

## The *Acta Pekinensia* Project<sup>1</sup>

The ‘*Acta Pekinensia*’ is not a previously unknown document but it is one that has hardly been used by historians of the key episode in the Chinese Rites Controversy, the papal legation of Charles Maillard de Tournon to the court of the Kangxi Emperor (1705-1710). There are many reasons for this: its length (1446 manuscript pages), its contents which were regarded as explosive and coming under the papal ban on publications on the question, and its language – Latin with much Italian, French, Portuguese and Spanish interspersed. It has lain in the Jesuit Roman archives for nearly three hundred years and is to be found today in the old Japan/China (Jap.Sin.) collection at Jap. Sin. 138.<sup>2</sup> The full title, which gives an accurate picture of its contents, is ‘The Peking Acts or Historical records of what happened in Peking, day to day, from December 4<sup>th</sup>. of the year 1705 when there arrived the Most Illustrious, Most Reverend and Most Excellent Lord Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon, Patriarch of Antioch, Visitor Apostolic with powers of a Personal Legate’<sup>3</sup>.

The Macau Ricci Institute has initiated a project to publish an annotated English translation of the document. The Jesuit Roman Archives have made available a digitized copy, and a transcript, now almost complete, has been made under the direction of Monika Miazek. The draft translations, now over two thirds complete, have been made by a large number of Latinists, many Jesuits of the Latin-educated generation, and the whole is being edited and annotated by myself, together with Antonio Vasconcelos de Saldanha and Claudia von Collani.

Its author, or rather compiler, the German Jesuit astronomer and technician, Kilian Stumpf, foresaw its neglect but also expressed his hope that it would eventually find readers. He wrote in the preface:

Unhappy me who was present and involved in what happened, who while preparing to pass on the truth to future generations must place my weak lamp under a bushel basket, and hide my history forever inside the prison walls of an archive. Nevertheless, I write for eternity, and since I write the

---

<sup>1</sup> This article was published in *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* XXX (2008): 17-29, and reproduced here with permission. – For a Chinese translation of a paper on this subject presented at a conference in Taipei in July 2005 v. Gu Weiyang 古偉瀛 ed., *Dongxi jiaoliu shi de xinju yi jidu zongjiao wei zhongxin* 東西交流史的新局以基督宗教為中心, Taipei: Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin 臺灣大學出版中心 [National Taiwan University Press], 2005, pp.207-246.

<sup>2</sup> The ‘*Acta Pekinensia*’ make up the whole of this bound volume, unfortunately laminated with subsequent loss of clarity. There is a partial copy also in the archives of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide (today Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples) in Rome under Informationum Liber 162 (pro Miss. Sin. vol. 7) and Liber 166 (Pro Miss. Sin. vol. 11). It is arranged chronologically in monthly sections (December 1705 to January 1712) with a documentary appendix (pp.1344-1466).

<sup>3</sup> In Latin, ‘*Acta Pekinensia sive Ephemerides Historiales eorum, quae Pekini acciderunt a 4.a Decembris Anni 1705. 1.a Adventus Ill.mi Rev.mi et Exc.mi Dñi D. Caroli Thomae Maillard de Tournon Patriarchae Antiocheni Visitatoris Apost.ci cum potestate Legati de latere etc.*’

truth it will not be lacking in usefulness for the wise reader, and this will satisfy his debt to the writer rather than praise which the latter has been taught to avoid.

And a little later:

If the arrangement of the work does not please him for whom I write, let him reflect, I beg you, that time did not allow a man so busy in the service of the Emperor to undertake another kind of history, nor would there have been any point in my polishing it since I did not know whether what I wrote would be consigned to darkness. Or, certainly, if perhaps it should seem to His Holiness some time appropriate to order that this work be brought to light, there will not be lacking someone to improve and develop it to bring fear and terror to all to whom are committed the affairs of our Holy Religion in the lands of Gentiles, whether as ordinary officials or grandees with authority. (AP1)<sup>4</sup>

Stumpf also explained in this preliminary note ‘to the reader’:

