

# From La Flèche to Beijing: The Transcultural Moment of Jesuit Garden Spaces



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**Abstract** In the early modern world, the Jesuit garden arguably became a transcultural phenomenon materializing the transfer of both elite knowledge and ideas. This paper elaborates the transcultural dimension of the Jesuit symbolic garden by focusing on the so-called Beitang garden in eighteenth-century Beijing, built in the European style by French Jesuits. As witnessed by a number of Chinese and Korean travelers, however, the Beitang garden was not the only tangible garden constructed by Jesuit missionaries. Like their counterparts in Europe, garden spaces were essential to the Jesuit residences in Beijing. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries these gardens, in which advanced European knowledge of cultivation, mechanism, as well as water conservancy were applied, were gradually turned into a dynamic space of increasing Jesuit botanic and cosmopolitan learning. Considering their unique social and political functions within sacred spaces, this paper will first synthesize the relevant facts in order to re-contextualize the construction of these garden spaces by examining various forms of their visual representation. Relying on written records by Korean travelers, this paper will elaborate on how concrete spatial arrangements and pattern designs, which were used to convey certain attitudes and ideas, became accessible for the Beijing Jesuits. This paper thus captures a transcultural moment for Jesuit garden spaces by demonstrating the ways in which a Jesuit garden in France was transferred to an eighteenth-century Jesuit space in Beijing.

In the eighteenth century, mobilizing ideas through the agency of various artistic media became a global phenomenon. In addition to portable images and decorative objects, physical spaces created through domesticated nature, although not conventionally considered as “objects,” served as crucial vehicles for conveying certain attitudes, ideas, and concepts. In fact, the roots of this exchange, both in form and signification, go back to the early Renaissance, when Europe encountered the

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Muslim empires.<sup>1</sup> Since then, the garden space was—starting with the symbolic gardens in France and Italy—embedded with a dual nature that unifies both religious (heavenly Paradise) and secular (earthly power) metaphors.<sup>2</sup> In this regard, the garden is not just a physical enclosure for display and enjoyment of various forms of nature or merely a conceptual ground for surprise, contemplation, and amusement, but a carrier of meanings.

Among all the intellectual orders, the Jesuits were the most important inheritors of this symbolic view. To their understanding, displays of tamed nature not only provided a symbol of control over the wilderness and the harnessing of nature in an orderly world, but also represented Christian high culture that creates a limited space of unlimited human activities, such as a space for displaying European *exotica* and elite culture.<sup>3</sup> Comparable in some regards to members of many European royal houses who were eager to scientifically explore Asia and America, the Jesuits traveled overseas, passionately described and studied foreign flora and fauna, sent dried seeds back to their home institutions in Europe and, above all, exported the symbolic gardens to extra-European spaces by duplicating them elsewhere.

In early modern Beijing, the European Jesuit occupation with horticulture continued. During a period of Chinoiserie collecting and “Chinese garden” constructions at many European royal courts, the Qianlong Emperor 乾隆 (r. 1736–1795) was equally fascinated by comparable transcultural visions as developed by his European counterparts. In response to this increasing mutual interest, Qianlong even assigned the Jesuit court painters working in his imperial workshops to build fountains and parterres for his private gardens. These fountains and parterres were supposed to imitate those at Versailles, which he had seen in a series of copperplate prints.<sup>4</sup>

As testified by new visual evidence, the construction of Jesuit garden spaces in Beijing appeared considerably earlier than Qianlong’s imperial garden project. Besides the emperor’s *Xiyang lou* 西洋樓 (“Western Mansions”; built between 1747–1760), which are said to be the first Chinese architectural complex incorporating European garden designs, the Jesuits also created three gardens as part of their residences in Beijing, the Nantang 南堂 (South Church),<sup>5</sup> the Beitang 北堂 (North Church), and the Dongtang 東堂 (East Church). Among them, the Beitang residence, run by the French Jesuits, seemed to have a prominent formal “garden in the French style” (*jardin à la française*).

<sup>1</sup>As Lisa Golombek has demonstrated, the nature of the European garden seemed to be changed by incorporating the patterns and designs of Timur gardens from Central Asia during the sixteenth century, see Lisa Golombek, “From Timur to Tivoli: Reflections on *Il Giardino all’Italiana*,” *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 243–54.

<sup>2</sup>See also Golombek, “From Timur to Tivoli,” 243.

<sup>3</sup>See Peter Davidson, “The Jesuit Garden,” in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 86–7.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Peter Fuhring et al., ed., *A Kingdom of Images: French Prints in the Age of Louis XIV, 1600–1715* (Los Angeles: Getty, 2015), 96–7.

<sup>5</sup>The Nantang residence was originally called Xitang 西堂 (West Church/Residence) before the Lazarists established their own church in 1723.

Adopting a transcultural perspective, this paper will elaborate on the construction of Jesuit garden spaces and their symbolic dimensions by focusing on the garden of the Beitang residence. Against a background of increasing competition between Jesuits of different nationalities, I argue that the Beitang garden not only presents a common view of the garden as a legitimate microcosmic reformulation of the macrocosm of the natural world, but also functions as a unified sign of both secular and sacred power.

I will first synthesize all extant architectural information on the Beitang garden to illustrate its different stages and then identify elements and patterns that potentially derive from European counterparts. Additionally, an analysis of relevant written sources will demonstrate how concrete ideas and patterns were available to the Jesuits in Beijing. The paper concludes with some considerations on Jesuit garden spaces as transcultural materializations of a specific moment in time, questioning the ways in which ideas and identities were constructed and conveyed through their garden spaces.

