflict over their relations with the superiors of the mission in Macao and the interior. Above all, their arrival in China in French ships, avoiding Portuguese ports, represented an affront to the padroado which had been the lifeline of the mission for so long.

The reasons for the establishment of the French mission are partly to be sought in the general French expansionism of the period. Colbert and his successor, Louvois, had seen possible commercial advantages in having French missionaries at the courts of Siam and China; Couplet's visit to Paris had stimulated Louis XIV and the French Jesuits to revive the project; and Louis' Jesuit confessor, Père de la Chaise, had helped with the arrangements. The appointment of the six men chosen - Fontaney, Tachard, Gerbillon, Le Comte, Vissdelou and Bouvet - as 'mathematicians of the King' was not just a subterfuge to avoid difficulties over the padroado. They were all experienced teachers of science and mathematics in the French Jesuit colleges and their subsequent correspondence with the French Academy of Science fully justified their title. There seems no question, however, that they regarded themselves as primarily missionaries²⁴, and an examination of the correspondence of Ferdinand Verbiest reveals that they did not set out completely uninvited.

Towards the end of his life Verbiest who, though no longer Vice-Provincial, was still the most important man on the mission, seems to have been obsessed with the problem of staffing an expanding mission. He had long been a staunch defender of the Portuguese padroado²⁵ and as late

²⁴ See the letter of Fontaney to Père de la Chaise, 15 February 1703, in Lettres Edifiantes, VII, 1707, esp. pp.77-78.

²⁵ See, for example, Nos. XIX and XXVI in Josson and Willaert's Correspondance de Ferdinand Verbiest: Verbiest to Couplet, Peking, 20 August 1670, pp.166-174; and Verbiest to Sebastien d'Almeida, 7 January 1678, pp. 196-207.

as September 1678 wrote to King Alfonso VI of Portugal in fulsome praise of the support of Portugal for the Jesuits of China.²⁶ But a circular letter which he addressed to the Jesuits of Europe in August 1678 indicates an increasing concern about the future of the mission.²⁷ Learned men, especially trained mathematicians, were urgently required.²⁸ His letters to the new General, a fellow Belgian, Charles de Noyelle (General 1682-6), concentrated on the need for new blood and although he still professed a special concern for the Portuguese²⁹, he welcomed the arrival of the French 'mathématiciens du roi'. In reply to a letter from Père de la Chaise introducing the six French Jesuits³⁰, he promised to help in any way possible, and described his intervention with the Emperor to get permission for the five³¹ who arrived in Ning-po on 24 July 1687 to proceed to the court.³² Both this letter and the accompanying letter to the General³³ were marked 'personal'³⁴ because, as he notes, 'for certain reasons it is absolutely necessary to keep it secret'³⁵. The 'certain reasons' are clearly the problems

²⁶ Correspondance, No. XXXII, Peking, 7 September 1678, pp. 256-266.

²⁷ Correspondance, No. XXX, Peking, 15 August 1678, pp. 230-253.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 237, 241-2, 245.

²⁹ See, for example, his boast to Noyelle of having undermined the Dutch mission for which the Jesuits acted as interpreters, in favour of the Macao connection (Correspondance, No. LXXII, Peking, 21 September 1686).

³⁰ Paris, 26 February, 1685, in Correspondance, No. LX, pp.482-6 cf. letter of de la Chaise to the Jesuit General on the same subject in Rome: ASJ, Gal. 72, ff.141-2, dated Paris, 14 March 1685. (I am indebted to Dr. A. Lynn Martin for drawing my attention to this letter)

³¹ Tachard had been detained in Siam.

³² Correspondance. No. LXXV, Peking, 1 October 1687, pp. 537-541.

³³ Correspondance, No. LXXVI, pp.541-4.

³⁴ Soli i.e. not to be opened by a secretary but for the eye of the addressee only.

³⁵ Correspondance, p.540.

connected with the padroado. In the last resort, his loyalty was to what he saw as the interests of the mission rather than to Portugal.³⁶

Verbiest died ten days before the French group arrived in Peking (7 February 1688) but the wisdom of his support was soon obvious. The newcomers quickly made their mark. Jean-Francois Gerbillon was chosen, a few months after his arrival in Peking, to accompany Father Thomas Pereira to Siberia where they acted as interpreters and negotiators in the discussions with the Russians which resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Nerchinsk.³⁷ On his return, he and Joachim Bouvet began teaching geometry and philosophy to the Emperor, whom they saw twice daily for two hours at a time.³⁸ The other three Frenchmen were dispersed to different provinces, but after some four years Jean de Fontaney and Claude de Visdelou were recalled to Peking, where in 1693 they won fresh favour by a gift of quinine which cured K'ang-hsi's fever.

Their services were at least partly responsible³⁹ for

³⁶ Or to China, according to Nigel Cameron, Barbarians and Mandarins, New York, 1970, p.262. Cameron, following Nikolai Spathary's account of his embassy to China, accuses Verbiest of 'perfidy' and betrayal of China's interests. A close examination of Spathary's narrative, however, in J. F. Baddeley, Russia, Mongolia, China, II London, 1919, reveals a more complex picture. Verbiest on Spathary's account, which is hardly disinterested, informed the Russian that K'ang'hsi was not prepared to go to war over the border question but was solely concerned with control over the nomadic populations of the border area. This could be interpreted as betrayal, but it could also be interpreted as an attempt (successful as it proved) at peacemaking. And it is not at all certain that this attempt to persuade the Russians to surrender the tribal chief 'Gantimur' was not inspired by K'ang-hsi himself.

³⁷ See J. Sebes, The Jesuits and the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689), Rome 1961.

³⁸ Pfister, Notices, pp.434, 445-6.

³⁹ French accounts such as Le Gobien's Histoire de l'Edit de l'Empereur de la Chine, en faveur de la Religion Chrestienne, Paris, 1698, tend to give all the credit to the French missionaries. Some credit must, however, be given to the Portuguese Thomas Pereira and the Belgian Antoine Thomas (see Pfister, Notices, pp.382, 406, 428, 446).

two important marks of favour from the Emperor. In 1692 K'ang-hsi issued an edict of toleration of Christianity⁴⁰ and in 1693 granted the French mission permission to build a house within the walls of the Forbidden City. It must have seemed in early 1693, that the mission was at last reaping the rewards of a century of effort, and that Christianity was about to become a respectable native religion. It was precisely at this juncture that the Rites Controversy flared up once more.

⁴⁰ For the Chinese text of this edict, see T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, III. pp.1789-91; and for the text with French and Latin translations, see Couvreur, Choix de Documents, 3rd ed., Ho-kien-fou, 1901, pp.108-109. Fu Lo-shu translates the edict and an earlier speech of the Emperor in favour of Christianity on pp.105-106 of her Documentary Chronicle. The versions of Le Comte and Le Gobien are given in Etiemble, Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.41-45. Ezra Pound paraphrases the decree in a characteristically eccentric version in Canto LX of his Cantos, London, 1954, p.344; one may allow some latitude for poetic license, as in his 'negotiations with the O Rosians' (the Chinese text has A-lo-su), and his '17 grandees' in place of the sixteen who signed it; but 'Fourtères' for 'Fontaney' and 'Bournat' for 'Bouvet' are less excusable, and he omits the key clause which permits not only the missionaries but all Christians free practice of their religion.

I. CHING T'IEN - ADORE HEAVEN?

On 26 March 1693, Mgr. Charles Maigrot M.E.P., Vicar Apostolic of Fukien⁴¹, issued an Instruction to all the missionaries of his Vicariate, ordering them 'until the Holy See shall decide otherwise'⁴² to observe the following seven provisions. 1. To use t'ien-chu for 'God' and in no circumstances t'ien or shang-ti. 2. Not to use tablets (tabellae) in churches with the characters t'ien and shang-ti, and especially ching t'ien, 'to adore Heaven',⁴³ since 'we are of the opinion that these tablets, and especially those which contain the two words ching t'ien cannot be excused of idolatry; and even if the matter is not so certain as it appears, the mere suspicion of danger

⁴¹ Maigrot had been in China since 1685 and had been Vicar Apostolic of Fukien since 1687 (see Mensaert, 'L'Etablissement de la Hierarchie Catholique..', pp. 379 and 381).

⁴² '...Donec aliter ab Apostolica Sede decretum fuerit'. I cite the text of the Magnum Bullarium Romanum, X, Rome, 1735 (1965 photographic reprint), pp.129-130. A French text, after the Decrét de Nostre S.P. le Pape Clément XI sur la grande affaire de la Chine, 1709, is given in Etienne, Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.103-106.

⁴³ The Latin has 'coelum colite' which can mean 'cultivate' or 'honour' as well as 'worship'. However, it would appear from the context and the subsequent debate that Maigrot intended by this translation a reference to 'cultus' or religious worship. The French versions of the decree invariably translate ching t'ien as 'adorez le Ciel' (v. Etienne, Les Jésuites en Chine, p.103). As for the Chinese, ching t'ien, Matthew's Chinese English Dictionary (1138.8) gives 'worship Heaven', but the range of meanings for the term ching in other contexts covers all forms of respect. One important point of which Maigrot may or may not have been aware (the Foochow Christians certainly were, v. Rome: ASJ, Jap.Sin.167, f.269v) was that the original ching t'ien inscription had been given to the Jesuits of Peking by the Emperor himself, and that those in provincial churches were copies of this original. It was this that led Beauvollier in his Eclaircissements sur les controverses de la Chine to interpret it as 'signifying that the Emperor wishes the Christians left in peace because they revere that which is greatest in Heaven'. Etienne, who includes this passage in his collection, quite unjustifiably describes it as 'une singulière audace en traduisant King t'ien: "laissez les chrétiens en paix"' (Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.28 and 30). The point Beauvollier makes, and quite explicitly, is one about its context and significance, not a mere point of translation.

of evangelical workers placing the abomination of desolation in the holy place, ought turn us away from the use of the inscriptions'. 3. The decisions of Pope Alexander VII were given in response to an untrue representation of the facts and hence cannot be invoked to permit the cult of Confucius and the ancestors. 4. Christians are strictly forbidden to perform or even be present at the semi-annual solemn sacrifices to Confucius and the ancestors which 'we declare to be imbued with superstition'. 5. 'We praise most highly those missionaries who ... have had the zeal to abolish the usage of tablets exposed in private houses in honour of the dead, and we exhort them to continue in future to follow the same practice'. If tablets must be retained, such terms as 'Xin chu', 'xin goei' and 'ling goei'⁴⁴ must be removed, and a declaration in due form posted nearby 'in large characters' asserting the Christian belief about the dead and filial piety towards them.

These provisions taken in themselves, and neglecting the tone and cumulative effect, were not radical divergences from the developed Jesuit practice. In the last two provisions, however, Maigrot launched a direct attack on the whole Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. On the basis of six years experience in China, and what later proved to be a very slight acquaintance with the language, he declared 'false, temerarious and scandalous', 'leading the simple into error and opening the way to superstition', the following propositions, some of which were pillars of the Jesuit interpretation:

- that the philosophy that the Chinese profess, if properly understood, has nothing in it contrary to the Christian law;
- that by the term t'ai-chi the wisest of the ancients wished to define a God who was the First Cause of all things;
- that the cult which Confucius rendered to spirits was civil rather than religious;

⁴⁴ Presumably the terms ching chu, ching kuei and ling kuei, referring to the 'spirits'.

-that the book which the Chinese call the I Ching is a summary of an excellent system of physics and morality.⁴⁵

These and 'other similar propositions' were not to be published by word or writing in his Vicariate. And, as his seventh and final prohibition, Maigrot issued a special warning against the 'atheism' and 'superstition' in the Chinese books, 'in the text as much as in their commentaries'.

It is not surprising that these instructions immediately divided the mission. Some of the Vicars-Apostolic approved them for their own vicariates, others opposed⁴⁶ or tried to remain neutral⁴⁷; and the religious superiors, too, were divided⁴⁸. Maigrot dispatched Nicholas Charmot M.E.P. to Rome, and as the affair proceeded other parties to the dispute sent their

⁴⁵ I know of no missionaries of this period who held such high views of the I Ching. Couplet in the Proemialis Declaratio to Confucius Sinarum Philosophus refers to it as the source (fontes) of the errors of the moderns (p.xxxviii). On the other hand, shortly after, Bouvet was to develop his 'figurist' views largely based on the I Ching. Perhaps as early as this, he or one of his French mathematician confreres had already begun to investigate the work.

⁴⁶ See Rosso, Apostolic Legations, pp.132-133.

⁴⁷ See the Pastoral Letter of Alvaro Benavente, Vicar Apostolic of Kiangsi, 3 December 1703 (copy in the Foucquet Papers in Rome: BAV, Borgia Cinse 376). This amounted to an exhortation to avoid superstitious practices while awaiting the decision of the Holy See.

⁴⁸ In Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.177-178, there is a Declaration dated 31 October 1701, signed by Michael Rubio O.S.A. and Thomas Hortiz O.S.A. on behalf of the Augustinians, declaring themselves supporters of the Jesuits. Jaime Tarin, the Franciscan Superior, describes the Franciscan position as one of neutrality ('en medio los Frayles de S.Fr.^{CO}') but admits that the general practice of the Franciscans was that of the Jesuits, unlike the Friars of St. Dominic (letter to Carlo Turcotti S.J., Canton, 3 December 1701, in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.208-209). In 1702, however, three Franciscans expressed their strong objections to Maigrot's decree (see authenticated copies of the testimony of Miguel Fernandez, Martín Alemán and Francisco de Palencia, in Rome: ASJ. Jap. Sin. 168, ff.361-364).

representatives, the Jesuits finally sending Francois Noël and Gaspard Castner in 1702.⁴⁹ The debate over the specific provisions of Maigrot's Mandatum soon became enmeshed with others over the extent of the jurisdiction of Maigrot and the Vicars Apostolic; over Maigrot's denial of faculties to administer the sacraments to those who opposed him⁵⁰; over charges of high-handedness and arrogance laid against Maigrot himself, and of encouraging physical violence to Maigrot laid against the Jesuits⁵¹. All these issues we must, reluctantly, put aside; reluctantly, because they greatly aggravated the controversy and made agreement on the main issues less and less likely.

In Rome in 1697, the Consultors and Cardinals of the Holy Office began to investigate Maigrot's claims, and were

⁴⁹ This seems to have been a response to a letter of the Jesuit General, Thyrsus Gonzalez, entitled 'Informatio ad PP. Missionarios Sinicos pro maximis controversiis et litigiis quae nunc Romae, et in tota Europa maxime turbant et inquietant Societatem' (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.428-429). 'I wish you would realize at last that these matters are not Chinese and Asian affairs or disputes, but European and Roman. Our adversaries have well understood this, and have devoted all their strength and efforts towards the Pope and the Roman authorities' (f.429r). In striking contrast is a letter of the French Superior, de Fontaney, of the same year. He had travelled to Europe on mission business but did not even bother to visit Rome. Writing from Paris on 20 September 1700, he says he thinks it useless to go to Rome merely to repeat the same arguments as before. 'It is as impossible', he writes, 'to forbid the Chinese the cult of the ancestors and of Confucius, as to forbid them to practice the third commandment to honour their fathers and mothers' (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, f.300v).

⁵⁰ See, for example, an exchange of letters between Maigrot and G. P. Gozani S.J. in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.267-268.

⁵¹ See Gozani's letter of 30 November 1700, admitting that the Christians of Foochow had been insubordinate, but denying that the Jesuits had been in any way responsible (in J. P. Lallement, Réponse aux Nouveaux Ecrits de Messieurs Etrangères contre les Jésuites, Paris, 1702, pp.37ff.). A translation of some of the complaints of the Chinese Christians against Maigrot is to be found in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.269v-272r.

later assisted by the Vicar Apostolic of Hukwang, Giovanni Francisco Nicolai a Leonessa, who drew up a report on the facts of the case.⁵² Leonessa's account of Chinese practices was on the whole accurate but he was faced with the necessity of providing translations and equivalents for the Roman theologians which involved committing himself for or against the Jesuits. He seems to have chosen, in the end, the latter course. T'ien means 'the material and visible Heaven or at most a certain power belonging to Heaven'.⁵³ Confucius is commonly called a 'saint' (sheng) not a 'master'.⁵⁴ The building dedicated to him in each city is called a miao which is a 'chapel' rather than a 'school' or 'hall'.⁵⁵ The Chinese deny the existence of spirits, since they are atheists and rationalists, but the dead are regarded as continuing to exist in some way.⁵⁶

The Commission was divided⁵⁷ but, with the election of a new Pope, Clement XI, finally reached agreement.⁵⁸ A papal legate should be sent to China to inquire into some of the matters and to settle the question. Charles Maillard de Tournon was chosen, consecrated Patriarch of Antioch, and on 4 July 1702, he set out for the East. More than two years after his departure, in November 1704⁵⁹ Clement XI issued the decree, Cur Deus Optimus, condemning

⁵² See Magnum Bullarium Romanum, X, pp. 130-136

⁵³ Magnum Bullarium Romanum, X, p.131.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.132.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.132.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.134. Leonessa, like Navarrete and Maigrot, does not seem to have been concerned with the logical incompatibilities of atheism and idolatry, materialism and praying to spirits.

⁵⁷ See Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.135.

⁵⁸ See Rosso, Apostolic Legations, pp.149, 154.

⁵⁹ Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.154, gives 20 November 1704, but the Magnum Bullarium Romanum, X, p.138, gives 5 November 1704.

the Chinese Rites; but withheld publication in Europe, presumably to allow de Tournon greater freedom of action. The decree, following the Responsa of the Commission⁶⁰, confirmed Maigrot's instructions with a few interpretative comments which, following Leonessa, identified the Confucian 'building' as a 'temple', and denied that the rites could be described as 'civil and political' rather than 'religious'.⁶¹ The vital last two articles, however, were left to be settled by de Tournon on the spot.

It was during the course of the deliberations of the papal commission in Rome, and of the theologians of the Sorbonne in 1700, that Europe was flooded with writings for and against the Jesuit position. Most of these were republications, or first publications in the case of material hitherto in manuscript, rehearsing all the old arguments, attacking the integrity and questioning the motives and behaviour of all parties to the dispute. Very few throw any new light on the subject, but are content to make points of logic, such as Jean Dez's argument that the Chinese cannot be, as Maigrot claims, simultaneously atheists and idolaters⁶²; or to score personal points by contrasting Maigrot's behaviour with his words⁶³, or citing Dominican against Dominican⁶⁴. Most conspicuous is the absence of testimony from the Chinese themselves; the whole debate consisted of Europeans telling the Chinese what they really believe.

The Jesuits in Peking when they, at last, realised the seriousness of the situation, conceived a master

⁶⁰ For the Responsa and the Decree, see Magnum Bullarium Romanum, X, pp.136-8.

⁶¹ Magnum Bullarium Romanum, X, p.137.

⁶² Ad virum nobilem de cultu Confucii philosophi, et progenitorum apud Sinas, Dillingen, 1700, esp. p.24.

⁶³ e.g. (Lallement), Réponse aux Nouveaux Ecrits, pp.1-15 (second pagination).

⁶⁴ e.g. Apologia pro Decreto S.D.N. Alexandri VII ... ex Patrum Dominicanorum et Franciscanorum scriptis concinnata, Louvain, 1700.

stroke. Why not get the Emperor himself to issue an authoritative statement on the meaning of the Rites? They did not, at the time, see the corresponding danger that the Pope should declare the Emperor to be wrong with very embarrassing results for the mission.

The declaration of K'ang-hsi⁶⁵ of 30 November 1700 fulfilled all their expectations. He approved of their

⁶⁵ I cite the translation from the original Manchu by George Kennedy, given by Rosso in his Apostolic Legations, pp. 138-143. I have also examined the very rare xylographically printed Brevis Relatio eorum quae spectant as Declarationem Sinarum Imperatoris Kam Hi circa Coeli, Cumfucii, et Avorum Cultum datam anno 1700..., Peking, 1701. Unfortunately, I did not have an opportunity to compare the Latin 'versio' of the Declaration in the Brevis Relatio with Kennedy's translation of the Manchu text. Rosso describes it as 'remarkably free' and implies that the Jesuits engaged in deliberate deceit to 'force their opponents to rely exclusively on a Latin version and a Chinese press release' (pp.138, 143). His arguments are not very convincing. The 'important passage' he alleges they suppressed is not part of the Declaration proper but, according to Rosso himself, a statement of the circumstances of presentation of the text to the Emperor. Rosso expresses surprise that 'the Fathers let a Manchu heathen compose a consequential religious memorial from a mere Chinese précis' (p.142) as the Jesuits allege in the Brevis Relatio (4b) and even more, that they should choose 'to submit a petition on typically Chinese usages in Manchu, the language of a few alien conquerors, to an Emperor who knew Chinese fairly well' (p.143). I find these remarks totally unjustified. The petition was presented by a Manchu official in the normal language of the inner court on a matter that primarily concerned the inner court to which the Jesuits belonged. Most of the Jesuits knew Manchu which they apparently used in familiar intercourse with the Emperor (v. Pfister, Notices, p.445). There is no evidence whatsoever that the 'alleged Manchu original' is not in fact the text presented to the Emperor and it would have been very dangerous indeed for them to print in Peking a falsified Manchu text. Rosso by arguing that the 'original' was the Chinese précis rather than the text actually presented to the Emperor is merely playing with the word 'original', and attempting to justify Maigrot's quibbles about divergences between the Jesuits' Latin version and the official Chinese version published in the Peking Gazette (see Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.145, n.46). As far as substance is concerned, there are no significant variations between the Chinese and Manchu versions (cf. Rosso, Apostolic Legations, pp.138-143 with pp.144-145). The Brevis Relatio was translated into English and published in London in 1703 as A Short Account of the Declaration given by the Chinese Emperour Kam Hi, in the year 1700.

statements that Confucius was honoured as a teacher; that 'performance of the ceremony of sacrifice to the dead is a means of showing sincere affection for members of the family and thankful devotion to ancestors of the clan'; that the tablets of deceased ancestors were honoured as a remembrance of the dead rather than as the actual residence of their souls; and that t'ien and shang-ti are not identified with the physical sky but as 'the ruler and lord of heaven, earth and all things', and that ching t'ien in the inscription bestowed on the Jesuit church meant 'reverence Heaven' in this sense.

As we have seen, this Declaration did not prove of sufficient weight in Rome to swing the balance in favour of the Jesuits. And the fact that it failed to do so is highly significant. Contemporary and modern opponents of the Jesuit position on the Rites have argued that the Emperor was interfering in a strictly theological matter in which, as Father Rosso puts it, he 'had usurped theological competence'⁶⁶. But neither K'ang-hsi's comments, nor the Jesuits' memorial (in Manchu and Chinese versions), raise theological issues. They were solely concerned with questions of fact - what did the Chinese, or a peculiarly authoritative Chinese source, really believe about these ceremonies? It has been argued that the Emperor was under Jesuit influence, and that as an alien, he was not qualified to speak on these matters.⁶⁷ Both comments are incompatible with what we know of the character and competence of K'ang-hsi. He was deeply interested in and patronised classical Chinese studies⁶⁸, was concerned with establishing norms for public morality⁶⁹, and was most unlikely to promulgate an interpretation of traditional ceremonies in a sense that he did not believe to be

⁶⁶ Apostolic Legations, p.146.

⁶⁷ Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.146.

⁶⁸ See Fang Chao-ying's biography of K'ang-hsi in Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p.329 (under Hsüan-yeh).

⁶⁹ As in the 'Sacred Edict' (shêng-yü) promulgated in 1670.

orthodox. And even if K'ang-hsi's testimony could be dismissed in this way, what of the other testimony gathered by the Jesuits and sent to Europe between 1701 and 1704?⁷⁰

It is not my task here to discuss, still less to defend, the substance of the Jesuit assessment of Chinese ritual practices. Some remarks about their method of approach are, however, necessary. As presented in the Brevis Relatio it consists of an examination of Chinese practices in addition to testimony from Chinese scholars. In section 6 of the document they present a detailed description of the temples of Heaven and Earth in Peking and the sacrifices performed in them, that squares with other accounts.⁷¹ Lest it be argued that this was an exclusively

⁷⁰ Most of this, together with the Declaration of K'ang-hsi, was published in the Brevis Relatio of 1701. The copy I have seen in the Jesuit Archives in Rome (Jap. Sin. I.206) contains the autograph signatures of Antoine Thomas, Gerbillon, Bouvet and Grimaldi, authenticating the testimony of the various Chinese authorities cited. Paul Pelliot has identified several of the ten informants cited (in 'La Brevis Relatio', T'oung Pao, n.s. XXIII, 1924, pp.355-372) and three of these, Mingju, Wang Hsi and Han T'an rate biographies in Hummel, Eminent Chinese (pp.577, 819, 275). Other documents which were sent at the time include a letter of five Peking Christians (Rome: ASJ, Jap, Sin. 168, ff.44-45) and the testimony of Joseph Wang (Jap. Sin. 167, f.5). Several Chinese works by Chinese Christians dealing with the rites question now in the Vatican Library appear to date from this period. Most of them seem to have come from the library of Leonessa since they are commented on by Carlo Castorano in his Parva Elucubratio super quosdam Libros Sinenses ab lll^{mo} et R.^{mo} D. Archiepiscopo Myrensi de Nicolais relicto (Rome: BAV. Borgia Latino 538). They include three works by Paul Yen of Fukien, the Li-shih tiao-wen (Rome: BAV, Borgia Cinese 316 (10)), the Ti t'ien k'ao (Borgia Cinese 316 (9), ff. 1-14) and the Miao-tz'u k'ao (Borgia Cinese 316 (9) ff.15-18); and the anonymous works, the Ts'un p'o p'ien (Borgia Cinese 316 (6) a), the Yuan li lun (Borgia Cinese 316 (6)b) and the Chi-tsu yuan-i (Borgia Cinese 316 (ii)). For comments see Parva Elucubratio, pp.411-414.

⁷¹ For a description of the temple, see A. Favier, Peking, Lille, 1902, pp.288-290. On the ceremonies see F. Farjenel, 'Le Culte Imperial en Chine', Journal Asiatique, ser.X, t.VIII, 1906, pp.491-516; and E. T. Williams, 'The State Religion of China during the Manchu Dynasty', Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, XLIV, 1913, pp.11-45.

upper-class approach, they added a section on the 'notion of God in popular tradition' which draws on Chinese proverbs and Chinese customs. Some of this evidence was rather two-edged and, as they themselves admitted⁷², attested to superstitious and idolatrous practices. The main thrust of their argument was, nevertheless, clear. The question of Chinese Rites was a question of fact and could only be resolved by long and patient investigation on the spot.

Maigrot's attitude, as that of many of the Roman theologians, was different. His answer to the Jesuit 'libels' and 'calumnies' in the Brevis Relatio was to stand on his dignity and authority as a bishop. The Jesuits accuse him of never having been at the court and of having no contacts with officials and scholars. He positively rejoices in this charge. 'It is true, thanks be to God, that I have never frequented the court', that 'famous Babylon, and to use the words of Fathers of the Society⁷³, centre of error, asylum of atheism and fortress of idolatry'.⁷⁴ Some Chinese Christians of Foochow⁷⁵ have accused him of mistakes in the Chinese of official documents he signed. This may be so, he says, but he always leaves this sort of thing to his servants.⁷⁶ And he continues:

⁷² Brevis Relatio, 50a.

⁷³ In a later letter he identifies his sources as Visselou and Le Gobien (Maigrot to Gerbillon, Foochow, 26 March 1705, in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.218r-v). Visselou is credible in view of his adherence to Maigrot's views during de Tournon's visit, but Le Gobien writes very differently in his Histoire de l'Edit, and, in any case, was never in China.

⁷⁴ Letter to Antoine Thomas, Foochow, 22 December 1703, in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.39v.

⁷⁵ Presumably a reference to the depositions of the 'Master of the Imperial School, Li-ye-suen, and his disciple Hoam-cai-kiao' cited in the 'Libellus supplex adversus Ill.^{mum} Dñm Conon.^{sem} a Christianis porrigendus' (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.269v-272v).

⁷⁶ Maigrot to Gerbillon, Foochow, 26 March 1705, in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.218r-v. A significant admission.

But, in any case, I concede your condemnation of my ignorance, and, thanks to God, I do not pride myself on being an expert in anything. But what I do make much of, my reverend father, is, ignorant though I be, to show that the Jesuits uphold idolatry in China, and what is even more deplorable, that they deceive the church in upholding it by false oaths, and false statements which do not appear to me to excuse them from bad faith ... This, my reverend father, is what the Jesuits have to answer and what is important: that I am ignorant, I admit, but that does not change the religion of China, and my ignorance does not justify the Jesuits in the bad faith which appears in their conduct.⁷⁷

No wonder the Jesuits were annoyed at this refusal on the part of Maigrot to discuss the Chinese Rites question on the level of fact.⁷⁸ Maigrot's ominous reference in the same letter to the imminent arrival of Maillard de Tournon did not augur well for the level of discussion to come.

⁷⁷ Maigrot to Gerbillon, 26 March 1705, Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.218v.

⁷⁸ It was not only the Jesuits with whom Maigrot refused to discuss the issue. Alvaro Benavente O.S.A., the Vicar Apostolic of Kiangsi, complained in a letter to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide on 27 November 1700, that Maigrot claimed to have evidence supporting his decree but refused to divulge it to the Franciscans and Augustinians. 'If', he asks, 'the Illustrious Bishop of Conon is convinced that the opinion of the Society (of Jesus) is false, why does he not communicate his writings to us so that we too may be convinced and subscribe to his views? Whether the cult is civil or religious, depends on the understanding of the Chinese books and the common consent of the Chinese. Why, then, are writings and apologies sent to Rome where such evidence is completely lacking? And, since this is so, why are they denied to us in China where we can judge the facts and say, this is the way things are, or this is not the way they are'. (I quote from p.6 of the printed version of this letter in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.366-369. The letter was also included in (Lallement), Réponse aux Ecrits, pp.18-38). Finally, in May, he received a copy of Maigrot's 92 propositions from the Bishop of Rosalie (Artus de Lionne) and found that except in three or four cases no proof was offered beyond a bland 'it is evident'.

Whatever Maigrot's knowledge of Chinese, he displayed a consistent hostility to Chinese culture that was hardly conducive to a serious examination of the questions at issue. On his return to Europe he was accepted as a 'China expert' and judging from one account at least, made a very negative contribution to the European assessment of China. Lelong, writing to Leibniz in September 1708, described his interviews with Maigrot as follows:

M. (the Bishop) of Conon arrived in France six months ago. He has just received a new brief from the Pope ordering him to go to Rome. I have had the honour of entertaining him several times. He informed me, à propos of the little book of P. Malebranche⁷⁹, that the Chinese are not capable of much concentration, that abstract matters are not at all within their grasp, that they have almost no idea of metaphysical truths. I believe that there is nothing much to be said of their sciences; all their erudition is reduced, even amongst the litterati, to making from time to time some little compositions of two or three pages⁸⁰

So much for over two thousand years of Chinese philosophy, for the massive compilations of Ch'ing scholars and their concern with systems of thought, exegesis and commentary. If we may speak of legitimate and illegitimate prejudices in the case of Chinese rites, there is little doubt in which class we must place Maigrot's contributions to the debate.

⁷⁹ A reference to Malebranche's Entretien d'un Philosophe Chretien et d'un Philosophe Chinois, Paris, 1708.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Oeuvres Complètes de Malebranche, ed. A. Robinet, t.xv, Paris, 1958, p.ix, n.5.

II. LOUIS LE COMTE vs. THE SORBONNE

Perhaps the best illustration of the extent to which the debate about Chinese Rites was a vicarious debate about European issues is the condemnation by the Sorbonne in August 1700 of propositions drawn from the work of the returned missionary, Louis Le Comte S.J. Not that the issues were not real ones, or unconnected with the Jesuit experience in China. Voltaire noted in Le Siècle de Louis XIV that 'the Christian brains' of the assembled Sorbonne theologians were 'shaken' by the Jesuits' praise of the Chinese.⁸¹ And, in all truth, this was so. The Jesuits do not seem to have seen the potential effect of their presentation of China on the European debate about revealed religion. What the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism was doing was nothing less than questioning the uniqueness of the Judaeo-Christian revelation.

This crucial debate, which was to be exploited to great effect by enemies of the Jesuits and the Church in the eighteenth century, was sparked off by the publication of Le Comte's Nouveaux Memoires sur l'Etat Present de la Chine, in 1696.⁸² Le Comte had had very limited experience in China⁸³ and it is doubtful whether he knew

⁸¹ '(L'abbé Boileau) déclama violemment contre les jésuites et les Chinois, et commença par dire, que "l'eloge de ces peuples avait ébranlé son cerveau chrétien". Les autres cerveaux de l'assemblée furent ébranlés aussi.' (Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire, Paris, 1878, t.15, p.79 - ch.XXXIX of Le Siècle de Louis XIV.)

⁸² I have used the Amsterdam, 1698 edition. The first edition appeared in Paris in 1696, and both this and the Amsterdam edition were in two volumes. Le Gobien's Histoire de l'Edit... was sometimes published as a third volume. There is also an English edition entitled Memoirs and Observations ... made in a late Journey through the Empire of China, London, 1698.

⁸³ See Pfister, Notices, pp.440-441. Jean-Francois Foucquet, cited by Nicéron in his ms. 'Réponse aux Questions regardant le Bibliothèque Historique et Critique des Geographes et des Voyageurs' (Paris: BN, Fr.25670, p.14) accurately describes Le Comte's missionary experience: 'Father Le Comte spent no more than four or five years in China in continual travels and extreme difficulties caused by the Portuguese'.

Chinese.⁸⁴ Jean-Francois Foucquet was probably correct in describing the Nouveaux Memoires as based on second-hand material combined with limited personal observation, and erroneous in many details.⁸⁵ But he was also correct in calling them 'si poliment et si spirituellement ecrits'. Despite, or perhaps because of the over-simplification of the contents, the vivacity of the work and its fashionable style made it extremely popular and led to several editions appearing in a short period of time.

What we have here in the Nouveaux Mémoires is the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism presented boldly and without qualification in an extreme form. He contrasts the idolatry of the majority of Chinese with the purity of Confucian belief: 'a chosen people, who, adore in spirit and in truth the Lord of heaven and of earth' in the midst of 'a criminal crowd of adorers of Belial'.⁸⁶ Confucius himself is regarded as 'a Saint' by the Chinese, and indeed he seems on examination 'less a Philosopher formed by reason, than a man inspired by God for the reform of this new world'. Yet he has never been regarded by the Chinese as a divinity.⁸⁷ The pure religion of the ancient Chinese is

⁸⁴ Foucquet in the notes cited above records an encounter between Le Comte and Leonessa in which the former admitted that he was unable to read two important Chinese works on ritual matters, the Chia li and the Li chi. It should be noted that Foucquet, like Leonessa, was by this time hostile to the standard Jesuit interpretation of the Rites and that he is quoting Leonessa, not reporting something he witnessed himself. On the other hand, he is probably right in arguing a priori that Le Comte could not have had leisure to read the classical books extensively during his harried missionary career from 1687-1691.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.14. The contemporary correspondence of the Jesuits in China makes several references to errors in Le Comte's account of the state of the China mission. See, for example, Carlo Amiani to the General, 30 October 1702 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.73-74) and William van der Beken to Ignatius Diertens, 15 August 1700 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, ff.287-292).

⁸⁶ Nouveaux Mémoires, Amsterdam, 1698, I, p.129.

⁸⁷ Nouveaux Mémoires, I, pp.278-280.

explained if we admit that the Chinese were descended immediately from the sons of Noah after the Deluge and that their ancient writings contain 'vestiges' of the primitive revelation.⁸⁸ Despite the influence of idolatry on the Jukiao (i.e. Ju-chiao or 'Confucianism'), there resulted a 'refined atheism' which never developed into a religious cult but remained purely 'political'.⁸⁹

The questions which Le Comte raised by this crude version of the Jesuit standard apologia went beyond the issue of the legitimacy of Chinese Rites. He was, in effect, claiming for Chinese tradition an equivalence to the biblical revelation. Ricci had attempted to avoid this dilemma in typical Christian-humanist fashion by contrasting a 'natural' revelation with the definitive personal intervention of God in history. Theological developments during the seventeenth century had rendered this less tenable. Developments in the theology of grace and the prevailing fundamentalist interpretations of Scripture had made it difficult to conceive of salvation outside the pale of Christendom. Bossuet's influential Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle blandly assumes that the only history worth discussing is that of the Judaeo-Christian world, and dismisses China altogether from the 'universe'. Outside of Christianity all was darkness and sin.

Shortly before the Chinese Rites came to the attention of the Sorbonne, the 'Christian brains' of the Doctors of that august body had been shaken by one Jesuit attempt to escape from the consequences of the theological position, extra Ecclesiam nulla salus⁹⁰. This was the theory of 'philosophical sin', namely that someone who had no knowledge of God could not offend against him, and hence was incapable of true sin; proposed by the Jesuit theologian

⁸⁸ Nouveaux Mémoires, II, p.89.

⁸⁹ Nouveaux Mémoires, II, p.122.

⁹⁰ 'No salvation outside the church'.

François Musnier.⁹¹ The so-called 'thèse de Dijon' was eventually condemned by some of the French Bishops in 1696, the very year that Le Comte's work appeared.

Le Comte's attempt to escape from the theological impasse by positing the persistence of a primitive revelation in Chinese tradition brought together the same coalition of Bossuet and the Jansenists that had secured the condemnation of 'philosophic sin'.⁹² When the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris met in July 1700, the question of Le Comte's Nouveaux Mémoires was introduced by an ally of the directors of the Missions Etrangères de Paris. Eight 'deputies' were elected to examine the work, at least five of whom were Jansenist in their sympathies.⁹³ This 'cabal' as Noël Varet, one of the Sorbonne theologians, called them⁹⁴, took the opportunity to secure yet another Jesuit scalp, and in August the Faculty condemned five propositions allegedly contained in Le Comte's work⁹⁵. The propositions selected for attack all deal with the purity of the Chinese conception of God and of Chinese morals, independently of the Christian dispensation.⁹⁶

⁹¹ See Etiemble, Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.231-233; and V. Pinot, La Chine et la Formation de l'Esprit Philosophique en France (1640-1740), Paris, 1932, pp.94-95, 302-304.

⁹² See Pinot, La Chine, p.99.

⁹³ See J. Davy, 'La Condamnation en Sorbonne des "nouveaux Mémoires sur la Chine" du P. Le Comte', in Recherches de Science Religieuse, XXXVII, 1950, pp.370-372.

⁹⁴ See extracts from Varet's journal, originally published by A. Gazier in the Bulletin Philologique et Historique of the Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, for 1916, in Etiemble, Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.59-63.

⁹⁵ Le Comte in his Eclaircissements sur la dénonciation faite à N. S. S. le Pape... Paris, 1700, denied that he in fact held the positions condemned. Etiemble describes this work, which I have not seen, as 'taking some license with the strict truth' (Les Jésuites en Chine, p.59), and a superficial examination of the condemned propositions suggests to me that they are all present, at least implicitly, in Le Comte's work.

⁹⁶ See the Propositions in Etiemble, Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.54-57.

The question of the legitimacy of the Rites was not explicitly raised in the 'Censure' of the Sorbonne but it figured prominently in the paper war that followed, and was swallowed up in the wider discussions preceding and accompanying the 1704 Roman condemnation. Le Comte himself followed up his defence of his Nouveaux Mémoires with a public letter to the Duc du Maine on the ceremonies of China⁹⁷, which some of his Jesuit confreres thought conceded too much⁹⁸. In this exchange, too, questions of theology predominated over questions of fact. Louis de Cicé M.E.P., Vicar Apostolic of Siam and Japan, in a published Letter objecting to the Jesuits having cited him in their defence, makes a typical statement when he says:

You (Jesuits) want ... to recall us to questions of words and to leave the area of knowledge, that is, of healthy and pure Theology, where you have been recalled despite yourselves.⁹⁹

But this was precisely the question. Was the Rites issue one of 'theology' or 'words'? of a priori judgements or of facts about China? There was much truth in Voltaire's characterisation of the Rites Controversy as 'the most noteworthy example of abuse of words'.¹⁰⁰

The Le Comte episode, however, reminds us that there were serious questions of theology involved. In his

⁹⁷ Lettre du R. Père Louis Le Comte de la Compagnie de Jésus à Monseigneur le Duc du Maine sur les Cérémonies de la Chine, Paris, 1700. At the same time he wrote a long letter to the Jesuit General which contained a full defence of Jesuit practices re the Rites (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 166, ff.342-346, dated Versailles, 13 July 1699).

⁹⁸ A letter of Jean de Fontaney written from Port-Louis on 9 August 1700, on the eve of his return to China, complains bitterly of 'la dernière folie' of P. Le Comte in claiming that the Chinese do regard Confucius as an idol (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 167, f.285v).

⁹⁹ Lettre...aux RR. PP. Jésuites sur les Idolatries et sur les Superstitions de la Chine, Paris, 1700, p.33.

¹⁰⁰ Art. 'Abus des Mots' in his Dictionnaire Philosophique, Oeuvres, Paris, 1878, t.17, p.50.

Eclaircissement, which concentrated on the theological issues in the dispute, he pointed out that the condemnation of his propositions was two-edged. While it might prevent the deists¹⁰¹ from taking comfort, it would encourage the 'free-thinkers and atheists'.

Would it not be much more dangerous to condemn the line taken in my book, by saying that the ancient Chinese, as those of the present day, are atheists. For will not the Freethinkers take advantage of what is presented to them, that in an empire so vast, so enlightened, established so solidly, and so flourishing, whether in the number of its inhabitants, or in the invention of almost all the arts, the Divinity has never been acknowledged. What, then, will become of the reasoning of the Fathers of the Church who, to prove the existence of God, have drawn on the agreement of all peoples, arguing that Nature has impressed the idea on them so deeply that nothing can efface it?¹⁰²

He cites many theological precedents for arguing that vestiges of revelation were contained in the ancient books of all nations¹⁰³ and, indeed, one might argue that this was the dominant theological tradition in late seventeenth century France.¹⁰⁴ Its rejection by the Sorbonne and the insistence of the 'Maigrotiens' on the atheism of the Chinese was fatally to undermine the argument for God's existence from universal consent, as thinkers like Pierre Bayle were quick to note.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, Deists like Voltaire drew on the Jesuit reports for evidence for

¹⁰¹ Some of the Doctors of the Sorbonne had founded their objections to Le Comte on these grounds. See the Lettre d'un Docteur sur ce qui se passe dans les assemblées de la faculté de théologie de Paris, Cologne, 1700, as cited in Pinot, La Chine, p.306, n.66.

