Ming Qing

STUDIES 2020

edited by
Paolo Santangelo

WriteUp

Ming Qing Studies 2020

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00162 Roma
(06) 89364113

isbn 978–88–85629–99-8
Ist edition: November 2020

Ming Qing Studies

Ming Qing Studies is an annual publication focused on late imperial China and the broader geo-cultural area of East Asia during the premodern and modern period. Its scope is to provide a forum for scholars from a variety of fields seeking to bridge the gap between 'oriental' and western knowledge. Articles may concern any discipline,includingsociology, literature, psychology, anthropology, history, geography, linguistics, semiotics, political science, and philosophy. Contributions by young and post-graduated scholars are particularly welcome.

Provided that the process of double-blind peer-review proceeds with no delay and the scrutiny of our experts confirms the scientificity, scholarly soundness and academic value of the author's work, it is one of Ming Qing Studies' commitments to publish the submitted manuscript within one year after its formal acceptance. This would ensure a timely circulation of the author's research outcomes withoutimposing hard limits on word counts or compromising the quality of peer-review, which, for publications in the same field, is usually much longer. The average article length is 10.000-15.000 words, but long articles and notes on focused topics are also taken into consideration.

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PREFACE

This issue is mainly focused on the concept of selfhood and intellectual and cultural history. Three articles concern female autonomy, identity negotiation and the strategies of gender construction and subversion in changing historical contexts. The former two describe the way a person negotiates his/her own identity with society at large. In *Confucian Chastity over Authenticity of Feeling: Identity and Emotions in a Rewriting of "Du Shiniang Sinks Her Jewel Box in Anger" in Late Chosŏn Korea*, **Hyuk-chan KWON** (University of Alberta) discusses the transformation of female personal duties. By comparing a Ming short story – Feng Menglong's notable "Du Shiniang Sinks her Jewel Box in Anger" 杜十娘怒沉百寶箱 – to its late Chosŏn re-adaptation, he delves into how the same narrative plot is elaborated in different societies, and the extent to which chastity may also be perceived differently. *Martyrdom, Sexual Autonomy, and "Restrictive Emotionality": The Making of a Ming Heroine* by **Isaac YUE** (Hong Kong University) touches upon the relationship between gender and how emotions manifest themselves. It examines the same Feng Menglong's story on Du Shiniang and other tales, such as "The Two Knights-errant" (二俠傳) by Xu Guang 徐廣, and "The Female Knight-errant Who Dispersed a Fortune and Killed Herself to Preserve Her Dignity" (俠女散財殉節). The other article, authored by **CHEN Jiani** (Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai Campus), *Empowering the Marginalised: Images of Knight-errant Courtesans in the Ming Dynasty*, concentrates on female knight-errants. Along with the Ming revival of the *xia* tradition in both society and literary representations, courtesan culture and knight-errantry were reconstructed through the aesthetic lens of Ming intellectuals who by linking these two aspects created a new ideal of the self – an ideal which not only challenged old stereotypical images of marginalized groups but, from a purely theoretical point of view, allowed also the negotiation and crossing of borders in gender and power structures. The work pulls together case studies on Zhao Yanru 趙燕如 and Kou Baimen 寇白門, two courtesans of respectively the mid-Ming and Ming-Qing transition who called into question the traditional passive images of courtesans/entertainers, and thereby brings to light those of Ming 'knight-errant courtesans' (*xiaji* 俠妓) produced by courtesans themselves and male *literati* in genres spanning poetry, anecdotes and biographies.

Four articles deal with the history of ideas, with a focus on Confucianism, Manichean texts, and cultural exchanges. *Local Concern and Classical Learning:*

Understanding Li Guangpo's 李光坡 *(1651-1723) Ritual Studies* by **YAP Sze Sze** (National University of Singapore) probes into the development of classical studies during the Qing Dynasty from a socio-historical perspective: Li Guangpo's annotation of the *Zhouli*, *Liji* and *Yili* is explored considering the social context of Anxi (Fujian), with special attention paid to the Li family and its strategies for maintaining elite status and dominance in society. It demonstrates how Li Guangpo's intellectual engagement was intertwined with these strategies, and ceremonial rituals are explained as part of the family's efforts to reorganize Anxi Hutou Li Clan (安溪湖頭李氏) and ultimately elevate its social status in the gentry circles.