## The Jesuits and the Origin of the Beitang Garden

New evidence has recently come to light to clarify the various facets of the Beitang garden built in eighteenth-century Beijing. The story starts with a wall-sized affixed hanging (*tieluo*), now kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, that portrays a solemn procession on the occasion of the Feast of the Sacred Heart taking place in the courtyard of the St. Saviour Church (*l'église du Saint Sauveur*), commonly known as the Beitang (Fig. 1).<sup>6</sup>

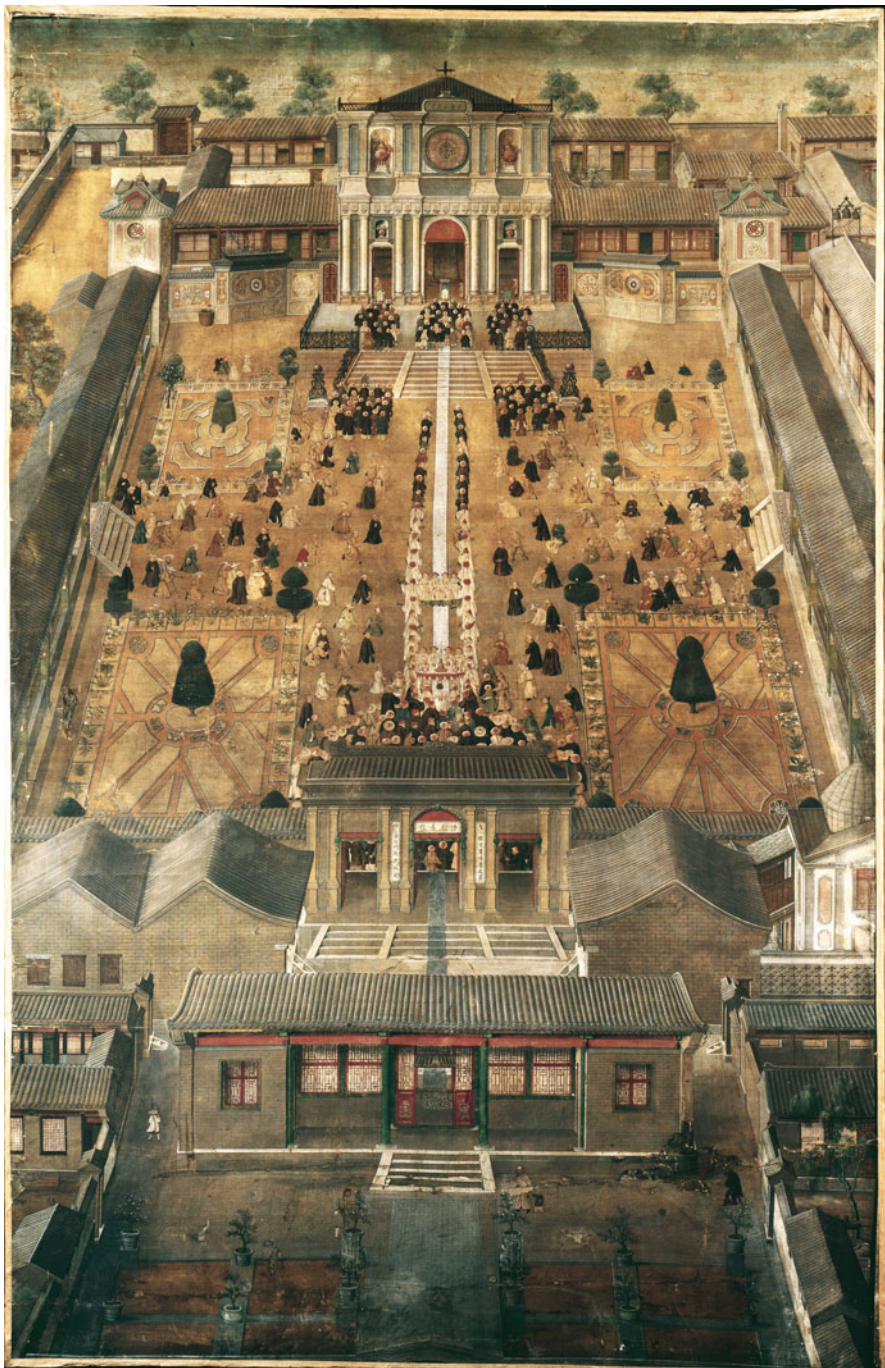
Apart from the ritual performed in the front yard, which has hitherto attracted the most scholarly attention, it is worth emphasizing that a roofed veranda, which is divided by gravel pathways into four parterres, walls the courtyard. In technical terms, it is a “quadripartite” or “parterre” garden, built according to European Renaissance style schemes. Such a display of tamed nature clearly differs from the conventional idea of Chinese garden space designs, which prize an imitation of natural forms, aesthetics of irregularity, and the creation of moments of surprise for the beholder or consumer of the garden.<sup>7</sup> As closer observation reveals, each parterre is laid out in a symmetrical pattern planted with differently shaped topiaries. Furthermore, the parterre is surrounded by flowering borders filled with various flowers and herbs of non-Chinese origin, including the Japanese rose, lily, and wall iris—a repertoire of exotic vegetation that can also be found in European botanic gardens.

The unique shapes of the topiaries remind us of their counterparts in Qianlong’s “European Mansions,” in whose development and design Jesuit court painters like

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<sup>6</sup>As for the identification of its iconography, see Lianming Wang, “Church, a Sacred Event and the Visual Perspective of an ‘Etic Observer’: An Eighteenth-Century Chinese Western-Style Painting held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France,” in *Face to Face: The Transcendence of the Arts in China in Beyond*, vol.1, ed. Rui Oliveira Lopes (Lisbon: University of Lisbon, 2014), 182–213.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Chen Liyao, *Private Gardens* (Vienna: Springer, 1999), 134–6.