¹⁰² Eclaircissement, p.14, quoted in Pinot, La Chine, p.307.

¹⁰³ See Davy, 'La Condemnation...', pp.387-388.

¹⁰⁴ See section I of the next chapter, on 'The Sources of Figurism'.

¹⁰⁵ Pinot, La Chine, pp.314-329, demonstrates from a comparison of the first (1697) and second (1702) editions of Bayle's Dictionnaire, and an examination of his works after 1700, how Bayle made effective use of this argument in his developing critique of religion.

their position.¹⁰⁶ Each party created an image of 'Confucius' and of 'China' according to its favoured model, and the K'ung-tzu of history and of Chinese tradition was forgotten in the ensuing argument.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Ch. II of the Essai sur les Moeurs; Ch. XVIII of La Philosophie d'Histoire; and the articles on 'Catechisme Chinois', 'Chine' and 'Philosophie' in the Dictionnaire Philosophique.

III. THE PAPAL LEGATES

The decisions of the Sorbonne in 1700 and of Rome in 1704 might not necessarily have proved fatal to the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. They were limited in scope and their practical provisions were not much stricter than the evolved Jesuit policy. They could to some extent be tempered by decisions of the local Bishops and Vicars Apostolic, and as long as the general accommodation to Confucianism was retained, the accepted image of the t'ien-chu-chiao would not be greatly affected. The two papal legations of the Patriarch (later Cardinal) Charles Maillard de Tournon and the Patriarch Carlo Ambrogio Mezzabarba, and the subsequent papal bulls of 1710, 1715 and 1742, destroyed any hope of this. Whether they were also responsible for the destruction of the mission is a further question we must consider, but there can be no doubt that they proved the final blow to the Confucian-Christian symbiosis developed by the Jesuits from Matteo Ricci through the seventeenth century.

The De Tournon mission (1705-1710) was certainly the most crucial episode in the negotiations between the Church authorities in Rome and the China mission. Since the declaration of K'ang-hsi in 1700, the confrontation was necessarily now one between the Pope, through his representative, and the Emperor; between the head of the Lord of Heaven Religion and the Son of Heaven. Hence, the personal qualities of the legate became an important factor in the situation, and to fully understand the course of events a detailed study of the Legate's personality and actions are essential. Once more I must excuse myself from that task, and restrict myself to a few comments on the attitude of the Legate to Confucianism and to the Jesuits. When Father Francis Rouleau's long-awaited study of the De Tournon mission is published, it may be possible to arrive at a just appreciation of his tragic role in the

history of the Jesuit mission in China.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, his actions, his relations with the Jesuits and other missionaries, even the bare chronology of events, remain shadowy, not because of lack of material, but because of their very abundance and mutual contradictions.¹⁰⁸ Rather than follow Rosso's procedure of compiling a consistent narrative from a pastiche of sources¹⁰⁹, I prefer to postpone final judgement until it is possible to collate fully all the sources and subject them to critical analysis.

It is, however, possible to make a few general comments about de Tournon's behaviour without examining the detailed

107 Meanwhile, we have, as a starting-point, Father Rouleu's long article, 'Maillard de Tournon: Papal Legate at the Court of Peking: The First Imperial Audience', in Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu, XXXI, 1962, p.264ff. See also Rosso, Apostolic Legations, Ch.VII and Docs. 3-8; Pastor, History of the Popes, XXXIII, Ch.VII; and Archbishop Lo-kuang's Chiao-ting yü Chung-kuo shih chieh shih, Chs. 4 and 5.

108 C. Berton in the article on 'Tournon' in his Dictionnaire des Cardinaux, Paris, 1857 (reprinted 1969) cols. 1586-1588 notes: 'Au surplus ses biographes sont loin d'être d'accord sur les procédés de sa mission, qui sont couverts d'épaisses ténèbres, chacun de ceux qui furent engagés dans cette triste affaire, mettant la raison de son côté (col. 1587).

109 Rosso in fact mainly follows one source, Ilarione Sala's Relazione, which he describes as 'exact to a nicety, checked against Chinese official and private sources' (Apostolic Legations, p.155, n.16). This seems to me a very strange judgement given that the Relazione was composed by one of de Tournon's retinue who knew no Chinese, and that the extant Chinese official sources such as those published in Ch'en Yuan's collections, K'ang-hsi yü Lo-ma shih-chieh kuan-hsi wen-shu ying-yin pen, Peking, 1932, are silent on most of the important events related by Sala. I know of no non-official Chinese sources on the Legation, and Rosso mentions none. Rosso is at pains elsewhere (p.181) to dismiss the Jesuit translated collection of official documents, the Atti Imperiali autentici di varj trattati, passati nella regia Corte di Pekino tra l'Imperatore della Cina e M. Patriarcha Antiocheno al presente Sig. Cardinale di Tournon, Cologne, 1710, as 'distorting the general picture of events', but Sala's narrative is, to an even greater extent, 'the direct fruit of a bitter controversy', and therefore to be treated, like all other documents of the period, critically.

charges and counter-charges. Even before he arrived in China, he had left behind him in India and Manila a trail of excommunications which suggests at the least, an undiplomatic temperament; and the same mode of procedure continued during his mission to China and his final sojourn in Macao. He was subject to continual illness, described by Rosso as 'partial paralysis and convulsion'¹¹⁰, which may explain but does not make less significant his constant irritation, suspiciousness and reversals of judgement. Whatever his private instructions, Innocent XI's anti-Rites decree cannot have reached him by the time he arrived in China, yet he acted as if the matter was decided. He was young¹¹¹, with no experience of missionary work, no knowledge of the language, and surrounded by a large retinue of curial officials and interpreters who shielded him from unpleasant Chinese realities. The result was that what should have been a fact-finding mission and an act of conciliation, became an exercise in Romanità and ecclesiastical politics.

That the question was closed as far as de Tournon is concerned is shown in his exchange with Alvaro Benavente O.S.A., the Vicar Apostolic of Kiangsi, in Canton in mid 1705, that is a few months after his arrival and before news of the Cur Deus Optimus decree can have reached China. Benavente had presented the Legate with a treatise on the rites, defending the Jesuit practices.¹¹² De Tournon replied that he intended to condemn the use of t'ien and shang-ti and at least the solemn cult of Confucius and the ancestors, although he had powers to suspend such a decision if he thought it best.¹¹³ Benavente returned to Kiangsi

¹¹⁰ Apostolic Legations, p.157.

¹¹¹ Thirty-three at the time of his appointment in 1702.

¹¹² Presumably the work found in the Foucquet Papers in the Vatican Library (Rome: BAV, Borgia Cinese 361 (i)a) with the title 'Passages chinois du traité de Mr. d'Ascalon sur les controverses'. Its contents (60 pp. of Chinese together with Foucquet's comments) correspond with the description Benavente gave of the work in a letter to Antoine Thomas, 20 July 1705 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, ff.270-271).

¹¹³ Benavente to Thomas, 20 July 1705 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.270r-v).

hopeful that 'new reasons' might persuade de Tournon to change his mind.¹¹⁴ He would have been disturbed to read, in a letter written by de Tournon shortly after the interview, that the Legate thought him 'little resigned to evident reason in the matter', and was grateful to him mainly for providing ammunition to use against the Jesuits.¹¹⁵ I do not know what time the Legate reached the conclusion that 'the China mission will have to be destroyed before it can be reformed',¹¹⁶ but it seems likely that it was quite early in his visitation.

It must have been at this period that de Tournon met Claude de Vissdelou S.J.¹¹⁷, who is the only Jesuit known to have taken an anti-rites position at this time.¹¹⁸ The Legate made much of Vissdelou, later¹¹⁹ securing his consecration as Bishop of Claudiopolis and Vicar Apostolic of Kweichow. Certainly, Vissdelou was the most able sinologist amongst the missionaries in China to adopt Maigrot's position on the Rites, as his published and

114 Ibid., f.270v.

115 De Tournon to the Abbe San Giorgio (di Biandrate), Canton, 20 August 1705 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.287r).

116 Onorato Ferrario, who had been sent to China to pave the way for the mission of the second Legate, Mezzabarba, wrote to Fouquet of the 'prophetic saying' of de Tournon that 'Sinensis Missio, prius destruetur antequam reformetur' (Rome: BAV, Borgia Cinese 468 (H)).

117 For biographical and bibliographical notes, see Pfister, Notices, pp.452-457; and the article, 'Vissdelou' by J. Dehergne in G. Grente, Dictionnaire des Lettres Francais: le Dix-Huitième Siècle, Paris, 1960; and Sommervogel, Bibliothèque, t.VIII, cols. 839-841.

118 Later Jean-Francois Fouquet would emerge as anti-rites, but, as I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, his stand against the Rites was late to emerge. Fouquet's marginal comments on his copy of Benavente's treatise on the Rites (Rome: BAV, Borgia Cinese 361 (i)a) makes it perfectly clear that at this period he accepted the standard Jesuit position - 'nostram sententiam' he calls it - on the liceity of Confucian ceremonies.

119 He was appointed 10 February 1708, and the appointment was confirmed by the Pope on 15 March 1711. See Mensaert, 'L'Etablissement de la Hierarchie', pp.30-31.

unpublished translations and treatises attest.¹²⁰ Even his most severe critics admitted his expertise in Chinese.¹²¹ None of his extant works deal directly with the Rites question, but his translations suggest that he took his stand, as Longobardo had done earlier, on the Neo-Confucian commentaries.¹²² Unlike Longobardo, however, he claimed that the Chinese did believe in spirits. Hence, although they were atheists, their ceremonies were often superstitious. And since their rituals were originally idolatrous, rather than part of the worship of a pure supreme being, they should be forbidden

¹²⁰ Most of Vissdelou's works remain unpublished, and the manuscripts are to be found today in the Vatican Library (Vat. Lat. 12852-4, 12862-7; for details see the Bibliography). But even his few published works, his contributions to the fourth volume of d'Herbelot's Bibliothèque Orientale, and his memoirs on the 'Kingdom of Mien' and Laos, published respectively in the Revue de l'Extrême Orient, II, 1883, p.72-88, and the Journal Asiatique, 2nd ser., X, No.59, November 1832, pp.414-438, are sufficient to establish his reputation as a sinologist. It should be noted, however, that his works are nearly all direct translations into French or Latin with little or no commentary, and that his gifts appear to have been expository rather than analytic.

¹²¹ Filippo Grimaldi S.J. in a letter to the Jesuit General, 18 October 1705, admits Vissdelou's 'scientia' but accuses him of acquiring it by neglecting his pastoral duties (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.343v). He also laments that Vissdelou was not sent home, as he had requested, earlier. Both comments may be discounted, to some extent, as reflecting the 'Portuguese'-French rivalry of the period.

¹²² For example, in his Latin translation of the Li Chi (Rome; BAV, Vat. Lat. 12852) he rejects the notion that the chiao sacrifice was to Heaven alone, and argue that it was clearly offered to Heaven and Earth (p.1). In his translation of the Ta-hsueh he equates tao with the Neo-Confucian li (Vat. Lat. 12853, pp.66-67). In a note to his translation from the Peking Gazette for 5 January 1706, describing the placing of commemorative tablets to seven Sung philosophers in a Fukien temple, he describes Confucianism as atheistic, and sees this atheism as deriving from Confucius himself (Vat. Lat. 12853, ff.258v, 262r-v).

to all Christians.¹²³

Visdelou initially, like other missionaries, accepted and defended the Jesuit interpretation of Chinese Rites. There was even question of him going to Rome in 1701 with Noël to represent the views of the mission.¹²⁴ He seems to have been questioning some aspects of the customs approved by the Jesuits.¹²⁵ By 1704, i.e. before de Tournon's arrival, he was regarded by his fellow-Jesuits as committed to the anti-Rites position.¹²⁶ Despite an appeal for loyalty from the Jesuit Bishop, and former

¹²³ I have reconstructed this argument from hints in his notes on the I Ching of 1728. In this he describes the victory of 'la secte des philosophes atheopolitiques' in the Ming and the triumph of their views over earlier idolatrous practices. When they write of 'Heaven' they mean 'the Heaven of reason' and they interpret shang-ti as 'la raison primitive'. But, although they do not believe in gods, they do believe in spirits ('Notes de M. l'Evesque de Claudiopolis sur le livre chinois nommé Yi Kim ou livre canonique des changemens', Paris: BN, Fr. nouv. acq. 22167, ff.1-12). I may be attributing too much consistency to Visdelou's position but he does seem to avoid the logical, if not the historical, objections to the common anti-Jesuit argument that the Chinese are simultaneously atheists and idolaters.

¹²⁴ See Foucquet's letter to Le Gobien, 6 December 1701, in London: PRO, SP. 9/239, f.51.

¹²⁵ A document in the Jesuit Archives in Rome (Jap. Sin. 150, ff.238-241) entitled 'Paradoxum Sinicum: Pater Claudius Visdelou contra Dominum Cononensem pro praxi et sententia Societatis' contrasts Visdelou's comments in a letter to the General 'dated the end of 1701 or the beginning of 1702' with his later position. In the earlier document he admits that Christians brought up in the faith, can participate in the Rites without harm, but he sees danger of slipping into error unless the Rites are modified. He concedes the probability that the ancient Chinese had some knowledge of God, but the accepted interpretation of modern scholars is so strong that it is almost impossible to persuade them to read the texts in any sense other than the Neo-Confucian.

¹²⁶ See, for example, the letters of Pierre Jartoux, to the General, 20 August 1704 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.123v) which suggests his recall; and of Bouvet, Peking, 27 October 1704 (Paris: BN, Fr.17240, f.261r) which describes him as 'guère éloigné du sentiment de nos adversaires'.

Visitor, Carlo Turcotti, on 9 May 1705¹²⁷, he declared himself to the Legate as opposed to the Jesuit interpretation of Chinese Rites, and seems to have been one of de Tournon's chief sources of information. He was rewarded with a bishopric¹²⁸ but was never able to take up his vicariate in Kweichow, owing to his refusal to accept the imperial p'iao, and ended his life in exile in Pondichery in India¹²⁹, studying and writing on Chinese history, and still maintaining his views on the Rites question¹³⁰. Visdelou's adherence to the opposition must have been a severe blow to the Jesuits.

Amongst the Foucquet Papers in the Vatican Library there is a collection of letters written in 1705-1706 by various French Jesuits in Peking to their colleague, Jean-Francois Foucquet, in the south.¹³¹ They were private letters, obviously not intended for publication but for the

¹²⁷ Copy (sent to the Jesuit General) in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, ff.227-8. Turcotti appeals to Visdelou to defend 'quanto peude' the Jesuit position, on two grounds: 1.that the traditional Jesuit practices in China, while not certainly correct, are 'more probable' than their opposite; 2.that Maigrot is 'one of the greatest enemies of the Society', and to attack the Jesuit position is to go over to his side.

¹²⁸ Even the hostile Jesuit author of the 'Paradoxum Sinicum' denies that Visdelou was motivated by self-interest in his stand. He had been discontented on the mission and increasingly alienated from his fellow Jesuits, but he was 'by nature and virtue not at all the sort of person who could be led to abandon his real opinion for such a motive' (Rome; ASJ, Jap. Sin. 150, f240r-v)

¹²⁹ On the details of his consecration and his later years, see the sympathetic account by J.F.Foucquet who had suffered a similar fate ('Réponse aux Questions regardant la Bibliothèque Historique et Critique des Geographes et des Voyageurs', 1727, ms. in Paris: BN, Fr.25070, pp.37-38, 65, 81-84).

¹³⁰ In his later years he went blind. In January 1728, in reply to a request from the Congregation de Propaganda Fide for a translation of the I Ching, he states that he is now too blind to read or write, but, dictated to a secretary some notes, presumably from memory ('Notes ... sur le livre chinois nommé Yi Kim', f.1a).

¹³¹ 'Nouvelles écrites de Pekin', Rome: BAV, Borgia Latino 543. Neither Rosso nor Rouleau seem to have been aware of the existence of this most valuable contemporary evidence for events in Peking, and I know of no writer on the subject who has used them.

information of their absent confrère, and the picture they present of de Tournon's activities between December 1705 and December 1706 is all the more valuable for that. They cover the Imperial audiences of December 31st. 1705 and June 29th and 30th, 1706; Maigrot's audience with the Emperor on July 26th 1706; and the protracted negotiations preceding the Legate's departure from the South in August, relating to K'ang-hsi's projected embassy to the Pope. I shall draw on these in the account that follows to illustrate some of the factors that made the de Tournon mission a disastrous failure, not just from the point of view of the Jesuit approach to Confucianism, but also in relation to the future of the Catholic Church in China.

The very first exchange between the Legate and the representatives of the Emperor in Peking was an indication of the fundamental dilemma of the legation. De Tournon was unable to state frankly the purpose of his mission, and the Chinese officials would not accept his claim that he was in Peking merely to thank the Emperor for his favours to Christianity. When he was pressed he added two other reasons - that he was also to examine the lives and behaviour of the missionaries, and to obtain permission for a representative of the Pope to reside in Peking to keep the Pope informed of the health of the Emperor etc. and to act as Superior General of all the missionaries.¹³² The mandarins in turn questioned de Tournon about his views on the Emperor's Declaration of 1700 on the Rites, thus suggesting that K'ang-hsi well understood the real purpose of the visit.¹³³ Over the next few days, the Emperor continued to question de Tournon through the officials about the purpose of his visit, and said that the matters

¹³² 'Nouvelles...', p.10 (Letter of Régis, dated 21 January 1706).

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 7 and 10. Régis also notes that the Manchu officials claimed de Tournon complained that the Jesuits should not have asked the Emperor for such a Declaration, but that de Tournon and his interpreter Appiani denied having said this.

raised were mere 'bagatelles'.¹³⁴ He also proposed that one of the experienced Jesuits be appointed to the new post of papal representative and was apparently annoyed at the Legate's negative reaction.¹³⁵

This was the background to the audience of December 31st, 1705,¹³⁶ which produced little result beyond the Emperor's agreement to send gifts to the Pope - and even this was to serve as grounds for dispute when de Tournon insisted on his Auditor, Sabino Mariani, bearing the gifts rather than the Jesuit, Joachim Bouvet, nominated by the Emperor himself. De Tournon was convinced that the Jesuits were intriguing against him, and that K'ang-hsi would have granted his request for a permanent papal representative in Peking, if they had not persuaded him to refuse. Certainly the Jesuits were hostile to the scheme and Régis, in his letter to Foucquet, makes some tart comments to the effect that the Legate 'has nothing in mind except his dear Italians, and he regards their establishment as his major business'.¹³⁷ But, whatever the Jesuits' role in the affair, it is highly unlikely that any Chinese Emperor could have agreed to the unprecedented recognition of a permanent diplomatic mission in Peking. Kilian Stumpf S.J. in his Acta Pekinensia which purports to give a full verbatim account of all the events of the legation, puts these words into the mouth of K'ang-hsi:

China has no common business with Europe. I tolerate you on account of your religion; you should care about nothing besides your souls and your doctrine. Although you come here from different countries, you all have one religion,

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.13. Régis gives the Emperor's Chinese expression as 'ouan y' (wan-i), a 'toy' or 'trifle'.

¹³⁵ De Tournon blamed the Portuguese Jesuit, Pereira, for suggesting this to the Emperor, a not unreasonable assumption; but Pereira sent de Tournon his oath that this was not the case ('Nouvelles...', p.15). A copy of Pereira's oath 'on the word of a priest' is to be found in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin.199, I, ff.126-127.

¹³⁶ Fully described in Rouleau's article, 'Maillard de Tournon...'

¹³⁷ 'Nouvelles...', p.25 - the emphasis is Régis's own.

and so any European living here is capable of writing and receiving the papal letters you talk about. As for a 'confidential agent' I don't know what you are talking about. In China we have nothing of the sort. There are some people who are close to my Throne, some at a middle distance, and others far away. If I entrust some business to any one of them, will they not carry it out faithfully?¹³⁸

The attitude expressed here is absolutely consistent with 'the Chinese view of their place in the world',¹³⁹ and, on these premises, de Tournon's plan for a permanent papal representative was doomed to failure.

During the early months of 1706, negotiations dragged on over such minor matters as a house in Peking for the Propaganda missionaries. In private, however, the Legate continued his investigations into the behaviour of the missionaries and their converts. It was at this time, apparently, that de Tournon and his suite began to take action on the Rites issue, presumably after receiving news of the decision of the papal commission.¹⁴⁰ In a letter of 12 March 1706, the French Superior in Peking described for Foucquet a confrontation between de Tournon and a deputation of Peking Christians. They accused two missionaries, Appiani, the Legate's interpreter, and Irofsolone, of having ordered them to destroy their ancestral tablets¹⁴¹, which was a breach of the Ch-ing law

¹³⁸ Rouleau, 'Maillard de Tournon...', p.318.

¹³⁹ See C. P. Fitzgerald's Chatham House Essay, The Chinese View of their Place in the World, London, 1964; and J. K. Fairbank (Ed.), The Chinese World Order, Cambridge, Mass., 1968.

¹⁴⁰ Note that the November 1704 Decree had not been published and was, therefore, technically not binding.

¹⁴¹ In Rome; ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.188, there is a Chinese document, signed by five Peking Christians, giving their account of an interview with Appiani in the Pei-t'ang in Peking, on the 2nd day of the 2nd month of K'ang-hsi's 45th year (i.e. 16 March 1706) in which Appiani confirmed this instruction and claimed to be acting on de Tournon's orders.

code¹⁴², and threatened to report the matter to the Emperor. Soon after¹⁴³, the Emperor questioned Gerbillon on the subject, and Gerbillon reported the Emperor's suspicion to de Tournon who, once again, accused the Jesuits of having prejudiced the Emperor against him, and denied that he had condemned the ancestral tablets. A few days later, however, he angrily refused a petition on the subject, tearing it up and stamping on it, to the indignation of the Chinese Christians who had presented it.¹⁴⁴

At the audience of June 29th, which was the second and last formal audience¹⁴⁵, the Emperor warned de Tournon to tell the Pope 'that the Doctrine of Confucius was the teaching of the empire, and it could not be touched if one wished that the missionaries remain in China'.¹⁴⁶ De Tournon objected that there were some aspects of Confucius' teaching that contradicted Christianity, and cited, as an example, revenge. K'ang-hsi replied that Confucius did not allow private revenge, but only the processes of justice. It was at this point that de Tournon made a serious error.

Monsignor replied that vindicative justice was a virtue rather than a vice, and according to what the Emperor had told him, that those who had made him believe that revenge was approved by

¹⁴² They showed de Tournon, according to this account ('Nouvelles...', p.42) a passage in the 'Tai Tsing Liu' (Ta-Ch'ing lu) 'where it is said that violation of the tablets merits death'.

¹⁴³ 16 April v. 'Nouvelles...', p.49.

¹⁴⁴ 'Nouvelles...', p.51.

¹⁴⁵ On June 30th the Emperor entertained the Legate at a solemn reception in the Ch'ang-ch'un-yuan outside Peking.

¹⁴⁶ 'Nouvelles...', p.59. This letter is dated 'Peking 6 Aoust 1718'. Clearly it dates from 1706, and the '1718' is a slip of the pen indicating, presumably, the year when Fouquet copied these letters into his notebook.

Confucius, had deceived him. He had never read Chinese books, and so he could not judge this teaching, but that he had ordered a European Doctor from Fukien, called Yen (i.e. Yen T'ang, Charles Maigrot) to come. He was a clever man, who knew how to write (Chinese) and understood Chinese books.¹⁴⁷

The Emperor immediately ordered that Maigrot should be sent to him in his summer residence when he arrived.

The interrogation of Maigrot, who arrived in Peking on the very day of the second audience, was a turning point in the whole affair. It is doubtful whether the Emperor, up to this time, knew of Maigrot's role in the controversies¹⁴⁸. Now de Tournon had thrust him into the centre of the stage.¹⁴⁹ The 'Nouvelles Ecrites' give many examples of Maigrot's failure to live up to de Tournon's high praise of his knowledge of Chinese, both during his interrogation by the mandarins and at his audience in Manchuria.¹⁵⁰ Even if these are discounted as Jesuit propaganda, which I believe unlikely in view of the private nature of the Foucquet correspondence, the results of Maigrot's appearance in Peking were decisive. To quote Maigrot's modern defender,

¹⁴⁷ 'Nouvelles...', pp.60-61.

¹⁴⁸ The Jesuits had been careful in their request of November 1700 for an official statement on the nature of the Rites, to avoid implicating Maigrot (see Brevis Relatio, 2r).

¹⁴⁹ De Tournon apparently later excused himself by telling 'Tchao laoye' (Chao Ch'ang?) that he had merely been reporting what Vissdelou told him about Maigrot ('Nouvelles...', p.64). But in this he must have been following Vissdelou against other informants.

¹⁵⁰ See 'Nouvelles...', pp.61-70, 73-76, 79. Some of these charges simply indicate a man struggling with a difficult language e.g. the claim by some Christians of Fukien that he needed 'to mark in European writing the sound and meaning of the Chinese characters' (p.79) and the discovery, by the mandarin Chao Ch'ang, that Maigrot quoted passages from his notes rather than by locating them in the texts (p.62). But his failure to recognize the characters above K'ang-hsi's throne and his inability to read and interpret the passages on which he based his objections to the Rites (p.74) if true, seriously undermine his credibility.

Antonio Sisto Rosso, 'The Emperor, disgusted with the Bishop's ignorance of language and obstinate views on the rites, issued a decree of blame and reprimand against Maigrot, on August 2, and addressed a stern communication of the proceedings to the Legate on August 3'.¹⁵¹ On December 17th, Maigrot together with two other missionaries were expelled from China, and all missionaries were ordered to receive a p'iao or certificate, authorizing them to remain in the country on condition that they accepted 'the prescriptions of Matteo Ricci'.¹⁵² Those who did not, were to be expelled immediately. During the Imperial tour of inspection of the South in early 1707, K'ang-hsi through his son Prince Chih, personally examined many of the missionaries, granted certificates to some, and ordered others expelled.¹⁵³

Meanwhile, de Tournon, on his way back to Macao, issued in Nanking on 21 January 1707, a decree against the Rites. It was a direct reply to the Emperor's decess about the p'iao, and instructed the missionaries how they were to reply to the questions asked in connection with the certificate.¹⁵⁴ The instructions purport to be in accordance with the recent degree of Pope Clement XI, but a close examination shows that they go decisively beyond both Maigrot's original decree and the decisions of Rome in 1704. They are bold and unqualified, condemning all 'sacrifices' to Confucius and the ancestors, all use of ancestor tablets,

¹⁵¹ Apostolic Legations, p.169.

¹⁵² 'Li Ma-tou te kuei-chü. I have not seen a Chinese text of the original decree, but the expression is used in the degree of 19 April 1707 which reiterated the Emperor's instructions (No. 4 in Ch'en Yuan's K'ang-hsi yü Lo-ma, and translated as Document 5 in Rosso's Apostolic Legations, pp.242-244). Rosso translates kuei-chü as 'customs', but it has a stronger normative sense, as is evident from its literal meaning, 'compass and square'.

¹⁵³ See Rosso. Apostolic Legations, pp.172-178.

¹⁵⁴ I follow the Latin text given in Dunyn-Szpot, Collectanea Historiae Sinensis, II, ff.476v-477r (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 105, 11). For a French translation, see Etiemble, Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.111-115.

and all correspondence between t'ien and shang-ti and the Christian God. And they are to be defended by appealing to 'the infallible rule of Christians in matters of faith', the Holy See. Finally, all discussion is ruled out by a clause forbidding any 'interpretation' of the Mandate, under pain of excommunication.¹⁵⁵

If de Tournon thought to silence all discussion by this means, he was mistaken. The missionaries were, in effect, placed in the dilemma of having to choose between expulsion and accepting the p'iao on conditions which appeared contrary to the 1704 papal constitution. Many of them chose the latter course, and defended themselves in different ways. As yet the constitution itself had not been published either in China or Europe and there seemed reasons to doubt whether its scope was as wide as de Tournon

¹⁵⁵ This was a wise provision, in view of the Jesuits' proclivity for controversy. It is amusing to find this very provision made the occasion for some scholastic distinctions by the anonymous pro-Jesuit author of the Caduceus Sinicus, Cologne, 1713. It is not clear, he says, whether the author of this 'Note for the elucidation of the above decree' is de Tournon, or an editor. Even if it is de Tournon's, it is self-contradictory, since 'if it needs Notes, the Decree of Cardinal de Tournon is not clear; therefore it requires explanation; therefore it is unjust to forbid its interpretation; and interpreters are unjustly excommunicated, and the boasted power of making laws according to Apostolic Constitutions is rendered null and void' (p.29). The author of the Caduceus Sinicus makes a more substantial point when he complains that de Tournon has gone beyond the bounds set by the 1704 Decree, and that the validity of that Decree was dependent on the accuracy of the information according to which it was issued (p.70).

claimed.¹⁵⁶ Some pinned their hopes on the mission of the Jesuits, Antonio de Barros and Antoine Beauvollier, sent to the Pope by K'ang-hsi in late 1706, and of Guiseppe Provana and J  se de Arxo, sent after them in 1707.¹⁵⁷ Others, especially the Portuguese Jesuits, denied the validity of de Tournon's acts, which were held to be in breach of the Portuguese padroado.¹⁵⁸ Yet others questioned whether

¹⁵⁶ Alvaro Benavente, in a letter to de Tournon of 19 February 1708, requested enlightenment to this point. If, he said, Clement XI had condemned the Rites in the same terms as de Tournon's instruction of 29 January 1707, then it would be 'a grave imprudence' for missionaries to accept the p'iao, and might even involve 'an error in Catholic Faith'. De Tournon replied evasively that 'in virtue of his office' he had condemned the Rites, but that he would not condemn those who accepted the p'iao in order to avoid expulsion (both Benavente's letter and de Tournon's reply of 16 March 1708, are found copied in Foucquet's hand in Rome: BAV, Borgia Cinese 377, pp.79-80). There is further evidence of de Tournon's vacillations over the p'iao and over destruction of tablets etc. in a letter of Emeric de Chavagnac S.J. to the Jesuit General, 8-9 October 1708 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.179-181).

¹⁵⁷ None of these men returned to China to report to K'ang-hsi, which appears to have aroused in K'ang-hsi, suspicions of foul play (v. Rosso, Apostolic Legations, pp.192, 202-203, and Docs. 13 and 20). In fact de Barros and Beauvollier were drowned off the coast of Portugal on the way to Europe; de Arxo died in 1711 when he was on the point of returning; and Provana, after his return to China had been delayed for many years, finally departed in 1719, only to die on the voyage. Provana presented to the Pope in February 1709, an appeal from the Jesuits of China which lists their reasons for regarding de Tournon's decisions as inapplicable, and is an excellent summary of the whole Jesuit case. This libellus supplex was published as an appendix to Vol. XXXIV of Pastor's History of the Popes, pp.514-525.

¹⁵⁸ King John V of Portugal, on 23 March 1711, issued a decree forbidding the publication and the observance, not only of de Tournon's 1707 decree, but also of the Brief of 25 September 1710 confirming it (copy in Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, f.40).

there had been a papal decree at all¹⁵⁹, or argued that it was a counsel of prudence rather than a doctrinal statement.¹⁶⁰

Gradually, however, it became clear that de Tournon's actions were sanctioned by Rome. In January 1710 a ship arrived in Macao from Manila, bringing a group of Italian missionaries conveying the Cardinal's red hat to be presented to de Tournon, who lay sick and under house arrest by the Portuguese authorities, in that city.¹⁶¹ On 15 September 1710, Clement XI confirmed de Tournon's Mandate of 1707, and on 19 March 1715, he issued the constitution Ex illa die which seemed to definitively condemn the Jesuit position. Not only did it reiterate the previous prohibitions, but it prescribed an oath to be taken by all on the mission, to obey the prohibitions. Its language was strong and unequivocal.

All the above responses are to be observed with everything contained in them, exactly, completely, absolutely, inviolably and undisturbed. And let them take care and procure as far as they can, that they are similarly observed by those of whom they have charge. Nor may they dare or

¹⁵⁹ Peter van Hamme S.J., in a letter to the Bollandist, Conrad Janninck S.J., 16 October 1707, claims that the Legate refused to produce a copy of the papal prohibition, and said that he did not have it with him (non tenemur). 'The opinion of many is that he doesn't have such a decree' (P. Visschers, Ed., Onuitgegeven Brieven van Eenige Paters der Societeit van Jesus, Missionarissen in China, van de XVIIde en XVIIIde Eeuw, met Aanteekeningen, Arnhem, 1857, p.62).

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, a letter of Etienne Le Couteulx to D'Entrecolles, 1717, published by H. Cordier in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp.49-54.

¹⁶¹ On de Tournon's conflict with the Portuguese in Macao, an excellent source is the 'Colecção de Varias Factos acontecidos nesta mai nobre cidade de Macao pelo decurso dos annos', published by J. M. Braga in A Voz do Passado, Macao, 1964. See, especially, the entries under the years 1705-1710.

presume to contravene them, or anything expressed in them, whether on any grounds, reason, occasion, colour or pretext whatsoever.¹⁶²

In fact, this was not the end of the Rites Controversy. A second papal legate, Carlo Ambrogio Mezzabarba, Patriarch of Alexandria, was sent in 1720, apparently to tie up the loose ends and implement the decree.¹⁶³ He avoided some of de Tournon's problems by gaining approval of the King of Portugal, Joao V, and sailing by way of Lisbon on a Portuguese ship.

¹⁶² Text in Magnum Bullarium Romanum, XI, pp.49-53; this section (para.5) on p.51. J.J. Heeren's version of the Chinese text of the decree in his article, 'Father Bouvet's Picture of Emperor K'ang Hsi', Asia Major, VII, 1932, Appendix A, pp.367-570, suggests that it was even stronger in tone, if not contents, than the Latin text.

¹⁶³ For the events of the Mezzabarba mission, see Pastor, History of the Popes, XXXIII, pp.468-484; Rosso, Apostolic Legations, Ch.IX and Docs. 23-27; Ch'ên Yüan, K'ang-hsi yü Lo-ma, Docs. 12-14; Lo-kuang, Chiao-ting yü Chung-kuo shih chieh shih, Ch.6, pp.141-174; Etienne, Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.130-140; and the journal of Mezzabarba's companion and confessor, Viani, published as Istoria delle cose operate nella China da Monsignor Gio. Ambrogio Mezzabarba Patriarca d'Alexandria, Legato Apostolico in quell Imperio, Paris, 1739 (I have used the 2nd ed., Cologne, 1740). Part of Viani's journal is found in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 198, ff.360-399, Rome:BAV, Vat. Lat. 10865, ff.637-652, and what appears to be the original in Rome:BAV, Vat. Lat. 10750 (450pp.). I have not compared these with the printed text but both Ross (p.207, n.14) and the Vatican Library card catalogue comment on the departures of the printed versions from the original manuscript. The printed text appeared after Viani's death in somewhat peculiar circumstances - an Italian work printed in Paris and Cologne - and I have found no evidence for Rosso's claim (p.207, n.14) that it was revised by Mezzabarba himself. English and French versions appeared in the collections of Voyages of John Green and Prévost d'Exiles, each with characteristic additions. Another source frequently cited is the Mémoires historiques sur les affaires des Jésuites avec le Saint Siège, 7 vols., Lisbon, 1766, by 'C.P. Platel' alias 'Pere Norbert de Lorraine, O.F.M. Cap.', alias Pierre Curel Parisot (1697-1769). An earlier version in 2 vols., Mémoires historiques ...sur les missions des Indes Orientales, was published at Lucca, in 1744. The sober bibliographer of the missions, Robert Streit O.M.I. describes Parisot as 'an undoubtedly psychopathic case' (Bibliotheca Missionum, VI, p.136) and his career, which is described by P.M. D'Elia in Il Lontana confino e la tragica morte del P. João Mourão S.J., pp.256-264, was made out of poison-pen attacks on the Society of Jesus. The Mémoires are a highly selective, tendentious and inaccurate compilation from anti-Jesuit sources, and his embroidery of Viani's account of Mezzabarba's legation is a good example of his method. A full study of the Mezzabarba mission, as of the de Tournon mission, would obviously require a delicate and complex exercise in textual criticism which is quite beyond the scope of this work.

He seems, too, to have behaved much more diplomatically during the series of audiences he had with the Emperor in December 1720, and January and February 1721. However, he was no more successful than de Tournon in convincing K'ang-hsi to allow Chinese Christians to follow the papal decrees on the Rites. Despite the constant complaints in the record of the embassy by Viani, the Legate's confessor, that the mission was frustrated by the intrigues of various Jesuits at the court - Thomas Pereira, João Mourão and the Chinese Jesuit Louis Fan (Shou-i) are particularly mentioned - it is clear from Viani's own report of the interviews with the Emperor, that the differences between Rome and K'ang-hsi were fundamental and irreconcilable.

At the second and private audience of January 3rd, 1721, K'ang-hsi asked how the Pope could judge Chinese affairs when he (the Emperor) does not judge European affairs.¹⁶⁴ Mezzabarba replied that the Pope was assisted by the Holy Spirit¹⁶⁵ and that he did not judge Chinese affairs, but only those regarding religion.¹⁶⁶ At a later interview (10 January, 1721) K'ang-hsi again objected that the Chinese Rites could only be judged by someone with a perfect knowledge of the Chinese language and Chinese beliefs.¹⁶⁷ 'This great struggle which has arisen

¹⁶⁴ Viani, Istoria, p.107. Fan Shou-i, in a remark that scandalized Viani and Norbert, but was strictly accurate, noted that the Pope could not command even in Europe (Viani, Istoria, pp.62-63, and Norbert, Mémoires, Lucca, 1744, I, pp.458-460). This Chinese Jesuit, on his return from Europe, seems to have provided the Emperor with much useful information on the ecclesiastical and secular politics of Europe. His account of his trip to Europe, the Shên chien lu, is the first account of Europe by a Chinese, and well deserves an annotated translation. The text is to be found in Fang Hao, Chung-hsi chiao-t'ung shih, IV, pp.186-195.

¹⁶⁵ K'ang-hsi, at a later audience, shrewdly remarked that Maigrot must be the Holy Spirit of the Christians (Viani, Istoria, pp.158-159).

¹⁶⁶ Viani, Istoria, p.108.

¹⁶⁷ Viani, Istoria, pp.116-119.

amongst Europeans about our praiseworthy rites, is not a controversy about religion, but a quarrel instigated by vile, rebellious men...; the constitution issued by your Pope is not a prohibition belonging to your Holy Law, but a pure vendetta against the Fathers of the Society'.¹⁶⁸ Mezzabarba's retinue seems to have interpreted this as evidence that the Jesuits, especially Louis Fan, had persuaded the Emperor that Maigrot and others had been engaged in an anti-Jesuit conspiracy.¹⁶⁹ They should, however, have been disabused by the audience of January 14th.

This fifth audience is undoubtedly the key incident in the Mezzabarba legation. Although the accounts of Viani¹⁷⁰ and of the Jesuits¹⁷¹ vary somewhat, they agree that the Emperor specifically defended the practices of Matteo Ricci, including the use of ancestral tablets, and of the terms t'ien and shang-ti. According to the 'Mandarins' Diary,¹⁷² Chia Lo (Mezzabarba) denied that he had come 'to argue about the doctrine of China' and begged pardon for Maigrot and others who had sent to Rome false reports about the Jesuits.¹⁷³ Viani, and the Jesuits' Latin version of the 'Diary' agree that the Emperor then made some remarks which appeared to approve the

¹⁶⁸ Viani, Istoria, pp.117-118.

¹⁶⁹ See Mezzabarba's additions ('aggiunte') to Viani's narration, especially No.4, Istoria, pp.111-112.

¹⁷⁰ Istoria, p.122ff.

¹⁷¹ As presented in the 'Mandarins' Diary', Doc. 23 in Rosso, Apostolic Legations, pp.357-360. A considerable portion has also been translated by Dun J. Li, in his China in Transition, 1517-1911, New York, 1970, Doc. 9, pp.20-22.

¹⁷² The 'Mandarins' Diary' was a record in Chinese of events of the Mezzabarba Legation, accepted and corrected by the Emperor. The Jesuits produced a Latin version, the authenticity of which was later questioned by Mezzabarba (Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.342) although he had seen and corrected it himself (see the testimony of Giampriamo in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin.198, ff.293v-296r, and of the Peking Jesuits, ibid., f.269r). Presumably, like most court documents, it may be taken as presenting an official statement of the Emperor's position rather than a verbatim record of the exchanges at the various audiences. It is least reliable as a record of what Mezzabarba said and did.

¹⁷³ v. Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.359.

the promulgation of Ex illa die in China, but the Jesuits took them as ironical, while Mezzabarba and his suite took them seriously.¹⁷⁴

If the Emperor did approve, he certainly changed his mind a few days later, when he read the Chinese text of the papal decree. There can be no question of K'ang-hsi's reaction, because the original vermillion endorsement in the Emperor's own hand has been preserved.

On reading this proclamation, I can only conclude that the Westerners are small minded. How can they talk about the great ideas of China? No Westerner understands Chinese books, and when they discuss them, our people find many of their remarks ridiculous. Now I have seen the Legate's proclamation, and it is just the same as Buddhist and Taoist heresies and superstitions. I have never seen such nonsense as this. Henceforth no Westerner may propagate his religion in China. It should be prohibited in order to avoid more trouble.¹⁷⁵

The threat was unmistakable.