The Qing Corpus of Manichaean Texts from Fujian by **Gábor KÓSA** (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest) gives an overview of the content and nature of the Manichean corpus in China, with particular reference to the recently discovered collection from Pingnan 屏南 county, and it surveys the south-eastern phase of Chinese Manichaeism after the Huichang 會昌 persecution (843-845). During this period, Chinese Manichaeans reportedly moved from the northern to the southeast part of the country, especially to Fujian and Zhejiang, where they reorganized into small communities and survived over the subsequent centuries. The majority of these *Mingjiao* 明教 scriptures, transmitted through family networks and used in local rituals commemorating Lin Deng 林瞪 (1003-1059), were finalized in the second half of the Qing Dynasty.

In *Import and Export of Ideas, Beliefs and Tastes in World History: The Case of Confucius in 18th Century Italy*, **Paolo SANTANGELO** (Università Sapienza, Rome) reconsiders the intellectual exchanges between Italy and China in the course of the 18th century along with the global fluxes of ideas, goods and technical expertise. It outlines the pioneering and dynamic role played by the Jesuits in the reciprocal exchange of knowledge by summarizing cross-cultural events and the controversy of Chinese rites that marked a series of contradictions inside the Church and beyond. One of these contradictions lay with the European elites whose representations of China and Confucianism influenced the debate over the *parti philosophique*, either in favour or against it. In this way, the discussions about Confucius in 18th century Italy are brought under the spotlight and evaluated.

Another article that investigates the dynamics of cultural exchange is *Chinese Diplomatic Gifts in Russia in 1655-1730: An Aspect of Intercultural Exchange* by **Rostislav BEREZKIN** (Fudan University) and **Maria L. MENSHIKOVA** (State Hermitage Museum). The Russian state established diplomatic and trade relations with the Qing Dynasty in the 17th century, becoming one of the first Western powers to enter into contact with China. A long process of negotiations with the Chinese government, which resulted in the signing of the Nerchinsk and Kyakhta treaties, was accompanied by the exchange of numerous diplomatic gifts. Reconstructing the general picture of

the gift exchange between Russia and the Qing Empire in the earliest period of their direct relations (1655-1735), the work discusses the cultural meaning of these Chinese objects in Russia, with a concise approach that combines the study of material objects with that of historical evidence.

New light on a section of the Ming bureaucratic structure is shed in *Mongol Military Intrusions and the Frontier Officials Selection in Late Ming China*. In this concluding article, **GENG Yong** (Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences) offers a detailed survey of the evolution of various special systems of selecting high-quality officials that were meant to serve in the northern frontiers, and alleviate local political and social crises. Many civilians were living in these frontiers during the Ming, providing cereals, building fortifications and handing over information about enemies to the troops stationed therein. The article thus analyzes the 'frontier [officials] selection' (*bianfang xuan* 邊方選), its separation from the 'distant [officials] selection' and subsequent adjustments that were closely related to the Mongols' military intrusion into the Ming Empire.

Paolo Santangelo

CHINESE DIPLOMATIC GIFTS IN RUSSIA IN 1655-1735: AN ASPECT OF RUSSIAN-CHINESE INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE[1]

ROSTISLAV BEREZKIN AND MARIA L. MENSHIKOVA
(Fudan University / State Hermitage Museum)

The Russian state established diplomatic and trade relations with the Qing Dynasty in the seventeenth century, thus becoming one of the first Western powers to have contacts with China. A long process of negotiations with the Chinese government, which resulted in the signing of the Nerchinsk and Kyakhta treaties (in 1689 and 1727 respectively), was accompanied by the exchange of numerous diplomatic gifts. These official gifts were placed in the Russian state treasuries. In the seventeenth century, the recipient was mainly the Kremlin Armory (Oruzheinaia palata, now a state museum) in Moscow, but after 1712, when the capital was transferred to Saint Petersburg, many items were moved to the new treasuries and palaces there. We have discovered that many objects received as diplomatic gifts from the Qing emperors have been preserved in the Russian museums up to the present, though often it is impossible to trace their exact history through the archives, because the latter were destroyed or mixed up during periods of political, military, and revolutionary turmoil. These gifts of the Qing emperors constitute genuine Chinese art objects that reached Russia at the early stages of Russian-Chinese exchange. They contributed to the formation of the image of China in Russia. They also serve as historical testimony to the peaceful connections between the two countries.