I only tell what happened, and as judged by human eyes, and I intend no other reward of my labours than to present the true facts which, indeed, is my bounden duty. I deal only with the things that happened in Peking or which relate in some special way to what happened in Peking. The rest I leave to others to tell according to their knowledge of what they saw or heard or which came from reliable sources. I was appointed Procurator by my superiors, together with Father Jean Régis<sup>5</sup>, to conduct business relating to the controversies, privately and publicly, with the most illustrious Lord Patriarch of Antioch, Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon, Visitor Apostolic with powers of Legate. They approved what I wrote, as you will see at the end. (AP1)

Fortunately, given Stumpf’s scrawling handwriting, he sent his drafts to the best penman among the Jesuits in North China, Giampaolo Gozani, then stationed in Kaifeng, to produce a clear copy to send to Rome. Stumpf checked the copy, sometimes made minor corrections or additions, and had the whole approved and attested by his colleagues in Peking. The result is nearly always legible although it often raises problems of interpretation, identification of Chinese names and terms, and sequence.

It is written in a precise documentary style, as befits what was meant to be a kind of legal document, apart from the introduction where Stumpf seems to be trying to demonstrate that he could write ‘classical’ Latin prose if he wished. This style with its conciseness and richness of allusion is particularly appropriate when translating Chinese documents and expressions.

---

<sup>4</sup> All references are given in this form to the page numbers in the original manuscript in Jap. Sin. 138. AP is used throughout for the *Acta Pekinensia*.

<sup>5</sup> Jean –Baptiste Régis (雷孝思) was stationed in Canton and was presumably intended to act a procurator in the South while Stumpf would act in the North.

Kilian Stumpf (記理安) was a German Jesuit who came to China in 1694. He was a trained scientist with knowledge of mathematics and chemistry. Despite his having taken an oath of allegiance to the King of Portugal he was blocked in Macao from going to Beijing, probably because of the Portuguese Jesuits' experience with Ferdinand Verbiest who when Director of the Astronomical Bureau (the *Qintian Jian* 欽天監) had encouraged the sending of non-Portuguese including French Jesuit personnel to China. Stumpf arrived in Macao with Claudio Filippo Grimaldi (閩明我) who in his absence in Europe on imperial business had been appointed Verbiest's successor. In Canton he repaired some astronomical instruments brought by Grimaldi which had been damaged on the voyage and his skill was reported to the Emperor by the local officials. Stumpf was summoned to the court where he arrived in July 1695. The Emperor when he interviewed him inquired particularly about his knowledge of glassmaking since Kangxi had been impressed by some recently imported European glassware, and he appointed Stumpf Director of the new imperial glassworks set up in the compound of the French Northern Church (Beitang). He later (1711) became Director of the Astronomical Bureau and was Jesuit Visitor (1714-1718). He died in Beijing in 1720.<sup>6</sup>

However, the capacity in which Stumpf produced the *Acta Pekinensia* was two-fold. He had been appointed by the Jesuit Visitor as 'procurator' for the mission to handle negotiations with the papal legate, a position he took seriously to the annoyance of de Tournon who eventually refused to have further dealings with him. Somehow he had also been appointed a papal notary which gave documents he signed an official status in the business of the papal curia in Rome, lack of which had been used previously as a pretext to exclude consideration of some Jesuit documents from China.

We have seen his insistence that he describes only what he saw and that where he was not an eyewitness he includes the writings of those who were. Not the least of the merits of the work is the abundant documentation citing original letters etc. in several languages or in translation, including many Latin translations of imperial rescripts. Sometimes the originals of these items are extant and verify his accuracy. Even more importantly he frequently gives documents which are no longer available.<sup>7</sup> As a papal notary he was concerned

---

<sup>6</sup> There are many biographical sources on Stumpf. Perhaps the most useful are S. Reil, *Kilian Stumpf 1655-1720: ein Würzburger jesuit am kaiserhof zu Peking*, Munster: Aschendorf, 1978 and Claudia von Collani, 'Kilian Stumpf (Jilian Yunfeng) – Mediator between Wurzburg and China' in Huang shijian 黄时鉴 ed., *Dongxi Jiaoliu Luntan* 东西交流论谭, Vol.2, Shanghai (Shanghai Wenyi Chubianshe) 2001, 259-276.