At this point Mezzabarba agreed to promulgate eight 'Permissions' which he claimed to have received from the church authorities in Rome¹⁷⁶ and which mitigated the force of the

¹⁷⁴ Viani, Istoria, p.129 cf. Diarium, quoted in Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.360, n.21. According to Régis, who was present, the Emperor remarked 'with a sardonic laugh' that these were minor matters that should be dealt with by the mandarins (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 198, f.239v). De Mailla, who was also present, blamed Pedrini and Ripa for mistranslating (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 198, f.255r).

¹⁷⁵ My translation after the facsimile text at the conclusion of Ch'ên Yüan's K'ang-hsi yü Lo-ma cf. translations in Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.376, and (the slightly different version in the 'Mandarins' Diary') in Li, China in Transition; p.22, Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.364; and Heeren, 'Father Bouvet's Picture of K'ang-hsi', pp.569-570.

¹⁷⁶ It was later claimed that Mezzabarba had exceeded his powers by promulgating the 'Eight Permissions' but several references in Viani (e.g. pp.68, 71-72, 160) and the 'Mandarins' Diary' indicate that he had announced their existence from the beginning of his mission. The mystery has been partly cleared up by a letter recently discovered in the Archives of Propaganda, in which Mezzabarba explains that the 'Eight Permissions' were the replies to certain 'doubts' proposed to Rome by some of the Vicars Apostolic, and which he had received in Lisbon before his departure (see art. 'Mezzabarba' by N. Kowalski in the Enciclopedia Cattolica, VIII, cols.924-925). It is clear, however, that their proclamation was to be at Mezzabarba's discretion, and K'ang-hsi may have been correct in thinking that the Pope had, in effect, given Mezzabarba 'two different versions of the Breve and Constitution, directing (him) to submit them to the throne upon arrival in China, according to circumstances' (Mandarins' Diary', in Rosso, Apostolic Legations, pp.350-351).

decrees to some extent. They represented a return to Maigrot's regulations, before de Tournon's blanket prohibitions.¹⁷⁷

For example, modified ancestor tablets were permitted; funeral ceremonies, and those in honour of Confucius were allowed, provided they did not include superstitious practices; while prostrations, incense, even offerings of food, were permitted in certain circumstances. When Mezzabarba departed on March 3rd, it must have seemed that the situation regarding the Rites was largely as it had been before de Tournon's arrival.

The two missions had certainly soured K'ang-hsi's relations with the missionaries, or at least with the official hierarchy of the church. What is remarkable in the circumstances is his continued toleration and goodwill rather than his occasional outbursts of impatience. When we consider the amount of time and energy he devoted to the domestic affairs of one of the smallest of Chinese sects, it is evident how highly he must have valued the services of the small group of missionaries at court. Their precise role as cultural brokers and foreign experts, even perhaps as personal friends and advisers to K'ang-hsi, has never been fully evaluated,¹⁷⁸ and probably never will, since it belongs to that area of inner court affairs that escaped the surveillance and recording brush of official historians. But the tantalizing glimpses we get of that relationship in Jesuit and official Chinese documents, leaves no doubt as to its importance.

Scarcely had Mezzabarba departed, however, than the intriguing began again. Some of the missionaries opposed to the Jesuits, wrote to Rome urging the repeal of the 'Eight Permissions'.¹⁷⁹ Mezzabarba himself adopted an increasingly

¹⁷⁷ See Etiemble, Les Jésuites en Chine, pp.137-138, for a translation of the 'Eight Permissions'.

¹⁷⁸ See C.W. Allan, Jesuits at the Court of Peking, Shanghai, n.d.; and T.E. Treutlin, 'Jesuit Missions in China during the last Years of K'ang-hsi', Pacific Historical Review, X, 1941, pp.435-446.

¹⁷⁹ See the letter of Ignatius Kögler S.J. to the Portuguese Assistant, Peking, 13 November 1721, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 198, ff.311v-316r.

hostile attitude to the Jesuits, and just before his departure from Macao, issued a Pastoral Letter, accusing the Jesuits of seeking to evade the papal constitutions by giving up missionary activity altogether.¹⁸⁰ And in Rome the Congregation of Propaganda Fide adopted an ever more hostile attitude to the Jesuits of the China Mission. The charges multiplied and became more detailed in a way that suggests an organised campaign against the Jesuits with correspondents in China feeding information to Rome.¹⁸¹ The Jesuit General replied in 1725 with a Memorial and a collection of documents demonstrating the good faith and correct behaviour of the Jesuits in China,¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ See the letter of the Peking Jesuits to the General, 17 July 1722, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 198, ff.269v-272v. The Jesuits admit that some of them had suspended missionary work for a time after the receipt of Ex illa die, pending the arrival of the legate, but they have all resumed pastoral work since. An excellent account of the reasons for temporarily ceasing to administer the sacraments is given in a letter from Romanus Hinderer S.J., who in 1718 was the sole missionary in Hangchow, and felt himself torn between obedience to the Holy See and the sure knowledge that his Christian flock were continuing their old practices (Annual Letter, dated 22 September 1719, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 198, ff.103r-104r).

¹⁸¹ See, for example, a Memorial of Propaganda to the Jesuit General, Tamburini, giving the resolutions of the 'Congregazioni Particolari' of 19 and 23 September, 1725. The Jesuits are accused of luxury (wearing silk clothes); of risking being accused of rebellion, by using horses and mules; of using titles of honour instead of being content with 'Padri Spirituali' (shên-fu?) or 'Lama, as the Moscovites and Tartars call their priests and religious'. Candidates for the priesthood should be sent to Europe for training. Four Jesuits - Parrenin, de Mailla, Hervieu and Porquet are to be recalled for a variety of reasons, mostly vague charges of opposition to the Rites decrees. A fifth, Mourão, is condemned for inciting the Emperor against the Legate, but since he is in prison, the General is on no account to try to get him released on the pretence of his return to Europe (Rome:ASJ, Instit. 170, ff.128-133).

¹⁸² The 'Memorials' and the 'Summario di diverse lettere e documenti dall' anno 1706 fino al 1722, per giustificare la sollecita, e sincera condotta del P. Gle. della Comp.^a di Gesù...' are found in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 198, ff.4-344. Many of the letters cited in the preceding pages come from this collection.

which seems to have staved off the attack for the time being. Propaganda, however, continued to gather information from anti-Jesuit sources, such as the ex-Jesuits, Visdelous in Pondichery, and Foucquet in Rome; from Matteo Ripa in Naples;¹⁸³ and from Carlo Castorano O.F.M., Vicar General of the Diocese of Peking.

The last named produced for the benefit of the Congregation, on his return after 33 years in China, a detailed study of some of the Chinese books in the Library of the College of Propaganda Fide.¹⁸⁴ It was presented to Cardinal Gentili in 1739¹⁸⁵ and must certainly have influenced the deliberations then going on in the Congregation. Its conclusions were definite and unqualified. The modern Chinese are atheists; the ancient Chinese were idolaters; the Chinese classics and most of the Chinese works of the Jesuits and their converts teach doctrines contrary to Christian faith.¹⁸⁶ Ancestor rites are illicit because they were originally sacrifices to the spirits of the ancestors, hence idolatrous, and even in the light of the modern materialistic interpretation, involve superstitious beliefs about the ch'i¹⁸⁷ or material part of the souls of

¹⁸³ See G. de Vincentiis (Ed.), Documenti e Titoli sul...Matteo Ripa, Naples, 1904, for evidence of his activities in this regard. The decree 'Ex quo singulari' specifically mentions as a source of information, 'complures Juvenes, qui ex iis Regionibus in Europam, educationis, & Christianae rei addiscendae causae, venerat' (Magnum Bullarium Romanum, Benedict XIV, Tom. I, p.202), presumably a reference to Ripa's Chinese students in Naples.

¹⁸⁴ The Parva Elucubratio super quosdam Libros Sinenses ab Ill.^{mo} et R.^{mo} D. Archiepiscopo Myrensi de Nicolais relictos, ms. in Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 538.

¹⁸⁵ The Proemium is addressed to Gentili, and dated Rome, 6 January 1739.

¹⁸⁶ Castorano displays considerable knowledge of Chinese in this work, and in respect to the classics, makes many telling points about the ancient worship of spirits and ancestors. But he tends to confuse the texts with the Neo-Confucian commentary, and in regard to Confucius himself, draws heavily on spurious later works such as the Chia yü.

¹⁸⁷ 'Aeres ki' he calls it.

the departed.¹⁸⁸ Confucius is regarded and worshipped as a saint whereas in reality he was a public idolater and private atheist.¹⁸⁹

In the light of such advice, it is not surprising to find that the Holy See decided finally against the Rites. The decree 'Ex Quo Singulari' of 1742, not only reconfirmed the decrees of 1704, 1710 and 1715, but revoked Mezzabarba's 'Eight Permissions' as the product of 'obsessions and anxieties' and permitting practices 'totally superstitious'. All missionaries not prepared to follow the prohibitions are to be recalled, and all must take an oath to observe all the precepts, including a condemnation of the practices permitted by Mezzabarba.¹⁹⁰

Roma locuta est; causa finita est.

¹⁸⁸ See Parva Elucubration, pp.102-123. On pp.274-358, there is an extended 'Expositio nonnullarum factorum super caeremoniis, ritibus, oblationibus, seu sacrificiis nationis Sinensis erga Progenitores Defunctos' which engages in considerable question begging. The ancestral hall is constantly referred to as a 'templum', the ceremonies as 'sacrificium', those assisting as 'ministri' and the ancestors themselves as 'numina'.

¹⁸⁹ See Parva Elucubratio, pp.422-507. Castorano cites the passages from the Analects about Confucius' refusal to discuss Gods and spirits as evidence for his atheism; and his teaching of the idolatrous classics as evidence for his idolatry (p.491).

¹⁹⁰ See the text in the Magnum Bullarium Romanum, Benedict XIV, Tom.I, pp.188-204.

IV. THE AFTERMATH OF THE RITES

All writers on the Chinese missions are agreed that the early 18th century was a period of marked decline for the Catholic Church in China. Not all, however, agree that it was the Rites Controversy that caused the decline, either wholly or mainly.¹⁹¹ I will not attempt a definitive answer to this question which depends to a large extent on a comparative assessment of the policies of the three Emperors whose rule spans the eighteenth century, K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung. It seems, however, that the period immediately following the de Tournon mission and the early 1720s were the crucial turning points. The first of these can be attributed to the Rites issue, the second hardly at all.

There are no reliable statistics for church membership, baptisms etc. for any period of the old Jesuit mission. One is forced, therefore, to rely on general impressions derived from the reports of as large a number of mission stations as possible. The task has been somewhat simplified for us, although in an admittedly polemic context, by the collection of documents produced by the Jesuit General, Tamburini, for the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, in 1725. One section of this collection¹⁹² is devoted to evidence of defections and difficulties caused by the Rites decision. It adds up to

¹⁹¹ Latourette in his History of Christian Missions in China, pp.152-153, makes a most judicious assessment of the factors affecting the 'retardation' of the church in China. He sees the Rites Controversy as beginning the process, traditional Chinese xenophobia as intensifying it, especially as Western intrusion grew, and the dissolution of the Society of Jesus and political changes in France as completing it. A similar argument, but concentrating more on the political factors, is given by H.W. Hering in his article, 'A Study of Roman Catholic Missions in China, 1692-1744', in New China Review, III, 1921, pp.107-126, 198-212. He also provides a useful chronological division between the Golden Period (1692-1707); the Period of Suspicion (1707-1723); and the Period of Repression (1723-1744).

¹⁹² Section 5, f.73ff. of Jap. Sin. 198.

a rather pessimistic picture, especially regarding the upper-class converts for whom Confucian and domestic rituals were of central importance. Even the Jesuits of the Court betray a new tone of pessimism in their letters. The arch-optimist, Joachim Bouvet, whose Portrait Historique de l'Empereur de la Chine of 1697 is a high-water mark in enthusiasm for China and its ruler, adopted a much more cautious tone on his return to China.¹⁹³ By the time of Ch'ien-lung, the Jesuits at Court were writing of the Emperor without bothering to disguise their disillusionment.¹⁹⁴ But their very presence indicates that they had not given up hope.

In his last years, apart from his objections to the papal decrees on the Rites, K'ang-hsi was also beginning to become suspicious of the western maritime activity in the South. His southern tours had alerted him to the constant and illegal trading and smuggling activities of the people of the coastal provinces as well as the arrival in increased numbers of ships of new Western powers. In 1716, he issued a warning to his high officials:

After hundreds of years, We are afraid that the Middle Kingdom will suffer injury from the overseas countries, for example, from the European countries. This is only a prediction...We have reigned in the Empire so many years and found the Chinese very difficult to deal with because their hearts are divided. Now our country has long enjoyed peace and order, We must not forget danger.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ See Rouleau, 'Maillard de Tournon', p.270, n.10.

¹⁹⁴ See, especially, the letter of Amiot, dated 17 October 1754, published in the 1811 edition of the Lettres Edifiantes, t.23. The Emperor, he comments acts as if he is God. We serve him here in Peking while our brothers are massacred in the Provinces (pp.293-295). Note that this was not published in the first series. Little of the growing disquiet of the Jesuits vis à vis the Emperor was allowed to appear in the public record. One should also note that the old optimism never completely disappeared. Ten years after Amiot's letter, Cibot wrote excusing the Emperor for his anti-Christian acts - 'croyez-moi, il n'a fait des martyres que comme malgré lui' (Lettres Edifiantes, nouv. ed., t.23, p.355, letter of 7 November 1764).

¹⁹⁵ Fu, Documentary Chronicle, p.123. Decree of 9 December 1716.

The next year, Ch'en Mao, a military commander in Kwangtung, memorialised against Christianity, not on the familiar grounds of heterodoxy, but on suspicion of collusion with Western powers.

Catholicism originated in Europe; now the Westerners have set up churches in various provinces which attract bandits and rascals. The hearts of these Westerners are inconceivable. At present they have established many churches both within and without the city of Canton. Moreover, their foreign ships also throng in the harbour of Canton. How can we guarantee that the missionaries and Western merchants do not communicate with each other and cause trouble?¹⁹⁶

The Emperor agreed with the Board of War that the old prohibitions against the preaching of Christianity in the provinces should be revived.¹⁹⁷

The beginning of the reign of Yung-cheng, in 1723, saw the introduction of a much harsher policy. Yung-cheng seems to have been suspicious by nature and the circumstances of his accession led him consciously to reverse many of his father's policies.¹⁹⁸ A year after his accession, he agreed to a memorial of the Board of Rites expelling all missionaries to Macao,¹⁹⁹ which was later modified to permit missionary scientists and other useful Westerners to remain in Peking²⁰⁰ and the others to reside in Canton.²⁰¹ In 1732 those in Canton were finally expelled, leaving only 23 missionaries in Peking, and a few in hiding in the provinces.²⁰² Yung-cheng's

¹⁹⁶ Fu, Documentary Chronicle, pp.123-124.

¹⁹⁷ Decree of 24 May 1717, ibid., p.124.

¹⁹⁸ v. Hummel, Eminent Chinese, pp.915-920 (Fang Chao-ying's biography of 'Yin-chên').

¹⁹⁹ Decree of 12 January 1724, in Fu, Documentary Chronicle, p.138.

²⁰⁰ 14 December 1724, in Fu, Documentary Chronicle, p.139. For a list of those in Peking in October 1727, see A. Gaubil, Correspondance de Pékin, 1722-1759, Geneva, 1970, pp.180-181.

²⁰¹ 3 February 1725, in Fu, Documentary Chronicle, pp.139-140. For a full account of the 1724 decrees and their effect, see de Mailla's letter in Lettres Edifiantes, XVII, 1726, pp.163-284.

²⁰² See Lettres Edifiantes, XXI, 1734, p.viii (du Halde's 'Epistre'); and Porquet's letter of 11 December 1732 in Lettres Edifiantes, XXI, 1734, pp.217-278.

actions against the Portuguese Jesuit João Mourão²⁰³ and the Manchu Christian Sourniama family²⁰⁴ may be explained as politically activated. But his objections also appear to have been doctrinal. In a reply to the Portuguese ambassador Metello de Sousa in May 1727, Yung-cheng railed against the unreason and un-Chineseness of Christianity. A translation of the Emperor's remarks can be found in Lo-shu Fu's Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations,²⁰⁵ but they are represented more ideosyncratically, although not inaccurately, in Ezra Pound's sixty-first Canto:

And he put out Xtianity
 chinese found it so immoral
 his mandarins found this sect so immoral
 'The head of a sect' runs the law 'who deceives folk
 'by pretending religion, ought damn well to be strangled'.
 No new temples for any hochang, taoists or similars
 sic in lege
 False laws are that stir up revolt by pretense of virtue,
 Anyone but impertinent fakers wd have admitted
 the truth of the Emperor's answer:

...
 ...nothing personal against Gerbillon and his colleagues,
 but Xtians are disturbing good customs
 seeking to uproot Kung's laws
 seeking to break up Kung's teaching.²⁰⁶

Some of Yung-cheng's fulminations against Christianity specifically mention the Rites decrees as the cause of his displeasure.²⁰⁷ However, I think it likely that, irrespective

²⁰³ See the decree of 2 July 1726 in Fu, Documentary Chronicle, pp.146-147, and the full discussion in D'Elia, Il lontano confino e la tragica morte del P. João Mourão S.I., Lisbon, 1963.

²⁰⁴ See Fu, Documentary Chronicle, pp.153-155 (decrees of 27 March and 8 June 1727); Ch'ên Yüan, 'Yung-cheng chien feng t'ien-chu-chiao chih tsung-shih' in Fu-jen hsueh-chih, III.2, 1932, pp.1-36; Hummel, Eminent Chinese, pp.692-694; Farren-in's letters in Lettres Edifiantes, XVII, 1726, pp.1-162; XVIII, 1728, pp.33-121, 248-311; XIX, 1729, pp.1-205; XX, 1731, pp.1-45; XXII, 1736, pp.44-98; and Gaubil's letters in his Correspondance, pp.145-171.

²⁰⁵ Pp.155-156, after the Shang-yü nei-ko, ch.14, 13a-15b.

²⁰⁶ The Cantos of Ezra Pound, London, 1954, pp.350-351. See also Canto LX, pp.344-346, on K'ang-hsi's decree of toleration and the activities of 'the archbishop of Antioch'.

²⁰⁷ See, for example, the account of the audience of 18 March 1733, in Gaubil's Correspondance, pp.351-353.

of the Rites controversy, under Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung, Christianity would have fared badly. Both Emperors seem to have been concerned with their 'image' as orthodox Chinese Emperors,²⁰⁸ as well as following a more typically sinocentric policy in government than K'ang-hsi.²⁰⁹ Their apparent reversal of K'ang-hsi's policy of toleration was really a return to a more normal pattern of foreign relations.

What was really crucial, however, was the reaction of local officials. A Christianity which appeared as

seeking to uproot Kung's laws
seeking to break up Kung's teaching,

which had no powerful scholar-official protectors, and whose writings were totally alien in terminology and content, had little hope of survival. The few missionaries who remained in the provinces, did so only as fugitives, ministering secretly to a cowed remnant of lower-class Christians, in constant fear of delation to the magistrates.²¹⁰ Christianity had finally acquired the label of 'foreign religion' that Ricci and his successors had worked so hard to evade. It was the Rites Controversy that made that label unavoidable, and, to that extent, was responsible for the fate of Christianity in China. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the label was flaunted and, in new circumstances, for a time brought success; but the truly Chinese Christianity Ricci had dreamed of never fully emerged. Is it too much to see the Rites Controversy and the attitudes it engendered as the root cause of the fate of Christianity in modern China?

²⁰⁸ See Hummel, Eminent Chinese, pp.917-918, and 369-372; Goodrich, The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien-lung, Baltimore, 1935; and H.L. Kahn, Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign, Cambridge, Mass., 1971.

²⁰⁹ Jonathan Spence's Ta'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor, New Haven, 1966, illustrates well the swing away from the 'personal' style of administration favoured by K'ang-hsi, to a more orthodox administrative system under Yung-cheng.

²¹⁰ See, for example, J. Krahll, China Missions in Crisis: Bishop Laimbeckhoven and His Times, 1738-1787, Rome, 1964; and B.H. Willeke, Imperial Government and Catholic Missions in China during the Years 1784-1785, New York, 1948.

CHAPTER 6

MOSES OR CHINA? THE JESUIT FIGURISTS

(Lequel est le plus croyable des deux, Moïse ou la Chine?)

Il n'est pas question de voir cela en gros;
je vous dis qu'il y a de quoi aveugler et de quoi éclairer.

Par ce mot seul, je ruine tous vos raisonnements. Mais la Chine obscurcit, dites-vous, et je réponds: La Chine obscurcit, mais il y a clarté à trouver; cherchez-la.

...

Il faut donc voir cela en détail; il faut mettre papiers sur table.

(Which is the more credible of the two, Moses Or China?)

It is not a question of a rough estimate. I tell you that there is something to confuse and something to enlighten us.

With this one word I destroy all your arguments. 'But China obscures things', you say; and I reply: 'China obscures the issues, but the light is there to be found; look for it.'

...

For this reason we must look at it closely; we must produce the documents.

- Pascal, pensées.¹

This enigmatic exchange between Pascal and his sceptical alter ego provides a useful point of entry to a discussion of the Jesuit 'Figurists'. Pascal was writing some fifty years before some of the French Jesuits in China developed their attempt to reconcile 'Moses' and 'China', that is to reconcile the data of the Bible, with early Chinese History and religion as represented in the Confucian tradition. But he had perceived with characteristic acuity what was to become one of the most hotly contested battle-grounds between orthodox Christians and 'enlightened' thinkers. Few, if any, of his contemporaries, and certainly not the Jesuits who were the main channel of information about China, were aware of the explosive implications of their interpretation of China.

¹ Fragment 593 in the Brunschwig edition of Pascal's Oeuvres, Paris, 1904, XIV, p.33. Translation by M. Turnell in his edition of the Pensées, London, 1962, p.229.

What Pascal saw, and what later thinkers saw more and more clearly, was that, ultimately, the new view of the history of mankind and the variety of human experience, deriving from reports about China and other non-Western civilizations, could not be reconciled with the accepted interpretation of the Bible.

Pascal clearly wished to preserve the latter, well summed up in the 'Moses' of his 'Moses or China' dichotomy. 'Moses' implied the orthodox view of the Pentateuch as the work of Moses, and a literal reading of the Old Testament as an authoritative account of the early history of mankind, and the acceptance of a date for the beginning of that history some 4,000 years before Christ. If the Chinese account of their own history did not square with this, then the Chinese were wrong. However, as a close reading of the passage from his notebooks reveals, Pascal was far too sensitive and honest to allow the question to rest there. How are we to explain the way the Chinese depict their beginnings as a nation and the source of their view of man's place in the universe? Perhaps we must reinterpret the ancient Chinese books in the light of the Bible? Perhaps, even, we must reinterpret the Bible to some extent in the light of the early history of China?

Virgile Pinot in his brilliant study of the impact of 'China' on European thought, argues that we should read Pascal's remarks about China in the light of his distinction between the 'fleshly' and 'figurative' meanings of Scripture; that, just as he wished to resolve apparent contradictions in the text of the Bible by distinguishing a 'literal' and a 'spiritual' sense, so, he suggests, Pascal was arguing that Chinese history may be literally false, but figuratively true.² I am not sure that Pinot is correct in this interpretation. The passage is far too obscure both in wording and in logical articulation for any degree of certainty as to Pascal's thought on the subject. If this interpretation is correct, however, we must regard Pascal's as the first 'figurist' interpretation

² Pinot, La Chine et la Formation de l'Esprit Philosophique en France, pp.347-348.

of the Chinese classics. 'Moses' is to be accepted as normative and 'China' reinterpreted in the light of 'Moses'.

The majority of late seventeenth century commentators accepted both 'Moses' and 'China' and attempted to reconcile them. The Jesuits of the China mission, as we have already seen, assumed that the traditional Chinese chronology was authentic, at least for the most part, and adopted that version of biblical chronology which best fitted the Chinese dates. The key point around which all reconciliation centred was the date of the biblical Deluge. If the Deluge were universal, as the orthodox interpretation held, then China could only have been inhabited after the Deluge, and sufficient time had to be allowed for the settlement of China by the descendants of Noah, and the development of an Empire which kept accurate historical records.

It was seen quite early in the history of the mission that the shorter Vulgate chronology caused insuperable difficulties, even if the earlier figures of Chinese chronology were regarded as mythical. The birth of the Emperor Yao, whose reign was supposed to coincide with the beginning of the use of an exact dating system, was thus placed at the most some eighty years after the Deluge. Adam Schall's solution was to adopt the chronology of the Roman martyrology as official for the mission. This was a version of the longer Septuagint chronology, which placed the creation in 5199 B.C. rather than around 4000 B.C. and the Deluge at around 2950 B.C.³ Later Jesuit works, however, pushed the Chinese dates back uncomfortably close to 2950 B.C. Martino Martini, in his Historiae Sinicae Decas Prima of 1658, began his chronological tables of the Chinese Empire in 2697 B.C. with Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor, but noted that two earlier Emperors, Shen Nung and Fu Hsi, were reputed to have reigned between them 255 years, bringing the beginning of the Empire to 2952 B.C. He, therefore, advocated the use of a longer Septuagint chronology to allow sufficient time for the

³ See Schall's memorandum on the subject, published by H. Bernard-Maitre as an appendix to his article, 'L'Encyclopédie Astronomique du Père Schall', in Monumenta Serica, III, 1938.

colonising and development of China.⁴ Couplet, in the 'Chronological Table' appended to the Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, attempted to minimise the problem by simultaneously using the Septuagint chronology, and casting doubts on all dates before Huang Ti. But the damage had been done. It was now known in Europe that Chinese chronology went back to nearly 3000 B.C. and that the Vulgate text of the Bible, declared authoritative by the Council of Trent, could be discredited from Chinese sources.

What was even more damaging was the timing of Martini's work. It was published only three years after Isaac de la Peyrere had published his book on the 'Pre-Adamites',⁵ which attempted to prove that there were men before Adam, and that only the Jews had descended from Adam. The full title of the work contains the argument in a nut-shell: 'The Pre-Adamites, or an interpretation of verses 12, 13 and 14 of the 5th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, from which the beginnings of man are proved to precede Adam; with a theological system derived from the hypothesis of the pre-Adamites'. La Peyrere argued that the passage in the Epistle to the Romans proved that sin entered the world with Adam, but that there were men to whom sin was not imputed and these, therefore, could not be descended from Adam. His exegetical arguments were specious and easily refuted, but he attempted to bolster them with a general reference to the newly discovered lands, including China, whose inhabitants were probably not descended from Adam. It is this line of argument that made an impression. The free-thinking Parisian physician, Gui Patin, observed at the time: 'I have met in this town a man who says that under the sun there is a new world inhabited by new men, with new forests and new seas, just like our own. And I met another who said that America and terra Australis nobis incognita was a new world which was not of the creation of Adam, and that Jesus Christ

⁴ See Pinot, La Chine, pp.200-201.

⁵ Prae-Adamitae sive exercitatio super versibus duodecimo, decimo tertio et decimo quarto capitis quinti Epistolae D. Pauli ad Romanos, quibus inducuntur Primi Hominis ante Adamum conditi, Systema theologicum ex Prae-Adamitarum hypothesis, Amsterdam, 1655.

did not come to save them'.⁶ Leo Strauss, in Spinoza's Critique of Religion, has noted Spinoza's debt to La Peyrère's argument about the implausibility of such a wide dispersal of mankind in the short orthodox chronology;⁷ and through Spinoza's writings, Bayle, d'Holbach, Diderot,⁸ and Voltaire,⁹ absorbed many of La Peyrère's ideas. La Peyrère himself was forced to recant to save his skin, but with the publication of Martini's Chinese history, the debate renewed. Isaac Vossius, the polymath who successively served Queen Christian of Sweden and Louis XIV, only to end his life, despite his notorious sceptical opinions, as Canon of Windsor, drew heavily on Martini and Chinese evidence in his Dissertatio de vera aetate mundi of 1659. He accepted the Septuagint 'long' chronology for dating the age of the world, but he proposed that the Deluge could not have been universal. George Horn, who replied to Vossius in the same year, was forced to an extreme position to counter him. Horn was, as Pinot says, 'a man of imagination with a light veneer of science'.¹⁰ Knowing no Chinese, he turned to a translation of the Persian chronicler Ulug-beg, which alleged that the Cathayans believe the world is 88,640,075 years old.

⁶ Correspondance, Paris, 1907, I, pp.296-297, quoted in Pinot, La Chine, p.196.

⁷ Spinoza's Critique of Religion, New York, 1965, Pt.I, Ch.III.

⁸ See, for example, Diderot's Encyclopédie article, 'Chinois, Philosophie de', in which he not only demolishes the Vulgate chronology by reference to Fu Hsi who 'reigned several centuries before the Deluge', but poses the choice between the chronology of our sacred books and those of the Chinese. Of course, he says ironically, we must reject the story of Fu Hsi 'despite the universal testimony of his nation' as mythical, since his mother conceived through a rainbow, rather than through human agency. Thus he implicitly questions both the argument for the existence of God from universal consent, and the biblical mythology.

⁹ Voltaire, in his article 'Chine' in the Dictionnaire Philosophique, defends the 'prodigious antiquity' of China, and accuses the figure-jugglers like the Jesuit Pétau, of saving biblical chronology only at the expense of absurdities such as alleging a population for the earth some hundred times longer than the present, only 285 years after the flood.

¹⁰ Pinot, La Chine, p.205.

Everyone knows, argued Horn, that the Cathayans are the Chinese, and this shows how little faith can be placed in Chinese chronology.¹¹ Even Horn realised how thin this argument was, and in 1666 in his Arca Noae, 'Noah's Ark', he came up with a new approach to the question which foreshadows in an interesting way the Jesuit Figurists. Once more he assumes that the Deluge was universal and that the Vulgate chronology must be upheld. If this is so the most ancient Chinese rulers must have preceded the Deluge, and this can only be so if they were in fact not rulers of China, but the Patriarchs and rulers of the Hebrews. Fu Hsi must be Adam, Huang-ti must be Enoch, Yao must be Noah, and so on.¹²

No one seems to have taken up Horn's argument at the time, but it did provide a logical escape from the dilemma posed by 'Moses' and 'China'. If 'China' could not be reconciled with 'Moses' as chronology, perhaps it could be reconciled as mythology, without sacrificing the uniqueness and normative status of the Judaeo-Christian revelation. To the end of the seventeenth century attempts were made to avoid the crux of the problem by invoking the Septuagint chronology¹³ but, by 1700, the Vulgate chronology seems to have triumphed. Bossuet's confident dating of the beginning of the world in 4004 B.C. and the Deluge in 2348 B.C.¹⁴ is the best known expression of this revived orthodoxy, but it seems to have been almost universal amongst orthodox Christians. It had serious consequences for those, such as the Jesuits of the China mission, who had faith in the authenticity of ancient Chinese records. They found that their colleagues in Europe looked askance at the manuscripts they sent to Europe. Etienne

¹¹ Pinot, La Chine, pp.206-207.

¹² See Pinot, La Chine, pp.207-209.

¹³ The best of these was Paul Pezron's L'Antiquité des Temps rétablie, Paris, 1687, which was a general discussion of ancient chronology aimed, according to the Avertissement, at 'defending the authority of the Sacred Books against the Pre-Adamites, the Libertines, and others of that ilk, and at establishing Religion among the Orientals, principally the Chinese and their neighbours'.

¹⁴ In the marginal notes to the Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle.

Souciet S.J., a famous biblical scholar and expert on chronology and astronomy, was a firm upholder of the Vulgate chronology.¹⁵ It was he who edited for publication several of the works of Antoine Gaubil,¹⁶ and Gaubil complained bitterly of Souciet's 'corrections',¹⁷ and the suppression of his works.¹⁸ De Mailla's Histoire generale de la Chine, sent to Europe in 1727, seems to have been refused publication for similar reasons.¹⁹

Both Gaubil and de Mailla advocated a position of austere scientific objectivity on questions of Chinese chronology. There are several passages in Gaubil's letters in which he argues that he is simply reporting what reputable Chinese scholars say, and translating the ancient Chinese works.²⁰

¹⁵ See 'Fastes du Monde ou Abrégé de Chronologie' in his Recueil des Dissertations, II, Paris, 1726.

¹⁶ Published in Souciet's Observations mathématiques, astronomiques, géographiques, chronologiques, et physiques, tirées des anciens livres chinois, ou faites nouvellement aux Indes et à la Chine, 3 vols, Paris, 1729-1732.

¹⁷ See, for example, his ms. notes int.I of the Pei-t'ang copy of the Observations cited in the Catalogue de la Bibliothèque du Pe-t'ang, Peking, 1949 (reprinted Paris, 1969), p.178, no.656; and his letter to de l'Isle, 13 October 1754, in Journal Asiatique 2 s., X, p.386, and Correspondance, p.776. In a letter to Souciet, thanking him for sending the first volume of the Observations, Gaubil admits that part of his dissatisfaction arose from the fact that Souciet printed notes not intended for publication (letter of 16 August 1731, Correspondance, pp.274-275) but he also sent Souciet a long list of 'fautes' (Correspondance, pp.282-288) and the next year complained bitterly of the 'petite persécution' which had overtaken him, for sending Souciet information (Correspondance, pp.280-281). Joseph Brucker in his 'Correspondance Scientifique d'un Missionnaire Francais à Péking au dix-huitième siècle: le Père Antoine Gaubil, d'apres des documents inédits', Revue du Monde Catholique, 1883-1844, cites some passages omitted in the published version of Gaubil's Histoire de l'astronomie Chinoise which strongly defended the Septuagint chronology (pp.45-46 in the 1884 offprint).

¹⁸ See, for example, his letter to de Guignes, 31 October 1755, in Journal Asiatique, 2 s., X, 1832, pp.390-391; and his letter to de l'Isle, 3 November 1755, on the suppression of his chronological work, and his Shu-ching translation, ibid., p.397

¹⁹ It was eventually published, after the suppression of the Society of Jesus, in Paris in 1777-1785, by the Abbé Grosier.

²⁰ Correspondance pp.64, 122-124, 462.

If the Chinese evidence cannot be reconciled with the accepted scriptural chronology, then the scripture scholars should look anew at their chronology. Perhaps the strongest statement of this view on the part of the missionaries is to be found in a letter from Joseph de Mailla to Etienne Souciet of 26 October 1727:²¹

There is one point in Your Reverence's letter which demands an answer, namely your remark about chronology, a point of consequence for Europe on account of the great difference between the Vulgate and the Septuagint. This ought not, it seems to me, to bother those who examine the chronology of the Chinese, because it is not a question of making up a system, but of facts which must be taken into account, and which good faith and the love for truth do not allow to be tampered with by those who report them. That alone is what we ought to be concerned with.²²

These are admirable sentiments, but they were the remarks of a missionary far removed from the European debate. The hard-pressed apologists for orthodox Christianity, when faced with the choice between 'Moses' and 'China', especially after the decisions of the Sorbonne and Rome in the Rites case, were inclined to sacrifice 'China'; while their opponents were often quite cynical in their exploitation of 'China' in order to undermine the credibility of 'Moses'.²³ Figurism was an attempt to save both 'Moses' and 'China' and to evade the dilemma of conflicting chronologies, by ultimately reducing 'China' to 'Moses'.

²¹ Published by H.Cordier in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp.71-80. The original is in Chantilly: Brotier, 110, no.17, ff.31-36.

²² Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, p.72.

²³ See, for example, Voltaire's letter 'Sur l'Athéisme de la Chine' in which he moves from a defence of the Chinese against the charge of atheism, to a general relativism in which all the conceptions of the deity held by mankind are thrown open to question (Lettres Chinoises..., Lettre III, Oeuvres, Paris, 1827, t.XXXVII, pp.20-21); and his delightfully satirical dialogue between the Emperor of China and Frere Rigolet, in which the intolerance of European Christians is contrasted with Chinese tolerance, with the final neat manoeuvre of the Emperor expelling these intolerant fanatics from his domain in the name of tolerance ('L'Empereur de la Chine et Frère Rigolet' in Oeuvres, t.L, Paris, 1826, pp. 163-189).

I. THE SOURCES OF FIGURISM

To the modern observer, much of the seventeenth and eighteenth century debate over questions of comparative chronology and comparative mythology seems mere shadow boxing. The refusal to place the bible in the category of myth, to regard it as anything but literal history, led to a reductionist approach to the question. The history of other civilizations could be demythologized, but all had to be judged ultimately by the touchstone of revealed history, by the Bible. The attempt of the Figurists in China to interpret the Chinese records of their ancient history and beliefs as a mythologized version of the common pre-Deluge history of mankind as recorded in the Bible, was but one, although admittedly an extreme, example of this line of argument.

To place the Figurists firmly in context, it would be necessary to discuss the state of the science of comparative mythology in the late seventeenth century, especially in France. I shall not attempt that task here, but merely list and comment briefly on a few sources specifically mentioned by the Figurists themselves.²⁴ Even such a superficial study should demonstrate that 'Figurism' was not an isolated or aberrant phenomenon, but an application to Chinese tradition of methods well developed in a general or other specific context elsewhere.

The line of argument which saw various traditions as bearers of an esoteric or unrecognized body of doctrine ultimately deriving from a primitive revelation, in fact goes well back into the Renaissance. The Figurist thinkers, in

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I hope to investigate the subject of the Figurists' sources and of Figurism in general in appropriate depth, at a later date. The writers cited below are all explicitly mentioned by one or more of the lading Figurists and many of the works referred to, were until recently in the Pei-t'ang Library in Peking. Verhaeren's Catalogue lists, amongst others, the following: No.1167, a 1616 Latin edition of the Cabbala; No.1603, Marsilio Ficino's edition of Iamblichus of Chalcis; Nos.1905-1931, various works of Athanasius Kircher, including the Arithmologia, the Oedipus Aegyptiacus (with stamp of the French mission); No.4027, a Greek and Latin edition of Iamblichus.

their abundant references to Pico della Mirandola's works on the Cabbala,²⁵ to studies on the Corpus Hermeticum, and to Iamblichus of Chalcis' work on the Egyptian mysteries²⁶ testify to this sort of influence, and their predilection for the cabbalistic and mysterious I Ching amongst all the Chinese classics is partly explained by this interest. More directly, the Renaissance concern with mysteries and prophecies, and with the foreshadowing of Christian doctrines in pagan antiquity was channelled to the Figurists through Paul Beurrier.²⁷

Beurrier, Canon of Saint-Etienne du Mont in Paris, wrote his 'Mirror of the Christian Religion in the Triple Law, of Nature, of Moses, and of the Gospel',²⁸ to serve as an 'aid and help to apostolic missionaries travelling to the Orient',²⁹ apparently specifically for the newly appointed French Vicars-Apostolic.³⁰ But, according to his Memoirs, the method had been tried out successfully on his libertine parishioners.³¹ This double concern with European waverers and Chinese pagans, with 'the confirming of the faith (of Christians), the conversion of (European) atheists, and of infidels of all

²⁵ I have not found a copy of Pico in the Pei-t'ang Catalogue, but Foucquet lists as one of the works sent him from France, 'Pic de la Mirandole 2 tomes' ('Premier Supplement du Catalogue livre au P. Dentrecolles', Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 565, f.593v).

²⁶ De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum.

²⁷ On Beurrier, see Pinot, La Chine, pp.290-292. He is referred to by Foucquet (letter to Hervieu, 30 September 1711 - Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, f.79v), by Bouvet (several references including the 'Examen Examinis'. Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f.240v) and de Prémare (see Pinot, La Chine, p.291, n.28).

²⁸ Speculum Christianae religionis in triplici lege, naturali, mosaica et evangelica, Paris, 1663 (I have used the 2 vol. Paris, 1666 ed.).

²⁹ 'Prologus ad Candidum Lectorem' in the Speculum (unpaginated).

³⁰ Pinot, La Chine, p.290, n.28.

³¹ See the story of the death-bed conversion of a freethinking doctor in Pinot, La Chine, pp.290-291, n.28.

kinds',³² was to be that of the Jesuit Figurists too. What they sought was a universal method, a key to all mythologies.

The key itself was the postulation of a primitive revelation to Adam, preserved through the family of Noah and scattered amongst the various nations of mankind after the Deluge. The Hebrews partly preserved this revelation in the Bible, but traces of it can be found in the literature and customs of other peoples. Beurrier attempted to demonstrate the truth of this thesis by gathering material from many sources, but especially from the voluminous writings of Athanasius Kircher. With an ingenuity that considerably outdistanced his scholarship, he finds traces of a revelation of the Trinity, the coming of Christ, of Paradise and Hell, in the Greek and Latin classics, and in the ancient records of Egypt and China. The Hebrew Cabbala, the mysterious Egyptian lore of Hermes or Mercurius Trismegistus, the sybilline 'prophecies', and the 64 mystic symbols of Fu Hsi, are all produced as evidence both for the existence of special revelations and for the transmission of the Adamic revelation. The latter was transmitted to the Egyptians by Shem, the son of Noah, and founder of the first Egyptian dynasty;³³ and the mysterious Hermes is identified, after Kircher, with Enoch.³⁴ China was settled by the descendants of Noah after the Deluge, and Fu Hsi, the first Chinese Emperor, must be one of the sons or nephews of Shem, who recorded in his hexagrams a kind of graphic representation of the primitive revelation.³⁵ Later Chinese philosophers, especially Confucius, also prophesied the coming of the Messiah.³⁶

³² The sub-title of the Speculum reads 'In quo potissimum faciunt ad fidei confirmationem, & conversionem Atheorum, & quorumvis infidelium, sincere exhibentur'.

³³ Speculum, Lib.II, cap.XIII, p.235.

³⁴ Speculum, Lib.II, cap.XXIX, p.310. It should be noted that Beurrier does not, as the Figurists later did, go on to identify Enoch with Fu Hsi too.

³⁵ Speculum, Lib.II, cap.XIV, p.258.