Despite the growing interest in the history of Russian-Chinese relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there still are no works specifically discussing the diplomatic gifts involved in these negotiations.[2] Several art objects in Russian collections that are considered to be gifts of the Qing emperors have

[1] This research was supported by a grant from the State Social Sciences Foundation of China: "The history of Chinese culture's one-hundred years of transmission abroad", no. 17ZDA195 (中国文化域外传播百年史). The authors also express their gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers for numerous comments and corrections and to Paula Roberts for editing English.

[2] See e.g., Cahen 1912; Chen 1966; Mancall 1971; Widmer 1976; Miasnikov 1987; Miasnikov 1996; Ye Baichuan 2010; Lim 2013; Samoilov 2014.

been described and studied by Russian art historians.[3] These earlier Russian research publications, however, are not complete in terms of materials used, and they do not properly contextualize these objects in the historical and cultural situation of Russian-Chinese exchange.

The present article has the purpose of reconstructing the general picture of the gift exchange between Russia and the Qing Empire in the earliest period of their direct relations (1655-1735), with an emphasis on gifts from the Chinese side. It also discusses the cultural meaning of these Chinese objects in Russia. The present research uses a synthetic approach, combining the study of material objects with that of historical evidence, that is, examining numerous artifacts from the Russian museum collections and archival documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that have been published in Russia.[4]

1. The Earliest Diplomatic Gifts in the Russian-Chinese Exchange (First Half of the Seventeenth Century)

Interest in Chinese goods on the part of aristocratic consumers in Europe and Russia led Russian authorities to search for continental routes leading to China. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the trade between Europe and China mostly used the sea route in the Indian Ocean, which was long and dangerous. At the end of the sixteenth century, the Muscovite state started the conquest of Siberia, which had formerly belonged to the Siberian Khanate and earlier, the Golden Horde, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century, this effort reached the borders of those Mongolian states that neighbored Ming China. At the same time, European traders and explorers tried to obtain permission to travel to China by land through the recently expanded Russian territories and Mongolia.[5] The Russian government, however, did not want to allow foreigners to travel through its territories, but intended to keep for itself the monopoly over the land routes to China.

Under these circumstances took place the earliest Russian diplomatic missions to China. The first, in 1618, was headed by a Cossack from Tobolsk named Ivan Petlin (dates unknown); the second was in 1655, organized directly by the Russian Court of Tsar Alexis (Aleksei Mikhailovich, r. 1645-1676), led by a *boyarin* (official), Fedor I. Baikov (ca. 1612-1663).[6] The primary aim of the first mission was to find new continental routes, that of the second to establish official diplomatic and trade contacts with China. The trips made by Petlin and Baikov were among the earliest diplomatic missions sent by the

[3] See, e.g., Menshikova 2014; Menshikova 2017.
[4] The most important being *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 17 veke* and *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 18 veke*.
[5] *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 17 veke*, vol. 1, pp. 42-43.
[6] On these missions, see Demidova and Miasnikov 1966.

European states to China in the modern period. Unfortunately, because of the ideological and cultural differences between Russian and Chinese official circles, the first Russian missions failed to establish official trade relations with China.

