

problem of the possible duality of the heart-mind and body in the Guodian texts, concluding that the available evidence shows “a range of views on relations between them”. Chan’s second essay focuses on the question of “nature and nurture” in the *Yucong* 語叢, suggesting that Daoist and Confucian elements form a complementary synthesis in these texts. In a broad analytical overview, Scott Cook examines the conspicuous arguments against governance based on normative punishments, while contemplating the social-historical developments that may have fuelled this debate. Tang Siufu investigates the possible connections between the Guodian manuscripts and the *Xunzi*, highlighting the similarity of prevalent themes and ideological positions. Li Rui traces the possible connections between the concepts of *liu wei* 六位 (six positions) and *san gang* 三綱 (three principles) and the accompanying developments in the social position of philosophers vis-a-vis rulers in the late pre-imperial and early imperial periods. In a concluding essay, Kenneth Holloway, taking inspiration from Prasenjit Duara, proposes an interpretation of the Guodian texts as a religious corpus united in “dialogical transcendence”.

Considering the broad range of topics and a well-balanced international team of contributors, this volume can be seen as a snapshot of the current state of research on the Guodian manuscripts. In this sense, it is somewhat disappointing that nearly all innovative points advanced by contributors are dismissed or denied by others. While disagreement is generally indicative of a healthy academic conversation, one wonders whether there is enough dialogue in the Guodian studies, as it seems that sometimes scholars are not willing to seriously consider each other’s opinions. This fragmentation may stem from disagreements on fundamental issues. Are the Guodian texts related to individual philosophers known from transmitted records? Or are they created by as yet unknown communities, whose ideas should be interpreted on their own, avoiding contamination from the received tradition? The different opinions on this matter determine different strategies of inquiry, and the outcomes are often incompatible.

Perhaps some additional editorial effort could have made the volume even better. Some essays are somewhat difficult to follow. And while misplaced punctuation usually does not incur significant problems, it becomes confusing in the primary source citations appearing in discussions dealing specifically with the nuances of textual transmission and interpretation. However, these minor problems do not diminish the value of this volume as a diverse and up-to-date summary of academic opinions on the most significant collection of ancient philosophical manuscripts discovered so far.

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SOPHIE LING-JIA WEI:

Chinese Theology and Translation: The Christianity of the Jesuit Figurists and Their Christianized Yijing.

xii, 151 pp. (Routledge Studies in Asian Religion and Philosophy, 26.)
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It is no secret that the archives of Europe contain many manuscripts bequeathed by those remarkable Jesuit pioneers in China known as Figurists, subtle and learned

scholars who sought to find in ancient Chinese sources the very religion that they themselves professed, though the verdict of later ages has inevitably been that ultimately they laboured in vain. Even so their ideas as expressed in European languages briefly stirred some reactions among their contemporaries, and these writings have therefore been explored by a number of recent researchers. But the related though decidedly less consequential materials in which they sought to project their ideas in Chinese have correspondingly been less thoroughly explored. Sophie Ling-jia Wei makes clear in the introduction to the work under review that her aim has been to remedy this, by distilling her extended reading of the Chinese Figurative legacy in the archives into five linked studies. In order to explain the Jesuit approach, however, she first has to recapitulate what has been discovered about the background to their approach in Western Christianity, including lesser-known currents of thought that found in the supposedly early Hermetic corpus of writings apparently early adumbrations of Christian truth.

Her first chapter in the series then considers the Jesuit writings in Chinese as “intralingual translations”, restatements in Chinese of what the ancient texts of China appeared to be saying to them in terms of a Christian message. This chapter shows ample evidence of Jesuit ingenuity both in their own command of expository Chinese and in the timely fashion in which they improvised Latin or other translations: the word “triune” for example for *sanyi* 三一 is correctly identified in n. 9 on p. 49 as appearing first in 1605 in English (not a language actually used by the Figurists), though this was in a hermetic context; the Latin “triunus” seems to emerge in a theological environment – and that a Protestant one – only towards the middle of the seventeenth century (according to Hans Schwartz, *The Trinity: The Central Mystery of Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), p. 92).

