

Liam Matthew M. Brockey. *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724*.

Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007. xii + 496 pp. index. illus. map. \$35. ISBN: 978-0-674-02448-9.

One of the most fascinating aspects of early modern Catholicism is its missions. The Society of Jesus played a considerable part in this history, particularly through its missions to China. Liam Brockey's book tells this story, drawing on numerous unpublished Jesuit archival materials composed in several languages and understudied until now. Brockey makes a strong argument for the methods of Jesuit evangelization and for their thoughts about the promotion of Catholic spirituality in this non-Christian land. Focusing on Jesuit strategies for their work in China — or “internal perspective,” as Brockey calls it (19) — this research discusses the following issues that characterized Catholicism as a whole at the time and were imbedded in the Jesuit missionary strategies in general: “individual piety, group devotion, and institutional development” (5). By analyzing these issues from a European perspective, Brockey seeks to answer several questions about the Jesuits in China and about Sino-Western relations between Europe and China, such as how the missionaries defined their proselytization, how many priests baptized Chinese, and how a Jesuit missionary was trained. These significant questions, however, were often treated in passing or were oversimplified in past scholarly works.

This ambitious work is distinct from other works on the Jesuits in China; as the book's title demonstrates, this is a work about the Jesuit mission to China. This approach illuminates the most important agents in this intercultural setting, the missionaries, and their intentions, which correspond to the wider contexts of early modern Catholicism and Europe. Brockey offers a balanced as well as realistic image of those missionaries in China in part 1. The thematic chapters in part 2 on Jesuit education, language study, strategies of conversion, and lay congregations further convince the reader of the significance of his research, since these important topics are systematically analyzed almost for the first time.

Two questions are raised, in my view, about Brockey's discussions of the early phase of the mission in the late Ming period. As evidence that the Jesuits gained protection to preach in China by establishing friendly relations with Chinese literati, Brockey states that these literati wrote prefaces and dedications for Jesuit Chinese publications that ensured that “the missionaries' writings reached greater

audiences" (61). However, why and how this greater audience could have been accommodated by the participation of the literati should have been explained concretely, especially since the author argues that the favor the Jesuits received from those literati was an important factor in the early missionary effort to establish a foothold. The Jesuit Chinese publications were indeed crucial, for printed words were central to the Jesuits' promoting of their public image and erudition, and was the main reason that the missionaries were able to expand so widely over mainland China. The reader might be interested in how the wider societal context of the late Ming period interacted with the missionary network, since at that time the relationships between various members of the literati and social groups, and their levels of their literacy, are complex issues. In addition, when Brockey argues that we should not underestimate the powerful effect that the Jesuit Niccolò Longobardo's display of a Christ image had on villagers, the manner and the reason that the uneducated Chinese were impressed by Longobardo's method is briefly treated alone. Brockey never denies that his arguments sometimes imply that Jesuit strategies might have relied on indigenous responses or on the Jesuits' intended effect, instead of merely on their internal perspective. Although to disclose a crosscultural interaction in the indigenous society might not be satisfactory in the cases I mention, Brockey points to two valuable primary accounts regarding the policy of Jesuit printing in China, and which were rarely consulted before: the rules of 1621 and 1631 (the "Matos Orders" and "Palmeiro Orders").

The second question is for the remarks on two visual materials from the mission. Brockey states that a woodcut published in 1637 is "similar to standard depictions of Jesus used in China by the Jesuits" (304–05), and that an image of the Madonna and Child on a Chinese scroll was "produced in China by the Jesuits and their Christian followers" (320–21) in the seventeenth century. These two remarks are, unfortunately, debatable. According to current research on devotional objects in China, there was likely no standard way of depicting Jesus at the time. The dating of the Madonna scroll is debated from the Chinese art historical perspective, although the connection of its iconography to the Jesuits was recognized. Moreover, when Brockey bases his identification of the two most common subjects of Christian art in China as the Savior and the Madonna and Child on "missionary sources" (306–07), he does not specify what the sources are. Actually, Brockey's archival research tells us more about the Jesuit descriptions of their uses of devotional objects in the China mission, and it is hoped that his arguments utilizing visual materials could be more systematic and refined.

These minor questions aside, this book reflects the most recent scholarly work in the field. It can greatly benefit scholars working in the broader fields of early modern Europe and China.

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