**Fig. 1** Anonymous, Chinese painter(s), *The Procession of the Feast of Sacred Heart in front of the Beitang church*. Color on Korean paper. After 1770. 185.7 × 130 cm. Bibliothèque national de France, Paris

Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining 郎世寧, 1688–1766), Jean-Denis Attiret (Wang Zhicheng 王致誠, 1702–1768), and Michel Benoit (Jiang Youren 蔣有仁, 1715–1774) were involved. As in the imperial gardens, a large Chinese juniper trimmed horizontally into two parts stands at the center of each parterre: the upper part in the shape of a cone with slightly rounded corners, and the lower clipped with four trapezoid lateral sides imitating the form of a pyramid. Moreover, each corner of the parterre also contains a tightly clipped juniper that is smaller in size and slightly different in shape. It remains unclear who built this “hidden” Jesuit garden, while its design, as testified by the wall hangings, was clearly affiliated with Qianlong’s imperial garden project and its maker was able to access the Jesuit reservoir of garden designs in Beijing.

As the only Jesuit compound located inside the Imperial City, the Beitang residence is only sparsely mentioned in the travelogues by Chinese or Korean visitors during the eighteenth century. The earliest account of the Beitang garden can be attributed to Pierre-Martial Cibot (Han Guoying 韓國英, 1727–1780), a French missionary who was deeply impressed by ancient Chinese garden designs while working at the Beitang.<sup>8</sup>

In a letter dated June 11, 1772, Cibot noted the close connection between Beijing and the Jesuit College located in La Flèche’ Loire Valley (Le Collège Royal Henrile-Grand, 1604–1762; now: Le Prytanée National Militaire) where Cibot, as well as other French Jesuits sent to China, were educated: “. . . in front of our church, there is a courtyard [filled with] parterres surrounded by a corridor; the big courtyard is almost like the one of our boarding school (the Jesuit college) in La Flèche.”<sup>9</sup>

Needless to say, although the parterre gardens that Cibot mentioned were not a building complex on a par with Qianlong’s imperial gardens, they were essential parts of Jesuit residences, both in Beijing and at La Flèche. This means, that while the Beitang garden layout bore certain aesthetic resemblances to the imperial project, the search for its genesis must start in Beijing where Jesuit settlements were established over 160 years before.

After the first Jesuit missionaries, led by Matteo Ricci (Li Madou 利瑪竇, 1552–1610), reached Beijing in 1601, the construction of ecclesiastical buildings was undertaken by Jesuit missionaries, which included Ricci himself, Johann Adam Schall von Bell (Tang Ruowang 湯若望, 1592–1666), and Thomas Pereira (Xu Risheng 徐日升, 1645–1708). Numerous local Chinese convents financially supported these construction projects to which the Portuguese king, who patronized the China mission, was only the “sponsor” *pro forma*. He did not provide financial support, nor did he send any skilled workers; however, things were different in the case of the Beitang compound.

Throughout the seventeenth century, the Jesuits established two churches under the protection of the Portuguese *Padroado*, namely St. Saviour Church (or Xitang,

<sup>8</sup>See Bianca Maria Rinaldi, *The “Chinese Garden in Good Taste”: Jesuits and Europe’s Knowledge of Chinese Flora and Art of the Garden in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Munich: Meidenbauer, 2005), 211–2.

<sup>9</sup>Orig. “. . .cour du parterre environné d’une galerie couverte qui est devant notre Eglise; la grande cour est à peu près comme celle des Pensionnaires de la Fleche.” Letter of Pierre-Martial Cibot to ?, dated June 11, 1772, in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères*, vol. 30 (Paris: Le Clerc, 1773), 94–114.

the West Church; renamed Nantang after 1723) built between 1650 and 1652, and St. Joseph Church (or Dongtang), which was built in 1662 but confiscated and destroyed during the anti-Christian movement led by Yang Guangxian 楊光先 (1597–1669). However, throughout these spaces no garden or European water installation could be found. This situation changed in 1670/71 when Thomas Pereira, a missionary who was gifted and trained in the arts of mechanics, reached Beijing.<sup>10</sup>

The tight control that the Portuguese king exercised over the Far Eastern mission, especially in China, changed dramatically after Philippe Couplet (Bo Yingli 柏應理, 1623–1693), a Belgian Jesuit who was affiliated with the Nantang, was sent back to Europe in 1681 as the procurator of the China Jesuits. Couplet's personal wish that scientifically well-trained Jesuits serving at the Qing court would facilitate the mission work unexpectedly coincided with King Louis XIV's (r. 1643–1715) attempts to extend his influence in the Far East.<sup>11</sup> Soon afterward, in 1686, six well-trained missionaries from the Jesuit College in La Flèche, including Joachim Bouvet (Bai Jin 白晉, 1656–1730), sailed to China.

After 5 years, Bouvet recruited twelve additional “French” Jesuits for work at the Chinese court. They included the sculptor Charles de Belleville (1657–1730) and the Italian lay brother Giovanni Gherardini (Nian Xiushi 年修士, 1655–1723?), who was trained in illusionistic paintings or *trompe l'oeil*. Both were actively involved in the construction of the first church for the French Jesuits in Beijing.