<sup>7</sup> An important example is the Emperor's rescript of 21 June 1706 (AP195-6) in which he rebuked de Tournon for saying he had no further business and now on the eve of his expected departure was attempting to raise not only new business but business beyond his competence relating to the imperial 'family'. I have been unable to find this in any of the published collections. It may not have been regarded as an official document but as pertaining to internal household affairs.

with documentary accuracy. All the Jesuits in Beijing who had witnessed the events signed the copy sent to Rome and the only dissent (on a minor matter) was duly recorded.<sup>8</sup>

## KANGXI AND THE JESUITS

The *Acta Pekinensia* sheds much interesting light on the complex relations between Kangxi and the Jesuits who served at his court. I have discussed this relationship at length elsewhere<sup>9</sup>. What we find in the *Acta Pekinensia* confirms and develops the emerging picture. Some of the Jesuits, especially Thomás Pereira, had frequent informal meetings with the emperor, tutorial sessions, music lessons, even simply conversations especially when the Emperor was on his hunting expeditions in Manchuria (always called Tartary in the AP). The Jesuits should be seen as members of the inner court rather than the regular bureaucracy with the exception of the Jesuit astronomers who alone should be called ‘mandarins’ and then only some of them, others refusing office.

An important role is played in the AP by the Manchu go-betweens or ‘minders’ belonging to the imperial printing office (Wuying Dian 武英殿) and the imperial manufactory (Yangxin Dian 養心殿). The connection of the Europeans with these two ‘courts’ was partly accidental and partly a matter of personnel (they were manned by Manchus of the Household often with personal ties to the dynasty). But it is reflected frequently in the *Acta*. One document reads: ‘The officials of the Yangxin Dian and Wuying Dian and other departments are responsible for the administration of the affairs of the Europeans’.<sup>10</sup> One of these officials Hesccken<sup>11</sup> (also known as Henkama, and Wang Laoye), that ‘cunning

---

<sup>8</sup> ‘Attestation: I, José Suarez, Vice-provincial of the China mission, have read the whole of the present work containing the *Acta Pekinensia* dealing with the relations between The Most Reverend and Illustrious Lord Charles Maillard de Tournon, Patriarch of Antioch, Apostolic Visitor etc. and the missionaries of the Society of Jesus, both in the matter of the Controversies and other business, written by Father Kilian Stumpf, a professed priest of our Society, and I attest they have been read by Fathers Antoine Thomas, Pierre Jartoux, and Ehrenbert Fridelli, and heard read out by Fathers Filippo Grimaldi and Thomás Pereyra, and that I have neither found anything nor know of anything found by others which would impugn the truth of what is relate. The only exception is that Father Antoine Thomas in one place noted a disagreement over the date of a conversation which he had with the Lord Patriarch. This did not affect the substance of the narration, and could not now be amended without some awkwardness, so I ordered that it should stand. And I approve the whole work including the corrections made by Father Kilian Stumpf with his own hand and signed by himself on page 348. I respectfully transmit it to Our Very Reverend Father Michelangelo Tamburini, General Superior of the Society of Jesus through Father Antonio Provana who is going to Rome as our procurator, so that this work of such importance both for the Church of God in China and in the eyes of our least Society, may stand as witness to the truth, and can have authority both in judicial and extrajudicial proceedings. Given at Peking, 25 October 1707, in the College of the Society of Jesus commonly known as the Si Tam. José Suarez, Vice-provincial of China, by my own hand and sealed with my seal of office.’ (AP2)

<sup>9</sup> In a paper entitled ‘Kangxi and the Jesuits: missed opportunity or futile hope?’ at the 10<sup>th</sup>, Colloque Internationale de Sinologie in Paris in September 2004 and in a paper in preparation for the forthcoming Tomás Pereira conference (Lisbon/Macao, November 2008).