³⁶ The chapter on Confucius in the Speculum, Lib.II, Cap.XX, is entitled, 'De Confusio Philosopho, et Propheta Sinensi'. The major evidence for Confucius' prophetic role is the legend of the mysterious ch'i-lin, or unicorn, which appeared to Confucius' mother before his birth. Beurrier interprets this as a Messianic prophecy.

In his main treatment of China,³⁷ Beurrier scours Martini's History for Chinese terms which he then derives from the Hebrew and interprets as prophetic. He seems to have used no other source, and his efforts are fanciful and unconvincing, but the Figurist thesis is present in its entirety: that the Chinese are descended from the sons of Noah, that they have preserved traces of the primitive revelation, and that their ancient books are prophetic. Thus, forty years before the Jesuit Figurists we find the bald statement:

It is absolutely certain that the Chinese held the same truths about the creation of the world, the production of the first man and his fall, the Deluge, the Trinity, the Redemption, angels and demons, Purgatory, the eternal reward of the just and the punishment of the evil, etc., as the holy Fathers and Patriarchs.³⁸

Beurrier, as we have seen, derived much of his material from the Jesuit, Athanasius Kircher. Kircher's influence on the Jesuit Figurists was enormous, both directly, and indirectly through writers such as Beurrier. The Figurists cite him frequently³⁹ both as a source and in justification of their enterprise; and, indeed, his works display a combination of enormous erudition, an encyclopedic knowledge of languages, sciences and literature, and almost total lack of critical judgement, in many respects similar to the characteristics of the Figurists. Kircher's only work on China, the China Monumentis qua sacris qua profanis...Illustrata, appeared after Beurrier's Speculum,⁴⁰ but his early works on the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics⁴¹ had been used by Beurrier. In these, not only did he freely identify ancient sages with biblical figures, Zoroaster with Shem,⁴² Mercurius Trismegistus with

³⁷ Lib.II, cap.XIX, 'De Praenotationibus Christianae Veritatis apud Sinas'.

³⁸ Speculum, p.260.

³⁹ See, for example, Bouvet's Examen Examinis, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f.243r.

⁴⁰ It was first published in Amsterdam in 1667, and appeared in a French edition, La Chine Illustrée, in 1670.

⁴¹ The Prodomus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus, Rome, 1636; the Lingua Aegyptica restituta, Rome, 1643; the Obeliscus Pamphilius, Rome, 1650; and the 3 vol. Oedipus Aegyptiacus, Rome, 1652-1654.

⁴² Obeliscus Pamphilius, p.13.

Enoch; but he also proposed the theory of the transmission from Adam of a 'supernatural science',⁴³ preserved in the 'hieroglyphic theology' of Egypt.⁴⁴ His early works mention China in passing, but in a confused and misleading fashion.⁴⁵ The China...Illustrata takes advantage of the works of Boym,⁴⁶ Grueber, and Martini, but all the information about China is forced into the mould of his earlier studies. The Chinese language, religion, and customs are, he argues, derived from Egypt,⁴⁷ and this obsession dominates the work. It was not, in fact, Kircher's work on China which influenced the Figurists, but other of his works: his Arithmologia⁴⁸ of 1665, for example, with its theory of the mystical significance of numbers, and its distinction between the 'vulgar' and superstitious cabbala, and 'the true and real mystique of numbers';⁴⁹ Noah's Ark⁵⁰

⁴³ Oedipus Aegyptiacus, I, p.79.

⁴⁴ Oedipus Aegyptiacus, II, pp.497-510.

⁴⁵ For example, Ch.II of Syntagma V of Oedipus Aegyptiacus, I, purports to deal with 'the Idolatry of the Chinese', but is nothing but a mismatch of snippets from Trigault with materials on Indian religion. He appears to identify the illustration of an Indian God (Shiva?) on p.399, as that of Confucius.

⁴⁶ Kircher seems to have met Boym in 1652, because the first volume of the Oedipus Aegyptiacus, published in that year, contains a eulogy of the Emperor Ferdinand III (No.XXVI) in Chinese, signed by Boym and 'Andreas Chin'. But there is no trace of Boym's hand in the work itself, unlike the China...Illustrata.

⁴⁷ See, especially, Bk.IV, c.I, p.134.

⁴⁸ The full title is Arithmologia sive de abditis Numerorum mysteriis qua Origo, Antiquitas, et fabrica Numerorum exponitur; abditae eorundem proprietates demonstrantur; denique post Cabalisticum, Arabum, Gnosticorum, aliorumque magicas impietates detectas, vera et licita mystica signification ostenditur.

⁴⁹ 'Vera & realis numerorum mystagogica' - 'Praefatio ad Lectorem' (unpaginated).

⁵⁰ Arca Noë, Amsterdam, 1675.

which dealt with the dispersal of the sons of Noah through the world; and the Tower of Babel⁵¹ which postulated Hebrew as the primitive language, traces of which could be found in other ancient languages.⁵²

All that was needed to complete the theoretical framework of Figurism, was a more explicit development of the theory of 'vestiges' of revelation in ancient traditions. This was provided by two French writers, cited frequently by the Figurists, Huet and Thomassin. Pierre Daniel Huet, Bishop of Avranches, in his Demonstratio Evangelica,⁵³ attempted to discern 'vestiges of the Mosaic doctrine'⁵⁴ in the writings and history of Greece, Rome, Egypt, India, etc. He makes little mention of China,⁵⁵ but it is his method which influenced the Figurists, and this is clear and fully developed. The Bible is accepted as 'true history'⁵⁶ and other religious traditions are regarded as degenerate versions of Mosaic religion which can be used as evidence in a 'geometric demonstration' of the truth of Christianity.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Turris Babel, sive Archontologia qua primo priscorum post diluvium hominum vita, mores rerumque gestarum magnitudo, secundo turris fabrica, civitatumque exstructio...explicatur, Amsterdam, 1679.

⁵² See Lib.III, cap.V. Kircher's contemporary, the Englishman John Webb, used many of the same arguments to prove that, not Hebrew, but Chinese, was the primitive language. See John Webb, The Antiquity of China, London, 1678; and the articles on Webb by J.D.Frodsham, 'Chinese and the Primitive Language: John Webb's Contribution to Seventeenth Century Sinology', Asian Studies, II.3, December 1964, pp.389-408; and Ch'en Shou-yi, 'John Webb, a Forgotten Page in the History of Early Sinology in Europe', Chinese Social and Political Science Review, XIX.3, October 1935, pp.295-330.

⁵³ The first edition appeared in 1679, and there were five other editions by 1722.

⁵⁴ 'Mosaicae doctrinae vestigia'.

⁵⁵ Only two in the first, 1679, edition. On p.126 he mentions Martini's exposition of Chinese chronology, and on p.326, he cites Confucius as having prophesied the Messiah.

⁵⁶ Verax historia.

⁵⁷ 'probari potest Religionis Christianae veritas eo genere demonstrationis, quod ne minus certum sit, quam demonstrationes ipsae geometriae' - Demonstratio Evangelica, p.3. For a full treatment of Huet's methodology, see A. Dupront, Pierre Daniel Huet et l'exégèse comparatiste au XVIIe siècle, Paris, 1930.

Similarly, the Oratorian, Louis Thomassin, in Méthode d'étudier et d'enseigner chrétiennement les poètes (1681), discovered in the ancient poets and philosophers 'many remains of the Theology of the Patriarchs before the Deluge'. Their works have been misinterpreted by later commentators, they have been corrupted by the demons, and confused with false doctrines, but he who knows how to read them aright, will find in them the pure sources of revealed religion.⁵⁸

The authors discussed, it will be noted, were all, with the exception of Kircher, French, and their works were all in fashion during the 1660s-1680s, when those members of the French mission who were to become Figurists were being educated in Jesuit colleges in France. It is not at all surprising to find such men approaching the Chinese classics in the spirit of Beurrier, Huet and Thomassin, and the logical consequence of this approach was the fully developed Figurist system.

Some elements of Figurism were commonplaces of earlier missionary writings about China. Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza's History of 1585 had postulated the peopling of China by the nephews of Noah.⁵⁹ Ruggieri had seen 'prophecies' and 'oracles' of Christianity in Chinese beliefs.⁶⁰ Longobardo, following Joao Rodriguez, had identified Fu Hsi with Zoroaster.⁶¹ Gabriel Magalhaes, in his History of China, had commented that the I Ching was regarded by the Chinese as 'the most profound, the most learned and mysterious of any (book) in the world' and attributed it to Fu Hsi, the first king of China,⁶² who reigned shortly after the Deluge.⁶³ Louis Le Comte had even written of the 'vestiges' of the knowledge of the true God transmitted by the sons of Noah, to be found in the Chinese

⁵⁸ See Pinot, La Chine, pp.348-349.

⁵⁹ The History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China, London, 1853, (Hakluyt Society, Vols.XIV and XV) I, p.12.

⁶⁰ Commentarii (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 101, II) f.310v.

⁶¹ Traité, pp.11-12.

⁶² A New History of China, London, 1688, p.98.

⁶³ Ibid., pp.251-252.

histories.⁶⁴ These were, however, all works intended for a European audience, for whom the problem posed by China was one of relating the antiquity of the Chinese Empire to the accepted Biblical framework. And none of them gave central importance or systematic development to these comments.

As we have seen, as early as 1664 a Chinese Christian, Li Tsu-po, had linked the Chinese doctrine of Heaven (t'ien-hsueh) with the earlier teaching of 'the men of Judea' from whom they were descended.⁶⁵ But Li's fate at the hands of Yang Kuang-hsien had warned the Jesuits, if warning was needed, of the dangers of this line of argument. Whatever their private thoughts on the subject, they saw clearly that their major problem was the foreignness of Christianity, and it would simply compound their difficulty to claim that Confucianism itself was foreign in origin. It was safer to remain silent on the question of origins, or, as Ricci had done, to appeal to 'natural reason' as the source of the early Chinese notions of God and morality.

By around 1700, when the Figurist system was germinating in China, conditions had changed. K'ang-hsi's apparent interest in Christianity and his curiosity about esoteric questions of science and literature, suggested to some of the Jesuits at court that a new approach, at once scientific and based on Chinese sources, might at last produce the fulfilment of their dreams - the conversion of the Emperor. The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, now over a century old, seemed based on an old-fashioned and inadequate theological foundation which concentrated in scholastic fashion of the definition of concepts, rather than on their historical origins. The Rites Controversy had revealed the vulnerability of a position which asserted the equivalence of 'natural' religion to 'revealed' religion. To men who came from an intellectual

⁶⁴ Nouveaux Mémoires, II, p.89.

⁶⁵ T'ien-hsueh ch'uan-kai, in T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, II, p.1058.

milieu in which the chronology, mythology, and customs of non-European civilizations were being used to undermine traditional beliefs, Figurism must have appeared the universal solution. If they could demonstrate from the ancient books of China that the Chinese had preserved vestiges of a primitive revelation, and that their history was really a 'figurative' version of the pre-diluvian biblical history of mankind, they would, at one and the same time, confirm the faith of the European sceptic and convince the Chinese of the equivalence of Christianity and their own most ancient beliefs. It was this seductive vision that explains the persistence, dedication and obstinacy of the Figurists.

II. THE FIGURISTS AND THEIR CRITICS

One of the most serious difficulties facing anyone seeking to give a consistent exposition of the Figurists and their views, is the divergences amongst the Figurists themselves.⁶⁶ A close view discloses not one system of interpretation of the Chinese classics, but several. Jean Bayard, a missionary sympathetic to the group, wrote to Etienne Souciet in 1722 that it was their lack of common purpose which was leading to their undoing.

Everything that can be done, has been done, to persuade these four fathers [Bouvet, Gollet, Foucquet and de Prémare] to mutually aid each other, and to direct their studies to one common end by the same propositions. No one has got anywhere, and I fear that the differences in their ideas will harm the common design they have to demonstrate that the mysteries of Christianity⁶⁷ have been known since the beginning of the world.

This comment seems to me to be particularly perceptive. All they did have in common was their general conviction that in the Chinese classics 'the mysteries of Christianity' could be found concealed in some fashion or other. Their methods and the object of their studies varied enormously.

The term 'Figurist' seems to have been first applied to the group by the French savant Nicholas Fréret, or at least so a reference in a letter of Antoine Gaubil to Fréret of

⁶⁶ It is this assumption that the Figurists were exponents of a common system that vitiates to a considerable extent Arnold Rowbotham's article, 'The Jesuit Figurists and Eighteenth Century Religious Thought', Journal of the History of Ideas, XVII, 1956, pp.471-485. Rowbotham's study is a useful introduction to the subject, but based largely on published sources. The voluminous archival material on the French Jesuits in China during the first three decades of the eighteenth century presents a far more complex picture than Rowbotham allows. In this chapter I shall simply indicate the lines along which an adequate treatment of the subject might proceed. At a future date, I hope to be able to fill in this outline.

⁶⁷ Bayard to Souciet, 1722 (? marked 'recue le 28e Juin 1723'), published by H. Cordier in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp.55-60; this passage on p.58. The original is in Chantilly: Brotier IIO, no.10, ff.16-19.

28 October 1733 would suggest.⁶⁸ Gaubil, in the same letter, gives a list of some of the theories of the 'Figurists' which provides a convenient starting point for our investigation, and a tentative definition of 'Figurism'. They believe, he says, that in the Chinese Ching or classics, there are to be found 'vestiges' of the pure ancient religion of mankind: the creation, the fall of man, the flood etc. There are also 'prophecies' of the God-man to come, the Trinity, the Eucharist etc., 'very clearly marked'. Finally, the figures of the ancient Chinese kings in the classical version of early Chinese history are regarded as concealing the 'saints of the Old Testament', and the events are transposed from China to Mesopotamia, Judea and the earthly Paradise.⁶⁹ It is apparent that only the last of these features of 'Figurism' in fact involved an emphasis on the correspondence between the 'figures' of the Ching and the Old Testament. The other two, the theory of 'vestiges', and the theory of 'prophecies' were, in principle if not in fact, quite distinct. In the writings of the Figurists we shall find all three lines of argument developed, but with a differing emphasis. Bouvet, the founder of the system, had comparatively little to say about 'figures'; the stress in his work was quite definitely on 'prophecy', and his favourite field of study as the I-ching or 'Book of Changes' which gave full scope to this propensity. Foucquet, on the other hand, was primarily concerned with demonstrating that the traditional version of Chinese origins, especially in the Shu-ching or 'Book of History', was an elaborate allegory concealing beneath its 'figures' the Old Testament

⁶⁸ 'Le nom de figuristes, que vous avez donné à plusieurs de nos missionnaires, m'a extrêmement plu...' (Gaubil, Correspondance, p.363). Rowbotham, op. cit., p.473, further derives it from the ideas of the Jansenist Abbé d'Etémare, but I find little in common between d'Etémare's millenarianism and the Jesuit Figurists in China.

⁶⁹ Correspondance, p.364. Note that initially Gaubil was far less hostile to the Figurists than he was by 1733, but he always objected to their denial of all historical reality to the first three dynasties, and to aspects of their theology. See especially Gaubil to Souciet, 5 November 1725, Correspondance, p.99; and Gaubil to ? , 21 October 1726, Correspondance, pp.121-124.

history. De Prémare, the third important 'Figurist' broke with Bouvet and Foucquet over the historical character of the classics. He upheld their basic historicity but claimed to detect in them 'vestiges' of an even earlier doctrine, the primitive revelation itself. Thus, we might argue that, in the strict sense, only Foucquet was a 'figurist'. Bouvet seems to have upheld a 'figurist' position, but to have gone far beyond it to a general theory of symbolism and prophecy;⁷⁰ while de Prémare largely abandoned the 'figurist' aspects of the system and concentrated on 'vestiges'.

On the whole, I think that 'Figurism' is a misleading term and, but for the fact that it has become accepted usage, would be better abandoned. Father Vincent du Tartre, an acerbic critic of Bouvet and his followers, coined a number of colourful but pertinent terms to describe them and their ideas: 'the sect of Père Bouvet',⁷¹ or 'Bouvetism';⁷² 'this hieroglyphic science';⁷³ 'the new family of Enochists';⁷⁴ 'the Fu Hsi-Enochist Fathers';⁷⁵ 'the I-chingists'.⁷⁶ All of these are accurate enough as applied to Bouvet and his followers and highlight many of the main features of Bouvet's system as seen by his contemporaries, but they are either too specific or too general to serve as labels for the movement as a whole. On the other hand, Louis Porquet, in a letter defending the group, refers to 'père Bouvet and those who with him mythologise the

⁷⁰ Note the order of precedence, as well as the language, of his description of his system in an early letter to the Abbé Bignon, 15 September 1704: 'Mais si on en juge par la signification symbolique des anciens jeroglyphiques, et par le sens intime et figuré des livres canoniques ...' (Rome:ASJ, Fondo Gesuitico, 731, f.1).

⁷¹ Letter of du Tartre, 25 March 1709, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 173, f.50v.

⁷² Letter of 12 January 1709, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 173, f.3.

⁷³ Letter of 25 March 1709, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 173, f.50v.

⁷⁴ Letter of 12 January 1709, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 173, f.4.

⁷⁵ 'Les Pp. fohienochistes', in 'Quelques reflexions en passant sur la lettre du R.P. Dentrecolles du 8 Nov. 1710', 24 January 1711, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, ff.5-32, several times repeated.

⁷⁶ Letter of du Tartre, 30 October 1722, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 183, f.66r.

personnages of the Chinese Ching' as 'the Mythologists'.⁷⁷ This is attractive from a number of points of view. It links the group appropriately with the proponents of comparative mythology of the late seventeenth century. It emphasises their common concern with demythologising the Chinese classics and detecting their biblical origins and point of departure. It is wider in its implications than 'Figurism', allowing for their 'discovery' of prophecies and vestiges of religious concepts, as well as of transmogrified biblical personages. It does not, perhaps, adequately characterize the preoccupation of Bouvet, and to a lesser extent de Prémare, with symbols, mathematical and 'hieroglyphic'. In modern usage, however, symbolism tends to be regarded as a central focus of the science of mythology, and the interpretation of the symbols of the Chinese classics was only possible once their general mythological status was established. Figurism was, in effect, the mythological interpretation of Confucianism.

All sources are agreed that Joachim Bouvet was the founder of Figurism. Some contemporary accounts even claim that it was conceived by him before his departure from Europe in 1685,⁷⁸ and a letter to his sister, written from Siam in June 1686, shows him adopting a typically 'figurist' approach to his first encounter with Asian religion.⁷⁹ The explanation for this clearly lies in his studies before leaving France, his imbibing of the current theories on comparative mythology, which he had deliberately cultivated as a preparation for

⁷⁷ Porquet to du Tartre, n.d., Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 515, f.245r.

⁷⁸ de Mailla, for example, in a letter of 1 November [1722?], says that Bouvet claims to have conceived his 'scheme' (dessein) before he left Europe (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 179, f.201r).

⁷⁹ He describes experiencing 'une joye secrete de reconnoître parmi toutes les fables de la Religion de ce pais, certains vestiges de la notre' - Letter to la Soeur de la Brière, 21 June 1686, cited after the Cornell ms. in J.C. Gatty, Le voyage de Siam du Père Bouvet, Leiden, 1963, p.LX.

his mission.⁸⁰ Bouvet's interest from the beginning seems to have been concentrated on the cabbalistic and numerological aspects of these works, an interest arising no doubt from his mathematical bent, as well as from his linguistic studies.

In the 'Preliminary Discourse' to the work which gives the fullest systematic exposition of his ideas, the Specimen Sapientiae Hieroglyphicae, Bouvet gives an account of the development of his theories during the over thirty years he had been on the mission. When he first arrived in China, he says, 'I was already furnished with a most fortunate aid to my work, for I brought with me a special knowledge of the Hebrew Mosaic cabballa, and of the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy, which are the true elements of the whole hieroglyphic wisdom of the Chinese, or rather of the Old Patriarchs'.⁸¹ For the next ten years,⁸² he acquired a knowledge of the Chinese language and Chinese literature, and 'began to experience the utility' of such studies.⁸³ The next twenty years he devoted to developing the 'system' and persuading seven or eight of his fellow missionaries of the truth of his general approach. Three or four of them agreed to devote themselves to the task of demonstrating the system 'from the texts of the canonical books'; he names these helpers as Jean-Francois Foucquet, Jean-Alexis de Gollet, and Joseph de Prémare.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Writing at the beginning of his journal of the voyage to Siam, he claims that even before he entered the Society of Jesus, he had wanted to become a missionary in China, and that all his studies had been directed to this one end (Voyage de Siam, pp.9-10).

⁸¹ Specimen Sapientiae Hieroglyphicae, ms. in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. IV.5, A, p.2.

⁸² Actually 'from 1693-1699, he was engaged on a voyage to Europe and back. However, he took with him some Chinese books as gifts from K'ang-hsi to Louis XIV, and presumably on this, as on his previous voyage (v. Voyage de Siam, p.XXIII) devoted himself to study. Amongst the Jesuits recruited by him on this trip were the future Figurists, de Prémare, Foucquet and probably Gollet.

⁸³ Specimen, p.2.

⁸⁴ Specimen, p.3. Bouvet adds sadly that de Prémare should have been placed first, but that 'for several years he seems to speak otherwise than he really feels, God knows why'. On de Prémare's defection from the Figurist camp, and his reenlistment, see below.

This bald account is vague, or perhaps even deliberately misleading,⁸⁵ about the organisation and basis of Bouvet's project. It ignores his machinations both with the Emperor and his superiors in order to gather together a team of co-workers in Peking. This was done through various subterfuges. In 1711, Jean-Francois Foucquet was called to the court.⁸⁶ According to the Visitor, Gozani, he was given permission to come by the Superior of the French Mission, D'Entrecolles, in order to help Bouvet with his work for the Emperor on the mathematics of the I-ching.⁸⁷ They were both explicitly ordered not to discuss matters of religion (i.e. the Figurist theories) with the Emperor.⁸⁸ Soon afterwards, the Jesuit superiors took advantage of the Emperor's desire for a treatise

⁸⁵ Bouvet insists that all his adherents voluntarily (sponte) and most willingly (libentissime) pledged to devote all their strength for the rest of their lives to his project (Specimen, p.3). This ignores the fact that as Jesuits and missionaries, they were not free agents and, as we shall see, were in fact acting contrary to the orders of their superiors. Both Gollet and de Prémare seem to have been unwilling helpers, or at least to have submitted freely to their superiors' directions to leave Peking for the provinces.

⁸⁶ 30 June 1711 according to a document translated by Fu Lo-shu in her Documentary Chronicle, p.116. He arrived on August 7th according to his 'Relation exacte...', Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 566, f.149r.

⁸⁷ G.P. Gozani, 'Compendiosa Informatio eorum, quae circa Pem Joachim Bouvet contingerunt mense April 1714 de eius Inobedientia, et Contumacia in retinendo P.em Premar.', Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 132, f.440v.

⁸⁸ On this question, see a series of letters between D'Entrecolles, Bouvet and Contancin, during 1711. D'Entrecolles, the Superior of the French mission, was stationed in Jao-chou in Kiangsi, and he delegated Contancin in Peking to ensure that Bouvet did not discuss his religious theories with K'ang-hsi, but only the mathematics of the I-ching (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, ff.35, 36-37, 53-57, 65-70, 71-72, 176-191). Other accounts of the prohibition by D'Entrecolles, and their confirmation by the Visitor Gozani, are found in J.P. Hervieu to Tamburini, 21 September 1711 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, ff.73-76) and Joseph Suarez to the Portuguese Assistant, 9 October 1713 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 175, ff.18-19).

on astronomy, to get Foucquet transferred from 'such a dangerous task' to the less dangerous area of astronomy.⁸⁹ At this point, Bouvet, contrary to the orders of his superiors, submitted to the Emperor a request for four French Jesuits - de Prémare, Gollet, Hervieu and Porquet - to be assigned to him as assistants in his work of commenting on the I-ching.⁹⁰ For a time Gollet and de Prémare assisted him, then, in April 1714, presumably at the request of some of the anti-Figurist Jesuits at court,⁹¹ an imperial order was obtained instructing Gollet and de Prémare to return to their missions in the provinces. Bouvet applied, on grounds of health, for at least de Prémare to be allowed to stay, and Kang-hsi granted his request.⁹² Two years later, presumably under pressure, but

⁸⁹ See Pierre Jartoux's 'Brevis Vitae Ratio...', 23 August 1714, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 175, f.383v. Jartoux who had been engaged on mapping work for the Emperor had originally been proposed as author of the projected work on astronomy, but, on his superiors' advice, suggested Foucquet as suited to the task.

⁹⁰ Gozani dates this some time in 1713 ('Compendiosa Informatio', Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 132, f.440v). He reports that in an interview on 5 April 1714, Bouvet admitted having done this but justified himself on grounds of a higher duty to God. His attitude is revealed in an interesting letter Bouvet wrote to Cyr Contancin S.J., of 18 August 1715, where he says: 'L'obeissance aveugle est une admirable vertu mais non pas en toutes rencontres. Dans l'affaire de l'Ye King je ne suis plus livré à l'obeissance que VV. RRs dans l'affaire du tien et du Xanti'. (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 176, f.340).

⁹¹ Kilian Stumpf, the newly appointed Visitor, in a letter to the General of 24 October 1714 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 176, ff. 98-99) gave a consistently hostile report on Bouvet's exercise in 'theosophy'. He does not explicitly claim credit for the order of recall but one suspects that his enigmatic phrase 'rebus mutatis' is meant to suggest his role in the affair. He was President of the Mathematical Bureau and quite influential and respected at court. The reason for his disapproval of de Prémare's involvement is that as an experienced and able missionary, he was wasting his time on the project.

⁹² Gozani, op. cit.

according to more than one account,⁹³ out of conviction that Bouvet's whole project was chimerical, de Prémare too returned to the South.

Bouvet's infatuation with his theories had, it would seem, led him to a position that, for a Jesuit vowed to obedience to his superiors, was, to say the least, equivocal. That he was aware of this is shown by a letter he wrote in his defence to the Jesuit General, Tamburini, on 30 October 1712. He writes, he says, to anticipate the accounts of his activities which his superiors will send. They are to be dismissed as 'contrary, lacking valid reasons, and produced by men ridden by empty fears and in this matter (if I may say so) as it were blind'. He is convinced that he has received special help from God to reveal to the Emperor the mysteries of religion concealed in the Chinese canonical books and especially the I-ching.⁹⁴ But his superiors continue to block his every move.

⁹³ Contancin wrote to the Jesuit General, Tamburini, on 1 September 1716, that de Prémare had returned 'within a month' to the South, after three years helping Bouvet, 'cum videret consilium docti Patris Bouvet nullo stabili fundamento niti' (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f.70r). A year before, on 3 September 1715, Pierre Jartoux predicted that de Prémare would leave Peking, since he had found Bouvet producing 'dreams' rather than evidence (Jartoux to Tamburini, Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 176, f.350r). For de Prémare's version of the reasons for his leaving Peking, see Section V on 'Joseph de Prémare and the theory of Vestiges'.

⁹⁴ An admittedly hostile account, that of Kilian Stumpf, in a letter to the Jesuit General, Tamburini, of 9 October 1716, alleges that Bouvet claims 'that he has been given by heaven the gift of tongues and the interpretation of words, and that he would leave nothing undone to persuade everyone that his work was the business of ages (negotium saeculorum) which would terminate the Chinese controversies, establish the Christian religion, and convert the whole of China' (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.114-123). Other accounts, too, assert that Bouvet claimed the gift of tongues (Contancin to Tamburini, 1 September 1716, Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.70-71; de Mailla to D'Entrecolles?, 1 November 1722, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 179, f.202r).

This work is not undertaken by me alone, but also by Fathers Foucquet, de Prémare and Gollet, who beyond all other missionaries of the Society have devoted themselves to the profitable work of studying the characters and books of the Chinese and the solidity of our system. For a long time they have been in complete agreement and favour it with all their hearts, but have not given their time because of the total opposition of the Superiors of this mission, who, conspiring together, have left and leave no stone unturned, especially in the proliferation of orders, even in virtue of Holy Obedience, which now number more than the ten commandments themselves.

In conclusion he 'dares to suggest' to the General the replacement of both the Visitor and the Superior of the French Mission, and nominates Gollet and Foucquet for the posts'.⁹⁵

I shall have more to say later about Bouvet's mental balance, about his and Foucquet's fears and obsessions, amounting at times to a persecution complex. For the moment, it is enough to note that if Bouvet saw a conspiracy against him, other members of the mission saw the activities of the Figurists themselves as a conspiracy, a divisive, sectarian secret society, undermining the unity and apostolic efficiency of the mission. Their activities seemed to justify this. A note-book belonging to Foucquet, now in the Vatican Library,⁹⁶ contains copies of letters and notes from Bouvet which apparently circulated within a restricted circle of French missionaries, in the period 1707-1710.⁹⁷ They are addressed to them not by their European names, but as letters from 'Sien Seng' (i.e. hsien-sheng, a 'master') to 'Noke' (no-kê = Hervieu), 'Kouei wen' (kuei-wen = de Mailla), and 'Long Tchu' (lung-ch'u = de Prémare). These names were not the common Chinese personal names, either tzu or hao, of the persons addressed, and they seem suspiciously like code-names adopted to preserve secrecy in case they were intercepted. The secrecy may have been necessary because of the de Tournon mission and the rites controversy⁹⁸ - de Tournon had specifically condemned one of Bouvet's Chinese

⁹⁵ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, f.266.

⁹⁶ Borgia Latino 515.

⁹⁷ Most are undated, but those that can be dated appear to be from this period. One has the date 3 December 1707 (Borgia Latino 515, ff.205-22), one 24 March 1708, and another 8 July 1710 (amongst four in Borgia Latino 515, ff.160-163,172-175).

⁹⁸ D'Entrecolles, in a letter of 8 March 1711, warns Bouvet against circulating 'new discoveries' because 'these papers now run the risk of being surprised by our adversaries' (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, f.37r).

works which had been reported to him⁹⁹ - but it seems equally likely that it was a device to elude the attentions of their superiors, and the 'Portuguese' Jesuits.

Of the three correspondents of Bouvet in 1707 - Hervieu, de Mailla and de Prémare - only de Prémare remained a Figurist into the 1720s, and with some reservations. Foucquet was certainly committed to the end, and there were one or two late recruits to the group, such as Charles Slavich¹⁰⁰ and Jean-Francois Noël¹⁰¹. But these, as also Jean-Alexis

⁹⁹ Bouvet's T'ien-hsüeh pen-i. See du Tartre, 'Quelques Reflexions en passant sur la lettre du R.P. Dentrecolles du 8 Nov. 1710', Rome:ASJ, J-ap. Sin. 174, ff.11-12.

¹⁰⁰ See Pfister, Notices, II, p.655-657, for a biography of Slavich (Pfister gives his name as 'Slaviczek' but all his letters I have seen are signed 'Slavich'). His correspondence with Foucquet (not listed in Pfister) in the Foucquet Papers (Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 566, ff.3-10, 346r-353v) reveals that in the period 1719-1720 he became, as he calls himself, a 'disciple' of Foucquet and corresponded with him on the I-ching and the significance of Chinese characters. He was a gifted mathematician and musician but produced little of note even in these fields, and nothing in the area of Chinese studies. A letter of the Vice-Provincial, de Rezende, to the General, 31 October 1723, describes him as 'burdensome to the mission', restless and a nuisance, but does not mention Figurist opinions amongst his faults (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 179, f.284v).

¹⁰¹ Noël, too, was influenced by Foucquet, whom he met in 1721 in Canton. Foucquet persuaded him to devote himself to the study of the Tao-te-ching, and the fruits of this labour were sent to the General in 1730 (see his letter to the General, 6 December 1730 in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 184, ff.62-63). I have not seen this work but from his description it appears to have been devoted to demonstrating prophecies of the Incarnation and the Trinity in the Tao-te-ching. Contancin, in a report to the new General, Retz, 12 November 1731, was scathing in his comments on Noël's work: 'Pr. Joannes Franciscus Noël non habet Systema, et in libris Sinicis quos numquam legit, valde ignarus est, ita ut vix possit unam lineam legere sine errore' (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 184, f.774).

Gollet,¹⁰² may be neglected as marginal figures in the movement, and their ideas regarded as derivative. The key figures in the movement are Bouvet, Foucquet and de Prémare, each of whom deserves detailed discussion in his own right.

Perhaps we should add to this list of Figurists the K'ang-hsi Emperor himself.¹⁰³ Certainly for a considerable period he patronized Bouvet's work on the I-ching. We know why he withdrew his support, or at least qualified it.¹⁰⁴ A deputation of missionaries in April 1716 persuaded K'ang-hsi that Bouvet's ideas were eccentric, and even dangerous,¹⁰⁵ and an edict was issued on 23 April 1716:

¹⁰² Gollet's reputation as a Sinologist has suffered unjustly, largely from the attribution to him of 4 vols. of mss. now at Chantilly (Brotier, 142-145). On close examination of these I am convinced that only Brotier 142 is the work of Gollet. Brotier 143-145 are clearly in the hand of Bouvet, and the contents, which well deserve Pfister's description of 'un tissu de rêveries' (Notices, p. 562) fit Bouvet's developed prophetic system. Gollet's genuine works are much more sober and balanced. They include a short treatise on the Rites question (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, ff. 319-323); and several letters and treatises for Souciet on chronology and astronomy (Chantilly: Brotier 142, ff. 1-5; 18-29, 44-95, 101-112. He was certainly a Figurist, but a moderate one, regarding only Yao and his predecessors as 'figures' and accepting the historicity of the first three dynasties (see, for example, Gollet to Gaubil, 1 December 1727, in Brotier 142, ff. 37-43, and his treatise equating Yao with Jectan, Brotier 142, ff. 6-17). In a letter to the General, 15 December 1727, he approves of the censorship of the works of de Prémare and Noélas and urges caution and careful examination of all works on the interpretation of Chinese books (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 184, ff. 16-17).

¹⁰³ On this subject see Fang Hao, 'Shih-ch'i-pa shih-chi lai-hua Hsi-jên tui wo-kuo ching-chi chih yen-chiu' in Fang Hao liu-shih tzu-ting kao, I, pp. 196-199.

¹⁰⁴ Fang Hao, op. cit., p. 197, claims that he 'stopped' the work. The decree cited below is more ambiguous, and Bouvet, at least, interpreted it as encouragement (see Stumpf to Tamburini, 9 October 1716, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f. 120r).

¹⁰⁵ A latin version of this memorial, by de Prémare, is to be found in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f. 52. It accused Bouvet of 'visions', and 'confusion', pointed out the unorthodoxy of denying that the early Chinese Emperors were real historical figures, and the danger of starting new controversies in Europe, like those about t'ien and shang-ti. A letter of Stumpf to the General, probably accompanying this translation, gives further details of the circumstances surrounding the memorial. He claims that the Emperor himself commissioned Stumpf to examine and report on Bouvet's work (Stumpf to Tamburini, 9 October 1716, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff. 114-123).

Tell Po Chin [Bouvet] that the memorial of Chi Li-an [Stumpf] and the others was very appropriate. Bouvet may either abandon his work on the I-ching or continue it. If he wishes to continue, he should do it himself and not use anyone else. There is no need to hurry. When he has completely finished the work he should report again.¹⁰⁶

What we do not know is the nature of K'ang-hsi's interest in the project. The memorials on the subject are enigmatic.¹⁰⁷ It is possible that K'ang-hsi was simply showing sympathy for his old mathematics teacher, and responding to his enthusiasm.¹⁰⁸ Or perhaps he saw Bouvet's work as part of the flourishing scholarly industry on the I-ching which he supported.¹⁰⁹

There is some evidence, however, that one aspect of Bouvet's work that particularly appealed to K'ang-hsi and aroused his interest, was his claim to have discovered a system that would not only explain past events but predict future ones. According to Cyr Contancin, K'ang-hsi, 'attracted by the strange promises of Father (Bouvet), expected him to produce things that were new, unheard of, and known to no one

¹⁰⁶ The text (from Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 439 A (c) 5) is to be found, together with a translation, as Document 12 in Rosso, Apostolic Legations.

¹⁰⁷ See the collection of manuscript versions of the edicts in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 439, A & B, and in Borgia Cinese 317 (4). Unfortunately not all are dated with the year as well as day and month, which makes the reconstruction of the chronology and order of this important group of documents very difficult.

¹⁰⁸ K'ang-hsi's admiration for Bouvet's work is shown in his remark, during the Mezzabarba mission, that only Po Chin (Bouvet) knew 'something of the purport of Chinese books' (The 'Mandarins' Dairy', Rosso, Apostolic Legations, p.368).

¹⁰⁹ In 1715 there appeared the Yü-tsuan Chou-i che-chung ('Imperial Collection of Commentaries on the I-ching') edited by Li Kuang-ti (v. Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p.474). Foucquet refers to it in his Dissertatio (Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 566, f.434) as produced under the direction of K'ang-hsi by his 'leading and most learned high officials'. Stumpf claimed that one reason for the Emperor's loss of interest in Bouvet's work was that this Palace Commentary had been completed (letter to Tamburini, 9 October 1716, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f.115r). Hu Wei's brilliant piece of textual criticism on the diagrams of the I-ching, the I-t'u ming-pien, which 'first placed the study of the Changes on a sound historical basis' (Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p.336) was published in 1700.

else, even about the future'.¹¹⁰ Bouvet's Superior, D'Entrecolles, lists amongst the things he is specifically forbidden to discuss with the Emperor, 'to propose, as a certainty, the term of the duration of the world, fixing it e.g. on the day which will complete 10,000 years duration, claiming that the authority of the Chings is clear on this, and that it is, moreover, undeniable on account of revelation'.¹¹¹ And, elsewhere,¹¹² he refers to Bouvet's interpretation of the hsien-t'ien ('former heaven') and hou-t'ien ('latter heaven') of the I-ching commentaries as Messianic prophecies, and prophecies of a Golden Age to come. A superficial examination of Bouvet's Chinese and Latin manuscripts,¹¹³ especially those dealing with the I-ching, confirms Bouvet's increasing preoccupation, one might fairly say obsession with these matters. If this was, indeed, the reason for K'ang-hsi's interest in Bouvet's project, his abandonment of it is further evidence of his wisdom and good judgement.

Just as K'ang-hsi abandoned the Figurists when, after long gestation, the 'proofs' came to light, so did many of the French Jesuits who, whether from conviction, or simply out of loyalty to their confreres in the intramission conflict between

¹¹⁰ Contancin to Tamburini, 1 September 1716, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin.177, f.70v - italics added. Cf. Jartoux to Tamburini, 2-3 September 1715, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 176, f.349v, which attributes the Emperor's interest to Bouvet's claim that all European sciences may be derived from the Chinese classics, and that his system can predict the future.

¹¹¹ D'Entrecolles to Contancin, 23 July 1711, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, f.56r.

¹¹² D'Entrecolles to Bouvet, 3 May 1712, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, f.183.

¹¹³ For a more full treatment, see the next section on 'Joachim Bouvet and the Prophecies of the I-ching'. It is obvious from Bouvet's Chinese manuscripts, especially such works as the I-hsüeh wai-p'ien, the Ta-I yüan-i nei-p'ien and the Shih hsien-t'ien wei-p'ien..., that this hsien-t'ien, hou-t'ien division was central to his interpretation of the I-ching and the Lo-shu and Ho-t'u diagrams. If the manuscripts at Chantilly (Brotier 143, 144, 145) are attributed to Bouvet, as I believe they should be, the extent of his preoccupation with this system of prophecy is revealed even more clearly.

French and 'Portuguese' Jesuits, had initially been favourable. There were some exceptions. As late as 1722, Bayard was defending the Figurists, but sadly acknowledging their failure to produce solid proofs for their ideas.¹¹⁴ The letters of Emeric de Chavagnac show him vacillating between rejection of specific Figurist theories, and the hope that there may just possibly be something in their theories.¹¹⁵ Louis Porquet, while protesting to du Tartre, 'I have not made my profession in the order of Mythologists; I am not even a novice; I am merely a spectator or auditor',¹¹⁶ says that he prefers their good intentions and ambition to the carping of their critics.

The French Superior, François-Xavier D'Entrecolles, found himself caught in the middle of the arguments raging in the mission over the theories of the Figurists. He was not himself a Figurist, nor even a sympathizer, but he had originally been chosen for the mission by Bouvet¹¹⁷ and he seems to have been personally sympathetic to the old man to whom the mission was so indebted. He also felt a special duty to defend the French missionaries against their critics from the 'Portuguese' mission.¹¹⁸ In fact, the most severe critic of the Figurists was a French Jesuit, Vincent du Tartre. He appears to have been a mediocre sinologist¹¹⁹ but his critique

¹¹⁴ Letter to Etienne Souciet, Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp.55-60.

¹¹⁵ Compare his hostile reports to the General, 8-9 October 1708 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 172, ff.179-183) and 24 September 1710 (Jap. Sin. 173, ff.252-253); with his remark to Souciet in September 1712, that 'L'Europe scavante sera surprise un jour' (30 September 1712, Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, p.41).

¹¹⁶ Porquet to du Tartre, undated, copy in Foucquet papers, Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 515, f.246r.

¹¹⁷ See Pfister, Notices, p.539.

¹¹⁸ Such as Joseph Suarez who, writing to the Portuguese Assistant, on 9 October 1713, depicts Figurism as an extreme example of the evils of the 'Schisma Gallicano' (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 175, ff.18-19).