This is because the Qing Dynasty tried to put diplomatic relations with the Russian state in the framework of the so-called tribute system, the traditional Chinese system of relations with foreign states, and the Russian side could not accept these terms. During the Ming as well as the Qing dynasties, embassies from neighbor states were received according to a complex protocol, which required the performance of special greeting ceremonies before the emperor (notably the *kowtow*) and the presentation of symbolic "tribute."[7] This approach created multiple obstacles in communications between the Chinese Court and the Russian envoys. For example, Petlin was not received at the Ming Court because he did not bring the required presents.[8]

However, there is historical evidence that the first gifts of the Chinese emperor to the Russian tsar had reached Russia even before the fall of the Ming Dynasty. These gifts – 700 bolts of patterned colored silk (damask) and 32 stone cups (probably carved jade items) – are mentioned in the letter of the last Ming Emperor Sizong (Chongzhen, r. 1627-1644), given to the Cossack chief Emelian Vershinin (dates unknown) in 1642. The original letter did not survive, but a Russian translation, made on the order of Nikolai M. Milesku-Spafarii (1636-1708), the Russian envoy to Beijing in 1675-1676, was included in Spafarii's *Official Report* (*Stateinyi Spisok*), presented to the Russian Court upon his return from China.[9] There it was mistakenly dated to 1649, an error that influenced later Russian historians.[10]

From other archival documents of this period, we know that Vershinin traveled to the land of a powerful Mongol ruler and then – together with his subordinates – to the inner areas of the Ming state, namely the city of Xining.[11] It was not an official mission organized by the Russian government, but rather a local commercial initiative realized through the intermediacy of the Mongol rulers. It is not clear though whether Vershinin reached Beijing himself and how he received the letter. This Chinese letter was kept untranslated for several decades in the Siberian city of Tomsk, where it was discovered by Spafarii in 1675,[12] but we can suppose that the gifts brought by Vershinin eventually reached Moscow. Several Chinese jade cups, presumably of the early seventeenth century, that survived in the Armory of Moscow Kremlin (no. DK-870, DK-854), may be associated with Vershinin's trip.[13] At the same time, a

[7] See e.g., Fairbank 1968; see also Lee 2017, pp. 28-29; Wills 2010.
[8] Demidova and Miasnikov 1966, pp. 51-52.
[9] This translation was included in the collection of *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 17 veke*, vol. 1, p. 118.
[10] Bantysh-Kamenskii 1882, pp. 6-7.
[11] *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 17 veke*, vol. 1, pp. 119-120.
[12] *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 118.
[13] *Petr Pervyi: Kollektsioner, issledovatel', khudozhnik* 2019, pp. 70-71.

similar jade cup, probably also of Chinese origin, is mentioned in the inventory of the Kremlin treasury dated 1640.[14] Thus, the early indirect contacts with China had already led to the importation of rare Chinese artifacts into Russia.

The exchange of gifts took place during the commercial expedition of Petr Yaryzhkin, a Tobolsk officer, and Seitkul Ablin, a Bukharian merchant in the state service, that was dispatched to Beijing on official orders in 1654 to announce the arrival of the Baikov embassy to Beijing.[15] Ablin belonged to the group of Bukharian merchants who resided in Siberian towns and were important figures in Russian-Chinese trade in the seventeenth century.[16] In 1654, Ablin was regarded by the Qing officials as the tsar's envoy; he agreed to perform necessary rituals and thus was treated according to the rules of the "tribute" system.[17] This happened because Ablin, not actually being an official envoy, did not have any instruction from the Russian Court on his behavior in Beijing, so he accepted the etiquette required by Qing officials.[18]

It appears that Ablin was the first to bring official gifts from the Chinese Emperor Shunzhi (r. 1643-1661) to the Russian tsar Alexis.[19] The list of these gifts, dated to 1657, included primarily silver vessels and various types of silk – velvet and damask of different colors – as well as the skins of several animals, stone (probably jade) cups, and a saddle decorated with gilded metalwork, with a bridle and silk cover.[20] Significantly, the range of gifts reflects the demand for certain Chinese goods in Russia at that time. The most requested items were silk – the traditional luxury good from China – as well as silver, gold, and precious stones; the mining of precious metals was not developed in Russia in the seventeenth century.[21]

The Baikov embassy was not successful, however, as he did not agree to follow the ceremonial protocol of the Qing Court. The tsar Alexis's gifts that he brought to Beijing were rejected.[22] However, he purchased a great deal of silk while in Beijing and thus contributed to the importation of Chinese luxury goods into Russia.[23]

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[15] Here we distinguish between "missions" with primary commercial purposes and official "embassies" organized by the Russian government; the latter were regulated by the diplomatic protocol on the Russian side as well.