<sup>10</sup> 養心殿武英殿等處管製造帶西洋人事 The document is translated in A.S. Rosso, *Papal Legations to China*, South Pasadena (P.D. & Ione Perkins) 1948 as Doc.19. The text is found in the *Zhang’gu zongbian* 掌故叢編 [‘Collected Documents from the Archives’], Taipei (Guofeng Chubanshe 國風出版社) 1964, 42 [15a].

<sup>11</sup> Chinese Heshiheng 赫世亨

fox' as Stumpf calls him<sup>12</sup>, figures prominently. His role as main intermediary while the papal legation was in Beijing (December 1705–August 1706) cost him the trust of all parties: the emperor who was convinced, with some justification, that Hescken was being bribed by de Tournon; the Jesuits to whom he had been a friend but who regarded him as a turncoat; and the legate and his party when he failed to secure permission for a permanent residence in Beijing. He was by this time old and in ill health. The next year he was baptised a Christian under the name Peter, and died in 1708 somewhat in disgrace.

It is noteworthy that the second audience of the papal legate (29 June 1706) occurred in the Yangxin Dian itself. The emperor had here an audience hall where he was accustomed to hold 'show and tell' sessions with his European artisans and technicians on what were called 'Yangxin days'.<sup>13</sup> Was this a calculated snub to the legate who was ambiguous as to whether he wished to be regarded as an ambassador or a religious superior, an ambiguity that sprang from the Pope's role in Europe as ruler as well as pastor? At least it shows that Christian affairs were in the emperor's mind closely related to 'foreign experts' matters.

The main conclusion I would draw is that the historian of China can learn much about what seems essentially Chinese affairs from European sources. I have looked in vain, admittedly not exhaustively, in Chinese sources for details of these imperial household arrangements.

## THE EMPEROR'S VOICE

One of the special pleasures in reading the *Acta Pekinensia* is to hear the Emperor's voice, as his remarks in Chinese are often recorded by Stumpf. We hear his first reaction to de Tournon's application to come to Beijing: *bu lai ba* 不來罷, 'he shouldn't come!'<sup>14</sup> We are told that he complained to Grimaldi about the missionaries he had come across in his Southern Tour moving around *luanluande, maomaode* 亂亂的冒冒的, in a seditious and disorderly fashion.<sup>15</sup> When Hescken insists on urging de Tournon's request for a house in Beijing the emperor curtly replies: *she bu de* 捨不得, 'You just can't leave it alone!'.<sup>16</sup> We are given Kangxi's comments on the Patriarch's first official statement of the

---

<sup>12</sup> AP78 cf. AP169 'that old fox'.

<sup>13</sup> A detailed description of these arrangements is found in a report of the French Jesuit Jean-François Foucquet in the Roman Jesuit Archives (Jap. Sin. II.154: 13-14). It was included as an appendix to the doctoral thesis of John W. Witek S.J., 'An Eighteenth-century Frenchman at the Court of the K'anghsi Emperor: a study of the early life of Jean François Foucquet' (Ph.D. thesis, Georgetown University, 1973 452-678) entitled 'Report of astronomy in Peking, 1711-1716'. It is thus available in the University Microfilms edition of the thesis but was omitted from the later book based on the thesis.

<sup>14</sup> AP6. The words have to be reconstructed from the sometimes inconsistent Portuguese romanization used in the AP. Here the text reads *Pu lai. Pa.*

<sup>15</sup> AP75: *luon luon tie, mao mao tie.*

<sup>16</sup> AP79: *xe pu te.*

reasons for his legation. De Tournon had claimed that he was in Beijing simply to thank the emperor for his benevolence towards Christianity. Kangxi bursts out: *Zhege shi wan de* 這個是頑得, ‘This is nonsense!’<sup>17</sup> He comments on de Tournon forbidding the Jesuits to give food to the Chinese Christians who attended the funeral of his chamberlain, Piero Sigotti: 小器 *xiaoqi*: ‘How petty!’<sup>18</sup> And we hear his exasperated *Nian ta ba*, 攆他吧, ‘Expel him then!’<sup>19</sup> when he hears of Sabino Mariani’s resistance to his orders. During his first audience when de Tournon started to discuss trivialities, the emperor cut his short with *Zhege ba* 這個罷, ‘That’s enough!’<sup>20</sup>