The next chapter concerns a yet more daring adventure: the attempted discovery of Jesus in ancient Chinese literature. But thereafter we are in more familiar territory for the secular student of China, in that a chapter follows on linguistic topics, covering not only a sketch of missionary lexicography but also the division of the Chinese language into three different registers by these Jesuit scholars, embracing the ancient language of the classics; the literary language of their own times as deployed in expository prose; and the vernacular.

Equally informative, but from a bibliographic point of view, is the next chapter, commenting on the formatting of the Figurists’ Chinese manuscripts, which was complex but formal, and as it would seem carried out with an eye to the printing of their works. The publishing efforts of the early missionaries have been usefully treated by Wu Yuxi 伍玉西, *Ming-Qing zhi ji Tianzhu jiao “shuji chuanjiao” yanjiu* 明清之际天主教“书籍传教”研究, Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2017, and from this it would appear that the Jesuits had earlier had plenty of experience of publishing in Chinese, but that under the Kangxi Emperor such opportunities were no longer there. What was needed now was an imperial imprimatur, and this of course entirely depended on bringing the emperor round to the Jesuit point of view. The final substantive chapter brings the focus in closer upon this key struggle, in which the Figurists, employed by the court for their mathematical skills, turn to a presentation of their case in terms of numerology, a feature of the interpretation of the *Yi jing* that they did in fact share with the emperor. But in the end this was not a common ground upon which the Figurist message could be established, so rather than spreading forth this hybrid gospel throughout the land, all its originators had to show for their efforts was the written material shipped back to Europe.

It may be tempting to construe all this as a particularly fatuous form of failed Orientalism, subjecting the Chinese tradition to a Western agenda designed to subordinate it to a Eurocentric perspective. The aim of Figurism was, however, to assert

the relative validity of the Chinese tradition by finding in it traces of True Religion on a par with that discerned in the Hermetic corpus, which provided a similar type of supposed leavening within the non-Christian classical tradition; both would have been placed in the same category as Judaism as adjuncts to Christianity, but without involving any equivalent to the anti-Semitism that Jews suffered. The Kangxi emperor no doubt did not appreciate all this; as a ruler of a very large empire he was guided by practicalities, and the construction of Chinese antiquity provided by the Jesuits simply did not work, even if their mathematics, astronomy and cartography did.

How the missionaries went about their task is even so not without interest, and the author has done much to bring possible new approaches to their work to our attention. This has plainly not been easy, and she sometimes falters, as with on p. 11 the dictum “Since (既) such texts as the *Shujing* and *Shijing*, together with the rest of ancient literature, are all based on the great *Yi* as to their Way and their learning, the hidden subtleties of their content at the verbal level are for their part (亦) necessarily of a piece with and completely identical with the *Yi*”: the syntactical structures involved cannot be split up into separate sentences, as attempted here. On p. 33 I very much doubt that Zhuangzi ever saw a looking glass, and in many places a precise reference to the Chinese texts quoted would have been appreciated, especially when as on p. 28 a source like the *Cefu Yuangui* gives one a thousand fascicles to search through. But these technical shortcomings can be corrected; given the originality of much of the writing in this slim volume, we look forward to the author’s further work in this area.

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ANDRÉ LALIBERTÉ and STEFANIA TRAVAGNIN (eds):

Concepts and Methods for the Study of Chinese Religions I: State of the Field and Disciplinary Approaches.

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GREGORY ADAM SCOTT and STEFANIA TRAVAGNIN (eds):

Concepts and Methods for the Study of Chinese Religions II: Intellectual History of Key Concepts.

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The volumes under review form part of a trilogy, together with a third collection that has not reached me, which will be devoted to key concepts in practice. But it is clear from what I have seen so far that all these compilations will come to play an important role in the field that they delineate. It is, furthermore, a field that is both lively and relatively new, just ripe for the very useful type of concerted overview that these volumes provide. One can predict that the ample bibliographies and discussion of current issues will soon form an essential first step beyond the shorter works that