¹¹⁹ Pfister, Notices, p.592, attributes no Chinese works to him, but notes that Régis's translation of the I-ching used du Tartre's commentary on the work. If, as I suspect, this is the In Librum Ye Kim Brevis Annotatio (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. I, 223), it proves to be a superficial and very scholastic version of the work.

of their ideas was common-sense and quite devastating. As early as 1708, he was attacking de Prémare for interpreting the I-ching in a mystical rather than a mathematical sense.¹²⁰ In January 1709, he replies to someone, probably D'Entrecolles, who had urged him to be kinder to Bouvet, that he objected primarily to the excesses of the 'cabal' of the 'Enochists'. Let them adopt their figurative interpretations of the ancient kings, provided they do not deny they were also real men; and let them spread their ideas, provided they do not treat as fools those who disagree with them.¹²¹ He objects strongly to Bouvet's method which turns all European and Chinese literature to allegory.¹²² Speculations are regarded as proof, and the biblical revelation is compromised.¹²³ Above all he objected to the abandonment of the established Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, thus risking the alienation of Confucian scholars, in pursuit of chimeras.¹²⁴

As time went on, and D'Entrecolles refused to forbid Bouvet to continue his work, du Tartre became more aggressive. He seems to have been the prime mover in an attempt formally to delate Bouvet and his theories to Rome in 1716.¹²⁵ When D'Entrecolles demanded that all the Fathers be consulted and

¹²⁰ Letter of 9 May 1708, copy in the Foucquet papers, Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 515, f.235.

¹²¹ Letter of 12 January 1709, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 173, ff. 3-4.

¹²² Letter to D'Entrecolles (?), 25 March 1709, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 173, ff.49-52.

¹²³ The twin themes of his 'Quelques Reflexions en passant sur la lettre du R.P. Dentrecolles du 8 Nov. 1710', Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, ff.5-32.

¹²⁴ See du Tartre to the Visitor, Laureati, 24 May 1719 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 182, f.233). He declares himself an adherent of the 'antiqua Missionariorum Societatis systemata'.

¹²⁵ I have not seen the original of this letter apparently signed by Parrenin, de Prémare, du Tartre, and Jartoux, but it is summarized by D'Entrecolles in his reply, dated 2 August 1716 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.56-57). De Prémare as, it appears, an unwilling signatory; D'Entrecolles describes him as 'sollicité' by the others (f.57).

their complaints be put into due form, du Tartre was quite rude in reply.¹²⁶ D'Entrecolles' position was moderate and conciliatory, Certainly, Bouvet should not be permitted to publish his theories without a full examination. But there is precedent for his views in the works of eminent authorities such as Huet and Beurrier, who have never been regarded as unorthodox, and it would be of great benefit to the mission if they should prove well founded.¹²⁷ It seems that du Tartre went ahead with his protest to the Jesuit General, since he complains in 1722 that his earlier list of extracts from 'the original writings of the I-chingist Fathers' must have got lost in the General's office,¹²⁸ and sends a further list. He tells the Mission Procurator in Rome, Nyel, that the attempts of the Figurists to label him a 'Maigrotian' are a smoke-screen, and to demonstrate this he will send 'an Evangelical demonstration of the true God from the Chinese books, under the names of Shang-ti and T'ien' which will show that he is 'not servilely attached to the modern Interpreters' and that he knows equally with them how to read the Chinese classics.¹²⁹ He also appeals to the fate of Foucquet who seems to have followed the logic of his rift with the established policies of the Society by joining its enemies.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ du Tartre to D'Entrecolles, 8 August 1716 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f.58). The letter ends 'Voila tout ce que jay a vous dire aujourdhuy. Je prie Dieu qu'il inspire une bonne fois votre Rev.', an extraordinary tone for a letter of a Jesuit to his Superior.

¹²⁷ D'Entrecolles, 'Responsum Inchoatum ad Delationem 64 Propositionum etc, quae incipit Decem et amplius anni sunt etc.;; 4 September 1716 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.74-83) cf. his letter to du Tartre of 12 September 1716 (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.86-87).

¹²⁸ See two letters, possibly to the French Assistant, Guibert, 30 and 31 October 1722, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 183, ff.65-67, 63-64. Both this list and its replacement do indeed seem to have got lost somewhere, since I have been unable to locate them in the Jesuit Archives in Rome.

¹²⁹ du Tartre to Nyel, 31 October 1722 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 183, f.65).

¹³⁰ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 183, ff.63v-64r.

Despite his protestations, there seems to have been a good deal of personal animosity on the part of du Tartre towards Bouvet and especially Foucquet. There is even a prima facie case for Foucquet's charge that the French mission was divided into 'Lyons' and 'Paris' factions, and that du Tartre was the leader of the 'Lyonnais'.¹³¹ But there was substance in their charges, and the more moderate critiques of men like Jartoux and de Mailla were formidable. Leaving aside their theological objections which were solid, and were never really faced squarely by the Figurists,¹³² their sinological arguments were unanswerable. De Mailla's attack is the most thorough from this point of view, and except for his assumption that the early 'history' of China is veridical, would be accepted by most modern authorities. Both Bouvet and Foucquet indiscriminately draw on Taoist and Confucian sources without perceiving that they belong to different

¹³¹ The Catalogus Patrum Gallorum Societatis Jesu in Sinis, c. 1710, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 134, ff.390-392, illustrates this well. Bouvet, de Prémare, Foucquet, Gollet and Porquet all belonged to the Province of France, centred on Paris. Parrenin, D'Entrecolles, Jartoux and de Mailla, belonged to the Lyons Province. In fact, du Tartre was from the Champagne Province, but he seems to have made common cause with the Lyons group. D'Entrecolles, in a letter to Hervieu attacking Foucquet's factionalism, notes that Foucquet regards du Tartre as a 'naturalisé lionnais' (letter of 29 October 1717, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f.439r). This division in the mission demands further investigation. It may well prove to be due not to personal attachments and factionalism, but to differences in the theological and cultural backgrounds of the Parisians and the Southerners.

¹³² See the list in Jartoux's letter to Tamburini, 2-3 September 1715, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 176, f.350v. They depended upon the notion of a unique revelation which, Jartoux rightly points out, was threatened by the Figurists' claims of extra-biblical revelation. Neither Bouvet nor Foucquet ever attempted to fully articulate a case for this, but were content with vague appeals to authority. It is interesting to note, however, that in a passage in the 'Supplement' to his letter to the Abbé Bignon (Paris:BN, Fr.17240, f.318v), Bouvet presents an argument very similar to the recent and influential thesis of the Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner, which proceeds from the two premises that God wills all men to be saved, and that salvation can only be found in Christ. Hence Christ must be presented in some way to all men. v. Rahner, Theological Investigations, V. London, 1966, Ch.6, 'Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions', pp.115-134

systems of thought.¹³³ Their 'hieroglyphic' interpretation of Chinese characters, independent of their conventional sense, has no justification.¹³⁴ Above all, the Figurists are so concerned with their systems and a priori notions, that they fail to consider the texts themselves.

They have changed, transposed and so disfigured the history and the chronology of the Chinese, that the most able of their doctors would no longer recognize anything. They propose as their goal a pious thought, or one of our European chronologies, and everything that they find in Chinese books, no matter how absurd and out of context, provided it has the least value for the system that they create, are so many precious jewels that they conserve with care and which give them the right consequently to reverse everything and confuse everything. As for me, I have not looked for mysteries; I wanted to see what the Chinese think and say, independently of any system, how their histories were written, who were their authors, what weight they had in their time, and what is the way they were put together...¹³⁵

This was the voice of the scientific sinologist, heard clearly for perhaps the first time in the history of the mission. The ferment over Chinese Rites and Figurism had brought the missionaries to examine the Confucian books more closely than ever, and the result was the birth of sinology.

¹³³ De Mailla (to D'Entrecolles?), 1 November 1722, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 179, ff.208-209.

¹³⁴ Ibid., f.212.

¹³⁵ De Mailla to Souciet, 26 October 1727, in Revue de l'Extreme Orient, III, 1887, pp.72-73.

III. JOACHIM BOUVET AND THE PROPHECIES OF THE I-ching

It is not my intention to produce here a biography of Joachim Bouvet, although such a study is long overdue. Nor will I attempt a complete analysis of his intellectual development. As yet there are too many bibliographical lacunae and puzzles,¹³⁶ and the important question of Bouvet's possible Chinese sources demands a treatment far beyond the scope of this work. I will restrict myself to a survey of those writings of Bouvet that I have examined, as far as possible in chronological order; and to an attempt to periodize and characterize his system.

Bouvet had, as we have seen, brought with him to China the germs of Figurism, emplanté in him by the late seventeenth century mythologists. From his arrival in Peking, to his death in 1730, with the exception of the years 1693-1699 when he returned to Europe at K'ang-hsi's behest to recruit more missionaries,¹³⁷ he remained at the court,¹³⁸ ever pursuing his vision of a Chinese Emperor and Empire, converted to Christianity. His first published work, the Portrait historique de l'Empereur de la Chine, Paris, 1697, is imbued with this sentiment,¹³⁹ and dedicated to Louis XIV, presumably with a

¹³⁶ J.C. Gatty in her Voyage de Siam de Pere Bouvet, pp.LXXXIX-CXVIII has cleared the ground with her 'Bibliographie des Ouvrages et des Lettres du P. Bouvet'. In this section, and in my own Bibliography, I make several corrections and additions to Gatty's list, but anyone who works on the subject must be deeply in her debt.

¹³⁷ See Pfister, Notices, p.434.

¹³⁸ He seems to have made a brief trip to Canton in 1690-1691, according to his manuscript Journal in Paris:BN, Fr.17240, ff.291-317. (I see no justification for Gatty's dating of this as 1706, since dates between 8 February 1690 and 24 August 1691 are mentioned in the text.) In 1706 he went to Canton with the presents destined for the Pope, but was recalled almost immediately due to the imbroglio with de Tournon.

¹³⁹ See also his letter of 24 October 1697 [not 4 October, and not Paris, as Gatty writes (No.66), but Fontainebleau], Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 166, ff.255-255, in which he tells Guibert, the French Assistant, that he wishes to refute Maigrot by giving public testimony to 'the belief of this Prince in the divinity', a matter on which his long and frequent access to the Emperor qualified him to speak.

view to gaining material support from the French king. In it, moreover, for the first time, but in veiled form, appear characteristic 'figurist' ideas. Fu Hsi, that extraordinary genius of antiquity, has invented a universal system of symbolism, which may prove the key to all sciences. Missionaries, instead of devoting their time to unavailing efforts to prove the Chinese atheists, should devote themselves to discovering the true philosophy of Fu Hsi.¹⁴⁰

Bouvet received support for his interest in the interpretation of the mysterious hexagrams of the I-ching from no less a source than Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, mathematician, philosopher, theologian and sinophile. Leibniz had long been interested in China¹⁴¹ and in 1697 published at Leipzig his Novissima Sinica, 'News from China', which consisted of excerpts from Jesuit writings on China. Bouvet does not seem to have actually met Leibniz while he was in Europe, but two letters, of 18 October 1697 and 28 February 1698, of Bouvet to Leibniz, are known,¹⁴² as is the subject of their correspondence: the nature of Chinese characters and the interpretation of the kua or 'lines' of Fu Hsi.¹⁴³ Leibniz had in 1697 invented a new system of mathematics, binary arithmetic, and he and Bouvet were interested in the analogies

140 Histoire de l'empereur de la Chine, La Haye, 1699 (facsimile ed., Tientsin, 1940), pp.147-150.

141 On the nature of this interest, see D.F. Lach, 'Leibniz and China', Journal of the History of Ideas, VI, 1945, pp. 436-455, and his The Preface to Leibniz' Novissima Sinica, Honolulu, 1957; F.R. Merkel, Leibniz und China, Berlin, 1952; and O. Franke, 'Leibniz und China', in Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft, Bd.7, Heft 3/4, 1928 (reprinted in Franke's Aus Kultur und Geschichte Chinas, Peking, 1945, pp.313-330).

142 Gatty, Nos. 67 and 71. I have seen neither of these letters, and they may not in fact be extant.

143 See Franke, 'Leibniz und China', Aus Kultur und Geschichte Chinas, p.319.

between this and the ancient Chinese system.¹⁴⁴ But, even more, Leibniz, like Bouvet, was concerned with ways of unifying and harmonizing the religions of mankind.¹⁴⁵ He thoroughly approved of the Jesuits' missionary methods in China, and was working towards the establishment of a Protestant mission on similar lines.¹⁴⁶ Like the Jesuits, he saw ancient Chinese religion as a pure theism, and even entertained the conceit of Chinese missionaries restoring an atheistic Europe to its doctrinal purity.¹⁴⁷

Leibniz's interest and enthusiasm, his belief in mathematical and linguistic codes, and his approval of the Jesuits' work, seems greatly to have stimulated Bouvet, and on his return to Peking, he reported his progress with mounting excitement. The 'métaphysique numéraire' of the I-ching seems to correspond to the mysterious numbers of Pythagoras, Plato, the Egyptians and the Jewish cabbala. If so, it can only be 'the precious remains of the most ancient and most excellent Philosophy, taught by the first Patriarchs of the world to their descendants, and then corrupted and almost entirely obscured by the passing of time'.¹⁴⁸ Its origin must be a special revelation of the Creator.¹⁴⁹ Soon, he is seeing

¹⁴⁴ See Leibniz's 'Explication de l'arithmétique binaire qui se sert des seules caracteres O et 1, avec des remarques sur son utilité et sur ce qu'elle donne le sens des anciennes figures chinoises de Fohy' in Mémoires de mathématique et de physique tirez des registres de l'Académie Royale des Sciences (année 1703), Amsterdam, 1707, pp.105-111. Bouvet later presented this article to K'ang-hsi (v. Jartoux, 'Brevis Vitae Ratio...', Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 175, f.386v). See also Bouvet's letter to Leibniz, 4 November 1701 (ms. in Paris:BN, Fr.17240, ff.75-88, and published in Leibniz, Opera Omnia, Ed. L. Dutens, IV, Geneva, 1768, Lettre 1).

¹⁴⁵ See G.J. Jordan, The Reunion of the Churches, London, 1927; and F.R. Merkel, 'The Missionary Attitude of the Philosopher G.W. von Leibniz', International Review of Missions, IX, 1920, pp.399-410.

¹⁴⁶ See his letters to Bishop Burnet (18-28 May 1697, in Leibniz, Textes inédites, I, Paris, 1948, p.204), and to Sebastien Kortholt (25 April and 20 May 1715, in Leibniz, Epistolae ad Diversos, Ed. C. Kortholt, I, Leipzig, 1734, Nos.CXCVIII and CXCIX).

¹⁴⁷ Letter to M. de Remond, in Leibniz, Opera Omnia, Ed. Dutens, IV, p.174.

¹⁴⁸ Bouvet to Le Gobien, 8 November 1700, in Leibniz, Opera Omnia, Ed. Dutens, IV, p.147.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.149.

in the kua of the I-ching, the Creation and the Trinity,¹⁵⁰ and the next step, the allegorizing of early Chinese history follows a year later.¹⁵¹ He announces to Leibniz in 1702 his project for a 'Chinese Academy' to recover and proclaim the rediscovery of this ancient system which is the source of all religion and all sciences.¹⁵²

This, then, was the origin of Figurism, and the basis for the formation of Bouvet's group of collaborators. By 15 September 1704, the system is fully articulated in his letter to the Abbé Bibnon.¹⁵³ The I-ching is now recognized as the locus classicus of the 'hieroglyphic science' of the ancient world, and, for the first time, Fu Hsi, its alleged author, is identified with the mysterious Patriarch Enoch, who 'walked with God',¹⁵⁴ and whose works, according to Tertullian, had been suppressed by the Jews, because they prophesied the Messiah. A month later, he applied to the Jesuit General, Thyrsus Gonzalez, for formal permission to establish an 'Apostolic Academy' in China, devoted to the advancement of his system.¹⁵⁵

150 Bouvet to Leibniz, 4 November 1701, Paris:BN, Fr. 17240, ff.81-82'.

151 Bouvet to Leibniz, 8 November 1702 (Leibniz, Opera Omnia, Ed. Dutens, IV, p.166).

152 Ibid., pp.167-168

153 I have used the copy in Rome:ASJ, Fondo Gesuitico 731. This is, I presume, the work referred to by Gatty as 'Lettre' No.145, since it is the only extensive letter in Fondo Gesuitico 731. It is, however, 36 pp. long not 44 pp., which may explain Gatty's failure to identify it with Paris:BN, Fr. 17240, ff.17-36 (No.83). The ASJ copy is addressed to 'Monsieur XXX'. and, although I have not made a complete textual comparison, appears to be the same letter with a few minor textual variations, perhaps the original draft or possibly the copy sent to 'P. de Linyeres' with Provana in 1707 (v. Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 171, f.51v).

154 Genesis, 5.21-24.

155 Letter of 28 October 1704, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, ff. 154-155.

Even if the General had been favourably disposed, which is unlikely given the opposition of Bouvet's local superiors,¹⁵⁶ it was hardly the time for new adventures in the interpretation of the Chinese classics. De Tournon's arrival was imminent, and the first draft of a Chinese work by Bouvet, the T'ien-hsüeh pen-i, had already caused a furore. Some time in 1702, it had been presented to the Emperor by Antoine Thomas, against the advice of the Visitor, Emanuel Laurifice, and the Emperor had rejected it as 'undigested, disordered and full of various errors'.¹⁵⁷ Bouvet apparently revised the work, producing a much larger version, entitled Ku-chin ching-t'ien chien, 'On the Ancient and Modern Cult of Heaven', in 1707.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ In his letter to the General, Bouvet hedged on this issue and suggested that perhaps (*forte*) the local Superiors might be unfavourably disposed (f.155r). He must have known that the Visitor, Emanuel Laurifice, had already condemned his T'ien-hsüeh pen-i.

¹⁵⁷ Laurifice to Gonzalez, 16 December 1702, Rome:ASJ, Jap.Sin. 167, f.101.

¹⁵⁸ The history of the T'ien-hsüeh pen-i and the Ku-chin ching-t'ien chien as seen in the manuscripts in Rome, Paris and Moscow, is a complicated one. It seems that the T'ien-hsüeh pen-i, was begun shortly after Bouvet's return from Europe in 1699, presented to the Emperor in 1702, and revised in 1703 (the copy in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 317 (15), has a Preface by Han T'an, President of the Board of Rites, dated 1703). He then seems to have planned to extend the work, the ms. in Paris:BN, Chin.7160 being labelled shang chüan, '1st volume'. The enlarged work, entitled Ku-chin ching-t'ien chien was apparently finished in 1706, since a Latin translation entitled De Cultu Coelesti Sinarum Veterum et Modernorum by Hervieu and de Prémare, dating the work 'anno 1706' is found in Paris:BN, Lat. n.a. 155. However, the versions in Paris:BN, Chin.7161 and Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 316 (14) have an author's preface dated 1707. The former is in two chüan and the latter has one chüan and a conclusion. In Paris:BN, Chin.7162, there is another two chüan version which seems to be a more literary and polished version, in which the fifty-one headings of BN 7161 are reduced to forty-one, and all are rendered in the form of four-character phrases; a further concluding section makes it considerably larger than the earlier versions. Both the Borgia Cinese 316 (14) ms. and that in Moscow (Rumyancov Museum, Skachkov Collection, No.562) explicitly link the Ku-chin ching-t'ien chien with the T'ien-hsüeh pen-i, the former in the title, the latter in the colophon. Other Chinese works in the BAV, Borgia Cinese 357 (9), and (15), appear to be collections of material to be incorporated in the work in progress. (See Gatty, 'Ouvrages' No.-2; Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p.275; P. Pelliot, 'Sur quelques manuscrits sinologiques conservés en Russie', T'oung Pao, XXIX, 1932, pp.106-107; and Fang Hao, Fang Hao liu-shih tzu-ting kao, I, pp.236-237).

Neither of these works are 'Figurist' in content, but rather collections of classical texts to illustrate the standard Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, and to defend the Jesuit position in the Rites Controversy. Bouvet was presumably referring to the T'ien-hsüeh pen-i when he wrote to Leibniz in November 1701 that he was preparing 'a complete collection of all the most beautiful expressions which are found in the classical books of China relating to the divinity, arranged in the form of a catechism'.¹⁵⁹ If Wang Chung-min's belief, that the T'ien-hsüeh pen-i is based on the earlier T'ien-Ju i-t'ung k'ao by Chung Hsing-yueh,¹⁶⁰ is correct, it would confirm my impression that the work is to be regarded as a reiteration of the established interpretation of Confucianism, rather than a new departure. The only noticeable development on the standard Jesuit argument is a greater emphasis on texts from the I-ching which had not hitherto figured greatly in the Jesuit writings,¹⁶¹ and a certainty about ancient Chinese knowledge of the Trinity.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Paris:BN, Fr.17240, f.83r. Apart from the form, both the T'ien-hsüeh pen-i and the Ku-chin ching-t'ien chien fit the description well, and the topical presentation might, with some liberty, be regarded as a 'catechism'. Both are, in fact, arranged under headings, and the later work adopts in the conclusion a three-fold division into 'popular sayings', 'scholarly sayings', and 'classical texts'.

¹⁶⁰ See the article on Han T'an by Fang Chao-ying, in Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p.275. It should be noted that the manuscript of the T'ien-Ju t'ung-i k'ao in Paris:BN, Chin.7171, has a Preface dated 1715, thus dating it considerably later than either of Bouvet's works; but the first of the works in the collection is dated 1702.

¹⁶¹ A manuscript with Chinese characters in Bouvet's hand, entitled the I Yo or 'Key to the I-ching' is to be found in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 317 (16) and an identical manuscript in Borgia Cinese 357 (9) has the title Ching-t'ien chien: fa-ming t'ien-hsüeh pen-i, 'Introduction to the Ching-t'ien chien: explanation of the T'ien-hsueh pen-i'. This appears to be an attempt to incorporate some of his later I-ching studies into the Ku-chin ching-t'ien chien. It is undated, but I think it should certainly be related to his later I-ching studies rather than to the T'ien-hsüeh pen-i.

¹⁶² This argument is not stressed in the Chinese works, but in a letter to Beauvillier, dated 25 October 1707, Bouvet describes a Latin translation he is sending to Rome, clearly the Hervieu-Prémare translation of the Ku-chin ching-t'ien chien, and singles out the passages on the 'san-ye' as of particular importance (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 171, f.42).

The last point was developed further in a Chinese work written around this time, the T'ien-chu san-i lun, which was sent to Europe in late 1707.¹⁶³ In a letter of 5 November 1707,¹⁶⁴ he describes this little essay as a new beginning in his studies. 'It ought suffice as an intimation of what I have promised regarding the Messiah and the Mystery of the restoration of the world. This is what we are going to work on seriously.'¹⁶⁵

The last remark suggests that the beginning of Bouvet's collaboration with other missionaries should be dated from this point, late in 1707. The earliest of the dated circular letters in the Foucquet Papers, comes from 3 December 1707,¹⁶⁶ and the notes which passed between Bouvet and Hervieu, de Mailla and de Prémare,¹⁶⁷ reporting on the Master's discoveries in mathematics and in the classics, appear to date between late 1707 and 1710. He outlines to his disciples the 'theology of the ancient Patriarchs of the world' as found in the Chinese classics and other ancient literatures.¹⁶⁸ He examines the figure of Confucius himself and declares him 'mythological' and 'a pure figure of the Son of God'.¹⁶⁹ In one letter he

¹⁶³ A manuscript of the Chinese work, together with another work on the thirty names for God in the Chinese classics (Shih ken-pen chen-tsai ming-chien) is in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. IV, 5. It appears to be the work described as having been sent, together with a translation, to P. Le Tellier in October 1707 (*Mémoire des écrits du Père Bouvet*, 26 October 1707, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 171, f.51v).

¹⁶⁴ Gatty, No. 99. This letter has not been located but Gatty, following L. Ansart, Bibliothèque littéraire du Maine, Châlons, 1784, cites several passages.

¹⁶⁵ Gatty, Voyage de Siam du Père Bouvet, p.CX.

¹⁶⁶ It is a comment on a letter from Leibniz describing a cabbalistic inscription on a medallion (Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 515, ff.205-220).

¹⁶⁷ One should perhaps add Foucquet himself to the list, but he is not mentioned in the headings. Presumably the letters came into his possession at this time.

¹⁶⁸ Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 515, f.178r.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., f.196v (to de Prémare)

even purports to find 'the hypostatical union of God and man in the mystery of the right angled triangle'. It is not surprising to find defections from the group even at this early stage.

The second stage in Bouvet's development of his system, after the initial discovery of the traces of the primitive revelation, is his work on the I-ching. This may be dated, for convenience, from 1711, when Foucquet came to Peking, but we have already seen him beginning to explore the I-ching at an earlier period. In 1711-1716, however, Bouvet, Foucquet, and for a time, de Prémare, were working on a series of Chinese commentaries on the I-ching, many of which are now in the Borgia Cinese collection of the Vatican Library.¹⁷⁰ Their method seems to have been to collect texts and commentaries which fitted the system, and to interpret them in terms of the system. These manuscripts were then circulated for comment. A note, in Bouvet's hand, on the cover of one of these works¹⁷¹ gives us a clue as to the circulation and the composition of the group at this period: 'aux R.R. PP. Foucquet, de Premare, De Chavagnac de la Comp.^e de Jesu. Le P. De Prémare ne la pas veue'. Hervieu and de Mailla who were mentioned in 1707 are now absent from the list, Foucquet and de Chavagnac have been added. De Chavagnac was an active missionary in far-off Kiangsi¹⁷² and, as we have seen, must be regarded as a sceptical

¹⁷⁰ Especially Borgia Cinese 317 (1)-(16). There is another series of Chinese works in Borgia Cinese 361 (2)-(6) which appear to be connected with this enterprise. The latter are closely associated with Foucquet's papers, and certain comments in Foucquet's hand, so for convenience I have treated the Borgia Cinese 317 mss. as Bouvet's, with the exception of Borgia Cinese 317 (5) and (7) which seem more likely to be Foucquet's; and the Borgia Cinese 361 mss. as Foucquet's. The present Borgia Cinese 361 (3), Dou-i yuan-chih-t'an mu-lu, is clearly Borgia Cinese 317 (1), misplaced during cataloguing, and I attribute it to Bouvet. It should be remembered, however, that they are all contributions to a cooperative project, and that the manuscripts were circulated amongst, and commented on by, the group as a whole, hence individual attributions are not of crucial importance. See the Bibliography for a tentative ordering of the manuscript, and some comments on their interrelationship.

¹⁷¹ The Ta-I yüan-i nei-p'ien, Borgia Cinese 317 (9).

¹⁷² See Pfister, Notices, pp.567-571.

sympathiser at the most; which leaves Bouvet, Foucquet and de Prémare as the hard-core Figurists, or 'I-chingists'.

The proliferation of texts on the I-ching produced by the group almost defies analysis. Most are undated - those that are dated are from 1712 and 1713¹⁷³ - none are signed, and they are in a variety of calligraphy. The question of their mutual relationship and of their Chinese sources is so complex that I pass over it completely and restrict myself to a brief analysis of the main arguments. Bouvet himself summarised his system of interpretation in the Preface to his 'Key to the I (I yo) of 1712. He argues that 'the Holy teaching of the great I' is mysterious and only to be discovered by cooperation between Chinese and Western scholars.

All the people of China and the Western regions originally came from one ancestor; they are all brothers, born of the same mother, the same great Father and Mother who produced Heaven, Earth and men. So, originally they were one family, and as one family with one heavenly Father and Mother, they submitted to the one Way, the one principle and the one teaching. They had the same teachers, one and the same heavenly teaching and beliefs, and so on. When you think about the God (t'ien-ti), how could the ancient Chinese have the true tradition of the heavenly teachings and beliefs, and the myriad countries of the Western nations not at all? Chinese scholars, since they do not travel, and do not study the strange writings of the myriad countries, have not examined their records, and so find it difficult to penetrate foreign affairs. Western scholars have made a special study of antiquity and have travelled widely through the world; they have studied the writings of each country, read their books, examined their sources, translated them into their own language. There can be no doubt that it is of great benefit to all scholars to study and test their works, and to know them thoroughly.¹⁷⁴

What we must do is to compare the scriptures and dogmas (ta tao) of Christianity with the ancient Chinese traditions, especially the I-ching and the other classics, and by combining them

¹⁷³ The I yo (Borgia Cinese 317 (2)) is dated 'the 1712th year of the Holy Religion of the Sages' (f.[10]r); and the I-ching tsung-lun (Borgia Cinese 317 (3)) has a note in Foucquet's hand, 'copié en 1713, mois de may, l'empereur partant pour Tartarie', as also does the Shih hsien-t'ien wei-p'ien... (Borgia Cinese 317 (11)).

¹⁷⁴ I yo, p.[1]v.

rediscover the heavenly teachings and beliefs of the earliest age of mankind. The I-ching is the most difficult of all these texts to understand, but its diagrams hold the key to these teachings.¹⁷⁵

The rest of the I yo is in two sections: an exposition of Christian doctrine beginning with the Trinity and ending with the life of Christ; and an interpretation of the hexagrams of the I-ching as 'proof for the preceding'. The method is simplistic in the extreme - three solid lines represent the Trinity, broken lines signify sin and the broken unity of mankind etc. etc. This method is pursued in later works, which extend the search for Christian mysteries to the commentaries and diagrams illustrating the I-ching. A diagram from the I-lei hsiang-t'u,¹⁷⁶ for example, which is triangular in form, is interpreted as proof of the knowledge of 'three powers' (san-ts'ai) and 'three supremes' (san-chi), i.e. a trinity, in the supreme being.¹⁷⁸ Yet another work, 'Dissertation on the Vestiges of Ancient Traditions' (Fu ku-ch'uan i-chi lun) extends the search for trinities beyond the I-ching to the Tao-te-ching.¹⁷⁸

The reasons for the hostility of their fellow Jesuits to the 'I-chingists' are apparent even from this brief description. Bouvet was staking all on the validity and acceptability of an argument that postulated a break with both Western and Chinese habits of mind. He had undergone a kind of conversion experience which left him unable to see the world except in terms of his system. And the more he pondered, the more the pieces of his mental universe were subtly re-organised to fit into the pattern. Hundreds of pieces of

¹⁷⁵ I yo, ff.[11]v - [2]v.

¹⁷⁶ I have not been able to trace this work or identify its author, but it is included in the list of Chinese works which Foucquet brought back to Europe in 1722 (v. H.A. Omont, Missions archéologiques francaises en Orient aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, Paris, 1902, Appendix XXVII, pp. 1156-1158).

¹⁷⁷ I-hsueh wai-p'ien, Borgia Cinese 317 (10), f.2r-v.

¹⁷⁸ Borgia Cinese 317 (7), f.24v.

disconnected and inconclusive evidence added up to certainty. One can speculate about his motivation and psychological orientation. In the first place, his kind of number mysticism had a quite respectable ancestry, of which he was conscious. Augustine, Nicholas of Cusa, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and Leibniz, all provide examples of a type of mind which seeks the key to 'all religion and all sciences' in numerical symbols. Bouvet's aberration, if such it was, was not a historical 'sport'. But perhaps even more important were the pressing needs of the mission, the impasse that the old Jesuit approach had arrived at. Bouvet had witnessed the furore aroused by Le Comte's Nouveaux Mémoires in Paris; he had lived through the disaster of the de Tournon legation. Just as Francis Xavier had been driven by a vision of souls damned because he had not reached them, so Bouvet was driven by a vision of Christ recognized in places where he had not previously been sought.¹⁷⁹

As the pressure from his opponents and superiors built up, Bouvet, far from retreating from his positions, became even more bold. This third stage in the development of his system centred on prophecy, and a theory about the three stages of the world. In his Idea Generalis Doctrinae Libri Ye Kim¹⁸⁰ sent to Rome in November 1712¹⁸¹ he announces that he is now convinced that the I-ching contains the idea of three 'states' of the world; a state of original perfection, a state of corruption, and a state of reformation and restoration. He has been forbidden by his superiors to speak to the Emperor about 'the supernatural mysteries of the Christian law' but he regards himself as free to develop the 'natural theology'

¹⁷⁹ See the 'Tractatus de Antiquitatibus Sinarum, ad Religionem Spectantes, Praeludium', Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, f.147r, where he argues that faith in Christ is necessary for salvation, and that to deny his interpretation of the ancient Chinese books, is to deny eternal life to a vast segment of humanity.

¹⁸⁰ Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, ff.290-291.

¹⁸¹ It seems to be the work referred to in his letter to the Jesuit General, Tamburini, 20 November 1712 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, f.279).

of the I-ching and the Emperor has expressed his interest in the theory of the three ages and 'insinuated' his approval. Whatever the nature of this 'approbation' of the Emperor, and I have been unable to find any evidence beyond Bouvet's tendentious description,¹⁸² Bouvet invoked it against his superiors as license to continue his investigations. This vague approval of the Emperor, plus reference to the precedents set by Huet and Beurrier, are his constant defence.¹⁸³

When, in 1718, he received 'with stupefaction' a letter from the General ordering him not to offer any of his 'singular and exotic opinions' to the Emperor without them having been first examined and approved by his Jesuit 'revisors', his reply is to refer the General to 'an exposition which I have prepared, of the integral system of hieroglyphic wisdom of the earliest Chinese'.¹⁸⁴ His Superiors will not, unfortunately, allow him to forward it. It appears that in 1720 and 1721 he did at last send off this treatise in several parts¹⁸⁵ and, if this is the work still extant in the Jesuit Archives in Rome,¹⁸⁶ it can hardly have reassured the General. At a time

¹⁸² Bouvet carefully avoids claiming that the Emperor gave direct approval, and he does admit that K'ang-hsi demanded proofs like those in Foucquet's work in progress on astronomy. This would hardly be 'natural theology', even in Bouvet's broad definition.

¹⁸³ See, in addition to the Idea Generalis, his letters to Tamburini of 3 November 1714 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 176, ff. 114-115), 25 November 1716 (Jap. Sin. 177, ff.219-222), 30 December 1718 (Jap. Sin. 178, ff.251-253), 14 November 1719 (Jap. Sin. 178, f.339) and 24 November 1721 (Jap. Sin. 179, ff.133-134, and Jap. Sin. IV.5, E).

¹⁸⁴ Letter to Tamburini, 30 December 1718, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 178, f.251v.

¹⁸⁵ See the reference in his letter to Tamburini, 24 November 1721 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. IV.5, E, f.1). The Visitor, Laureati, in a letter to D'Entrecolles of 27 July 1719, told the French Superior that he had given Bouvet and Foucquet permission to send their Latin writings to the General only, but to no one else (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 178, f.290).

¹⁸⁶ In Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. IV.5, A, F and H. For titles and details see the Bibliography. This is almost certainly the 'work of 200 pages on a discovery made in the I-ching' which Mlle Gatty believed lost (see No.40 on her list of 'Ouvrages').

when the Jesuits were coming increasingly under fire, a 'mystical system of prophetic times' was scarcely what he needed to defend his hard-pressed missionaries against their critics.

Till the end of his life in 1730, Bouvet continued to work on this aspect of his system. In a series of letters to Father Souciet, published by Henri Cordier in the Revue de l'Extrême Orient, and dating from 1725, 1727 and 1728,¹⁸⁷ he refers to a number of works which he has sent to Europe, dealing with his prophetic system, and which were believed lost.¹⁸⁸ One of these, 'a work of 20 to 30 pages' sent to Pere Tournemine, and dealing with 'the character of Hou-chi ['the Lord of Millet'] who appears a perfect type of the Saviour',¹⁸⁹ I discovered in the Jesuit Archives in Rome.¹⁹⁰ The other works on 'chronology' i.e. on his 'system of the prophetic times', were sent to Souciet in 1726, and inspired Souciet's refutation of 29 October 1727.¹⁹¹ These are, I believe, the works now in the French Jesuit Archives at Chantilly, Brotier Nos. 143, 144 and 145, which have been mis-catalogued by all bibliographers¹⁹² as Gollet's.

¹⁸⁷ These are Gatty's Nos. 137, 140 and 143, and were published in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp. 67-69, 64-65 and 218-220 respectively. Another letter dated 13 November 1727 is in Paris:BN, Fr.n.a. 22435, ff. 19-20r. The Catalogue and Gatty (No. 141) regard this as to Souciet also. However, Bouvet explicitly refers to Souciet in the third person in the letter. With Pfister I read the date as the 13th not the 18th of November.

¹⁸⁸ Gatty's 'Ouvrages', Nos. 41 and 42.

¹⁸⁹ Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp. 219-220.

¹⁹⁰ Entitled Expositio unius odæ propheticae libri canonici xi-kim, in qua clare, distincte et veluti historice sub unico typo praenuntiata Christi Salvatoris Incarnatio, nativitas, Instantia, vita privata et publica, praedicatio, passio, mors, ejusque sacrificium tum cruentum tum incruentum pro remissione peccatorum et perpetua omnium populorum faelicitate oblatum, 24 pp. (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. IV.5, F).

¹⁹¹ Referred to by Bouvet in his letter to Souciet, 23 November 1728, Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, p. 64.

¹⁹² Sommervogel, Bibliothèque, III, cols. 1546ff; Cordier, Bibliotheca Sinica, col. 1051; Pfister, Notices, p. 562, No. 1; and Rowbotham, Journal of the History of Ideas, XVII, 1956, p. 474.

There seems little point in pursuing Bouvet through the labyrinthine ways of his 'sacred algebra, belonging to the true and ancient cabbala, and common to the ancient Hebrews and the ancient Chinese'.¹⁹³ He is convinced that the I-ching prophesies the age of the world as 100 cycles of 120 'sabbatical years' or 91 'solar years' each; that the hsien-t'ien or 'former age' covers the period from the creation to the Ascension of the Lord and the hou-t'ien or 'latter age', from the Ascension to the end of the world;¹⁹⁴ but he was unable to convince either his fellow missionaries or his European correspondents. The very titles of the works¹⁹⁵ would be enough to arouse the suspicions of an orthodox scripture scholar like Souciet, and Bouvet's naive belief that Souciet objected primarily to his Septuagint chronology¹⁹⁶ demonstrates how his world had narrowed to the walls of his Peking study. Bouvet's penchant for solitariness, which had led Bénigne Vachet M.E.P. to describe him on his first voyage out to China as 'a solitary genius' and 'a better Carthusian than a Jesuit',¹⁹⁷ was still in evidence. He remained optimistic and cheerful to the last, still hoping to find 'a more palpable demonstration' of his 'divine numbers' and the 'period of the prophetic times'.¹⁹⁸ Even the last remaining Figurists, Gollet, Foucquet and de Prémare, refused to follow him in these flights.

¹⁹³ Bouvet to Souciet, 18 October 1727, Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, p.219.

¹⁹⁴ See the Vera Temporum Propheticonum Ratio et Mensura... Pars Prior, Chantilly: Brotier 144, ff.2v-35 (pp.4-5).

¹⁹⁵ See the Bibliography.

¹⁹⁶ Bouvet to Souciet, 23 November 1728, Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, p.64.

¹⁹⁷ Cited in Gatty's Introduction to the Voiage de Siam du Père Bouvet, p.XXIII, n.1.

¹⁹⁸ I have not seen the letter to Souciet of 12 October 1729 from which this passage comes, but Gatty's long extract (No.144) proves that less than twelve months before his death Bouvet was still as committed a 'Figurist' as ever.

Gollet was in exile in Macao. Foucquet, recalled from the mission, and alienated from the Society of Jesus, remained committed to Figurism but confined himself to arguing the figurative nature of early Chinese history to anyone whose ear he could catch. De Prémare continued to seek 'vestiges' in Chinese language and literature, but he also produced many works of a far more conventional nature, in Chinese, French and Latin, and was almost recalled to Europe for continuing to maintain the old Jesuit interpretation of the Rites.

It is tempting, but I think a mistake, to dismiss Joachim Bouvet as a crank of a familiar type, and his life-work as totally misguided. In many respects he was more correct than his hard-headed critics. Much of the early Chinese 'history' is now seen to be clearly mythological, and its leading figures 'culture heroes' analogous to those of other traditions. The central dilemma to which he addressed himself, the scandal of religious pluralism, was one that most Christian thinkers either passed by with averted eyes, or arrogantly talked out of existence. Bouvet's enormous, if misdirected, erudition covered many areas of Chinese studies almost totally neglected in the West till two centuries later, when the I-ching was rediscovered and popularized by sinologists, psychologists and cultists. Even if, as ultimately I believe we must, we regard Bouvet's system as a manifestation of a kind of intellectual pathology, it is a particularly fascinating case-study, and well worth a more thorough investigation than I have given it here.

IV. JEAN-FRANÇOIS FOUCQUET AND THE SYMBOLISM OF THE CHINESE CLASSICS

The person and career of Jean-François Foucquet remain enigmatic, partly because the abundant papers he left have not been thoroughly explored,¹⁹⁹ partly because he himself engaged in a deal of reinterpretation of his own career, in the period after he left China. Fortunately, Foucquet's papers, including letters, diaries, notes, fragments and drafts of treatises, enable us to correct the record, and to establish both the outline of the development of his Figurist views, and the reasons for and course of the protracted quarrel with his superiors that led to his leaving the mission and the Society of Jesus. Here I shall concentrate on his interpretation of the Confucian classics and the main lines of his intellectual development, and leave the other questions, as far as possible, to his future biographer.

Foucquet arrived in China in mid 1699,²⁰⁰ and worked in Fukien and Kiangsi before being called to Peking by the Emperor, at Bouvet's prompting, in May 1711. Before this period he was already a member of the inner circle of Figurists,²⁰¹ and had in 1709 or 1710 produced a lengthy 'Memoir on the System of the Three Dynasties or Imperial Families

¹⁹⁹ Father Henri Bernard-Maitre, is currently engaged on a survey of the Foucquet Papers in the Vatican Library, which should clear the way for a much needed monograph on Foucquet. See the Bibliography for my tentative ordering of Foucquet's works. Foucquet's habit of making additions etc. to his notebooks is sometimes confusing, but fortunately the black Chinese ink can always be distinguished from the browned ink of additions made in Europe.

²⁰⁰ Pfister, Notices, p.549, gives 24 June 1699, although Foucquet himself in his letter to the Duc de la Force (Lettres Edifiantes, V, 1705, p.133) gives 29 July 1699 as the date of his arrival in China.