The church dedicated to the Holy Saviour was built between 1699 and 1703 on the west bank of Lake Canchikou 蠶池口 inside the *Xi'an men* 西安門 (Xi'an gate) of the Imperial City. Unlike the other compounds purchased by the missionaries, it was a privileged site bestowed upon them by Kangxi Emperor (r. 1661–1722) to show his gratitude to the French Jesuits for curing his malaria by using quinine from South America in 1693.<sup>12</sup>

Using this circumstance to their advantage, the Beitang residence was often propagated in the reports of French Jesuits as the “royal church” of the Kangxi Emperor. It was a project co-sponsored by Louis XIV, or, to be specific, a French royal church *pro forma*, since a diagram signed by a French Jesuit named P. Moreau<sup>13</sup> records that the French king also donated an iron railing (Fig. 2). As shown in Moreau's layout, which was produced during the Kangxi reign, the church was equipped with an astronomical observatory and, after its consecration on December 9, 1703, also a library situated behind the chancel. Remarkably, Beitang's rectangular courtyard is divided by a marble avenue, contradicting the testimony of

<sup>10</sup>Regarding Pereira's contribution to the Nantang's renovation project, see Lianming Wang, “Propaganda Fidei: Die Nantang-Kirche und die jesuitischen Sakralräume im Peking der Frühen Neuzeit” (PhD diss., University of Heidelberg, 2014), 57–60.

<sup>11</sup>See also Claudia von Collani, “French Jesuits,” in *Handbook of Christianity in China*, vol. 1 (635–1800), ed. Nicolas Standaert (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 313–6.

<sup>12</sup>See Louis Pfister, *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine, 1552–1773*, Variétés sinologiques 60 (Shanghai: Shanghai Mission Catholique, 1934), 446–9.

<sup>13</sup>Jean-Michel Moreau (1741–1814), active in eighteenth-century Beijing.

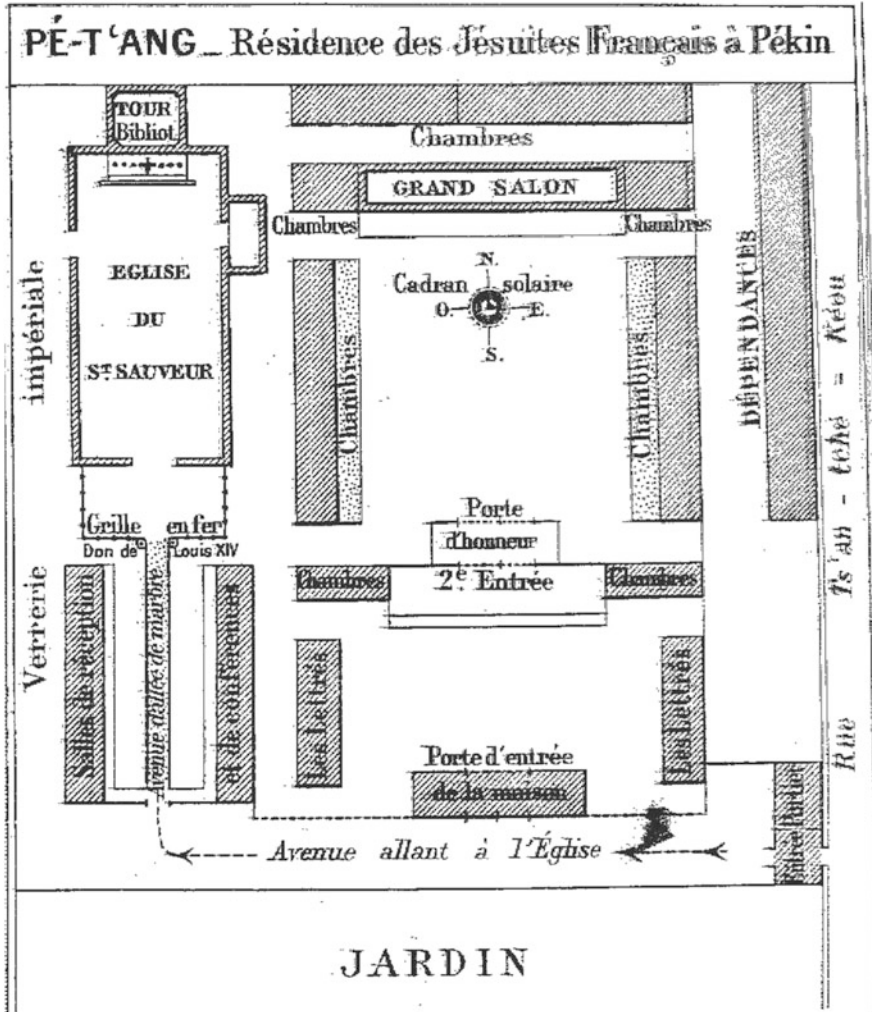
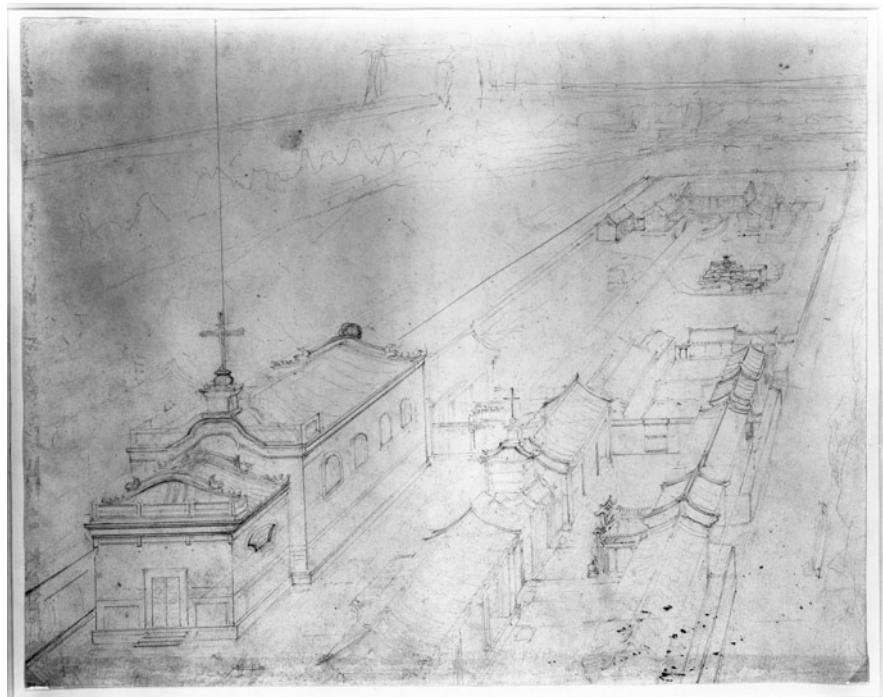


