

## NOTES

1. *Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832 and 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands* (London: 1834). Other works by Karl Gützlaff include *A Sketch of Chinese History, Ancient and Modern* (London: 1834; German version: 1847); *China Opened* (1838); and *Life of Tao Kwang* (1851).

2. Among the few studies available on Gützlaff and his role in protestant mission are D. H. Bays, *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present: Essays in Religious and Social Change* (Stanford, CA: 1996); David Cheung, *Christianity in Modern China: The Making of the First Protestant Church* (Leiden: 2004); Hermann Schlyter, *Karl Gützlaff als Missionar in China* (Copenhagen: 1946); Sun Lixin, *Das Chinabild der deutschen protestantischen Missionare des 19 Jahrhunderts: Eine Fallstudie zum Problem Interkultureller Begegnung und Wahrnehmung* (Marburg: 2002).

3. See Bays, *Christianity in China*, p. 266.



Yves Lenoir and Nicolas Standaert, editors. *Les Danses rituelles chinoises d'après Joseph-Marie Amiot: Aux sources de l'ethnochorégraphie*. Collection Histoire, Art et Archéologie 6. Namur: Éditions Lessius and Presses Universitaires de Namur, 2005. 326 pp. Paperback, €36.00. ISBN 2-87299-135-2.

Thanks to the joint editorial efforts of Yves Lenoir, professor of musicology at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve (d. 2003), and Nicolas Standaert, professor of sinology at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, it is now possible to take a fresh look at the life and work of the French Jesuit missionary Joseph-Marie Amiot (1718–1793), with the Chinese name of Qian Deming 錢德明, and especially his contributions in the realm of ancient Chinese ritual dance. In this volume, three texts written by Amiot, two of which are manuscripts that have never been published before, are presented in carefully made critical editions and combined with four essays by specialists in the field.

The titles of the two manuscripts, which are closely related to each other, are “*Mémoire sur les danses religieuses des anciens Chinois*” (Record of the religious dances of the ancient Chinese), dated 1788, and “*Suite du Mémoire sur les danses religieuses des anciens Chinois*” (Supplement to the record of the religious dances of the ancient Chinese), dated 1789. The first was rediscovered by Yves Lenoir in the Palace Library of Madrid, and the other by Nicolas Standaert in the National Library of Paris. Critical editions of these texts have been provided by Brigitte Van Wymeersch (pp. 181–216) and Michel Brix (pp. 243–286), respectively. Whereas the first manuscript is about “*grandes danses*” (perhaps rendered best as “dances

performed at the occasion of the great state sacrifices”), the second concentrates on “*petites danses*” (denoting dances performed at sacrifices of minor importance). Under both headings, a variety of dances are described. Added to the theoretical introduction is a series of plates illustrating how these dances were performed, the attributes the dancers hold in their hands, and the position of their feet, all with explanations in French.

The third text included in this volume consists of two parts, the first titled “*Des danses Chinoises*” (Chinese Dances), the second “*Des anciennes danses Chinoises*” (Ancient Chinese Dances, pp. 293–315). Although it was formerly published as part of an article under the name of abbot Francois Arnaud (1721–1784) in *Journal Étranger* in 1761, it can safely be ascribed to Amiot as well (pp. 287–321). The article is divided into two parts, the first discussing ancient Chinese dance in comparison with the ancient Greek dance tradition, and the second dedicated to Chinese dances and mainly quotes from one Chinese source titled “Commentary to the Classic of Ancient Music” (*Guyue jingzhuan* 古樂經傳), a book written by Li Guangdi 李光地 (1642–1718), grand secretary at the court of the Kangxi emperor and a specialist of court music.

To facilitate the identification of Amiot’s transcriptions of Chinese words, tables with the corresponding transcriptions in *pinyin* and the Chinese characters have been provided by Nicolas Standaert for all three texts (pp. 218–220, 260, 360–317). Additionally, references to the page numbers of the originals are inserted into the newly edited text, which is very helpful, since the analyses in the essay frequently refer to the pages in the originals. Needless to say, the critical edition of these texts will be of high value for any further research on Amiot’s work, but even more stimulating than having the authentic materials at one’s disposal for further studies are the related studies, which enable the reader to view Amiot’s efforts within a broader perspective.

In the first essay (pp. 11–77), Michel Hermans conveys a vivid picture of Amiot the man and his early inclination toward music. Basing himself mainly on letters Amiot had sent to others, he reports that already in his youth he had learned to play the traverse flute and the clavecin (cembalo) and that he once said about himself that he had a “passable” understanding of music. He reports that the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–1795) had commanded Amiot to come to Beijing because of his competence in mathematics, music, and pharmacy, and illustrates the various aspects of Amiot’s role in the French mission in Beijing, a place he denotes as a “cultural cross-way” of two civilizations. The reader also learns that from 1754 on, Amiot enjoyed the support of a young Chinese scholar whose name is transcribed as “Yang Ya-ko-pe” (probably a convert called Jacob). He not only accompanied Amiot from 1754 on for almost thirty years on his travels but also strongly supported him in his pursuit of Chinese studies. As we also learn from letters, it was this companion who painstakingly worked to copy the many illustrations accompanying the manuscripts that Amiot intended to send to Europe and this companion who also encouraged Amiot to add the notation of a hymn to Confucius to the script.