²⁰¹ Apart from the copies in his notebooks of Bouvet's letters of 1707-1710 to other missionaries, there are several letters and notes by Foucquet in Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 515, dating probably from 1707-1708, indicating his adherence to the 'I-chingists'.

that are alleged to have governed China from Yao to the Ch'in',²⁰² which argued that the Hsia, the Shang and the Chou dynasties were mythical and the Classics should be read figuratively not literally. Although he was diverted in April 1712 to work on astronomy, he was at the same time deeply involved in Bouvet's I-ching project. Foucquet's habit of compiling lengthy apologies for his superiors, leaves us in no doubt about this.²⁰³ They were in daily contact and communicated their discoveries to each other. Something of the excitement of the period is captured in a note in Bouvet's hand in Foucquet's papers:

Mon. R. Pere,

Vers midi j'ay trouvé une demonstration palpable pour faire voir a l'Europe et a la Chine tout ensemble, que les 3.hoam, les 5 ti, les fouhi, les hoamti, ne sont autre chose qu'Enoch.

J'ay besoin du dictionnaire de furhère [?].

V.T.R.S.J. Bouvet²⁰⁴

Foucquet, like Bouvet, resented the restrictions placed upon his work by his superiors. Shortly after his arrival in Peking, he wrote to Hervieu, who was the 'admonitor' of the French Superior, D'Entrecolles, protesting at the prohibitions on speaking to the Emperor about their new ideas, and defending his right to work on, if not to publish, his researches on the I-ching.²⁰⁵ D'Entrecolles' reply was conciliatory, approving his ideas in general, but urging

²⁰² The manuscript of the Mémoire in Paris:BN, Fr. n.a.5744, was sent to Etienne Souciet in 1719, but a note at the end says that it was written in 1709 or 1710, and that he had not had time to revise it since.

²⁰³ See his 'Relation exacte de ce qui s'est passé a Peking par rapport a l'astronomie Européenne depuis le mois de Juin 1711, jusqu' au 1^e Novembre 1716', Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 566, ff.144-184.

²⁰⁴ Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 565, f.32.

²⁰⁵ Letter of 30 September 1711, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, ff.77-84.

caution, and pointing out that the mission had provided him with a Chinese secretary, at great cost, to help him in his work.²⁰⁶ Foucquet's letter names the work he is engaged upon as the I-kao ('Notes on the I')²⁰⁷ which seems to confirm his authorship of the manuscript of that title in the Borgia Chinese collection of the Vatican Library.²⁰⁸ Like Bouvet's I-ching commentaries, it is quite tendentious, taking the text and interpreting its 'inner meaning' (nei-i) as references to the Trinity, the Incarnation etc. Several other collections of texts and draft commentaries on the I-ching are also in the Foucquet Papers, and presumably date from this period.²⁰⁹ They are clearly, from their titles and contents, contributions to Bouvet's project, and it is not always certain whether they are Foucquet's own work, or his copies, with comments, of Bouvet's works.²¹⁰ There can be no doubt, however, that Foucquet was, at this period, Bouvet's most ardent 'I-chingist' collaborator.

Most of Foucquet's Chinese and Latin manuscripts do not concentrate on the I-ching, and I think it is possible to trace his growing divergence from Bouvet on this issue. Foucquet's interests lay much more in the evidence he thought he discerned in the Chinese Classics for the transmission from the sons of Noah of a primitive revelation. The I-ching

²⁰⁶ Letters of 3 November 1711 and 3 March 1712 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 174, ff.110-115, 164-168). Elsewhere (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f.32r) the secretary is named as 'Lou Siancong', and described as being a licentiate, aged 63 (in 1719) and a former catechist (Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 566, ff.219v-220r).

²⁰⁷ Jap. Sin. 174, f.80v.

²⁰⁸ Borgia Chinese 317 (7).

²⁰⁹ Borgia Chinese 361 (2), (4), (5), (6), and the unnumbered I-hsüeh wai-p'ien at the end of this collection. The numbering of these manuscripts is faulty. The I-ching chu-chia chieh-shuo in Borgia Chinese 361 (5), following the original catalogue marks, should be 361 (3). The present 361 (3), the Chou-I yüan-chih-t'an mu-lu, is clearly the missing Borgia Chinese 317 (1), probably misplaced and catalogued twice during Pelliot's cataloguing. The original 361 (5) is the manuscript now found unnumbered at the end of the collection.

²¹⁰ I have, as noted previously, for convenience allotted the Borgia Chinese 361 manuscripts to Foucquet, and the Borgia Chinese 317 manuscripts (except for the I-kao) to Bouvet. For titles and details, see the Bibliography.

was for him but one source of these ideas, and the basic concepts of Chinese philosophy as found in a very wide variety of sources, ancient and modern, were drawn upon. Unlike Bouvet, who was increasingly preoccupied with prophecy and extraordinary revelations, Foucquet knew what he wanted to discover; the basic doctrines of Christianity concealed or figured in the personages and concepts of Chinese tradition; and he devoted all his energies to unveiling them. Again unlike Bouvet, he was not concerned with system-building so much as with assembling disparate pieces of evidence to support his general theory, as the title of his major work, 'Dissertation on the True Origin of the Doctrine and Records of the Chinese...' ²¹¹ indicates. Whereas Bouvet eventually moved from Figurist premises via the I-ching to a 'universal prophetic system', Foucquet remained a Figurist.

Foucquet's Chinese manuscripts, by comparison with Bouvet's, are fragmentary: compilations and notes rather than drafts or finished treatises. This may be due to the fact that he was less adept in Chinese than Bouvet, but it probably also reflects his and Bouvet's disillusionment over converting K'ang-hsi. The later works of both are all in Latin and French, and aimed at convincing European scholars of the universality of revelation, rather than at converting the Chinese. ²¹² Another difference is the wide range of topics they cover: the interpretation of t'ai-chi, ²¹³ the death-bed

²¹¹ Dissertatio de Vera Origine Doctrinae et Manuscriptorum Sinensium contenta quatuor propositionibus. On the extremely complicated state of the manuscripts of this work in Rome: BAV, Borgia Cinese 358 and 437, and Borgia Latino 544 and 566, see the Bibliography.

²¹² Note the significant change between Foucquet's original sub-title for the Propylaeum Templi Veteris Sapientiae (Borgia Cinese 566), which is addressed solely to China missionaries - 'eruditio legis evangelicae praeconibus, in vinea Sinica adlaborantibus' - and the title he later gave in Borgia Cinese 371 (interleaf opposite p.2), which is addressed to European scholars as well - 'eruditio, Christi gloriae zelatoribus ac operariis ministris Evangelicis in vinea Sinica adlaborantibus'.

²¹³ T'ai-chi lüeh-shuo (Borgia Cinese 317 (5)). I attribute this to Foucquet on grounds of calligraphy and contents, as well as his undoubted authorship of the accompanying mathematical treatise.

'conversion' of Chu Hsi from his atheism;²¹⁴ the essence of the classics;²¹⁵ the nature of the 'true Lord';²¹⁶ and the true Confucian scholar.²¹⁷

Perhaps the most interesting of Foucquet's Chinese works is a treatise entitled, 'According to an examination of the Ancient Classics, the Appearance of the Heavens is not Invariable'.²¹⁸ It is presented in the form of a dialogue between a Chinese and a European about the irregular motion of the five planets. The European says that the Chinese classics contain a good example of a major and irregular change in the distinction drawn by the I-ching between the hsien-t'ien and the hou-t'ien. When the Chinese protests that the commentators are vague about the meaning of these terms, the European demonstrates from the I-ching and other classical texts that it is really a distinction between the state of innocence and the fallen state of man.

In these various remains of the ancient Philosophers, it must be conceded that some things can be found, not it is true in their original and pure state, but, as it says in the Proverbs, gold is refined from dross. Nor should it be said that no vestige remains of the ancient and true doctrine. Certainly, there are some records, especially some of the figures of the I-ching, which as even the modern school of Philosophers admits, have been lost to the followers of degenerate systems, and have long been hidden.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ Chu Hsi wan-nien t'ung-hui chih chu (Borgia Cinese 357 (11) and 380 (1)).

²¹⁵ Ching-i ching-yao (Borgia Cinese 380 (2) to (4)).

²¹⁶ Chen-tsai ming-chien (Borgia Cinese 316 (18)). The author is unnamed, but it bears some notes in French in Foucquet's hand.

²¹⁷ Ch'eng-Ju - a draft only with notes in French and Chinese (Borgia Latino 566, ff.113-139).

²¹⁸ Ch'ü ku-ching-ch'uan k'ao t'ien-hsiang pu chun-ch'i (Borgia Cinese 380 (6) - with Latin translation - and 380 (7) text alone).

²¹⁹ Ibid., pp.5-6 (I have translated the Latin rather than the Chinese, as representing more accurately Foucquet's mind on the subject).

So far, then, we have a restatement of Bouvet's I-ching theories, with the rather irrelevant variation of a starting-point in astronomy.

What follows, however, is pure Foucquet, Figurism run wild. A whole series of common Chinese characters are analysed into components which are alleged to 'figure' the Old Testament story. The character ch'iu, 'hillock' or 'mound', originally represented two people on a plain i.e. Adam and Eve in Paradise.²²⁰ Kuo or 'state',²²¹ comes from the world and its heavenly king.²²² And so it goes on for several pages of ingeniously conceived but utterly unfounded examples.

If any real Chinese, outside the pages of Foucquet's imaginery dialogue, had followed him this far, which is almost inconceivable even in the early eighteenth century when Chinese linguistics was in its infancy, I am sure the conclusion would have repelled him. Foucquet's last examples were taken from basic characters dealing with nature, which figure prominently in Taoist works such as the Tao-te-ching. He moves on from this to argue that the traditional hostility of Confucian to Taoist was misplaced. The true Confucianism was the teaching of the Tao-te-ching which was not opposed to cultivation of virtues such as jen and i, 'mercy' and 'justice',²²³ but fulfilled them by preaching the shêng-jen, the Sage, the Christian Saviour.²²⁴ Thus the Tao-te-ching rather than the I-ching becomes the key text of Foucquet's new variant on the Jesuit interpretation of Chinese tradition.

That this is not a temporary phase in his thinking is shown by a massive work of Foucquet's, sent to the Jesuit General in 1718,²²⁵ entitled the Problème Théologique.²²⁶

²²⁰ Ibid., p.20.

²²¹ Foucquet argues quite speciously, but necessarily for his argument, that the common abbreviated form for this character is in fact primary.

²²² Ibid., p.19.

²²³ Misericordia and justitia.

²²⁴ Ibid., p.29.

²²⁵ See the accompanying letters to the General of 23 and 26 November 1718, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 182, pp.66-68, and further references the following year, 19 November 1719, Jap. Sin. 182, f.240r.

²²⁶ There are identical copies, 321 pp. each, in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 371, and Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. IV.4.

The 'Problem' is 'whether one can say, and how one can say, that in the unique true sense of the ancient Chinese books, the character tao signifies the God whom the Christians adore?' And the answer is affirmative.²²⁷ Tao is the Christian God, and the shēng-jen, 'celebrated in a thousand ways in the ancient monuments of China, is the Messiah promised by our Scriptures, the Saint par excellence'.²²⁸ Evidence is gathered together from mainly Taoist sources - Tao-te-ching, the Lieh-tzu, the Chuang-tzu, the Huai-nan-tzu, and later Taoist commentators. But he also draws on the I-ching and Shih-ching which he describes as 'equally' sources of 'the spirituality of Tao'.²²⁹ Thus, the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism has become the Jesuit interpretation of Taoism!

Behind all this theorising, however, is a basic 'Figurist' premise:

No one should, therefore, be surprised to find this subtle and sublime doctrine amongst the ancient sages of China. I would say two things about it. Firstly, that this doctrine is as ancient amongst the Chinese as it is amongst the Chaldeans and Egyptians; since the origin of all these peoples is the same, their doctrine also comes from one and the same source, namely Noah and his children. Secondly, what one finds there is incomparably more pure, more inspired and more complete than in the remains which have been conserved of their Philosophy.²³⁰

Confucius is said to have had 72 disciples to whom he taught a secret or mystical doctrine, much of which was lost in the burning of the books.²³¹ But he who holds the key to the ancient Chinese books can read them.

²²⁷ A note is appended to the title: 'Dans l'ouvrage suivant on expose les raisons qui sont pour l'affirmative. On pourra dans un autre ouvrage exposer les raisons qui sont pour la negative si on les apprend des personnes qui soutiennent ce sentiment' (p.1).

²²⁸ Borgia Cinese 371, p.3.

²²⁹ Ibid., p.46.

²³⁰ Ibid., p.69.

²³¹ Ibid., pp.235-236.

Foucquet was aware that his reinterpretation of China's past required reinforcing in two directions. Firstly, he had to demonstrate that the Chinese ideas about their origins as a nation and their early history were false, or rather misinterpretations of the ancient tradition. And secondly, he had to convince European theologians that his views were orthodox. It was to this task that he devoted his last years in China, and the result is a vast collection of completed and incomplete 'propositions', variously titled, and scattered through the Foucquet papers. I shall not attempt to arrange them in definite order, but simply to report their main arguments.²³²

The Four Propositions to which Foucquet addressed himself in his Dissertatio de Vera Origine Doctrinae et Monumentorum Sinensium may be summarised as follows.²³³ 1. Adam, the first man, had knowledge not only of the mysteries of religion, including a future redeemer, but also of all arts and sciences which he was entrusted to transmit to posterity 'in graphic form', 'through the infinite multitude of symbols'. 2. Some of Adam's sons and nephews were given the key to these mystic symbols or cabala, especially Seth and Enoch. The 'arcane tradition' was revived by Moses, and again, after the captivity of Babylon, by Esdras. 3. The cabala was preserved not only orally, but in books kept secret from the common people. 4. These books were saved in Noah's Ark, and they, together

²³² There are clearly two groups of documents. 1. Those belonging to the Dissertatio de Vera Origine Doctrinae et Monumentorum Sinensium contenta Quatuor Propositionibus; and 2. the Propylaeum Templi Veteris Sapientiae. The latter, I have tentatively concluded, was the title Foucquet proposed to give a reworking of the Dissertatio with a Latin translation of the Problème Théologique appended. In fact, only a Preface, a statement of the four propositions, and the '4a Propositio, 2a Pars' of the Dissertatio, appear to have been finished. The contents of the texts which appear to have been entitled Propylaeum...correspond closely to the projected '2a Propositio' of the Dissertatio. Nothing of the 1st or 3rd propositions seems to have been attempted. For full bibliographical details, see the Bibliography.

²³³ After the text in Borgia Latino 566, ff.338r - 340v.

with the oral tradition, were handed on through Noah's sons to all the nations of the world. The most extensive and best preserved source of this ancient tradition is to be found in China, and by studying the ancient Chinese books the 'sacred enigmas' can be restored and the 'divine science' systematically expounded.

It is not surprising to find that Foucquet never completed more than a small part of this formidable programme. He did, however, produce a substantial draft of the section dealing with China (4th proposition, 2nd part) as well as a sketch of the whole argument in a Preface. The Preface acknowledges his debt to the kind of thinking on comparative mythology that we have already noted to be common in the seventeenth century. He cites Kircher, Huet, scripture scholars such as Bellarmine and Cornelius a Lapide, and Pico on the cabbala.²³⁴ There is another substantial fragment on the cabbala, in several copies, amongst the Foucquet papers,²³⁵ which covers the same ground, but adds little to the argument. The breadth of reading is impressive, especially since the Chinese rice-paper and Chinese ink indicate that it must have been produced entirely in China using the limited resources of the Jesuit libraries there; but it is hardly original.

The section on China,²³⁶ however, is certainly original and constitutes a unique contribution to the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. Foucquet is attempting nothing less than a complete reinterpretation of the whole of Chinese tradition in the light of his Figurist assumptions. He rejects the

²³⁴ Borgia Latino 566, ff.327v-336v (and identical copy in ff. 612-613, 682-689).

²³⁵ Borgia Cinese 358 (3) and (4) contains pp.17-[272] and Borgia Latino 566, ff.785-905 has pp.17-[260]. There are other fragments in Borgia Latino 566, ff.614-665 (pp.21-129) and 690-780 (pp.17-197).

²³⁶ This makes up the '4a Propositio, 2a Pars' of the Dissertatio. It is divided into 2 chapters. The first of these is found in Borgia Latino 566, ff.359-602 and (an identical copy made in Europe and lacking characters) in Borgia Cinese 437. The 2nd chapter is in Borgia Cinese 358 (1) and (2) and (a European copy without characters) in Borgia Latino 544.

traditional (and Jesuit) distinction between schools of thought in early China as irrelevant since their more profound teachings flow from a common source. By a combination of careful textual criticism and wild symbolic interpretation of characters, he demonstrates to his satisfaction that the source is the ancient Patriarchs and the teachings are the basic dogmas of Christianity, the Trinity and Incarnation, the Fall and the Redemption.

A good example of his method of working is his treatment of Confucius. With considerable erudition, and drawing on a wide variety of sources, he reconstructs the life of Confucius. He shows critical sense²³⁷ as well as knowledge of the texts, and the general picture that emerges is one that would be acceptable to any Chinese scholar of his time. All this is, however, nothing but a backdrop to his main point. Confucius claims to have received his teaching from the ancients, especially from one Lao P'eng.²³⁸ Lao P'eng is called, by Chuang-tzu, P'eng Tsu, P'eng the Ancestor, and can be no other than Adam himself.²³⁹ Confucius got this teaching from a visit to Chou, where he met Lao Tan or Lao Tzu, keeper of the records. These records, from which both Confucius and Lao Tzu drew their ideas, were clearly 'the records of the early world which Noah preserved in the Ark, or copies of them', brought to China after the flood. Chou means 'universal' which comes from its function as repository of the universal teaching. The ancient name for China, Chung-kuo, is misapplied to China, but fits Judea perfectly.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ E.g. in his treatment of the Chia yü, Borgia Latino 566, ff.370r-372v.

²³⁸ Presumably a reference to Analects, VII.I: 'The Master said, "A transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself with our old P'ang' (Legge trans.). It would be possible, although contrary to all the commentators, to read ch'ieh in its original sense of 'to steal' rather than the deprecativ 'my humble self', 'I venture', and hence to arrive at Foucquet's reading, 'I borrow my ideas from Old P'eng'.

²³⁹ Borgia Latino 566, ff.363r-v.

²⁴⁰ Borgia Latino 566, ff.402v-406r.

As time went on, this pure doctrine was distorted by the commentators. The Han commentators, after the burning of the books, fell into 'heresies', 'monstrosities' and 'errors'.²⁴¹ Chu Hsi in the Sung misinterpreted the Saint or Messiah, as a mere human sage.²⁴² T'ien-tzu, or 'Son of Heaven', was regarded as referring to the Emperor, but when the Li Chi says that only the t'ien-tzu or shêng-jen can sacrifice to God, it must refer to Christ.²⁴³ The I-ching has been wrongly regarded by some as 'magic, atheism, and the dregs of all superstitions'.²⁴⁴ If that is so, why did Confucius wish for fifty years to be added to his life, in order to study it?²⁴⁵

The major part of the 1st chapter of the 4th Proposition, Part 2, over 350 pages,²⁴⁶ is devoted to proving from an indiscriminate array of texts, ancient and modern, Confucian and Taoist, that the authentic esoteric teaching of the ancient Chinese was that there was one supreme lord, infinitely wise and just; that the soul was immortal; that we should love our neighbour as ourselves; and that there was a Saint to come. This section, too, displays that peculiar mixture of erudition and misplaced ingenuity, critical sense and wild flights that characterises Foucquet's work. So often his argument turns on a verbal trick or false etymology. A passage in the Imperial Commentary on the I-ching which associates 'spirit' (shên) with 'word' (yen) must be a reference to the Word, or Christ.²⁴⁷ The character t'ien is composed of symbols for 'two' and 'man', and must be read as a prophecy of the second Adam, Christ.²⁴⁸

²⁴¹ Borgia Latino 566, ff.406v, 408r.

²⁴² Borgia Latino 566, f.410r.

²⁴³ Borgia Latino 566, f.410r.

²⁴⁴ Borgia Latino 566, f.428v.

²⁴⁵ Analects, VII.16. On this question, see H. Dubs, 'Did Confucius study the Book of Changes?', T'oung Pao, XXV, 1927-1928, pp.82-92.

²⁴⁶ Borgia Latino 566, ff.430-602.

²⁴⁷ Borgia Latino 566, ff.436r-v, citing the text of the Chou-i che-chung, ch. 17, 15.

²⁴⁸ Borgia Latino 566, f.442r.

Yet, he is also much more aware than most of his Jesuit predecessors of the polytheistic (he calls them 'idolatrous') elements in the sacrificial rites described in the Shu-ching and Li chi.²⁴⁹ The roots of his future breach with his order over the Rites issue are there, not yet recognized even by Foucquet himself.²⁵⁰

The second chapter of Part 2 of the fourth proposition²⁵¹ attempts the much more difficult task of determining Confucius' role in the transmission of the 'arcane doctrine' of the Patriarchs. In this chapter, unlike the earlier account of the life and career of Confucius, he proceeds to mythologize the historical Confucius. He makes much of the fact that Confucius, like Christ, had 72 disciples, a clear 'sign' (sacramentum) of Confucius' Messianic expectations. The Confucians called themselves Ju, the character for which comes from jen, 'man', and hsü, to 'expect' or 'hope',²⁵² hence 'those Philosophers were men who were expecting or hoping'.²⁵³ What were they hoping for? Both the ancient form of the character hsü and the 'canonical definition',²⁵⁴ of the hsü hexagram of the I-ching are explained as 'clouds ascending above the heavens'. Who ascended above the heavens in a cloud of glory but the Lord, Jesus Christ?²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ See, for example, his discussion of the chiao and shê rites, Borgia Latino 566, ff.438r-440v.

²⁵⁰ Here, as elsewhere in the Foucquet manuscripts, a later comment (recognisable by the browned European ink) draws out the implications contrary to the Rites, which remained undeveloped in the earlier text (see the note on f.441r).

²⁵¹ Entitled 'De Arcana Doctrina Confucii et Monumentorum Sinensium'.

²⁵² I can find no dictionary warrant for such a reading.

²⁵³ Borgia Cinese 358 (1), p.22.

²⁵⁴ Actually the commentary attributed to the Duke of Chou. See Legge, The I Ching (Sacred Books of the East), Vol.XVI, Oxford, 1899), Appendix II, pp.272-273.

²⁵⁵ Borgia Cinese 358 (1), p.25.

To the objection that the Confucian Books contain public teachings, not a cabbalistic secret doctrine, he replies with what he obviously regarded as a devastating syllogistic argument.

The doctrinal system is one and the same, and expressed in characters of completely the same nature, in the other canonical books as in the I-ching. But the doctrinal system of the I-ching is wholly symbolic. Therefore, it is wholly symbolic also in the other canonical books.²⁵⁶

No wonder du Tartre and the other critics of the Figurists found it impossible to pin them down. Ultimately, Figurism was an act of faith, which defied logic, or rather created an invincible closed logic of its own.

We have seen enough of Foucquet's theories to understand the hostility of his Superiors and colleagues. But Bouvet, too, perhaps even more than Foucquet, held extreme theories, and he was allowed to remain in Peking and continue his writings. Foucquet was later to claim that he was driven out of China because of his views on the Rites,²⁵⁷ but his own habit of keeping documents and compiling dossiers and elaborate defences of his actions provides ample evidence to refute this. Foucquet's downfall was his refusal to obey his superiors, not only about his writings, but in countless other matters as well.²⁵⁸ He saw conspiracies everywhere, listened at closed

²⁵⁶ Borgia Cinese 358 (2), p.128.

²⁵⁷ See the 'Notizie Breve spettante alla persona di P. Jis. Fran. ^{ci} foucquet Gesuita francese' in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.426-429. This is the account Foucquet gave to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide of his career in China. He claimed to have gone to Peking in 1711 to combat the Jesuit interpretation of the Rites, to have been expelled by the Emperor because of this, and to have received from Mezzabarba a commission to go to Rome to expose the Jesuit frauds and misinterpretations.

²⁵⁸ There are long lists of his acts of disobedience in a letter of Jartoux, 23 September 1720 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 178, ff. 384-385) and D'Entrecolles, the Superior of the French Mission, in a reply to Foucquet's last letter before embarking for Europe, says that, despite all his other offences, he would not have been recalled if he had not refused to recognize as his superior in Peking, Father du Tartre who had been duly appointed (letter of 2 September 1722, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 179, ff.170171).

doors,²⁵⁹ interpreted every action of the other Jesuits as aimed at him,²⁶⁰ and sent a huge volume of complaints against his superiors to Rome.²⁶¹ As early as October 1716 he had asked to be recalled to Europe to be freed from these vexations²⁶² and his surprise at his recall is rather ingenuous.²⁶³ His complaints had become so vociferous, and his personal relations with other members of the mission so strained that the General had no choice but to recall him.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ See 'Au R.P.Laureati et ses Consulteurs', Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 566, f.198r and 212r, where Foucquet claims to have overheard the 'Lyons Fathers' plotting against him. There is a revealing slip in this account, because at the first mention he claims to have been passing by and to have accidentally heard du Tartre say, in a loud voice, that they would have to search his room. The second time (f.212v) he says that du Tartre spoke 'in a very low and distinct voice', an admission of eavesdropping.

²⁶⁰ See, for example, the prolonged correspondence about a wall that du Tartre was building in the French mission compound, which Foucquet interpreted as a direct affront to Bouvet and himself ('Au R.P.Laureati et ses Consulteurs', Borgia Latino 566, ff.262v-292r).

²⁶¹ See especially his letter to the General, 30 October 1716 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.149-153); his 'Lettre a communiquer aux RR. Peres Admoniteurs et Consulteurs du R.P. Dentrecolles', 22 January 1717 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.30-51; 'Au R.P.Laureati et ses Consulteurs', 18 January 1718 (Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 566, ff.185-324); and 131 pp. of copies of letters dealing with the appointment and actions of Vincent du Tartre as Superior of the French Jesuit House in Peking, forwarded to the General on 26 November 1718 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 182, ff.71-137). Note the ever-increasing length and complexity of the apologies. In 1718 alone, he sent no less than 300 pages of letters or copies of letters to Rome (Letter to Guibert, 26 October, 1719, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 182, f.197).

²⁶² Letter to Guibert, 31 October 1716, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f.159v.

²⁶³ Tamburini, in the letter of recall (14 November 1719, Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 182, f.234) specifically claimed to be 'not unwillingly' agreeing to his own request to be recalled, made in letters of the 23rd and 26th of November, 1718 (the originals of these letters are in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 182, ff.66-68).

²⁶⁴ In his letter to the Visitor, Laureatin, the General does not merely say that Foucquet may return, but orders his recall: 'Since this Father Francis is useless, and is said to have had continual quarrels since he entered China, Your Reverence shall order him to return to France at the first opportunity' (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 182, f.236). Foucquet's own version was that the General had ordered his Superiors to allow him to return (see letter to D. Vasco Fernandez Cesar de Menzes, 1722, in Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 565, f.117r).

On the eve of his departure for Europe in January 1722, Foucquet left in the hands of de Goville, the mission procurator in Canton, a number of letters, one of which was for D'Entrecolles, the Superior of the French Mission. He insisted,

This sad issue is the consequence and the result of the firm and invariable attachment that I have had to a very true doctrine of which, I am persuaded more than ever, an understanding is necessary for the salvation of this mission.²⁶⁵

His description of this doctrine makes it clear that he is referring to his Figurist views. The first three Chinese dynasties are 'chimerical' and the Christian God is the deity proclaimed by the Chinese, not only by the names t'ien and shang-ti, but also as tao, t'ai-chi, shên and li. But there is also a new note which I have not found in any of his writings prior to this date.²⁶⁶

Let us suppose, as you are pleased to have it, that the Emperor has the right idea about the supreme being, which is something that demands long and serious examination; it is, nevertheless, certain that his Prince in practice, I mean in the public cult of shang-ti and t'ien, namely in the sacrifices which he offers to them, often displays idolatry. He associates his ancestors to this Supreme Being, he renders them an honour like that he renders to shang-ti. It is a veritable apotheosis of those Princes who died in infidelity.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Letter, dated 13 December 1721; Foucquet's copy in Rome: BAV, Borgia Latino 565, ff.109v-110r (this passage f.10(r)). Another copy, by D'Entrecolles, is in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. IV.5 (E).

²⁶⁶ There is abundant evidence for Foucquet's adherence to the standard Jesuit position on the Rites throughout his time in China. A brief history of the more important items on this subject should include at least the following: Foucquet's Journal for 1705 (in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 376) which includes his formal assent to the Jesuit position on the ching t'ien tablets, ceremonies for the dead, and for Confucius; his annotated commentary on passages from Alvaro Benevente's defence of the rites (Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 361 (1a)); his 'Factorum Congeries quibus probatur voce et littera t'ien, item vocibus et litteris shang-ti bene significari Deum apud Sinas' - after 1707 (Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 515, ff.9-19). In 1703, he wrote to the General about some scruples he had about testimony on the Rites sent earlier to Rome; they did not relate to the substance, but to the means by which it was collected (Rome: ASJ, Jap. Sin. 168, f.22r).

²⁶⁷ Borgia Latino 565, f.109v.

Note that he is certainly not a 'Maigrotian'; he does not believe the Chinese are atheists - on the contrary, on the 'terms' question he is far more liberal than his confreres. Nor does he refer to the ceremonies at the heart of the Rites Controversy - those to Confucius, the recent dead, and the ancestors. But he is beginning to claim that his 'heresy' and the reason for his recall relate to the Rites issue, not primarily to Figurism, or to his behaviour.

On his way south to Canton, Foucquet had met the papal legate, Mezzabarba, who was proceeding to Peking. It is not known exactly what happened at that meeting,²⁶⁸ but some of his fellow Jesuits began to suspect that Foucquet would go over to the enemy. There were some unpleasant exchanges with de Goville over money, over his books which he regarded as his own, and his Superiors as belonging to the mission, and over a young Chinese he was bringing back to Europe.²⁶⁹ De Goville intercepted a letter Foucquet wrote from the ship to Perroni, one of the Propagandists, which seemed to confirm

²⁶⁸ Foucquet's own account in the 'Notizie Breve...' (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, ff.427r-428v) is quite unreliable. He claims to have met Mezzabarba 'secretly by night', whereas Viani in his Istoria says that the Legate was prevented from meeting 'Il Padre Fochet Gesuits' by the Chinese officials, but received a letter from him (see entry under 5 December 1720). This is confirmed by de Goville in his Journal (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 199, II, f.502v) who says that the Emperor had given strict orders that no European was to see the Legate before he reached Peking. The fullest account, including the text of Foucquet's letter to Mezzabarba, is in Viani's manuscript Giornale (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 198, f.373v-376v) which makes it clear that Foucquet's complaints against his Superiors were the old ones noted above, and that it was only in a later letter of 24 December 1720 that he declared himself an opponent of the Rites.

²⁶⁹ See de Goville to Foucquet, 30 December 1721 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 179, ff.147-148) and de Goville to Guibert, 25 November 1722 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 183, ff.78-80. On the sad fate of the Chinese, 'Jean Hou', see Foucquet's 'Recit Fidele ...' published by H. Cordier in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, I, 1882, pp.381-422, 523-571; itself a useful corrective to Voltaire's imaginative 'Anecdote singuliere sur le Père Fouquet, ci-devant Jésuite', art. 'Ana, Anecdotes' in the Dictionnaire Philosophique (Oeuvres, Paris, 1825, t.51, pp.396-398).

his suspicions.²⁷⁰ When he arrived in Paris, Foucquet bypassed his Superiors and proceeded to Rome where he placed himself at the disposal of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. In March 1725, he was consecrated Bishop of Eleutheropolis, and spent the rest of his life as a special consultant to the Congregation on Chinese affairs.²⁷¹

Many items in the Foucquet papers, dating from 1723 to his death in 1741, attest to the kind of information he gave to Propaganda in those years. On his arrival, he informed one of the Cardinals that he could prove that for two thousand years the Chinese had rendered an idolatrous cult to t'ien and shang-ti, but that these were originally terms for the true God.²⁷² In the 'hieroglyphics' of the Chinese classics, all the mysteries of the Christian Religion were to be found.²⁷³ The Congregation was prepared to listen to his views on the Rites²⁷⁴ but not apparently to what was closest to his heart, his Figurist theories.

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- ²⁷⁰ See de Goville to the General, 19 December 1722 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 179, f.239) and the copy of the intercepted letter itself in Jap. Sin. 179, f.156.
- ²⁷¹ See Ritzler and Sefrin, Hierarchia Catholica Medii et Recentioris Aevi, V, Padua, 1952, p.193, for the dates and details of his consecration.
- ²⁷² See his Diary for 12 September 1723 on an interview with 'Le Cardinal del giudice' (Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 565, f.177).
- ²⁷³ Copy of a letter, undated but probably of this period, to the Cardinal Prefect' (of Propaganda?) in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 468 (last item).
- ²⁷⁴ The following documents dealing with the Rites, and dating from this period are to be found in the Foucquet Papers: 'Iudicium de quibusdam funeribus honoribus Sinensium' (Borgia Latino 542, ff.1-6 and 91-101 (Italian version); and Paris: BN, Fr. 12209, f.69ff.); 'De funeribus Sinensium disquisitio prolusoria', 1724 (Borgia Latino 542, ff.11-74, and Synopsis, ibid., ff.7-8); 'Clausula Disputationum de ceremoniis Sinensibus', 1724 (Paris:BN, Fr.12209, ff.81-103); 'Lettre de l'Eveque d'Eleutheropolis au R.P. N [Noelas] de la Compagnie de Jesus a Canton', 8 November 1725 (Paris:BN, Fr.12209, ff.87r-984); and Foucquet's translation of Chu Hsi's Chia Li (Rome:BAV, Vat. Lat. 12851).

Foucquet is described by many visitors to Rome in those years as a garrulous old man who would talk for hours about his theories.²⁷⁵ In 1732 he expounded to Joseph Spence the contents of the works on Figurism he intended to publish.⁷⁶ Spence's scepticism as to whether they would see the light of day was fully justified. It is not surprising, given the theological climate of the time, that the Bishop of Eleutheropolis did not publish his magnum opus. What is surprising, is that he did not even continue his work on it. Many times he made copies of parts of the work already done in China,²⁷⁷ but, apart from a short 'Preliminary Introduction to the Understanding of the Ching',²⁷⁸ he wrote no more on the subject.

The 'Essai d'Introduction Préliminaire à l'Intelligence des Kings' itself adds very little to the argument of the earlier works. Once more we are treated to the assertion that

275 See R. Etiemble, l'Orient Philosophique, II, p.7, on the President de Brosses' encounter with Foucquet. Montesquieu had several conversations with him in 1729 (see Le Spicilège in Oeuvres Complètes, Ed. A. Masson, Paris, 1950, II, pp. 819-820).

276 J. Spence, Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men, Ed. J.M. Osborn, Oxford, 1966, No.1406, II, pp. 519-520.

277 These copies, amongst the Foucquet Papers in the Vatican Library, are easily distinguished by the European paper and ink, and most are in the hand of a secretary.

278 There is considerable confusion about this work which has been wrongly attributed to both Visselou and de Prémare. The title of the copy in Rome:BAV, Vat. Lat. 12870, which is the fullest version (133pp.) is given as 'Essai d'Introduction Préliminaire à l'Intelligence des Kings, c'est à dire des Monumens Antiques conservés par les Chinois' and it is sub-titled, 'Sentimens de l'Eveque d'Eleutheropolis sur la Doctrine des Chinois Anciens et Modernes'. The confusion with Visselou's works arose from the fact that this manuscript is found in the middle of a collection of Visselou's works, annotated by Foucquet, and presumably at one time belonging to Foucquet. Cordier's attribution of the work to de Prémare is less easily explicable, but perhaps arises from the association of the extracts from the work in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 468 and Paris:BN, Fr. 12209, with Foucquet's copies of works by de Prémare.

the I-ching is the key to understanding the Chinese classics,²⁷⁹ and that it depicts the three states of nature, 'Anterior Heaven', 'Posterior Heaven', and a third emerging age in which Nature will be established in its primitive goodness.²⁸⁰ The bulk of the work consists of an extreme and eccentric Figurist interpretation of Chinese characters. For example, Fu Hsi's name is broken down into the elements of the characters, and it is deduced that fu = 'dog' and 'man' = the Egyptian god Anubis = Hermes = Mercury Trismegistus = Enoch; and hsi means the 'originator of sacrifices'.²⁸¹ The Emperor Yao is really shang-ti or God, since 'Yao is clearly derived from the Hebrew Yahweh'.²⁸²

The method is bolstered by a theory of the nature and origin of Chinese characters which might be described as the root of the Figurist misinterpretation of characters:

Each character represents the Idea, of at least one being if the character is very simple, or the Ideas of several beings if it is composed of more parts; in so far as these beings are themselves Images in some fashion of their Author, or of their Restorers; it follows that each character always contains some meaning concerned with Religion, and so it signifies something Sacred. But this sacred meaning, which is fundamental, primitive, and essential, is concealed by the normal and secular meaning which is superficial and, as it were, the wrapping of the first.²⁸³

Needless to say, this theory of meta-linguistics has no basis in reality and, in Foucquet's case at least, seems to have been invented post factum to justify conclusions previously

²⁷⁹ Rome:BAV, Vat. Lat. 12870, p.6.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., pp.7-13.

²⁸¹ Ibid., pp.17-20.

²⁸² Ibid., p.60. In a letter to Souciet, dated 26 November 1719, Foucquet developed this argument further by deriving the character of Yao from a distorted version of the Hebrew letters of the name 'Yahweh', combined with the character yüan meaning origin i.e. Father; thus producing a 'mysterious spiritual painting, which expresses to understanding eyes the source of being' (Borgia Latino 566, ff.377v-678r).

²⁸³ Ibid., p.28.

reached on other grounds. It is nonetheless important, since it spells out baldly the basis on which both Bouvet and Foucquet proceeded. Even de Prémare, who was a pioneer in the scientific study of the Chinese language, ultimately concurred with the notion that Chinese characters were at least in origin 'hieroglyphics', sacred symbols rather than a conventional notation. The false analogy with Egyptian hieroglyphics, perhaps derived ultimately from Kircher, was taken by the Figurists to disastrous lengths, and by none more disastrously than Foucquet.

The only work of Foucquet to be printed during his lifetime, apart from a letter published in the Lettres Edifiantes for 1705,²⁸³ was the Chronological Table of Chinese History,²⁸⁵ published at Rome in 1729. Despite its title and subject matter, this too is a Figurist work, in the sense that it aims at demonstrating the inauthenticity of all Chinese chronology before 425 B.C., and hence the mythical nature of the Hsia, Shang and Chou dynasties. The purpose of the work is clearly indicated in the original subtitle:²⁸⁶ 'According to the most important History, the true dating of the history of the Chinese goes back to some 400 years B.C.; and so the fable that the Chinese Empire was instituted many thousands of years before Christ is exposed to the ridicule of critics'. And Foucquet's 'Explanation' of the table, which circulated widely,²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ Letter to le Duc de la Force, 26 November 1702, in Lettres Edifiantes, V, Paris, 1705.

²⁸⁵ Tabula Chronologica Historiae Sinicae connexa cum cyclo qui vulgo Koa-tsé dicitur.

²⁸⁶ Found in a letter of D'Entrecolles attacking the work, the manuscript of which had been 'detained' (arrestée) by the French Provincial (D'Entrecolles to Guibert, 14 October 1713, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 199, I, ff.307-308).

²⁸⁷ There are manuscripts of it in the Vatican Library (Borgia Cinese 468), the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris (Fr.12209, ff.39-68), and the Nimes Library (see Cordier, Bibliotheca Sinica, I, col.501); and it was published in English translation in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, XXXVI, London, 1729-1730, pp.397-424. It was not published with the Tabula, nor, as Rowbotham claims ('The Jesuit Figurists...', p.475) was the Essai d'Introduction Préliminaire a l'Intelligence des Kings.

insisted even more strongly that the early Chinese kings were 'truly chimerical men'.²⁸⁸ However, as his Jesuit critics were quick to point out, Foucquet's source for this Table was a Chinese official, Nien Hsi-yao,²⁸⁹ whose table, following Chu Hsi's, began for convenience in 425 B.C. without, by any means, questioning the reliability of historical records before that date.²⁹⁰ It was as if a history of Rome from the time of Julius Caesar, was produced as evidence for the unreliability of Roman history before Julius Caesar.

There is something deeply tragic about Foucquet's last years. His library of 4000 Chinese books, which he had fought so hard to bring back from China, was confiscated by the French King. He found himself involved in the sordid scramble for ecclesiastical benefices.²⁹¹ He was heeded when he denigrated the purity of Chinese beliefs and practices, while his great idea, for which he gambled all, was ignored. And, judging from the number of extant manuscripts and letters, the Jesuit Figurists who remained in China had more influence on European scholars than he did from Rome. One wonders whether he regretted his breach with the mission and the Society of Jesus.

²⁸⁸ 'An Explanation of the New Chronological Table of the Chinese History...', Philosophical Transactions, XXXVI, p. 400.

²⁸⁹ Strictly speaking, Nien was a Chinese Bannerman (see Hummel, Eminent Chinese, p.588).

²⁹⁰ See a letter of Gaubil, 20 September 1730, in his Correspondance, pp.262-263; and a letter of D'Entrecolles to Guibert, 14 October 1723 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 199, I, ff.307-308). There was, surprisingly, a quite favourable notice on the work in the Jesuit Journal de Trevoux, XXX, 1730, pp.179-182.

²⁹¹ See H. Cordier, 'Correspondance du Père Foucquet avec le Cardinal Gualterio', in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, I, 1882, esp. p.47.

V. JOSEPH DE PRÉMARE AND THE THEORY OF 'VESTIGES'

The third of the trio of leading Figurists, Joseph de Prémare, provides yet another variation on the Figurist theme. He remained to the end a convinced Figurist, in that he accepted the basic premise of a primitive revelation transmitted through the Chinese classics, the 'vestiges' of which were to be found there by those who knew what to look for. He was, however, alienated from both Bouvet and Foucquet, whose behaviour he found offensive, and whose ideas exaggerated, and he appears from his writings a sounder if less spectacular sinologue. For this reason he was, in the long run, the most influential of them all.