Fig. 2 Signed by J. Moreau, *Diagram of the Beitang Residence around 1710*. Nineteenth century (based on sources from the eighteenth century). Published in: Camille de Rochemonteix, *Joseph Amiot et les derniers survivants de la Mission française à Pékin (1750–1795)* (Paris: Picard et fils, 1915), on the next page of fol. LXIII (introduction)

the “Paris wall hangings” discussed above, which show a yard filled with a distinctive quadripartite garden. It should also be noted that in Moreau’s version, the garden appears in the south of the residence, not in the courtyard.

Moreau’s plan also fails to match another ground plan of the garden seen in *Qianlong jingcheng quantu* 乾隆京城全圖 (*Complete Maps of Beijing during the Qianlong Reign*), which was produced by the Italian Jesuit court painter Castiglione and his Chinese colleagues in 1750. While the garden is rendered almost invisible in this image (perhaps



**Fig. 3** Bird's-eye view of a church in a walled compound in Beijing, attributed to Beitang in the 1710s. Drawing on sheet. Before 1730. 24.6 × 31.3 cm. DRWG 1—Russian, no. 323, Yuding Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC

due to technical reasons), this map, which was based on actual surveys, confirms that by the 1750s the Beitang church had a square courtyard walled by a verandah.

What to make of the substantial inconsistencies between the two visual sources? During the period from the two earthquakes (1720 and 1730) to the Lazarists' takeover of the church in 1785, the Beitang residence seems to have received some visible architectural modifications, as did the other Jesuit churches in Beijing. This is evidenced by visual sources in the "Yudin Collection" (Krasnoyarsk, Eastern Siberia), now kept at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C.<sup>14</sup>

The first drawing, displaying the draftsman's skillful use of perspective, indicates that the exterior of the church's chancel is directly connected to an annex building (*Tour d'Astronomie et Bibliothèque*) as in Moreau's diagram (Fig. 3). It also illustrates the outline of the marble avenue that we saw in Moreau's diagram and an entrance hall flanked by lateral annex buildings, which serves as the south doorway to the courtyard. Instead of a French-style garden, a set of artificial rockeries similar to arrangements of

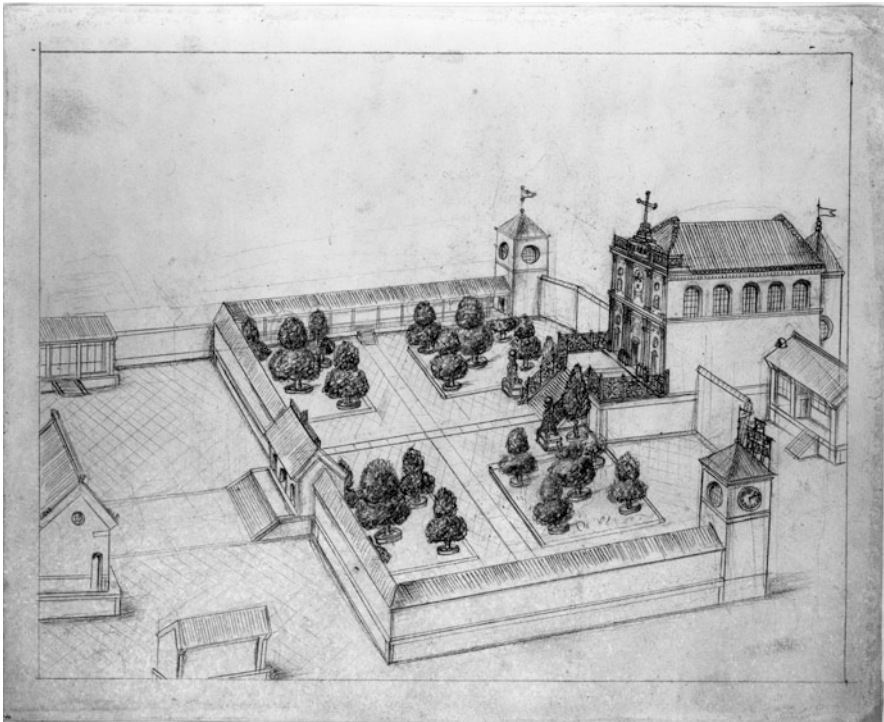
<sup>14</sup>On the history of the "Yuding collection," see Barbara L. Dash, "A Visionary Acquisition: The Yudin Collection at the Library of Congress," *Slavic & East European Information Resources* 9 (2008): 92–114.