There are a few places in the *Acta* when we would like to know exactly what the Kangxi Emperor said in Chinese. The AP says that after the first audience (31 December 1705) as de Tournon was leaving, the Emperor sent after him a message in just two words, in Latin *novi te*.(AP49) This is highly ambiguous. Does it mean: ‘I have got to know you’, ‘Pleased to make your acquaintance’; or does it mean ‘I know what you are up to’, ‘I have seen through you’? Both meanings are encompassed by the Latin verb *noscere*. But what did the Emperor say in Chinese? – or possibly Manchu, since another important inference from the AP is that inner court affairs were largely conducted in Manchu. Those Jesuits who had most to do with the Emperor were Manchu speakers and Stumpf notes occasionally that Manchu was more precise than Chinese in some contexts and used to elucidate the corresponding Chinese.

Kangxi displays his knowledge of Christianity and uses it against them. He accuses the Christian sympathizer, Henkama, of not observing the Christian rule to love others as yourself, *ai ren ru ji* 愛人如己<sup>21</sup> and says that if the Jesuits do not expose throughout Europe the Legate’s ingratitude he will regard himself as badly served and them as not true men: *wo bu fu, nimen bu zhen ren* 我不負，你們不真人。

Stumpf also reports a discussion about theological matters with the emperor which shows Kangxi’s grasp of quite subtle issues and again gives us his actual words:

The Emperor, contrary to his general custom, in the course of his conversation used the term *Tianzhu* 天主. The Father, however, to exclude all possibility of ambiguity, called God: *wanwu zhenzhu* 萬物真主, or Lord of all things. And the Emperor smiling said: Why are you looking for

---

<sup>17</sup> AP31: *Che co xi van tie*. The original Italian letter also given in the AP is full of empty high flown eloquence. Kangxi saw the Manchu translation before it was complete.

<sup>18</sup> AP20: *Siao Ki*.

<sup>19</sup> AP507: *Nien tapa*.

<sup>20</sup> AP48: *Che co pa*.

<sup>21</sup> In the text, *ngai Gin ju ki*; the gospel injunction to love your neighbour as yourself (Mt19:19, 22:39, Mk12:31,33; Lk10:27).

another name? There is no word in creation which matches the immensity of God. The very name you have just spoken is inadequate. God is alone among all things; if, therefore, he is Lord of all things, he is Lord of himself, and inferior to himself. The immensity of God can be contemplated with the intellect, but cannot be expressed in a word.’ (AP74)

The remarks reported in the AP nicely complement Kangxi’s marginal comments in the recently published documents dealing with the legation.<sup>22</sup> The *Acta Pekinensia* traces Kangxi’s growing irritation with the Patriarch but it seems the Jesuits did not know that de Tournon had been complaining about them to the Emperor behind their backs. On April 28<sup>th</sup> he made a complaint that the Jesuit Joachim Bouvet had appropriated control of the gifts being sent to the pope, presumably after receiving letters from Sabino Mariani, de Tournon’s auditor and Bouvet’s companion on the mission to Rome. The Patriarch claimed that Kangxi favoured those who had been longer at the court and had no consideration for newcomers. The Emperor was very annoyed on receipt of this report, presumably from Hesccken<sup>23</sup>, slashing out the phrase. ‘has no consideration for’, and commenting: ‘how can they say I show no consideration?’ He eventually somewhat softens the draft of his reply but concludes: ‘You cannot have listened carefully to what I said which was very benign towards you.’

Evidently de Tournon continued to complain because this is followed by an undated vermilion message (*i.e.* one entirely in the Emperor’s hand) in which he reminds de Tournon that it was on his explicit orders that Bouvet had been sent to accompany Mariani and he expects his orders to be carried out. ‘Why should I recall Bouvet? He has not yet fulfilled my commission. De Tournon and Co. should be content if they have another look at my edict. De Tournon should remain calm and care for his health. There is no need for him to send me communications.’