The Superior of the French Mission, F.X. D'Entrecolles, in his report to the Jesuit General of 17 November 1707, summed up de Prémare in terms that well describe him as he appeared throughout his career in China:

He is extremely talented, even, perhaps excessively so, since his understanding is a little facile. He is adaptable to all tasks, and wonderfully suited to the Chinese sciences, and the fruits of his work match his labours; so that he deserves the crown amongst all our Fathers, and more than once put down Father Visselou when he was boasting of his knowledge of Chinese. On the other hand, in practical matters he has little capacity on account of his excessive facility and credulity, and he cannot keep a secret, but is full of leaks.²⁹²

His facility, his credulity and his impracticality are all in evidence in the documents that de Prémare left behind;²⁹³ but so also is the learning and the penetration of things Chinese. None of his works was printed in his lifetime.²⁹⁴ They were, nevertheless, widely known, and in the nineteenth century were hailed as laying the groundwork of modern sinology.²⁹⁵ And not only his linguistic and literary studies.

²⁹² Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 171, f.115r.

²⁹³ See the (very incomplete) listing in Pfister, Notices, pp.522-529, and the Bibliography to this work.

²⁹⁴ Except a few unimportant letters in the Lettres Edifiantes series.

²⁹⁵ See the eulogy of de Prémare by Rémusat in his Nouveaux Mélanges Asiatiques, II, Paris, 1829, pp.262ff.

Abel Rémusat, in praising his Notitia Linguae Sinicae,²⁹⁶ also notes favourably his theory of 'vestiges'.²⁹⁷ His, too, was the only major treatise on Figurism ever to be published.²⁹⁸

Is there any basis for the nineteenth century reputation of de Prémare? and how did his views differ from those of Bouvet and Foucquet? A close examination of his works shows that he was a convinced 'I-chingist' and, despite the linguistic expertise displayed in his Notitia and his work on the six kinds of Chinese characters,²⁹⁹ as firm a believer in the hieroglyphic interpretation of Chinese characters as the other two. He was, however, much more moderate in his arguments for these views. He was no 'Enochist', preferring to argue from Chinese sources alone without invoking the cabalistic lore that Bouvet and Foucquet were so fond of.³⁰⁰ He did not follow Bouvet in his immersion in the prophetic system of the I-ching.³⁰¹ Nor did he, like Foucquet, reduce all ancient Chinese history to mythology.³⁰² It was this moderation

²⁹⁶ Published in Malacca in 1831 by the Anglo-Chinese College.

²⁹⁷ Nouveaux Mélanges Asiatiques, II, Pp.367-269.

²⁹⁸ Vestiges des principaux dogmes chrétiens tirés des anciens livres chinois, trans. and ed. A. Bonnetty and P. Perny, Paris, 1878 (originally in the Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne, VIIe se., t.VII-XIII).

²⁹⁹ Liu-shu shih-i, ms. in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 357 (10).

³⁰⁰ Foucquet complained that de Prémare was ill-equipped for the task of expounding 'la belle doctrine', since he restricted himself to Chinese studies and theology, without extending his interest to geometry, music, the theory of numbers, and astronomy, all essential to the task ('Relation Exact', Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 566, f.168v).

³⁰¹ He wrote of his two years with Bouvet that 'he made me waste my time with periods and calculations for which I had no taste' (letter to Guibert, 16 October 1721, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 183, f.34v).

³⁰² He did, however, agree that some of the figures of the Shu-ching should be dated before the Flood, and hence were not to be taken as historical Chinese rulers (letter to Tamburini, 20 September 1723, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 183, ff.93v-95v). His 'Recherches sur les temps antérieures à ceux dont parle le Chou-king, et sur la mythologie chinoise', at least in the version published by Pauthier in his Livres Sacrés de l'Orient, pp.13-45, is silent on the historical value of this material.

in his views together with his mild personality, that preserved him from the more severe criticism of his colleagues on the China mission, and gained him a hearing for Figurism where Bouvet and Foucquet were dismissed as cranks.

De Prémare's earliest works, written within a few years of his arrival in China in late 1698, show an extraordinary ability in Chinese that fully justifies D'Entrecolle's high praise. He produced a Chinese work on the Rites question, the Ju-chiao shih-i or 'True Meaning of Confucianism', under the pseudonym of Wen Ku-tzu,³⁰³ as well as a long treatise on the same subject, now in the Vatican Archives.³⁰⁴ Although the former is undated, the latter, which appears to be a reworking of the Chinese treatise in scholastic form, is dated 26 September 1705, less than seven years after his arrival.

Neither of these, nor another Chinese work of the same period, the 'Record of a Dream of Paradise' (Mengmei-t'u chi)³⁰⁵ show any trace of Figurist ideas. However, copies of his letters in the Foucquet Papers³⁰⁶ indicate that he was one of Bouvet's collaborators as early as 1703. He, with Hervieu, translated the T'ien-hsueh pen-i in 1706, and in a letter to Bouvet of 12 July 1707, he calls himself a 'disciple'.³⁰⁷

³⁰³ There are manuscript copies of this work in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 316 (20) and Paris:BN, Chin. 7152 and 7153. The Borgia Cinese copy has been reproduced in the T'ien-chu-chiao, tung-ch'uan wen-hsien hsü-pien, III, pp.1333-1410, and there is a Latin translation by Prémare himself in Rome: ASJ, Fondo Gesuitico 724/4. None of the copies are dated, but it is unlikely that it was written after de Tournon's 1707 decree, and it is clearly related to, and probably precedes, the Tractatus de Ju Kiao of September 1705.

³⁰⁴ Tractatus de Ju Kiao, in the Vatican Archives, Albani 242, ff.6-162.

³⁰⁵ Ms. in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 357 (9). Neither Pelliot in his Inventaire Sommaire (p.47), nor Fang Hao who discusses the work in his article 'Ming-mo Ch'ing-ch'u t'ien-chu-chiao shih-ying Ju-chia hsüeh-shuo yen-chiu' (Fang Hao liu-shih tzü-ting kao, I, pp.240-241), identify the author. But de Prémare, in a letter to Bouvet, 30 January 1708, claims it as his (Borgia Latino 565, f.437v).

³⁰⁶ Borgia Latino 565, ff.400-462.

³⁰⁷ Borgia Latino 565, f.459r.

The fruits of this discipleship are revealed in a long letter to Father Grimond, Superior of the Professed House of the Society of Jesus in Paris, dated 25 October 1707.³⁰⁸ Through Father Bouvet, he says, he and a number of other French Jesuits have had the good fortune to come to understand the mystery behind the Chinese classics, which is concealed in the form of Chinese characters. He gives several examples which are no different from, and no more convincing than those presented by Bouvet and Foucquet.³⁰⁹ He does, however, give a rationale for this kind of approach to the classics which I have not found elsewhere in the Figurist writings. Ricci's method of arguing to the existence of God from the texts of the classics is, he says, still fruitful, but it does not go far enough.

When we come to talk to them of the Incarnation, they cry out, like the Jews, 'This is a hard saying'; and they withdraw saying, pu hsin, 'we cannot believe that'.³¹⁰

In other words, for de Prémare, Figurism is not a substitute for the old Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, but its complement, to meet the difficulty of relating the new revelation to Chinese tradition.

This missionary orientation comes out very strongly in his correspondence with Foucquet after his sudden departure from Peking. Foucquet had evidently accused him of being a turn-coat, of yielding to flattery and other forms of subtle pressure from the 'Lyonnais'.³¹¹ De Prémare replied that he

³⁰⁸ Paris:BN, Lat. n.a. 156, ff.8-21. I have used the copy in the Foucquet Papers, Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 565, ff. 463-477.

³⁰⁹ Some are, in fact, found in the works of Bouvet and Foucquet e.g. the interpretation of yen, 'to speak', as 'the Incarnate Word', and the analysis of the 'sheep' element in characters as a reference to the 'Lamb of God'. One particularly ingenious element, which I cannot recall seeing elsewhere, is the interpretation of ch'uan, 'boat', as 'eight mouths (i.e. eight people) in a boat', or Noah's Ark (f.475r).

³¹⁰ Ibid., f.470r-v.

³¹¹ The letters to which de Prémare is replying are, unfortunately lost, but in his 'Relation Exacte', Foucquet accuses him of yielding to 'the flattery, the caresses, the presents even' of his opponents (Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 566, f. 165v).

still believed that the central mysteries of Christianity were to be found in the classics and other early Chinese texts. What he objected to was the theory 'that the I-ching and other like books, were revealed by God to some of the first antediluvian Patriarchs, ... for the truth is that for all our conjectures, neither you nor I can know anything of that. Here is the crux of the matter, for, without it, no more Systems'.³¹² If this cannot be demonstrated, and at best, he says, all that Bouvet and Foucquet have demonstrated is a mere possibility, then it is useless as a method of apologetics.³¹³ De Prémare's position was frequently misunderstood by both parties to the dispute. They tended to think of Figurism as a total system which one either accepted or rejected, and when de Prémare returned to the south in August 1716 the anti-Figurists rejoiced at his 'defection'.³¹⁴ while Foucquet accused him of no longer being the same man.³¹⁵ In fact, he remained true to his convictions - a moderate Figurism.

The treatises and letters belonging to de Prémare's later years in China reveal a double concern - on the one hand, the defence and development of the established Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, and on the other, the articulation of the theory of 'vestiges'. In the first case, there are a number of letters to Foucquet protesting at his association of

³¹² Letter to Bouvet and Foucquet, 23 September 1717, in Rome: BAV, Borgia Latino 565, f.627.

³¹³ De Prémare to Foucquet, 30 December 1717, in Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 565, f.625; and de Prémare to Guibert, 14 September 1718, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 178, f.169r.

³¹⁴ See, for example, Contancin to the General, 1 September 1716, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 177, f.70r.

³¹⁵ Foucquet to de Prémare, undated, in Rome:BAV, Borgia Latino 565, ff.12v-13r.

Figurism with opposition to Chinese Rites,³¹⁶ as well as two documents, the circulation of which were to lead to demands for his recall. The first of these was a long letter dated 10 October 1728,³¹⁷ notable chiefly for its attempted refutation of the charge of 'atheism' made against the Neo-Confucians, which cites numerous texts in support of the thesis that Chu Hsi and other Neo-Confucians acknowledged a God.³¹⁸ Rather ingenuously, de Prémare claimed that, while the Holy See had forbidden missionaries to use t'ien and

316 See, especially, his letter to Fouquet, 24 December 1725, in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese, 468 [F], pp.1-7, and Fouquet's reply of 13 October 1726, *ibid.*, pp.7-25. De Prémare further developed his objections to Fouquet's position in a letter to Etienne Fourmont, 1 November 1730 (Paris:BN, Fr.15195, ff.40-45). In Borgia Cinese 468 [D], pp.53-57, there are some notes by Fouquet outlining the points of agreement and disagreement between himself and de Prémare. He wrongly, I think, restricts the area of disagreement to the Rites question; wrongly, because, as I shall demonstrate, de Prémare remained sceptical about the cabbalistic aspects of Fouquet's theory, and about the non-historical nature of the first three dynasties.

317 The copy I have used is that in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 361 (1)d. It is addressed to 'monsieur...', and is almost certainly the 'dissertation sur l'athéisme prétendu des chinois' which de Prémare mentions in a letter to Fourmont of 10 November 1730, as having been sent to the Abbé Raguet (Paris:BN, Fr.15195, f.46r). There are two published versions, edited by G. Pauthier; part of the letter, under the title of 'Sur le non-athéisme des Chinois', was published in the Revue de l'Orient, nouv. ser., t.V, 1857, pp.10-27; and the whole, including the Chinese characters, in the Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne, 5e ser., t.III, 1861 (I have used the offprint, Paris, 1861). Pauthier's edition followed a 'manuscrit autographe conservé à la Bibliothèque Impériale de Paris', but I have not located this copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

318 In this, de Prémare has the support of some modern scholars, e.g. J.P. Bruce, Chu Hsi and His Masters, London, 1923, esp. Ch.XII, and J.K. Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, Ch.X. It seems to me that one of the major defects of de Prémare's exposition of Neo-Confucianism, is the lack of nuanced descriptive labels. For him, as for his contemporaries, the choice lay between a Christian conception of 'God', atheism and deism. De Prémare admits at one point that the Neo-Confucians 'appear rather to be deists' than atheists (p.4), but, on the whole, argues as if they accepted the Christian concept of a personal transcendent being, ignoring the 'immanentism' that J.P. Bruce stresses.

shang-ti in their evangelisation of China, i.e. in practice only, it was not forbidden to argue that these terms were, in theory, acceptable.³¹⁹ That he was wrong was shown by the reception given to a letter of his to Father de Briga, intercepted on the way to Europe, and delayed to Rome. Only his ill-health and bureaucratic procrastination prevented his recall from China.³²⁰ The original letter has not survived, but the excerpts which caused the fuss, together with de Prémare's reply, are extant in several copies,³²¹ and de Prémare's 'crime' is clear. He denies that the Chinese are atheists, and he continues to believe that they can be converted by an appeal to their own classics, thus, says his delator, 'rendering the preaching of the gospel useless'.³²²

De Prémare attempted to avoid this impasse by simultaneously defending in general theological terms his right to use the method of 'citing the documents of the gentiles in favour of the Christian religion',³²³ and by expounding his theory of 'vestiges'. We can trace the progress of his work in his letters

³¹⁹ Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 361 (1) d, pp.1-2.

³²⁰ For correspondence on this matter see the instructions of Propaganda to the Jesuit General, December 1727, and 5 October 1736 (Rome:ASJ, Instit. 170, ff. 157-158, 169-170), and de Prémare's letter to the General of 1 December 1728 (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 184, ff.27-28), 5 December 1729 (*ibid.*, ff.47-49), 13 November 1730 (*ibid.*, ff.54-57) and 3 December 1734 (Jap. Sin. 181, ff.118-119). De Prémare's defence was that the work in question had been intercepted by 'a certain French priest' in 1725, and his views misrepresented by 'inept excerpts with violent marginal notes' (Jap. Sin. 184, f.48v).

³²¹ 'Extrait d'une dissertation envoyé de St. Malo à M. le Nonce en France ... ou Précis d'une lettre au R.P. de Briga interprete de la bande d'Isis par le R.P. de Prémare, jesuite missionnaire en Chine' (Paris:BN, Fr.15195, ff.5-9, and Lat. n.a. 156, ff.22-51; Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 468 [A] and Borgia Latino 565, ff.612-613). De Prémare's 'Réponse à un Extrait envoyé, dit on, de St. Malo à Monseigneur le Nonce à Paris', 16 August 1727, is in Paris: BN, Fr. 15195, ff. 10-20 and Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 468 [B].

³²² Paris:BN, Fr. 15195, f.5v.

³²³ See the 'Quindecim Quaestiones Doctis Viris Propositae' (Paris:BN, Fr.12209, ff.37-38, and Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 468 [F], pp.4-7) and 'Examinatur an Missionarij possint, et interdum debeant citare gentium monumenta in favorem Christianae Religionis', 2 September 1727 (Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 468 [C], pp.I-II, and Chantilly, Brotier 119, ff. 95-101r).

to Europe, especially those to the French philologist and chronologist, Etienne Fourmont. His attention was drawn to Fourmont by a report in the Jesuit Journal de Trévoux of Fourmont's dissertation of 1722 to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, on 'Chinese Literature'.³²⁴ In December 1725, he wrote suggesting that Fourmont might be interested in his 'system' for understanding the real meaning of Chinese characters.³²⁵

Fourmont must have replied favourably, because in late 1728, de Prémare unleashed on him a flood of letters and treatises expounding his ideas.³²⁶ He notes that Fourmont is sceptical that 'a simple dissection of characters would make much impression upon scholars',³²⁷ and he admits that while the Chinese commonly see symbolic importance in the elements of the characters, they also distinguish in them what, in modern terms, we would call 'radical' and 'phonetic' elements.³²⁸ However, in interpreting Chinese characters, as in interpreting Chinese texts, one constantly finds there is a mysterious element that evades analysis.

³²⁴ A summary of this dissertation is to be found in the Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, V, 1729, pp.312-319.

³²⁵ Letter of 1 December 1725 in Paris:BN, Fr. 15195, pp.1-4.

³²⁶ Ten main items are listed in his accompanying letter of 4 December 1728, including six letters to Fourmont; and a further four items, in another letter dated 10 December 1728 (Paris:BN, Fr. 15195, ff.34-35, 36-37).

³²⁷ Paris:BN. Fr. 15195, ff.24v-25r.

³²⁸ Ibid., f.25r. De Prémare gives as examples the characters nu and fen which are analysed phonetically by the Shuo wen dictionary (first century A.D.), yet commonly interpreted symbolically as 'enslaving the heart' and 'dividing the heart'. His point is a shrewd one, since spurious etymology is an inveterate Chinese habit, and one that, unfortunately, has influenced many Western scholars (see, for example, Léon Wieger's Chinese Characters). Fenollosa's baneful influence on Ezra Pound's 'translations' is another example of the dangers of the symbolic approach to the understanding of Chinese characters.

My idea is that it is necessary to interpret the hieroglyphics in the same way as one interprets the Ching. One must follow what the Chinese say, as far as it is possible, and show that when they fall short or offer no satisfactory explanation, it is usually because they have lost the traditional teaching which was revealed to the patriarchs, and then to the prophets; and which the Son of God, who taught them all, came to teach us himself.³²⁹

Thus did de Prémare attempt to reconcile sinology and theology, and the result, although less extravagant than in the works of Bouvet and Foucquet, was equally forced and ultimately untenable.

One of the letters de Prémare sent to Fourmont in 1728, was a fifty page notice on the I-ching, which he described as 'some preliminaries' to the 'commentaries on the I-ching' that he was working on.³³⁰ In 1731 he completed a longer (124 page) work, called 'Notes Critiques pour entrer dans l'Intelligence de l'y King', which contained, in addition to a general introduction, a chapter interpreting the first two kua of the I-ching, as symbolic of the Incarnation.³³¹ Even a brief glance at these works makes it clear why they were never published. They are forced and unconvincing, as simplistic as any of the extant Figurist works.

³²⁹ Ibid., f.25r.

³³⁰ The manuscript of this work is now in Paris:BN, Fr. n.a. 4754. A slightly earlier and related work, 'Variae Quaestiones circa libros King, et eorum usum proponuntur et solvuntur', dated 2 October 1727, is in the Foucquet Papers, Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 468 [C] pp.39-52.

³³¹ There are two copies known, one in the Foucquet Papers, Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 361 (I) b, and one described in detail by Cordier in his Bibliotheca Sinica (cols. 1372-1373) in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Chin. 2720 is the old number, but I have been unable to discover the present classification).

What distinguished de Prémare from the other Figurists is his historical sense, which must have been constantly at war with his Figurist theories. This appears most clearly in his magnum opus, Vestiges des principaux dogmes Chrétiens tirés des anciens livres chinois,³³² where, together with the standard Figurist interpretation of selected texts from the I-ching, the Tao-te-ching and elsewhere, there are some quite shrewd comments on the unhistorical character of much of the accepted 'history' of early China. He abstains from judgement on the general question of historicity of the first three dynasties - 'I leave the Chinese their histories',³³³ - but notes the obviously mythological nature of many of the details. Are we really to believe that ancient China was divided into neat 'well-field' units of nine equal areas of land?³³⁴ or that Kings Wen and Wu, the founders of the Chou Dynasty, behaved in such an ideal fashion?³³⁵ Are the dragons, tortoises, unicorns and phoenixs of Chinese tradition, real or symbolic creatures? Having raised these very pertinent questions, however, he assumes that the symbolic significance

332 The original Latin manuscript, 'Selecta Quaedam Vestigia...', is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Chin.9248). It was published in French translation by Augustin Bonnetty and Paul Perny in the Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne, VIe ser., t.VII-XIII, and later reprinted in a limited edition in Paris in 1878. In the Jesuit Archives in Rome (Jap. Sin. II.168) is a 79 pp. Latin manuscript entitled Antiquae Traditionis Selecta Vestigia, in four articles, with an Introduction ('Ad Tractatum Sequentem Quaestio Proemialis quo circiter tempore ponendum sit initium verae Sinarum Historiae'). This is not, as an accompanying note has it, 'probabilmente e il manoscritto del de Prémare: Selecta Quaedam Vestigia'. Rather, it is a summary and defence of the work, probably the one referred to in de Prémare's letters to the General, 5 December 1729, and 13 November 1730 (Jap. Sin. 184, ff.47-49, 54-57).

333 Vestiges, p.173.

334 Vestiges, p.177.

335 See the last section of the Vestiges on 'Ven-vang' and 'Vou-vang'.

of these and countless other passages is to be discovered by applying the key of Christian symbolism and mythology. Instead of vestiges of 'primitive' modes of thinking about the nature of the world and man's place in it, he discerned vestiges, or more correctly perhaps, presages, of his own beliefs.

It would be foolish to dismiss de Prémare and the other Figurists, as a mere historical dead-end. They were grappling with very real problems, which their more 'scientific' successors frequently failed to be aware of, let alone to solve. They were ahead of their time in applying the comparative method; they correctly perceived that mythology and symbolism were key elements in the interpretation of the Chinese classics; and, as Jarry notes, it was the Figurists more than any other thinkers of the time, who 'deoccidentalised' the historical and geographical bounds of European intellectual life.³³⁶ They obeyed Pascal's injunction to 'produce the documents' and forced other thinkers, Christian and anti-Christian, to examine them. Few agreed with the Figurists in seeing Moses in the Chinese documents; but if Moses was not there, what was there? And how did China relate to Moses, to the Biblical revelation? Of such questions was born the scientific study of religion, and Figurism played a significant part in its conception.

³³⁶ E. Jarry, 'La Querelle des Rites', Ch.XV of S. Delacroix, Histoire universelle des missions Catholiques, II, Paris, 1957, p.339.

OF SCIENTIFIC SINOLOGY

It is, indeed, really difficult, to take the just medium between those who too highly extoll, and those who too much despise the Chinese literature.

Antoine Gaubil¹

The attitude displayed by Antoine Gaubil in his letter to the Secretary of the Royal Society cited above, is that of the scientific sinologist, who seeks to arrive at an objective and balanced judgement about Chinese culture, and to communicate it to a non-Chinese audience. It was a position that was hardly possible for a Jesuit missionary to adopt much before the time Gaubil arrived in China (1722), at least as a basic aim. Some of Gaubil's predecessors were sinologists, as it were, in their spare time. They wrote for a European public, letters and treatises of the 'curious' as well as 'edifying' type.² But their orientation was necessarily missionary, and their approach to Chinese culture dominated by that missionary concern. The bulk of their time was devoted to presenting Christianity to the Chinese, and their reports to Europe were aimed at securing aid for their missionary work, and, as the Rites Controversy developed, defending the methods they had evolved.

¹ Letter to Dr. Cromwell Mortimer, Secretary of the Royal Society, 2 November 1752, published in Philosophical Transactions, XLVIII, 1753 (reprinted in Gaubil, Correspondance, p.698).

² Already, by 1722, fifteen volumes of the Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des missions étrangères had appeared in Paris, the first in 1703. They contained, like the earlier Annual Letters, and the many treatises, accounts, histories, travels etc. we have already noted in passing, much 'sinological' material, as well as propaganda on behalf of the missions. A statistical survey of the bulk of printed literature would, I believe, show that the balance between 'edifying' and 'curious' was tipped in favour of the 'curious' by the arrival in China of the French 'mathématiciens du roi' who took seriously their responsibility as corresponding members of the French Academy of Sciences.

During the reigns of the Yung-cheng (1723-1736) and Ch'ien-lung (1736-1796) Emperors, missionary work of a public kind almost ceased.³ The literary apostolate the Chinese continued, but on a much reduced scale,⁴ inhibited both by the defection of Chinese scholar-officials as a result of the Rites decisions and imperial sanctions against Christianity; and by the problems of church censorship and the need to avoid Confucian terminology.⁵ The missionaries who remained in Peking as Western experts of one sort or another, had the leisure that their predecessors had lacked, and freedom from the overriding missionary and propagandist pressures that had dominated the earlier mission. They no longer felt the need to 'extol' or to depreciate Chinese tradition, and could begin to attempt to present it in its own terms to an eager European public.

³ The missionaries of Peking continued to minister to the Christians of the surrounding area, but even their work seems to have been much more pastoral than active evangelizations. The eulogy of Michael Benoist (who was in Peking 1746 to 1774) in the Lettres Edifiantes (letter of an unnamed missionary, Peking, 1775, published in t.24 of the Toulouse, 1810-1811 edition, but not in the original series) described him accurately enough as a fountain-maker on week-days, and a missionary on holidays (p.326).

⁴ An examination of the bibliographies in Pfister's Notices is particularly revealing. Joseph de Mailla (in China from 1703 to his death in 1748) is the last Jesuit writer to produce a substantial number of religious works in Chinese. Some slightly later Jesuits, like Kögler and Benoist, produced Chinese works on scientific subjects, but the only really important Chinese work of the mid-18th century is Alexandre de la Charme's Hsing-li chên-ch'üan which will be discussed below.

⁵ On the censorship of Chinese books, see below, the account of the difficulties that La Charme experienced over the publication of the Hsing-li chên-ch'üan. There were even problems over obtaining some of the earlier European works about China. In 1733, Gaubil wrote to the General for special permission to obtain for the Peking mission a copy of Noël's Philosophia Sinica, published in Prague in 1711. The reasons for the ban on the work are not given, but presumably it was regarded as falling under the prohibitions of the 1715 decree, Ex Illa Die (see letter of 10 October 1733, in Gaubil's Correspondance, p.360).

I do not wish to imply that the mid and late 18th century Jesuit sinologists were free from bias, nor that they always preserved the difficult balance that Gaubil spoke of. In some respects, it seems to me that the scientific interpretation of Confucianism that resulted, precisely because it was content for the most part to present the self-image of Confucianism, the K'ung-tzu of over 2,000 years of accrued legend and adulation, was less perceptive than the earlier Riccian and Figurists interpretations. Ricci and his immediate successors had perceived, dimly but surely, the 'religious' dimensions of an overtly 'secular' tradition. The Figurists, however misguided in their use and interpretation of their insight, had grasped the mythological and symbolic features of much of the Confucian 'deposit of faith'. And both earlier interpretations had been founded on a missionary optimism, the opposite of which occasionally emerges in the writings of their frustrated successors.

They certainly had reason for feeling frustrated. They had crossed the world to preach the gospel, and instead found themselves producing playthings for the amusement of the Emperor and his court. In 1714, Pierre Jartoux wrote an account of his missionary career⁶ in which he laments the fact that in thirteen years on the mission he had done no real missionary work, but had been 'a mere workman' for the Emperor, producing clocks, mapping the Great Wall, and teaching mathematics to one of the Emperor's sons.⁷ All he had to show for so many years of toil were toys like the clockwork tiger which the Emperor used for target practice.⁸ Fifty years later, Pierre-Martial Cibot bitterly described himself as a gardener in the Versailles of China.⁹ Even the scientific works that the Jesuits produced were, it appears, in the

⁶ 'Brevis Vitae Ratio P. Petri Jartoux Missionarii S.J. in Sinis...', Peking, 23 August 1714, in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 175, ff.381-386.

⁷ *Ibid.*, f.381r.

⁸ *Ibid.*, f.381v.

⁹ Letter to Brotier, 22 October 1767, published in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, p.255.

Ch'ing period, restricted to court use, and not allowed to circulate amongst a wider public. Bernard-Maître argues plausibly that it was this deprivation of a wider Chinese audience that drove so many of the 18th century missionaries to prefer writing for a European public which would appreciate their work.¹⁰

On the whole, however, the Jesuits of the 18th century probably erred, in Gaubil's terms, by 'too highly extolling' China and things Chinese. This may partly have been self-justification for their continued presence in China; partly, too, retrospective vindication of their lost cause in the Rites dispute. The sinophilism which marked Jesuit writings about China from the beginning, reached its climax in the great French Jesuit collections - the Lettres Edifiantes, Du Halde's Description ... de la Chine, de Mailla's Histoire Générale de la Chine, and the Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les moeurs, les usages ... des Chinois. It was these works and the works of the French savants who corresponded with the French Jesuits in Peking, which entitle the Jesuits to be regarded as the founders of scientific sinology. And it is the 'Confucius' of this last stage in the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism that is the subject of this chapter.

I. JEAN BAPTISTE DU HALDE

Jean Baptiste du Halde S.J. was never in China,¹¹ yet his contribution to sinology was second to none. Du Halde was for nearly forty years the official editor of French Jesuit missionary material, and especially that emanating

¹⁰ In 'Les adaptations chinoises d'ouvrages européens...', Monumenta Serica, X, 1945, p.369.

¹¹ His work certainly does not deserve, on this account the title of 'Literary Imposture' imposed upon it by Isaac D'Israeli in his Curiosities of Literature (1834 ed., I, p.194, cited in G.B. Hill's edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson, Oxford, 1934, II, p.55, n.4). Du Halde never claimed to be more than a compiler and editor.

from China. He edited Volumes IX to XXVI of the Lettres Edifiantes (1709-1743), and brought together in his Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'Empire de la Chine (Paris, 1735)¹² the most comprehensive account of China hitherto available. The latter was, as Dr. Johnson advised Boswell to do¹³, 'consulted' by almost all the important mid and late eighteenth century writers - and many later- who invoked China on one or other side of their debates; and the popularity of the former is attested by the many editions of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.¹⁴

The Lettres Edifiantes, as we have seen, contain much that is 'curious' as well as 'edifying', and amongst the 'curious' material there is occasional reference to Confucius and Confucianism. None, however, is very substantial or original. In the nineteenth collection (1729), we find an attack by de Prémare on Eusèbe Renaudot's Anciens Relations des Indes et de la Chine (1718) in which, in very guarded fashion, de Prémare introduces his views on the 'hieroglyphic' nature of Chinese writing, the derivation of Chinese religious ideas from the survivors of the Deluge,¹⁵ and the significance of the I-ching,¹⁶

¹² There were, in addition to the two French editions, 4 vols., Paris, 1735, and The Hague, 1736, two English translations; one in four volumes, The General History of China..., London, 1736 and 1741, rightly described by Cordier as 'une édition fort mal soignée' (Bibliotheca Sinica, IV, col.37), and another folio edition in two volumes, A Description of the Empire of China, London, 1738-41. Some extract from the Description, and from the Lettres Edifiantes, were included in Thomas Percy's Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the Chinese, London, 1762.

¹³ Boswell asked Johnson if he should read Du Halde's China. 'Why, yes, (said he) as one reads such a book; that is to say, consult it.' - Boswell's Life of Johnson, Oxford 1934, II, p.55 (under Spring 1768).

¹⁴ See Cordier, Bibliotheca Sinica, Cols. 926-941, for details. In addition to the original edition, 34 vols., Paris, 1703-1776, there were editions of 1810-1811 (Toulouse), 1819 (Lyon), 1829-1832 (Paris) and 1838-1843 (again Paris). See also A. Rétif, 'Brève histoire des Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses', in Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft, VII.I, 1951, pp.37-50.

¹⁵ Lettres Edifiantes, XIX, 1729, pp.461-462, and 483

¹⁶ Ibid., p.476.

as well as defending the Chinese from the charge of atheism.¹⁷ The last point was taken up at greater length by Parrenin in the twenty-first volume (1734) in a letter to Dortous de Mairan, dated 11 August 1730, where he claims that the charge of Chinese 'atheism' is based on a one-sided examination of the Sung philosophers, and a failure to examine popular beliefs and positions.¹⁸

In general, however, the Lettres Edifiantes are silent on Confucianism, and the reasons are not far to seek. The first Recueil appeared in 1703, when de Tournon was already on his way to China, and a favourable reference to Confucianism would have drawn fire from Rome as well as the French opponents of the Society. The policy of the editors, Le Gobien, Du Halde and Patouillet,¹⁹ seems to have been to select, and publish material from the letters from China that contributed to a favourable picture of Chinese culture, Chinese morals and Chinese society, and thus, indirectly to refute their opponents' basic premise of a benighted atheistic China. There is considerable debate as to the extent to which Du Halde and the others edited their material. Virgile Pinot in La Chine et la formation de l'esprit philosophique en France²⁰ gives several examples of cuts and rewriting of letters by Du Halde, while Alexander Brou S.J. claims that, on the whole, he was a faithful editor, guilty of suppressions certainly, but not, for the most part, of positive distortions of the views of the contributors.²¹

¹⁷ Ibid., pp.485-491.

¹⁸ See, especially, pp.133-134.

¹⁹ Le Gobien edited t. I-VIII, Du Halde t.IX-XXVI. Louis Patouillet edited at least t.XXVII, XXXI, XXXIII, and XXXIV. T. XXIX, XXX and XXXII have introductions signed 'M.J.' which Rétif suggests signifies '(René) Maréchal, jésuite', but Patouillet may well have been responsible for these too (v. Rétif, 'Brève Histoire...', p.40, n.14).

²⁰ Pp.158-167.

²¹ v. A. Brou, 'Les jésuites sinologues de Pékin et leurs éditeurs de Paris', Revue d'histoire des missions, XI, 1934, pp.557-566.

Pinot cites²² one disgruntled contributor - Foucquet - but Foucquet is hardly a reliable authority since at the time he wrote he was a declared opponent of some of the principles which the other contributors as well as the editors shared. On the other hand, there was one case at least where two letters were spliced together, attributing a quite false statement to the author under whose name the 'letter' appeared.²³ De Prémare, in a letter to Fourmont, refers to the letter, already cited, refuting Renaudot, and points out that Du Halde has made two additions and some abbreviations. He does not, however, appear very upset, and concludes: 'for the most part he has made a fairly good précis of what I said at much greater length'.²⁴ This seems to me a fair comment on Du Halde's method.

Pinot is more justified, I think, in his criticism of Du Halde's editing of material that appeared in the Description. Admittedly, Du Halde does not cite his sources, except in a general acknowledgement in the Preface, and the work purports to be his personal synthesis. But I agree with Pinot²⁵ rather than Brou²⁶ in this case. As Pinot shows, du Halde especially suppressed passages which referred to popular Chinese religious practices and superstitions, thereby exaggerating the profundity and purity of Chinese religious ideas. As a later missionary noted, 'Father du Halde is much too flattering to the Chinese in the portrait he gives of them'.²⁷

Despite this, however, the Description ... de la Chine is a key work in the evolution of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. Precisely as a work of synthesis, it brings

²² La Chine, p.160 (letter of 7 November 1736).

²³ See de Mailla's complaint to Souciet on this matter, in a letter of 17 September 1730 (published in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp.651-652).

²⁴ Prémare to Fourmont, 10 November 1730 (Paris:BN, Fr.15195, ff.51r-v).

²⁵ See La Chine, pp.167-180.

²⁶ See 'Les jésuites sinologues...', pp.562-563.

²⁷ Letter of Francois Bourgeois S.J., 1 September 1767, in Lettres Edifiantes, XXIX, 1773, p.152.

together a great deal of Jesuit writing on Chinese religion and on Confucianism. Despite Du Halde's protestations in the Preface that he writes purely as an historian and avoids all matters in dispute,²⁸ the Description contains a restatement of the central Jesuit position on Confucianism. He is cautious, avoiding explicit statements which might bring down on him the wrath of the anti-Rites party,²⁹ but the established Jesuit interpretation is implicit in the whole work. On Chinese chronology, he accepts the traditional view and appeals to the Septuagint to avoid problems of discrepancy with the Bible.³⁰ He describes the I-ching as 'a pure enigma',³¹ but he is prepared to regard Confucius as having prophesied the Messiah³², and he attributes the foundation of the Chinese Empire to the sons of Noah.³³ He is, however, no Figurist, since he sees the first Chinese as following 'the law of nature which they had received from their Fathers',³⁴ rather than as transmitters of a primitive revelation.

In the section on Chinese religion³⁵ he contrasts the worship of shang-ti and t'ien by the ancient Chinese, with the Epicurianism of the Taoists³⁶ and the idolatry of the Buddhists.³⁷ The Taoists and Buddhists are

²⁸ Description, La Haye, 1736, I, p.xxxi.

²⁹ See Du Halde's letter to Foucquet of 5 July 1734, cited in Pinot, La Chine, pp.172-173. This was clearly an attempt to prevent trouble from this quarter.

³⁰ Description, I, p.261.

³¹ Description, II, p.345.

³² Description, II, p.387.

³³ Description, III, p.2.

³⁴ Description, III, p.15.

³⁵ Beginning t.III of the Hague edition.

³⁶ Description, III, p.19. Du Halde inclines to the Figurist theory that Lao-tzu had some knowledge of the Trinity, but he qualifies it as 'une connoissance bien grossière'.

³⁷ Description, III, pp.23-34, contains the strongest language I have seen used in any Jesuit work, in describing the Buddha and Buddhism. For example, in describing the death of Buddha: 'ce fût alors, quand il étoit prêt de sa fin, que mettant le comble à l'impiété, il vomit de son sein tout le venim de l'athéisme' (pp.23-24).

responsible for the perversion of ancestor rites into superstition.³⁸ But elements of the pure ancient religion remain in the practices of the literati and the imperial sacrifices to shang-ti³⁹; and they are maintained in their purity by the vigilance of the 'Tribunal of Rites'.⁴⁰ Similarly, in philosophy, although 'a great number of mediocre and untalented literati have followed the recent Commentators on the ancient texts who have evolved 'a sort of Atheism', 'the truly learned'⁴¹ follow the text rather than the gloss, and believe in a supreme God, shang-ti or t'ien.⁴²

None of this is new, and most can be found verbatim in earlier Jesuit writings. The interesting thing about Du Halde's Description, apart from its value as a summa of Jesuit views on China, and its undoubted influence on eighteenth century thinkers and writers, is that as late as 1735 he could uphold the old Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism. He even rehearses the old Rites controversy arguments⁴³ in detail, making it perfectly clear where his sympathies lie. It is very doubtful whether the church authorities in Rome can have been content with his plea that he was merely writing 'en qualité d'Historien',⁴⁴ and an examination of Du Halde's third volume goes far towards explaining the severity and strict legal provisions of the 1742 decree against the Rites. Even as an historian and as a sinologue, the Jesuit editor remained attached to the basic principles of interpretation laid down by the man he eulogized as 'the Apostle of China',⁴⁵ Matteo Ricci.

³⁸ Description, II, p.154.

³⁹ Description, III, p.6.

⁴⁰ Description, III, p.17.

⁴¹ 'Les vrais Scavans'.

⁴² Description, III, p.142ff.

⁴³ Description, III, p.142ff.

⁴⁴ Description, III, p.39.

⁴⁵ Description, III, p.142.

II. ANTOINE GAUBIL

The recent publication of the Correspondance de Pékin of Antoine Gaubil has, to my mind, established beyond doubt his status as the greatest sinologist of the whole period of the old Jesuit mission in China. Abel Rémusat, well over a century ago, described him as 'incontestably amongst all Europeans, the one who best knew Chinese literature, or at least, who was able to make the most useful and the greatest number of contributions to its study'.⁴⁶ Since Rémusat's time, of course, there have been many sinologists whose works are superior to Gaubil's in erudition and judgement. His translations have been superseded and the premises which underlie his work on Chinese chronology and astronomy - premises derived from the Chinese themselves - have been found false. But in his time, and judged by the standards of his time, he was a prodigy.

Gaubil had some advantages that many later sinologists have lacked, especially his continuous residence in Peking for thirty-seven years, and his contact with Chinese scholars. We should not, however, exaggerate the value of this in the circumstances surrounding the mission in the mid-eighteenth century. Whereas Ricci and his immediate successors had contact with, and the collaboration of eminent Chinese scholars, Gaubil was reduced to hiring Chinese secretaries who, by his account, were not very helpful. Writing to Joseph Delisle, in 1752, he complained:

Here we do not have the facilities that you have in Paris Up till now I have had enough to employ a copyist; but even with the money, it is very difficult to find people who can obtain the books and explain what is difficult for us in them. What are called able Chinese scholars are usually people with no critical sense, little erudition, and lacking the principles of our sciences, and inwardly full of a ridiculous disdain for anything not

⁴⁶ Quoted in Pfister, Notices, p.667, from Rémusat's Nouveaux Mélanges Asiatiques, II, p. 289.

Chinese. Furthermore, they have few scruples about deceiving us, saying, if it is in their interest, that white is black. One must be in a position to verify properly what they advance, otherwise one is subject to many errors of this sort; this has done much harm, and been the cause⁴⁷ of many blunders and laughable misunderstandings.

That this judgement was not motivated by European prejudice is shown by many passages in his letters appreciative of Chinese scholarship, and sympathetic towards the Chinese as people. It does, however, show the difficulties under which he laboured.

Perhaps Gaubil's greatest contribution to sinology, was not his numerous published works⁴⁸ but the influence of his manuscripts and his letters on European scholars. Gaubil was rightly critical of the failure of such scholars, clerical and lay, to appreciate the value of his work, and that of other Jesuits:

When you have seen [the manuscripts] that M. Fréret had collected, those that P. Souciet has left, what P. Patouillet collected etc., you would conclude that most of our Fathers have completely wasted their time and effort in sending to Paris so many memoirs and writings, of which some have been rejected as ridiculous, others split up into sections and sent in all direction, without being put all together, and others thrown away. See what has come of so much trouble taken; and the example of past experience teaches us for the future. 49

Joseph Brucker has shown how Souciet and Du Halde mutilated Gaubil's works, which they printed in their collections; and how de Guignes plagiarised his work on the Huns.⁵⁰ It was not till the nineteenth century

⁴⁷ Gaubil, Correspondance, p.666 (letter of 13 August 1752).

⁴⁸ For a full listing of published and unpublished works, see Joseph Dehergne's 'Bibliographie des ouvrages du Père Antoine Gaubil' in the Correspondance, pp. 884-910.

⁴⁹ Correspondance, p.674 (Gaubil to Delisle, 28 August 1752).