*Taihu shi* 太湖石 (Taihu rocks), that as irregularly shaped holed structures form essential elements of Chinese garden designs, are piled up in the middle of the courtyard. On top of the pile, a tiny European-style fountain is installed.

In the second drawing the front yard is replaced by a European garden representing two lateral towers at the end of the verandah and four parterres, elements that match, for the most part, the depiction in the wall hangings discussed above (Fig. 4). It is noteworthy that the addition of a three door-gateway in Chinese style divides the front yard into two separate parts: the walled yard in the north and the empty space surrounded by low buildings in the south.

Due to the striking dissimilarities between the two Yudin drawings—stylistic features and different levels of the mastery of perspective—and the predications on the Beijing map from the Qianlong documentation project, it is safe to suggest that the Yuding drawings were made in different periods and probably by different hands: The former during Kangxi’s reign and prior to the most serious earthquake in 1730, the latter after the church’s enlargement in the 1740s when the French-style garden was added. This allows us to date the physical construction of the European garden on Beitang’s compound back to the 1740s, prior to the construction of Qianlong’s “European Mansion.”



**Fig. 4** A Catholic church with walled courtyard garden in Beijing, attributed to Beitang after 1740s. Drawing on sheet. Before 1730. 23.4 × 29 cm. DRWG 1—Russian, no. 140, Yuding Collection, Library of Congress, Washington DC

## The Mediators at Beitang: Attiret and d’Incarville

The question of authorship remains. Who was able to erect such a “secret garden”? Judging from the aforementioned visual evidence in combination with the garden’s specific dating, the construction of the garden can be seen as an extension project of the damaged Beitang attributed to Jean-Denis Attiret, a French Jesuit who arrived in Beijing in 1737. By around 1740, Attiret was the only person living at Beitang who was trained in European architecture and painting. It is noteworthy that the Jesuit College (Collège de L’Arc) at Dole, where Attiret was educated, also had a walled garden filled with four parterres quite similar to that of Beitang and the Jesuit garden in La Flèche.

As Castiglione’s assistant and a skilled painter in his own right who was involved in a number of imperial art and garden projects in Beijing, Attiret paid great attention to Qianlong’s Chinese gardens; this is reflected in a famous letter sent from Beijing on November 1, 1743.<sup>15</sup> To European readers, his report on Qianlong’s garden is fundamental and, undoubtedly, the most comprehensive description that a Jesuit ever put in writing. It is therefore not far-fetched to assume that it was Attiret who transplanted a version of the European garden familiar to him at Dole in the Middle Kingdom.

As emphasized in Attiret’s letter to Paris “the Jesuits (including himself) holding different posts at the court were then the only Europeans who had the opportunity to observe the Chinese gardens.”<sup>16</sup> Of course, beholding or consuming garden spaces and bringing a physical garden space into being are two completely different things. Attiret presumably needed the help of a botanist or gardener who was able to raise plants and some kind of guidebook on patterns of parterres as inspirational sources for the Beitang garden.

Unlike Attiret, Pierre Nicolas d’Incarville (Tang Zhizhong 湯執中, 1706–1757), a French Jesuit and amateur botanist had, at the very beginning of his career as a gardener, been denied access to the imperial gardens by Qianlong.<sup>17</sup> As a regular correspondent of the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris, d’Incarville had passionately dedicated himself to the study and collection of non-European plants since his arrival in Beijing in 1740; further, the transmission of seeds of Chinese plants to Europe and European plants to China was made possible by him.<sup>18</sup> After he became an “imperial gardener,” d’Incarville presented two specimens of mimosa (*Mimosa pudica* L.) to Qianlong in 1753, a lively scene of which is captured in Castiglione’s painting entitled *Haixi zhishi cao* 海西知時草 (*Time-telling Plants from the West of the*

<sup>15</sup>Jean-Denis Attiret, *A Particular Account of the Emperor of China’s Gardens near Peking*, trans. Sir Harry Beaumont (London: R. Dodsley and M. Cooper, 1752); see also Craig Clunas, “Nature and Ideology in Western Descriptions of the Chinese Gardens,” *Extrême-Orient* 22 (2000): 154–5.

<sup>16</sup>Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, 175.

<sup>17</sup>A brief bibliography of d’Incarville is provided by Georges Métaillé, “Botany,” in *Handbook of Christianity in China*, vol. 1, ed. Nicolas Standaert (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 805.

<sup>18</sup>See Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, 153–61.

Sea).<sup>19</sup> These plants were raised in Beijing but their dried seeds were one of the results of d'Incarville's botanical exchanges with his European colleagues.

The fact that the first place where he attempted to collect plants was a small park in the southern part of Beitang confirms the existence of the *Jardin* on Moreau's diagram (Fig. 2). This green space, he claimed, was probably used "to raise foreign or European plants."<sup>20</sup>

In his letter of September 20, 1742, d'Incarville also referred to two other places in Beijing where the Qianlong Emperor had assigned the Jesuits to observe indigenous plants:<sup>21</sup> "I herborize in a park that we have here and at our burial ground; that is where I have collected a few seeds; there are very few special ones, for the most part they are the same species as in Europe."<sup>22</sup> This kind of compound of planting beds was actually not unfamiliar to the other Beijing Jesuits. As discussed in detail below, every Jesuit residence seemed to have assigned professional botanists or gardeners to take care of their planting beds. Against this background, it is thus reasonable to say that d'Incarville, whose principal interest was to research non-European plants and to transmit his knowledge between Europe and China, was probably the one who facilitated Attiret's attempt at a French-style garden.