The third and last document in the series, undated but probably somewhat later, is even more angry in tone and written in a strong agitated hand. ‘Duo Luo (De Tournon) previously was pleased at the thank-you gifts sent to the Pope. Now he wants me to recall them. I am annoyed at the divisions that have appeared now that so many more Westerners have come who have different ways of behaving. Some are here today gone tomorrow. There are now many nationalities and many societies (*hui* 會) represented but they worship one God (*Tianzhu* 天主). Why cannot they live together under one superior? Then there would be no strife and they would follow my instructions.’

---

<sup>22</sup> *Qingzhong qianji Xiyang Tianzhujiào zai Hua huodong dang’an shiliao* 清中前期西洋天主教在華活動檔案史料, ed. Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’an guan 中國第一歷史檔案館, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2003), vol.1, Nos. 4, 5, 6, pp.10-11).

<sup>23</sup> The document bears no seal or date and is apparently a memorandum rather than a formal memorial – another indication of the less formal nature of the conduct of household affairs.

Taken together with the *Acta Pekinensia* these documents give a very full understanding of what went wrong in the relations between emperor and legate. They are a good example of the need to use documentation from both sides. This is not a simple matter of two points of view or information known to one side only. Sometimes European sources give information on Chinese events that are either too commonplace or outside the literary conventions of Chinese sources. Conversely, the Chinese saw as ludicrous, surprising or contradictory aspects of European behaviour that the Western missionaries took for granted. The double perspective enriches and enlightens. The publication of the *Acta Pekinensia* in a language many Chinese scholars read should enable this double perspective to be applied by both Chinese and Western historians.

## THE VOICES OF THE CHINESE CHRISTIANS

Another invaluable contribution of the *Acta Pekinensia* is the constant attention to the views and actions of the Chinese Christians of Beijing and elsewhere which tend to be ignored or diminished in many other Western missionary sources of the time. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of the Chinese Rites Controversy was the neglect of the vast amount of Chinese testimony sent to Rome with François Noël and Kaspar Castner in 1702. The Pope's legate in China was similarly scornful of Chinese views and there are many episodes in the document which show this. Early in his stay in Beijing, de Tournon had a heated exchange with a young Chinese Christian recently married to a non-Christian who is rebuked for not marrying a Christian. The man points out that he is a Christian only because his great grandmother, a Christian, married his non-Christian great grandfather and that in any case with so few Christians it was virtually impossible to marry always within the community. And he ends by saying pointedly and to the scandal of de Tournon's entourage who were unused to the laity talking back to 'Great Lords' of the church: "The Lord Patriarch is ignorant of our customs."(AP86)

Another redoubtable Beijing Christian, Peter Wang<sup>24</sup>, on 7 March 1706 argued the case for the Chinese rites with Ludovico Appiani, the Patriarch's interpreter, and according to the *Acta* account worsted him.<sup>25</sup> And in many other episodes the Chinese Christians are depicted as active and vigorous participants in church affairs.<sup>26</sup> The *Acta* also gives a vivid account of de Tournon's arrogant and contemptuous treatment of the Beijing Christians,

---

<sup>24</sup> Wang Baiduolu 王柏多祿, a leading Beijing Christian who figures in several of the protests against changes to the Chinese Rites e.g. the printed formal protest of 1718 (ARSI: JSI.205). He was a first degree holder (*shengyuan* 生員) and a student in the Calendrical Bureau (*tianwen sheng* 天文生).

<sup>25</sup> AP95.

<sup>26</sup> e.g. AP23, 85, 87, 89, 106, 109, 111, 112.

trampling on a petition they present to him.<sup>27</sup> This was the background to and main reason for the failure of the legation.

## CLOSE READING

The *Acta Pekinensia* is not always easy to interpret. It demands the collaboration of scholars expert respectively in Chinese and European sources. There are many examples in the *Acta Pekinensia* just as there are in the Chinese sources that require a close and informed reading. I will take just a few examples.