[16] See Sladkovskii 1974, pp. 110-111; Monahan 2016, pp. 55, 125, 176, 182.

[17] Circumstances of this mission are primarily known from the Chinese historical records, see *Da Qing Shizu zhang huangdi shilu*, 135: 2a; see also *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 17 veke*, vol. 1, p. 178; Demidova and Miasnikov 1966, pp. 105-108.

[18] *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 17 veke*, vol. 1, pp. 249; see also Mancall 1971, pp. 48-49; Miasnikov 1987, pp. 103-112.

[19] *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 17 veke*, vol. 1, pp. 249.

[20] *Ibid*., vol.1, pp. 216, 249.

[21] Sladkovskii 1974, pp. 113-114.

[22] Demidova and Miasnikov 1966, pp. 131-132; see also Mancall 1971, pp. 49-51.

[23] For the list of goods brought by Baikov, see *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 17 veke*, vol. 1, pp. 237-238, 250.

2. Chinese Diplomatic Gifts for Russia in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century

The amount of Chinese luxury goods brought to Russia significantly increased in the second half of the seventeenth century, and this had to do with the intensive attempts of Russian authorities to establish contact with the Qing government. By the end of that century Muscovite Russia and the Qing Empire were able to negotiate the ceremonial issues, and this led to the signing of the Nerchinsk peace treaty in 1689.[24] Under these circumstances, the exchange of gifts remained an important aspect of diplomatic relations between Russia and the Qing Empire. At least seven official diplomatic and trade missions traveled from Russia to China between 1650 and 1700: besides one headed by Baikov, others proceeded under envoys Ivan Perfiliev (1658) and Seitkul Ablin (1658 and 1668), Ignatii Milovanov (1670), Nikolai M. Milesku-Spafarii (1675-1676), Nikifor Venyukov (1686), Fedor A. Golovin (1689), and Evert Ysbrants Ides and Adam Brand (1692-1695).[25] Most of these Russian envoys brought back numerous Chinese objects, though not all of these were mentioned in the surviving historical documents.

For example, Perfiliev brought to the tsar twenty-five pieces of damask, two pieces of velvet, skins of various animals, silver, and tea.[26] The mission of Milovanov brought gifts of velvet, damask, brocade, and a saddle.[27] If we compare these with the gifts brought by Ablin in 1654, we can see that there was a standard set of objects used in the Russian-Chinese exchange of that period.[28]

The Manchu government apparently regarded the Russians as a northwestern nomadic tribe that would be most interested in silk, tea, and horse implements.[29] Tea was not common in the central part of Russia at that time, but it already was popular among the peoples of Mongolia and Siberia.[30] The first recorded transfer of tea to Russians from the Mongol territory is dated to 1638, when it was sent as a gift to the Russian tsar Mikhail Fedorovich (r. 1613-1645) by a Mongolian ruler; but it has been suggested that Chinese tea became known in Muscovite Russia in an even earlier period (also through contacts with the Mongols).[31] Tea is also

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[24] See, e.g., Mancall 1971, pp. 82-110, 153-162.
[25] See Mancall 1971, pp. 44-162; Skachkov 1975, pp. 21-27; see also Myasnikov 1980, 148-240.
[26] *Russko-kitaiskie otnosheniia v 17 veke*, vol. 1, p. 250.
[27] *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 278.
[28] The Russian side mostly used precious furs as diplomatic gifts. Perfiliev and Milovanov missions were interpreted as "submission of tribute" by the Qing side, see Miasnikov 1987, pp. 152, 176.
[29] Significantly, relations with Russia were put under the control of the *Lifanyuan* 理藩院 (Court of Colonial Affairs, in Charles O. Hucker's translation) which managed relations with the Mongols, Tibet, Kokonor and the chieftains of Eastern Turkestan.
[30] Sladkovskii 1974, pp. 112-113.
[31] See Avery 2003, pp. 113-114.