## The Garden Spaces of Portuguese Jesuits

The Beitang was not the only Jesuit residence that possessed an actual garden. In fact, the Jesuit gardens were great attractions for many travelers who sojourned in Beijing. Back in the seventeenth century, when the Jesuits published extensively on the non-European plants and gardens they witnessed, Gabriel de Magalhães (An Wensi 安文思, 1610–1677) indicated in an annual report sent from Beijing in 1675 that Claudio Filippo Grimaldi (Min Woming 閔我明, 1639–1712), an Italian Jesuit, built a "household garden" (*Hausgarten*) on the compound owned by Portuguese missionaries;<sup>23</sup> to be exact, it was located on the north side of the Xitang

<sup>19</sup>See also Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, 156–7.

<sup>20</sup>Henri Bernard-Maitre, *Un correspondant de Bernard de Jussieu en Chine: Le Père Le Chéron d'Incarville, missionnaire français de Pékin d'après de nombreux documents inédits* (Paris: J. Peyronnet, 1949), 16; quoted in Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, 153.

<sup>21</sup>They are the cemetery of Zhalan 柵欄, the burial place of the Portuguese Jesuits, and the cemetery of Zhengfusi 正福寺 near the Fucheng Gate 阜成門, where the French Jesuits had been buried since 1732, see also Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, 153.

<sup>22</sup>Letter of d'Incarville to Jean-Marie-Joseph-Claude Rondeaux de Sétry, September 20, 1742; quoted in Bernard-Maitre, *Un correspondant de Bernard de Jussieu en Chine*, 14; see also Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, 153.

<sup>23</sup>See also Claudia von Collani, "'Jingtian': The Kangxi emperor's gift to Ferdinand Verbiest in the Rites Controversy," in *Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688): Jesuit Missionary, Scientist, Engineer and Diplomat*, ed. John W. Witek (Nettetal: Steyler, 1994), 353–470.

residence, which was renamed to Nantang after the Lazarists occupied their own church inside the *Xizhi men* 西直門 (Xizhi-Gate) in 1723.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to these European sources, a Chinese traveler also provided a similar account on this actual garden in the seventeenth century. In 1688, Huang Biao 黃表 (fl. 1660–1690), a local governor from Suzhou, expressed his deep admiration for the “borrowing sceneries,” a Chinese term that denotes a traditional strategy in gardening in which new vistas are created and framed in picturesque ways, which he encountered in Grimaldi’s garden writing:

Inside [the Xitang residence], there are waterside pavilions and garden ponds, including a Daiguan-hall, a Jijin-Terrace, a Wuzhu-Veranda, and a Wanlan-Pavilion, all made exquisitely in European-style. . . [also] there are crucian carps measuring three *cun* long, jumping above the water ponds for fun.<sup>25</sup>

In this lively description, he mentions the essential architectural elements of a “typical” Chinese private garden, such as a Daiguan hall (Hall for Great Scenery), which the garden’s owner used to entertain his visitors, a raised flat platform called Jijin Terrace (Terrace Throughout the Time) used for observing sceneries, a Chamber amid Phoenix Trees and Bamboos, and a waterside pavilion designed for admiring water plays. Furthermore, he also describes the garden as containing an orchard with a great variety of foreign plants and trees, whose changing blossoming and fruit-bearing appearances in the garden are commonly used to illustrate and reflect the changing of the seasons: “. . . inside the garden, there are peach trees planted whose fruits [are] as big as bowls; [one can also find] delicious melons as small as silkworms.”<sup>26</sup>

To Huang Biao, the foreign varieties of fruits and plants that vegetated vigorously in the seventeenth-century Xitang garden were a big attraction. This also illustrates that the “Portuguese” Jesuits, such as Grimaldi, presumably started their botanical

<sup>24</sup>The location of the Xitang garden at the north side of the residence is confirmed by Hong Dae-yong 洪大榮 (1731–83) in 1765, see Huang Shijian 黃時鑒, “Chaoxian Yangxinglu suoji de Beijing tianzhu tang 朝鮮燕行錄所記的北京天主堂 (Beijing’s Catholic Churches in the Descriptions of Korean Notes on Travels to Beijing),” in *Hanguo xue lunwen ji* 韓國學論文集 (*Selected Works on Korean Studies*) (Beijing: Peking University Center for Korean Studies, 1999), 159: “. . . I entered the north gate [of the residence, I saw] another courtyard in which the flowers and trees grew magnificently / . . . 由北門入, 又有庭, 花樹蔚然.”

<sup>25</sup>Fang Hao 方豪, *Zhongyi jiaotong shi* 中西交通史 (*History of Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges*) (Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua chubanshe weiyuanhui, 1954), 54; see also Chen Tongbin 陳同濱, “Nantang yuanqi kao 南堂緣起考 (On the Origin of the Nantang Residence),” in *Di san ci Zhongguo jindai jianzhu yanjiu taolunhui lunwen ji* 第三次中國近代建築史研究討論會論文集 (*The Collection of Proceedings of the Third Conference on Chinese Modern Architectural History*), ed. Wang Tan (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe chubanshe: Xinhua shudian jingxiao, 1991), 50–1: “太觀堂、及今台、梧竹軒、玩瀾亭. . . 內建亭台池水, 式仿西式, 極其共巧. . . 巨鯽有翅, 跳躍遊戲, 有三寸大.” In 1692, Huang Biao included his descriptions on Xitang garden in the published travel books entitled *Yuanyou lie* 遠遊略 (*Summaries on Travels to the Distanced Regions*) after returning to his hometown.