Firstly there are the titles and honorifics. Stumpf always refers to the Jesuits simply as ‘the Fathers’. The legate’s entourage get ‘Reverend Lord’ (the *Dominus* is perhaps the equivalent of Dom or Abbé but it nonetheless reads as exaggerated). De Tournon himself however invariably gets the full treatment: ‘the Most Illustrious and most Excellent Lord Patriarch’, and so on. On one occasion Stumpf cites an internal note de Tournon sent the Jesuits signed:

Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon, by the grace of God and of the Apostolic See, Patriarch of Antioch, Domestic Prelate of His Holiness Our Lord Clement, by Divine Providence Pope, XI, assistant at his Pontifical throne, also Consultant of the venerable Holy Roman Universal Inquisition against the evils of heresy, and Commissioner and General Apostolic Visitor to the East Indies and the Empire of the Chinese and neighbouring kingdoms and islands, with the faculties of a Legate *a latere* etc. (AP314-5)

It is hard to believe Stumpf is not subtly mocking the pretensions of this Piedmont aristocrat with a title appropriated from the eastern church (Patriarch of Antioch) maintaining the style of a prince of the Roman church in the middle of China.

The AP records without comment de Tournon’s complaint that when he is staying in the Jesuit house they do not come to kneel and kiss his hand every morning. (AP42) He seems to have wanted to be treated as the cardinal he became just before his death, with a levee attended by all his clients. The Jesuits pointed out elsewhere that most of them had been up and out of the house on the Emperor’s business long before the Patriarch rose and that the house was full of spies who reported such actions to the Emperor who would take amiss his servants showing fealty to a foreigner. They did not believe that when in Peking one should do as the Romans do (not that they said this to the papal legate).

Again there are comments that only the theologically initiated would appreciate. In the middle of a passage on another topic Stumpf makes the apparently irrelevant comment that Charles Maigrot, the Bishop of Conon and Vicar Apostolic of Fujian called to Beijing by de Tournon as his ‘China expert’, confessed his sins only occasionally while de Tournon did so every week. The

---

<sup>27</sup> AP107.

uninformed reader might not appreciate that this is a coded way of saying that Maigrot had Jansenist tendencies while de Tournon, whatever his faults, was no Jansenist.<sup>28</sup> Moreover the details given for the funeral of his valet/surgeon Sigotti and the celebration of Easter 1706 seem intended to establish an excessive concern for liturgical niceties on the part of the Patriarch. We hope to draw attention to such matters in the annotations we are providing to the translation.

Generally however the *Acta Pekenensia* makes its points by reporting conversations and actions in detail. In places it is a brilliant piece of dramatic art. Here, to give but one example and whet your appetite is a passage from a fiery interview between the Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Barros and Maillard de Tournon on 26 April 1706. De Barros, whose account this is, is disputing de Tournon's reading of canon law and says:

'I believe I understand that each of us is interpreting the text to suit himself. For my interpretation is vastly different from that of Your Excellency.'

Woe is me! I touched the mountains, and they began to smoke, and soon they were threatening to pour out fire. Trembling and raging, he shouted out: 'Why do you speak to me disrespectfully? Do you understand what a *legatus a latere* is?' Then sliding his frail hand from his chest right down to his waist in one movement, he said: 'A *legatus a latere* is a side, a part of the Supreme Pontiff.'<sup>29</sup> I tried as best I could to appease his growing anger, implying that I had in no way intended to cause any offence or trouble; and saying that I had answered because he had told me to, and that if there was anything in my answer which I should not have said, he should advise me of it and I would make amends. 'You! You are speaking disrespectfully,' His Excellency said. 'You say that you understand quite clearly that each of us is interpreting the text to suit himself.' Since there was no easy way to calm the rage of the Lord Patriarch who was shouting in this way, I decided to leave and so avoid appearing to throw oil on the flames instead of water, and to allow his anger to abate. I therefore asked quietly for leave to depart, and went out through the door. I was not more than two paces from the door, when I found that the Lord Patriarch was following me, as fast as he was capable of moving, and ordering me to return with his voice raised in abusive words: 'Come back! Come back!', he was shouting. 'You must take your punishment. Come! Do as you are told! I suspend you. Take your punishment with due humility. You are suspended.' I stood still, quite nonplussed at this sudden fury which had blazed out with such violence without any reason at all. His staffs were alarmed by the shouting of the Lord Patriarch, and some began to open their doors, and others to come outside. His doctor was approaching, but

---

<sup>28</sup> One of the main planks of the Jansenist heresy was that the Christian sacraments, confession and communion, should be used infrequently out of respect. This was argued by the leading Jansenist theologian Antoine Arnauld in his *De la Fréquente Communion* (1643).