The second essay, written by Nicolas Standaert, focuses on the major Chinese source that Amiot used for his own description of Chinese ritual dances (pp. 79–128), the “Complete Book on Music and Pitch Pipes” (*Yuelü quanshu* 樂律全書), by Zhu Zaiyu 朱載堉 (1536–1611).<sup>1</sup> Zhu was one of the most distinguished mathematicians and musicographers in Chinese history and was a prince and descendant of the fourth Ming emperor in the sixth generation. Although Amiot nowhere in his manuscripts explicitly mentions either the *Yuelü quanshu* or Zhu’s name, but instead only very generally speaks of the “materials that I had at my disposal,” by comparing Amiot’s manuscript with those in the *Yuelü quanshu* Standaert convincingly shows that this book must have served Amiot as his most prominent source. As Standaert points out, Zhu Zaiyu’s book was written under the impact of ritual reforms that took place under Emperor Shizong (r. 1522–1566). In addition, it was reproduced within the frame of a movement propagating the need of returning to antiquity. Thus, to use Standaert’s own formulation, Zhu Zaiyu’s “collection was in fact a monument of musical and theoretical creativity” (p. 87). This implies that what Amiot himself considered as dances from “the most remote times of Chinese history” turn out to have been in the very first place Zhu’s own idea of how the dances would have been in a golden age and how they should thus be “revived” at the Ming court. However, as Standaert also points out, the slight misunderstanding to which Amiot fell victim secured him warm feedback by European intellectuals such as Voltaire, who at that time cherished the hope to find a kind of utopia in the Far East.

The question of how exactly to define Amiot’s contribution to the field of ethnomusicology and ethnochoreography is at the very center of the third study, conducted by Brigitte Van Wymeersch (pp. 129–151). As she points out, Amiot’s major contribution was to make a Western audience familiar with a choreographical method used in China already in the sixteenth century and thus at least some years before any comparable choreographic notations were used in Europe; thus, he may be called a precursor in the field of ethnomusicology. On the other hand, as Wymeersch also emphasizes, Amiot’s study was not a case of field research, since he seems to have based his studies on ancient ritual dances solely on books and not on actual performances at the imperial court in Beijing.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Wymeersch points out that the scenic ballets as they came to be performed at the court of Louis XIV (r. 1643–1715) might at least partly have been inspired by Amiot’s report of not only the dances themselves but also their cosmo-political implications.

In the fourth and last essay of the volume, Yves Lenoir, the initiator of the book, gives a detailed description of the two manuscripts and the plates before and after their restitution (pp. 134–179). Because both parts are closely related to each other, Lenoir undertakes the attempt of bringing the single parts in a fictive order and succession, as it could have been if Amiot had had time to publish his record on the dances as one entity. Additionally, Lenoir traces the various stages of the progression of the two manuscripts from remarks in the correspondence

between Amiot and his colleagues and friends. Lenoir posits that perhaps Amiot had interrupted his work on the dances for more than ten years because this project was not really one of his most beloved ones. As Lenoir concludes from Amiot's own remarks in his letters to friends, his decision to make himself more familiar with the subtleties of Chinese music and dance seems to have arisen out of a certain frustration, having tried in vain to attract Chinese intellectuals to the delicacies of contemporary Western music that he himself loved so much. His sudden turn from trying to communicate Western music to Chinese scholars toward informing a Western audience about Chinese imperial ritual music and dance may thus be explained within the frame of a certain kind of strategy as is known to be typical for the Jesuit missionaries in general.

It is thus a rather multifaceted view that an attentive reader of this volume will receive both of Amiot as a person and of his role as a transmitter and communicator of Chinese culture. On the one hand, he is depicted as a pioneer who doubtlessly did much to enlarge a Western audience's knowledge about Chinese culture, but on the other hand the authors of this volume do not hesitate also to depict some weak points in Amiot's attempt to communicate the "otherness" of Chinese culture to his home audience and to point at the limitations of his own conceptions. The editors of this remarkable volume can be congratulated for this critical and unpretentious approach to Joseph-Marie Amiot and his merits as an early sinologist.

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1. For a more thorough analysis on the choreography of ancient ritual dances as it has been preserved in various Chinese sources, see also Nicolas Standaert, "Ritual Dances and Their Visual Representations in the Ming and Qing," *East Asian Library Journal* 12, no. 1 (2006): 68–181.

2. For a recent example of a field study on contemporary performance of the sacrificial music and dances for Confucius, held at Qufu and Taibei, see Joseph S. C. Lam, "Musical Confucianism: The Case of 'Jikong yuewu,'" in Thomas A. Wilson, ed., *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 134–172.