⁵⁰ See J. Brucker, 'La Chine et l'Extrême Orient d'après les travaux historiques de P. Antoine Gaubil, missionnaire à Peking (1723-1759)', Revue des questions historiques, XXXVII, 1885, pp.485-539 (esp. pp.511-512 and 525-530).

that some of his works were appreciated and published.⁵¹ On the other hand, a mere glance at the list of his manuscripts now in various European collections, and even more at the addressees of his letters, demonstrates the extent of his contribution to European studies on China, and on scientific questions. He was a correspondent of leading figures in the Academies of Paris, London and St. Petersburg - of Delisle, Bayer, Fréret, Dortous de Mairan, Deshauterayes, the elder de Guignes, Anquetil du Perron, Mortimer and Birch. And many of the letters, as collected in his Correspondance, prove to be miniature treatises on a wide variety of subjects, full of information, corrections and suggestions that were incorporated in his correspondents' works.

Unfortunately the subjects he discussed did not, except marginally, touch on Confucianism. History, chronology and astronomy were his chosen fields, and in them he saw his function as that of translator and compiler.

I have always been surprised (he wrote to Delisle in 1752) that the missionaries did not begin by making sure that they had faithful translations of the ching and the histories; I believe that this would have cut short many useless disputes. It is one thing to see some truncated fragments of the ching and the histories, and another to see them as a whole. 52

His own translations included those of three of the classics; the Shu-ching, sent to Europe in 1739 and published after Gaubil's death by de Guignes; the Shih-ching, sent in 1749, but never published; and the I-ching, which does not appear to have been sent to Europe, nor perhaps to have been

⁵¹ For example, his 'Abrégé de l'histoire de l'astronomie chinoise depuis l'an de J.C. 1368 jusqu'à l'entrée des jésuites au Tribunal des Mathématiques' (partly published in 1809); and his translation of the Shu-ching (published by de Guignes in 1770 with many lamentable 'corrections', but in its original form by Pauthier in Les livres sacres de l'Orient, 1841).

⁵² Correspondance, p.674 (Gaubil to Delisle, 28 August 1752).

completed.⁵³ These do not strictly belong to the area of 'interpretation' of Confucius and Confucianism, since they remain bare translations. On the crucial question of their authorship and authority, Gaubil appears to take a quite traditional position, as he does on other textual questions.⁵⁴ It was not so much that he was uncritical, as that he appreciated better than other Jesuits the sheer weight of Chinese opinion behind accepted views. He preferred to follow them until there was strong evidence to the contrary, rather than reject the tradition for a priori and essentially European reasons. He was, as Confucius himself claimed to be, 'a transmitter and not a maker'.

Gaubil and de Mailla,⁵⁵ in their correspondence with Nicholas Prérét and others, de Prémare's letters to Etienne Fourmont,⁵⁶ and the Parrenin - Dortous de Mairan correspondence,⁵⁷ all proved important links in the growth of the scientific study of China and the Chinese. If, as is arguably the case, Western sinology could only seriously begin when the Chinese view of their own tradition had been absorbed in Europe, then to Gaubil and his colleagues, but especially to Gaubil, we must attribute the beginnings of sinology.

⁵³ See Bibliographie, Nos. 17 and 36 in Correspondance, pp.889, 897.

⁵⁴ For example, his defence of the authenticity of the Chu-shu chi-nien against de Mailla's strictures (see Correspondance, p.511 cf. de Mailla's letter to Prérét, 23 May 1735, in his Histoire générale de la Chine, I, Paris, 1777, pp. lxxxiii - lxxxx).

⁵⁵ See especially the letters published as an introduction to the first volume of de Mailla's Histoire générale.

⁵⁶ See the list of manuscript letters in the Bibliography to this work, and also the excerpts published by Fourmont in his Linguae Sinarum Mandarinicae, Hieroglyphicae, Grammatica Duplex, Paris 1742.

⁵⁷ See the Bibliography for manuscript and published letters of Parrenin, and Dortous de Mairan's Lettres au R.P. Parrenin, Paris, 1759.

III. ALEXANDRE DE LA CHARME AND THE Hsing-li chên-ch'üan

While most of the Jesuits of the China mission in the mid-eighteenth century concentrated on sinological work for a European audience, a limited amount of writing on religious subjects was still published in Chinese. Most of these are devotional works, prayers, lives of saints, spiritual exhortations. There is, however, one outstanding exception, the work of Gaubil's near contemporary, Alexandre de la Charne (in China, 1728-1767). This truly major work, the Hsing-li chên-ch'üan ('True Explanation of Natural Philosophy'), published in 1753, is important since it represents the fullest elaboration of the standard Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism to be published in Chinese by the Jesuits of the old mission.

From the title with its clear echo of the great Neo-Confucian summa, the Hsing-li ta-ch'üan, we might expect that La Charne was attempting the last and obvious stage in the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, the absorption of Neo-Confucian philosophy. Alas, despite the lengthy discussion of Neo-Confucian concepts such as t'ai-chi, li and ch'i, we find that, at bottom, it is a straight-forward expansion of Ricci's position. It, too is a summa, but one that resolutely excludes from its synthesis the 'spiritual' elements in Neo-Confucianism. It does, however, incorporate arguments from Jesuit writers after Ricci on the nature of the soul, and there is a stress on the equivalence of the Christian ching (i.e. the Bible) with the Chinese ching, that may be due to Figurist influence.

The Preface reasserts the old Riccian distinction between the classics and their commentaries.

What did the earlier Confucians say? Believe in the classics and do not believe in the commentary; discuss the classics, and do not discuss the small print [of the commentary]. And what do the later Confucians say? Believe in the classics and also

believe in the commentary; discuss the classics, and also discuss the small print. 58

The modern Confucians, then, are untrue to the classics, using language not given prominence in the classics to develop doctrines unheard of in the time of Confucius. Above all, they replace the clear notion of a creator, maker of all things, with vague and contradictory notions that are not true equivalents. T'ai-chi is associated with the creator in producing matter, but is not identical with him; t'ai-chi must blend with ch'i, it cannot of itself be the origin of things.⁵⁹ Similarly, li, ch'i, yin and yang, as described by the 'later Confucians', have properties which make it impossible that they could function as equivalents to the lord and maker of things.⁶⁰

What is more remarkable about La Charme's work is the positive side of his argument. It was clearly dangerous after the 1742 Rites decision simply to repeat Ricci's arguments in their original form. La Charme goes to quite extraordinary lengths at times to retain the argument from equivalence without using the terms proscribed by Rome, and without appearing to claim too much for Confucianism. He attempts to evade the terms problem by inventing yet another term, shang-chu, 'the lord above', which was neither classical nor Christian, but had overtones both of the classical shang-ti and the Christian t'ien-chu. Where Ricci would have used t'ien, La Charme uses shang-chu.⁶¹ He cites the classics

⁵⁸ Cited in Ch'en Shou-i, 'Ming-mo Ye-su-hui-shih te Je-chiau-kuan chi ch'i fan'ying', in Ming shih lun-ts'ung, X (Ming-tai tsung-chiao), p.89

⁵⁹ Hsing-li chen-ch'üan, ch. 2, chap.4, p.100. cited by Chu Ch'ien-chih, 'Ye-su-hui tui-yu Sung Ju li'hsüeh chih fan'ying', in Ming shih lun-ts'ung, X (Ming-tai tsung-chiao), p.156.

⁶⁰ See the passages cited in Chu Ch'ien-chih, op. cit., pp.156-157.

⁶¹ Ch'en Shou'i, op. cit., p.90 n.1 & 2, argues that shang-chu must have been introduced in the later Shanghai, 1889 edition, in place of the condemned t'ien used in the original 1753 edition. I have superficially examined the rare original edition (in Rome:BAV, Borgia Cinese 362) and my recollection is that it carefully avoided all use of the condemned terms t'ien and shang-ti. It is notable that amongst the complaints of Propaganda about the work (on which, see below) this charge was not made, which it certainly would have been if La Charme's text had given any grounds for complaint.

frequently, but avoids the t'ien and shang-ti passages that were the common stock of the 17th century Jesuit works.

On the other hand, he includes an argument that seems to come from the Figurists and implies, although does not spell out, the Figurist claim of a revealed source for the Chinese classics.⁶²

China has its five classics, the Songs, History, Changes, Rites and Annals; Christianity, too has its five classics, its Songs, History, Changes, Rites and Annals. But the classical books which Christianity has, have not undergone the Ch'in burning, and are complete and without lacunae; while the classical books which China has, have undergone the Ch'in burning, are deficient and missing characters. 63

This passage would seem to claim for the Chinese ching a revealed rather than a 'natural' origin, and this appears to have been the interpretation placed on it by certain anti-Jesuit sources. The Jesuit Administrator of the Dioces of Peking, Laimbeckhoven, received a sharp letter in 1767⁶⁴ from Propaganda, informing him that 'on the testimony of certain people' it was believed that the Jesuits in China had published a work in Chinese 'in which the law of the Old Testament is compared with the ancient doctrine of Confucius and other Chinese philosophers, and this Confucius is even called a "Saint" and said to be inferior to none of the Patriarchs'.

⁶² There is no evidence, that I know of, to associate La Charme with the Figurists. He arrived in China too late to be actively associated with Bouvet or de Prémare, and his Latin translation with commentary of the Shih-ching, which we would expect to show traces of Figurist ideas if he held them, is conspicuously free from any suggestion that the early Chinese heroes and kings are not historical. (See Confucii Chi-king sive Liber Carminum, Ed. Julius Mohl, Stuttgart, 1830).

⁶³ Cited in Ch'en Shou-i, op. cit., p.93

⁶⁴ Dated 29 January 1767 (copy in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 181, f.294). Note that the complain was not made till fourteen years after the original publication, further evidence that the work cannot have been blatantly in breach of Ex Quo Singulari.

Laimbeckhoven in reply forwarded the testimony of the official 'revisor', the Carmelite Joseph of St. Theresa, which denied that any of these ideas were to be found in the text of the Hsing-li chên-ch'üan. The scope of the work is simply 'to demonstrate in a new style, and in a philosophic way, that the true Religion is to be embraced by all, and that the Christian Religion is such'.⁶⁵ Laimbeckhoven adds his own version of the method of the work:

The author, feigning to be a Chinese philosopher, leads Chinese literati to a knowledge of the true God, of the immortality of the soul, and of other principal dogmas of the True Religion, to a knowledge of which we can come by the natural light of reason alone. 66

What is most curious is that both Joseph of St. Theresa and Laimbeckhoven⁶⁷ appear to have thought that to argue from reason and from Chinese texts was a new method invented by La Charme. If neither was being deliberately ingenuous - and I think it unlikely - we have striking evidence of the extent to which the Rites Controversy had disrupted the methods of the mission and undermined the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism.

On the whole the Hsing-li chên-ch'üan was a disappointing conclusion to the tradition. Despite its considerable length, it marked no real advance on its predecessors, and, in some respects, was more simplistic and unperceptive. La Charme's other literary productions reveal him as essentially a compiler rather than an original thinker;⁶⁸ and his

⁶⁵ Ms. in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 184, f.240r.

⁶⁶ Letter of 6 August 1769, Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 181, f.294r.

⁶⁷ Ibid. - 'nova haec ac Philosophica methodo argumentis ex sola ratione nec non e Libris sinicis peritis'.

⁶⁸ He was the author of a huge French-Chinese-Mongol-Manchu Dictionary, 6 volumes in folio of some 5,000 pages, never published, which was described by a nineteenth century missionary as 'un travail enorme, mais indigesta moles' (M. Lamiot C.M., cited by J. van den Brandt, 'La Bibliothèque du Pe-t'ang: notes historiques', Monumenta Serica, IV, 1939-1940, p.618.

translation of the Shih-ching, admittedly an early work,⁶⁹ has been strongly criticised by later sinologists.⁷⁰ But, original or not, it testifies to the continuing Jesuit attachment to Confucianism, and their attempt to salvage something from the debris of the post-Rites Chinese Church.⁷¹

IV. THE Mémoires concernant l'Histoire ... etc. des chinois.

The last product of the Jesuit mission in China appeared, as it were, posthumously, since it was published after the dissolution of the Society of Jesus. It was, however, a fitting monument to the industry and sinological work of the Jesuits. The fifteen volumes⁷² of the Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages, & c, des chinois, par les Missionnaires de Pékin appeared in Paris in 1776-1791, and brought to light much of the material that had lain gathering dust in manuscript in the libraries of French scholars and institutions. It also published the work of some of the last generation of Jesuits in China, such as Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, Pierre-Martial Cibot, and the two Chinese Jesuits Kao Lei-ssu and Yang-Te-wang.⁷³

⁶⁹ According to Legge, c.1733, some five years after La Charne arrived in China (see Legge's Preface to The Chinese Classics, I, p.v).

⁷⁰ Legge, loc cit., cites Callery's comment, 'la production la plus indigeste et la plus ennuyeuse dont la sinologie ait à rougir' and adds, 'the translation is, indeed, very defective'.

⁷¹ Laimbeckhoven notes that the Vicars-Apostolic of Shansi and Szechwan distributed the work to Christian literati to confirm their faith in a time of persecution (Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 181, f.294r).

⁷² Sixteen, if one includes the Suite published in Paris in 1814.

⁷³ On Kao and Yang see H. Cordier, 'les Chinois de Turgot' in Mélanges d'histoire et de géographie orientales, II, Paris, 1920, pp.31-39. The Preface describes the Mémoires as 'le fruit d'une correspondance qu'on entretient depuis dix ans, avec les missionnaires de la Chine, & avec deux chinois que l'envie de se rendre utiles à leur Patrie en fit sortir à l'âge de dix-neuf ans, pour apprendre en France les Langues & les Sciences de l'Europe' (p.i). The attribution of the 'Essai sur l'antiquité des Chinois' in t.l of the Mémoires to 'Ko, Jés.' suggests that it is the work of Kao Lei-ssu and the Preface (p.vi) attributes to 'nos Chinois ... de concert avec nos Missionnaires', which suggests that Yang too contributed to it.

The programme of the Mémoires was proclaimed in the first item in volume one, the 'Essay on the Antiquity of the Chinese', in the phrase, 'only China can make China known',⁷⁴ in other words, Chinese culture should be presented in its own terms. And the 'Essay' itself exemplifies this in quite brilliant fashion, dismissing extremes in European interpretations, such as the Figurist view of the I-ching, as the intrusion of 'systems' into a confused mythology.⁷⁵ The writer, or writers,⁷⁶ are equally harsh on the enthusiasm of Chinese literati who regard the I-ching as 'the philosopher's stone of the arts and sciences'. True scholars Western and Chinese - know it for what it is, a mixture of all kinds of symbols and allegories, difficult to decipher and understand, but containing some 'important things'.⁷⁷

On the question of Chinese chronology, the 'Essay' takes a cautious position, based, it is claimed, on the best Chinese histories. According to these, nothing authentic is known much before Yao.⁷⁸ As for Fu Hsi, beloved of the Figurists:

Fu Hsi has been more fortunate in Europe than here. He is believed, so far away across the seas, to be the Founder of our Monarchy. In fact, our historians have been careful not to mention him, and those who have spoken of him do not allow him into our annals except by way of supplement, and simply to say something on the subject.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ 'La Chine seul peut faire connoître la Chine' (Mémoires, I, p.23).

⁷⁵ Mémoires, I, pp.42-43, 104.

⁷⁶ The 'Essai' seems to be principally the work of Kao Lei-ssu and Cibot. Since 'Ko' is given as the author, I presume that he had the leading part. Amiot in Mémoires, XV, p.274, seems to refer to Cibot as the author, since he notes that the author of the 'Essai' died in August 1780. Cibot's Chinese name, however, was Han (Kuo-ying) not Ko. Joseph Dehergne in his article, 'Voyageurs Chinois...', Momumenta Serica, XXIII, 1964, p.392, n.73, notes that there is manuscript evidence that the work was partly by Kao and partly by Cibot. Probably Cibot polished the style, since the work is one of the best written of all the contributions to the Mémoires.

⁷⁷ Mémoires, I, p.43.

⁷⁸ See Article II, p.149 ff.

⁷⁹ Mémoires, I, p.131.

It should be noted that the authors, or perhaps the editor,⁸⁰ assume that China was a colony, founded by the survivors of the Deluge,⁸¹ but this Christian perspective is essentially incidental. The main purpose of the work, in which it succeeds remarkably, is to present the orthodox accepted version of early Chinese history based on the best sources.

Another trace of Christian interpretation in the 'Essay on the Antiquity of the Chinese' is a general assumption that 'Religion and the Divinity',⁸² are to be found in the Chinese classics, not perhaps in the overt form that the Figurists claimed, but in some form. I suspect that this argument is Cibot's rather than his Chinese collaborator's since in other places Cibot reveals himself as something of a Figurist. He belongs rather to the line of de Prémare than that of Bouvet or Foucquet, seeing limited traces of Christian doctrines in the form of Chinese characters,⁸³ but accepting the historicity

⁸⁰ Who the editor or editors were is uncertain but I suspect they were former Jesuits, i.e. members of the disbanded Society of Jesus, seeking literary employment. The Abbé Grosier, who edited de Mailla's Histoire was one such. A reference in a letter of Cibot to Père Brotier suggests that Brotier may have been one at least of the editors of the Mémoires see (Cibot to Brotier, 5 November 1769, in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, p.262).

⁸¹ Mémoires, I, p.250.

⁸² Mémoires, I, p.43.

⁸³ See his 'Lettre sur les caractères chinois' in Mémoires, I, reprinted after the original edition, Lettre de Pékin sur le génie de la langue chinoise, Brussels, 1773; and the 'Essai sur la langue et les caractères des chinois: Article Second', in Mémoires, IX, esp. pp.378-389. Amiot, too, in his 'L'antiquité des chinois, prouvée par les monument', Mémoires, II, reveals himself as a believer in the theory of the transmission of 'the doctrine of the chosen people, before Moses', to the Chinese through the grand-sons of Noah (p.6); although he rejects the ideas of 'our' I-chingist missionaries' (p.26).

of Yao, Shun, Yu and the first three dynasties. He wrote to Brotier, in explanation of his position, in November 1769.

You can put your mind at ease about my way of thinking. If I go astray, it will not be in the footsteps of Fathers Bouvet, Prémare, Gollet etc. However, I warn you in advance that the rays of Revelation shine in all the ancient monuments of China... 84

What saved Cibot from excesses was his common-sense and his realisation of the limited knowledge Europeans have of China.

China is the America of men of letters. European scholars are like the Portuguese who boast of having conquered the Indies because they discovered them and built a few little forts on their coasts. 85

The note of humility, in itself, was a valuable contribution to sinology.

There is hardly a contribution to the Mémoires that does not in some way touch on Confucianism, but it is in the twelfth and thirteenth volumes that we find the major works on the subject, Amiot's 'Life of Confucius' and his 'Brief Lives of the Principal Disciples of Confucius'. It is typical of these works that he refers to 'Koung-tsée, appelé vulgairement CONFUCIUS'. His aim is, indeed, to present K'ung-tzu, not Confucius, to be 'the Historian of the Historians of him whose life I write',⁸⁶ and to present such as he is in the eyes of his nation, and so, necessarily, to tell what the nation tells of him'.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, Amiot seems to have set out to tell all that the nation tells of Confucius i.e. to assemble from all available sources all the remarks, all the stories, all the references relating

⁸⁴ Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, p.262 (letter of 5 November 1769).

⁸⁵ Letter to Brotier, 22 October 1767, Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp.256-257.

⁸⁶ Mémoires, XII, p.12.

⁸⁷ Mémoires, XII, p.12, n.4.

to Confucius. Rarely does he cite sources, although he frequently indicates by quotation marks that he is quoting from a Chinese source.⁸⁸ The result is not a critical biography of Confucius but a compilation, even extending to a complete and detailed 'Table Chronologique' of his 'life'. The lives of the disciples in the thirteenth volume are similarly detailed and uncritical. The Confucian line of succession is traced, its heroes eulogized, and their places on the tablets of the Confucian sanctuary justified.

All this was far from the methods of the modern historian of Chinese philosophy. Neither the biographies nor the ideas are subjected to critical analysis. Yet it was an important stage in the European discovery of Confucianism. No longer was Confucianism presented as a praeparatio evangelica, seen in an historical evolutionary sequence that would end inevitably in the fulness of Christian revelation. Nor was it seen as a version of the Judaeo-Christian tradition garbled in transmission. The aim of the exercise was to present Confucius as he was seen by those who called themselves his successors and followers, and as he actively influenced the lives of living Confucians. The myth of Confucius was the logical starting-point for scientific study of Confucianism, and Amiot's 'Life' was the first European work to present the myth in full. Thus, the last contribution of the old Jesuit mission to sinology was to present the K'ung-tzu who for nearly two centuries had been obscured by the Jesuit Confucius.

⁸⁸ He attempts to justify himself in his introduction (Memoires, XII, p.5) by listing the major sources and indicating that it is these or one of the Chinese 'histories' that he is citing whenever he gives a quotation. Moreover, this cavalier attitude towards his sources is compounded by his remark, 'since these books are of an almost equal authenticity, I dispense myself from citing them in the margin'. 'These books' range in date over at least 1,500 years, and one wonders what Amiot's criteria for 'authenticity' can be.

AN AGENDA

A survey, such as this study has been, cannot, I think, legitimately issue in a conclusion. Its logical end is rather a non-conclusion, an agenda for further investigation. In this note I would like briefly to indicate what the main items on such an agenda might be.

Firstly, I see the need for a much more thorough exploration than I have been able to give here, of the Rites Controversy and of Figurism. Both episodes in Sino-Western interpretation touched on tender spots in the European consciousness, laying bare assumptions, attitudes, systematic preconceptions, that had been ignored or misunderstood till the challenge of Chinese circumstances brought them to the surface. China acted as a catalyst, and the Jesuits, in their role of cultural middle-men, helped bring about a confrontation whose implications have yet to be fully worked out. The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism was but one element in the European reassessment of values described variously as 'the Enlightenment', the process of 'secularization', 'la crise de la conscience européenne';¹ but it was a not unimportant one.

Secondly, there is the question, put to one side in the course of this work, of the ultimate validity of the Jesuit interpretation, or interpretations, of Confucianism. This is not a matter of a simple comparison between the Jesuit views and the accepted views of modern scholarship. It involves a reassessment not only of the Confucian tradition, but of the whole Chinese intellectual tradition, and of its Western interpretations. The Jesuits, representatives of European values and intellectual methods, attempted, as their European successors have done, to understand Chinese intellectual life in terms of systems, and transmuted the tradition of the Ju or Chinese 'scholars'

¹. The title of Paul Hazard's masterly study of the period 1680-1715 (Paris 1935), translated as The European Mind.

into an '-ism', Confucianism. They concentrated on conceptual correspondences - hence the crucial importance of 'terms' in the Rites Controversy - rather than on analogies of function and the integration of values in the social behaviour of 'Confucians'. Their European frame of reference proved inadequate to expressing Chinese reality, and they were often, at least dimly, aware of this. Modern sinologists, applying a battery of linguistic, archaeological and text-critical methods, have been able to recover, with some certainty, the historical Confucius from the Confucius of Chinese tradition, but, for all their sophistication, one suspects that many of the same assumptions that vitiated or at least obfuscated the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, have been at work. What is needed is a reexamination of the hermeneutics of sinology. In historical perspective the deficiencies of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism are evident, but their bias was overt, and their assumptions usually quite explicit. The assumptions of more recent scholars are often far less obvious, but they are not necessarily less biased.

A third, and closely related, item on the agenda, is to determine the applicability of the secular/sacred categories to China. For the Jesuits of the China mission this was much more than an abstract or theoretical problem. It was a personal dilemma, affecting as it did their self-image and their whole life-style. Could one dress, act, even think as a Confucian scholar, and still be a 'religious' man? The Jesuits at court felt this tension most acutely and some, judging by their complaints, were unable to resolve it. Most, I believe, resolved it in practice, but did not, or could not, find a theology to articulate the personal harmonization of their actual occupations and their ultimate goals. The reason was that in China, even more than in Europe, and in Confucianism more than in Buddhism or Taoism, the Western-style division of life into secular and religious areas was inapplicable. Family life, government, personal relations, were in many respects 'sacred' activities, no more and no less than

various kinds of ritual. The ambiguity of the Confucian concept of li, at once the prescriptions of ethics and of polite custom, a matter of religious obligation and of social convention, illustrates this well. The Jesuits learnt to be Confucian chün-tzu and to live by such a code, and they judged Chinese customs and behaviour in the light of their experience. When forced to defend themselves, however, they found it necessary to use such terms such as 'atheist', 'civil', 'political', which were incompatible with their general interpretation and, they realised, misleading. At a time when theologians, historians and phenomenologists of religion, and philosophers are engaged in renewed debate on such issues as 'secular Christianity', the nature of transcendence and the secularization of Western society, the Jesuit experience in China may prove an enlightening paradigm.

All these must remain, for the moment, mere suggestions, and a programme for possible future research. But they demonstrate the centrality and relevance of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism, not only to Chinese studies, but to many other areas of live contemporary interest. It would surely have delighted the survivors of the Jesuit mission in China at the end of the eighteenth century to know that their work had not been completely in vain. At the blackest moment, when news of the suppression of the Society of Jesus reached Peking, Amiot wrote an inscription for the Jesuit cemetery, which remains even today a moving document:

Stand, passerby, and
Read;

And think a little of the instancy of human affairs.
Here lie the French missionaries of that,
While it lived, most renowned Society, which everywhere
Taught and promoted the genuine cult of the true God,
And imitated closely Jesus, whose name it bore,
In all things, so far as human frailty allows,
And amidst toils and troubles, cultivated virtue,
Aided its neighbour, and became all things to all men,
That it might benefit all, and flourished for over two
centuries,
Giving to the Church its martyrs and confessors.

We, Joseph-Marie Amiot,
 And other French missionaries of the same Society,
 While in Peking in the Kingdom of China, under the
 auspices and protection
 Of the Tartar-Chinese monarchy, obtained through science
 and the arts,
 Still promoting the affairs of God;
 While in the imperial palace itself, amidst so many
 useless
 Sanctuaries, our French church still shines forth;
 Alas! quietly waiting for our lives to end,
 Have placed this monument of brotherly love
 In this last resting place.

Go, passerby, congratulate the dead,
 Condole the living, and pray for all, wonder and
 Be silent.

In the year of Christ MDCCLXXIV,
 On the fourteenth day of the month of October;
 In the thirty-ninth year of the reign of Ch'ien-lung,
 On the tenth day of the ninth month. 2

Wonder, indeed, but let us not leave them in silence, since
 they still have much to tell us.

²See the original Latin in Pfister, Notices, pp.992-993;
 French translation in Pfister, Notices, pp.991-992, and
 English translation in Cary-Elwes, China and the Cross,
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(Bouvet)

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(Bouvet)

Quaedam Propositiones de Religione Sinarum seu Sinensium a primis temporibus. Cognitio veri Dei eis nota fuit etc. 1725? (Probably extracted from Bouvet's works by one of the Jesuit 'censors' in Rome) In Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. 180, ff.174-175.

Expositio unius odae propheticæ libri canonici xi-kin, in qua clare, distincte et veluti historice sub unico typo prænuntiata Christi Salvatoris Incarnato, natiuitas, instantia, vita privata et publica, prædicatio, passio, mors, ejusque sacrificium tum cruentum tum incruentum pro remissione peccatorum et perpetua omnium populorum faelicitate oblatum, 24pp., in Rome:ASJ, Jap. Sin. IV.5, F.

Letter to Etienne Souciet, 27 October 1725, in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp.67-69.

Letter to Souciet, 18 October 1727, in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp.218-220

Letter to Père ? , 13 November 1727, in Paris:BN, Fr. nouv. acq. 22435, ff.19-20v. (Gatty, LI4I deciphers the date as 18 November, but I read it with Riister as 13 November. Following the printed catalogue, Gatty gives Souciet as the addressee, but Bouvet refers to Souciet in the third person.)

Letter to Souciet, 23 November 1728, in Revue de l'Extrême Orient, III, 1887, pp.64-65; original in Chantilly, Brotier I10, no.12, f.22r.

Nova Expositio periodi consummationis Saeculi seu Systematis temporum propheticorum olim SS. Patriarchis et Prophetis distincte revelati, subinde permultis Saeculis alta oblivione sepulti, ac demum recens faeliciter detecti in Jeroglyphicis Sinarum monumentis, 56pp., in Chantilly, Brotier I43.

Brevis Synopsis Systematis Temporum prophetic. faeliciter detecti in vetustis Sinarum Monumentis, 192pp., in Chantilly, Brotier I43.

Vera Temporum Propheticorum Ratio et Mensura ab annis 15. et ultra faeliciter detecta, in Jeroglyphicis Sinarum monumentis.

Pars prior complectens Seriem tum Saeculorum, tum generationum ab ipso mundi primordio, usque ad Messiam Redemptorem nostrum collectum, in Chantilly, Brotier I44, ff.1-9.

Mystici Temporum Propheticorum Numeri, in Vetustissimis & Jeroglyphicis Sinarum Monumentis, pluribus abhinc annis faeliciter detecti; iidem nuper cum simili faelicitate et evidentia observati, in antiquioribus ponderum et mensuram tabulis, ex primaeva, ut videtur, SS Patriarchorum Traditione, per munus Aegyptiorum, ad Graecos et Romanos traductis, in Chantilly, Brotier I44, ff.10-17r.

Confirmatio Systematis Temporum Prophetic. petita ex magica constructione et mysticis figurae Uei ki pan tu, seu abaci majorum latrunculorum, a diluvii tempore, usque ad praesentem aetatem, in hieroglyphica Sinarum traditione servatae, in Chantilly, Brotier I44, ff.18-28.

Confirmatio majorum periodorum & notabiliorum Epocharum Prophetici temporum Systematis, detecti in Sinarum Monumentis, petita ex pluribus ac diversis figuris magicis, ab omni aevo toto orbe dispersis, in Chantilly, Brotier I44, ff.29-46, with 5 ff. (47-52) of figures.

Specimen Elementorum Arithmeticae formalis et symbolicae, in vetustiori Sinarum traditione faeliciter detectae; ex cujus principiis generantur plurimae ac diversae numerorum seu figurarum, seu periodicorum forma, quibus vi temporum propheticorum characteres, et celebriores, ne dicam omnes Epochae Sacrae, 1724, in Brotier I45, ff.53-124.

Supplementum Explicationis Speculi Astronomici Sinensis, in Chantilly, Brotier I45, ff.125v-140.

Pro Expositione figurae Sephiroticae Kabalae Hebraeorum, & generatim demonstranda mira conformitate, primaevae Sinarum

(Bouvet)

- Sapientiae hieroglyphicae, cum antiquiore et sincera Hebraeorum Kabala, ab ipso mundi primordio, per sanctos Patriarchos et Prophetas successive propagata, in Chantilly, Brotier 145, ff. 141-161.
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(P. Émère)

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(Po Chin)

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Tsung-lun pu-lieh lei lo-shu teng tang-t'u fa

I-yo 易錦 據論希列類洛書等方圖法

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Chüan	卷	Ho-t'u	河 圖
Chuang-tzu	莊 子	Hou Chi	后 稷
Chüeh	覺	Hou-han shu	後 漢 書
Chüeh-chiao t'ung-wen chi	絕 徼 同 文 紀		
Ch'üeh-Fo pu-Ju	缺 佛 補 儒	Hou-t'ien	後 天
Chün-tzu	君 子	Hou-t'u	后 土
Chung	衆	Hsi Ch'ao	郊 超
Chung-kuo	中 國	Hsi-chin ch'ü-i pa-chang	西 琴 曲 意 八 章
Chung-kuo chin-san-pai-nien hsüeh-shu shih	中 國 近 三 百 年 學 術 史		
Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh ts'ung-shu	中 國 史 學 叢 書		
Chung Ming-jen	鍾 鳴 仁	Hsi-yü-chi	西 域 記

Hsi-yü-chuan	西域傳	Huang Hui	黃輝
Hsi-yü t'u-chi	西域圖記	Huang Ying-chia	黃應申
Hsiang	像	Hui-liu-tao	迴六道
Hsiang Hsü lu	象	Hui-yüan	慧遠
Hsiao-ching	孝經	I	義
Hsiao-jen	小人	I-ching	易經
Hsieh	邪	I-lai(-ti)	依賴(體)
Hsieh chao-chih	謝廠制	I-shen-lun	~神論
Hsien min yü shên	先民於神	I-ta-li-ya	意大里亞
Hsien-sheng	先生	I-t'u Ming-pien	易圖明辨
Hsien-t'ien	先天	I-wu-so-wen	~無所聞
Hsin(belief)	信	Jao-chou(-fu)	饒州(府)
Hsin(renew)	新	Jên(benevolence)	仁
Hsing	性	Jên(man)	人
Hsing-li chên-ch'üan	性理真詮	Ju	儒
Hsing-li ta-ch'üan	性理大全	Ju-chiao	儒教
Hsiu-tsai	秀才	Ju tsai	如在
Hsü	需	K'ang Fa-lang	康法朗
Hsü Ch'ang-chih	徐昌治	Kao An	皋菴
Hsü Chi (Lung-yü)	徐驥(龍興)	Kao F'an-lung	高攀龍
Hsü Chih-chien	許之漸	Kao-sêng chuan	高僧傳
Hsü Ju-k'o	徐如珂	Ko-i	格義
Hsü Kuang-ch'i (Hsüan-hu)	徐光啓(玄扈)	Ko-lao	閣老
Hsü-t'ing Mi-shih-so ching	序聽迷詩所經	K'ou-t'ou	叩頭
Hsüan-hsüeh	玄學	Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'êng	古今圖書集成
Hsü ^{an} -yüan chih-pên ching	宣元至本經	Ku Hsien-ch'êng	顧憲成
Hsüeh-kuan	學官	Ku Yen-wu	顧炎武
Hu	胡	Kuan-kuang shang-kuo	崔光上國
Hu Wei	胡渭	Kuei-wen	龜文
Huai-nan-tzu	淮南子	Kung Ting	共訂
Huang Chen	黃貞	K'ung	空

Kuo	國 [= 国]	Ming-i tai-fang lu	明夷待訪錄
Lao P'eng	老彭	Ming lun-hui-pien chiao-i tien	明倫彙編
Lao-tieh	老翁	Ming-shih	明史
Li(reason)	王里	Mu-hu-fu	穆護友
Li(rites)	禮	Mu-k'an	木龕
Li-chi	禮記	Nan-chang	南昌
Li Chih	李贄	Nan-hsiung	南玄雄
Li Chih-tsao	李之藻	Nan-wu	南無
Li-hsüeh	理學	Nei-i	內意
Li Kuang-ti	李光地	Ning-tu	甯都
Li Ma-tou	利瑪竇	No-kê	諾格
Li Ma-tou p'u-sa	利瑪竇菩薩	Nu	怒
Li Pen-ku	李本固	Pa	罷
Li-pien	理編	Pa-tê-lê	罷德肋
Li-pu	禮部	Pai-lu-tung shu-yüan	白鹿洞書院
Li shih tiao wen	李師條問	Pan-chang-miao sêng	板樟廟僧
Li T'ai-tsai	李太宰	Pan Ku	盤古
Li Tsai-k'o (Lei-ssü)	利再可	P'an-kung li-yüeh shu	頻宮禮樂疏
Lien Hsi-hsien	廉希憲 (類思)	Pao-chiu shen-ling	保救身靈
Ling	靈	Pei-t'ang	北堂
Ling-kuei	靈云鬼	P'eng Tsu	彭祖
Ling-wei	靈位	P'i-hsieh chi	闢邪佳
Lo-shu	洛書	P'i-hsieh lun chung	闢邪論中
Lo Wen-tsao	羅文藻	P'i-hsieh lun shang	闢邪論上
Lung-ch'u	龍出	P'iao	票
Ma T'ang	馬堂	P'ien-hsüeh i-tu	轉學遺牘
Mao Rui-chêng	茅瑞徵	P'ing-pu shan-i	平不善疑
Miao	廟	Po Shu-jen	薄樹人
Miao tz'ü k'ao	廟祠考	Po-ssü	波斯
Ming	名	Po-ssü-sêng	波斯僧

Pu hsin

不信

San-chi

三和

San-chiao chêng-tsung

三教正宗

San-chiao chien-hsiu

三教義修

San-chiao ho-i

三教合一

San-hui

三淮(懷)

San-pa-ssü

三巴寺

San-pa-ssü sêng

三巴寺僧

San ta chu-shih

三大柱石

San-ts'ai

三才

San-tzü-ching

三字經

San-wei i-t'i

三位一體

Sê

色

Sê-mu

色目

Sêng

僧

Shan-hai yü-ti ch'uan-t'u

山海輿地

Shang-chu

上主全圖

Shang-ch'uan

上川

Shang chuan

上卷

Shang-ti

上帝

Shang-yü nei-ko

上諭內閣

Shao-chou

韶州

Shê

社土

Shên

神

Shên Chu

神主

Shên Chu-hung

沈株宏

Shên Ch'üeh

沈灌

Shên-fu

神父

Shên Fu-tsung

沈福宗

Shên Lien-chih

沈蓮池

Shên Tê-fu

沈德符

Shêng

聖

聖教規程

Shêng-chiao kuei-ch'eng

Shêng-ch'ao p'o-hsieh-chi

聖朝破邪集

Shêng-jen

聖人

Shêng Pao-lu

聖保祿

Shêng-shui chi-yen

聖水紀言

Shêng-ssü ta-shih

生死大事

Shêng-yü

聖諭

Shih(history)

史

Shih(substance)

質

Shih-chi

史記

Shih-chia

釋迦

Shih-fu

師傅

Shih-jen

世人

Shih-ta-fu

士大夫

Shuang-hsü

雙嶼

Shuo-wen

說文

Ssü hu ch'i hsien

杞乎其先

Ssü-ku ch'üan-shu

四庫全書

Ssü-ma Ch'ien

司馬遷

Ssü-pi-li-to san-to

斯彼利多

Ssü-shih-êrh chang ching

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Ssü-shu tsung-chu

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Su-chou

蘇州

Sun Chi-kao

孫繼皋

Sun Po-t'an

孫柏潭

Ta-Ch'in

大秦

Ta-Ch'in Ching-chiao liu-hsing

Chung-kuo pei

大秦景教流行中國碑

Ta-Ch'ing lü

大清律

Ta-Hsi	大西	T'ien-chu-chiao hsüeh	天主教學
Ta-Hsi Li Hsien-sheng Ma-tou ch'uan	大西利先生瑪實傳	T'ien-chu-chiao yao	天主教要
Ta fu-mu	大父母	T'ien-chu ho? Shang-ti yeh!	天主何上帝也
Ta Kuan	達觀	T'ien-chu-kuo	天主國
Ta-tao	大道	T'ien-chu-kuo sêng	天主教僧
Ta-tsung-po	大宗伯	T'ien-chu Shang-ti	天主上帝
Ta ya	大雅	T'ien-chu (sheng-chao) shih-lu	天主(聖教)實錄
Tai-i p'ien	代疑篇	T'ien-chu shih-i	天主實義
T'ai-chi	太極	T'ien-chu-chiao tung-ch'uan	天主教東傳文獻(續編)
T'ai-wan hsüeh-sheng shu-chü	臺灣學生書局	wen-hsien (hsü pien)	
T'ang 堂		T'ien hsiao tê	天曉得
T'ang-hui-yao	唐會要	T'ien-hsüeh	天學
T'ang Jo-wang	湯若望	T'ien-hsüeh ch'u-han	天學初函
Tao	道	T'ien-huang	天皇
Tao-an	道安	T'ien-ti	天帝
Tao-jen	道人	T'ien-ti chih Shang-ti	天地之上帝
Tao-li-t'ien chu	和利天主	T'ien-tsun	天尊
Tao-te-ching	道德經	T'ien-tzu	天子
Ti(lord)	帝	Ting Chih-lin	丁志麟
Ti(sacrifice)	禘	Tou-ssü	陡斯
Ti-pu	地部	Tsu	祖
Ti t'ien kao	帝天考	Tsu-ch'uan t'ien-chu shih-ch'eng	祖傳天主十誠
T'i	骨豐		
Tiao	弓	Tsun ching	尊經
T'ien	天	Tsun po p'ien	存環篇
T'ien-chu	天主	Tsung-ping	總兵
T'ien-chu Chiang-sheng chi-lu	天主降生記	Tu-men Yü-lu	都門語錄
T'ien-chu-chiao	天主教		

Tung-lin hui-yüeh	東林會約	Yang-yeh yin-ju	陽耶陰儂
Tung-lin hsüeh-an	東林學案	Yao	堯
Tung-lin shu-yüan	東林書院	Yeh Hsiang-kao	葉向高
Tung-lin tang	東林黨	Yeh-huo pien	野獲編
Tzū	子	Yeh-lu Ch'u-ts'ai	耶律楚才
Tzū-li (-ti)	自立(體)	Yeh-su Ch'i-li-ssü-tu	耶穌契利斯督
Wai-tao	外道	Yen	言
Wan-i	玩意	Yen Jo-chü	閻若王虞
Wang Hung-hui	王宏誨	Yen T'ang	顏王當
Wang Tso	王佐	Yen Wen-hui	晏文允軍
Wang Ying-lin	王應麟	Yin Kuang-jen	印光任
Wei Chung-hsien	魏忠賢	Yin-mo	湮沒
Wei-shu	魏書	Yo-chi	樂記
Wen-chung	問終	Yo-ching	樂經
Wen-tê	文德	Yu	有
Wo-san-i	我三一	Yü Huang	玉皇
Wu	無	Yü-tsuan Chou-i che-chung	惟暮周易折中
Wu-hsi	無錫	Yüan 元	
Wu Tao-an	吳道南	Yüan-chao	圓照
Wu-tsa-tsu	五雜俎	Yüan-chih	元質
Wu-wei	無為	Yüan-hsi-jen	遠西人
Yang Ch'i-yüan hsien-sheng ch'ao-hsing shih-chi	楊洪園先生超性事蹟	Yüan-li-lun	原禮論
Yang Kuang-hsien	楊光先	Yüeh-chih	月氏
Yang T'ing-yün (Ch'i-yüan)	楊廷筠(洪園)	Yün-ch'i	雲棲
		Yung	用