<sup>29</sup> Literally in Latin *legatus a latere* means 'one sent from the side of [the Pope]'.

the Lord Bishop of Peking<sup>30</sup> hurrying from a nearer room was in front of him, and began asking: ‘What is the meaning of all this shouting and disturbance?’ The Lord Patriarch sent him back to his room, saying it was none of his business. The Lord Bishop retreated. And the Most Excellent Lord continued to thunder suspension to strike terror into me. What was I to do? In a state of suspense, I stood for a short time deliberating whether to depart or to stay. Finally I decided it was more expedient to remain in his presence and patiently allow his fury to be sated, than by leaving, to give cause for suspicion that I went away like someone who refuses to stay, and despised the rebuke, whether just or unjust. When the Lord Patriarch went back inside again, I too re-entered the room. I remained standing. He too was standing, afire with the desire to punish me; and Father Candela<sup>31</sup> was there too, standing beside him. And these words burst from him: ‘Hear me. Humbly hear your punishment.’ These words were repeated several times. Then bending slightly forward, he pointed to the floor with his finger. I being totally unaccustomed to anything like this, did not understand it was a sign demanding a response. But to the sign His Excellency added an order, calling out: ‘You will be examined on your knees; you will be examined on your knees.’ I answered that an examination on bended knees is a sacred action, and that I had no difficulty with that; that I had fairly frequently made an examination in that way; and moreover was prepared for it. However I started to give a reason for my previous departure from his room. I told him that I had done this solely so that my presence in the room would not cause his more distress and provoke his ire all the more; for there was good reason to fear that this might be very much to the detriment of His Excellency’s health and no small embarrassment to myself. (AP136-7)

This could almost serve as a film-script but it is a historical record, written at the time by a participant. While Stumpf himself eschewed such dramatics he skillfully incorporated them in his record of events.

## CONCLUSION

It seems to me that our work on the *Acta Pekinensia* leads to a number of conclusions for future work on the history of Christianity in China, at least in the early Qing. The first is that collaborative work between Western and Chinese scholars is indispensable. We all need to use whatever sources are accessible to us, Chinese and European, but the depth of background and linguistic expertise will necessarily be stronger on each side in their own sources. Good annotated editions and translations of these sources will be of great help.

---

<sup>30</sup> Bernardino della Chiesa, an Italian Franciscan, who had come from his residence in Linqing to meet the legate and was staying in the Jesuit house.

<sup>31</sup> Andrea Candela, the Patriarchs’s chaplain and chancellor.

Re the Chinese sources, apart from the published writings of Chinese Christians, more attention needs to be given to documents from the imperial household departments which are where the Westerners were administratively located. The clothing records depict the Emperor's daily movements. The imperial expense accounts, inventories etc. have survived only sporadically but would repay much more attention. And these can be very usefully complemented by the Jesuit sources. Missionaries sometimes kept documents, informal sources, local and central, that were excluded from the compilation of the official histories.<sup>32</sup> The *Acta Pekinensia* draws attention to this, and its availability in English should open up a number of new avenues for the general historians of China as well as for historians of missions and Sino-Western relations.

Paul Rule

---

<sup>32</sup> In my contribution to the 1992 Symposium on the Chinese Rites Controversy in San Francisco I drew attention to the recently acquired collection of Chinese documents in the Ricci Institute at the University of San Francisco which I call the Sala Papers. Their main value lies in the fact that most are copies made at the time by Europeans in Canton and Macao of instructions from Beijing and responses of local officials dealing with the house arrest of de Tournon in Macao none of which to my knowledge are found today in Chinese archives. v. 'Towards a history of the Chinese Rites controversy' in D.E.Mungello, ed. *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, Nettetal (Steyler Verlag), Monumenta Serica Monograph Series, XXXIII, 1995, 252-256.