<sup>26</sup>Fang, *Zhongyi jiaotong shi*, 54; see also Chen, “Nantang yuanqi kao,” 51: “園內中大桃如碗; 小瓜如蠶大, 味美. . .”

experimentations in Beijing, initiated by the early Jesuit botanist Michal Boym (Pu Mige 卜彌格, 1612–1659), much earlier than the French Jesuits.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, Grimaldi's garden is not the only one that possesses an orchard. As confirmed by a Korean traveler named Hong Dae-yong in 1765,<sup>28</sup> the Dontang residence even had a vineyard, which was fitted out with a water disposal system that seemed to be operated mechanically, for producing red wine:

...under the observatory (Yuntai), there is a garden measuring more than ten acres in which there are over one hundred posts made of bricks; each brick post is higher than one *zhang*. On its top, one can see a cross-shaped outlet. During spring and summer, there are grape trellis built on the posts; under the posts, there are mounds similar to [the form of] tombs which are actually used for storing the grapes. On the eastern side of the yard, there are several buildings. Among them, there is a well. On its top, a wheel is installed which is closely connected with a wooden wheel gear spinning like a mill. . .people do not need to take care of it but the water is [automatically] running into the irrigation canals as long as the wheel gear is spinning...<sup>29</sup>

To the Jesuit missionaries, the idea of creating a watering system using European mechanical knowledge was nothing new by the eighteenth century. Already in the early seventeenth century the fourth volume of Johannes Schreck's (Deng Yuhan 鄧玉函, 1576–1630) *Yuanxi qiqi tushuo* 遠西奇器圖說 (*Illustrated Books on the Wonderful Machines from the Far West*), published 1627 in Beijing, contained an entire chapter with rich illustrations dedicated to the question of how to channel water.<sup>30</sup>

In the same travelogue, Huang Biao further claimed that at both sides of the Wanlan-Pavilion 玩瀾亭 (Pavilion for Playing with Waves), two ponds equipped with waterworks were situated. The left one was supposedly an artificial waterfall, or a European-style fountain, which also appeared in Beitang's rectangular garden

<sup>27</sup>See Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, 117–32.

<sup>28</sup>The descriptions of Hong Dae-yong's visits to the Jesuits residences in Beijing are summarized in Lee Hyung-dae, "Hong Dae-yong's Beijing Travels and His Changing Perception of the West-Focusing on Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok and Uisan mundap," *The Review of Korean Studies* 9 (2006): 45–62.

<sup>29</sup>Hong Dae-yong, *Eulbyeong yeonhaengnok* 湛軒燕記 (*Zhan Xuan's Notes on Travels to Beijing*, 1765), published in Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, ed., *Yonhaengnok sonjip* 燕行錄選集 (*Selected Works of Korean Notes on Travels to Beijing*), vol. 1 (Soul: Mimmungo, 1989), 315–6; quoted in: Huang, "Chaoxian Yangxinglu suoji de Beijing tianzhutang," 159: "雲台下庭廣十數畝，築磚為柱，長丈餘，上有十字通穴，遍庭無慮百數。蓋春夏上施竹木務葡萄架，柱旁往往聚土如墳者，葡萄之收藏也。庭東有屋數間，中有井，井上設軋轆，旁拖橫尺木牙輪，平轉如磨...机輪一轉...人不勞而水遍于沟坎..."

<sup>30</sup>Johannes Schreck (Deng Yuhan 鄧玉函) and Wang Zheng 王徵, *Yuanxi qiqi tushuo* 遠西奇器圖說 (*Illustrated Books on the Wonderful Machines from the Far West*) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1936). Besides the mechanical book, Golvers argues that there were probably also two copies of Basilius Besler's *Hortus Eystettensis, sive Diligens et Accurate Omnium Plantarum, Florum, Stirpium*. . .(Nürnberg 1613) available in the Xitang library, which would facilitate the establishment of Grimaldi's Xitang garden, see Noël Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China*, vol. 3 (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2015), chapter 5.4.18.

around 1710. The right one was shaped like a fountain with spraying streams. Huang Bing elaborated:

... in the left one, the water rising three or four *chi* over the pond; in the right one, there are four water streams squirting four to five *chi* high; at each side of the pond, [the Jesuit missionaries] also built a small square cellar for installing mechanical devices spraying water all around, for irrigating the trees and bamboo plants.<sup>31</sup>

Creating such water features not only demanded the practical knowledge of someone trained in mechanics. More importantly, a comprehensive guidebook was also required. As Noël Golvers has demonstrated, both water plays that Huang Biao witnessed could be found in Georg Andrea Böckler's (1617–1687) *Architectura Curiosa Nova*, published in 1664 in Nuremberg (vol. 2, fol. 55, 3)—an illustrated guidebook with over 200 copperplates that speak of the construction of water plays, fountains, labyrinths, and the layout designs of garden.<sup>32</sup> Of course, the great variety of water features as introduced in this book had the potential to greatly inspire Pereira and other Jesuit fathers to create a water system in line with the latest European standards.

Besides other treatises on European gardens, this book also seems to have been part of the permanent collection of Jesuit libraries in Beijing.<sup>33</sup> Fifty years later, in 1720, when a Korean traveler named Lee Gi-ji 李器之 (1690–1722) visited the Xitang residence, he described one of these book's copperplate prints as follows:

... one can see rocks among the flowers and trees. The water strands are issuing forth from the top of the artificial rock(s), about two or three *zhang* and scattered like drops and fog in all directions, splashing like the light drizzle on the flowers.<sup>34</sup>

Lee mentioned three additional water features displayed on the copperplate engravings, and he further recorded that they are “tricks from [private] gardens of European noble families . . .”<sup>35</sup> He detailed these three varieties of water features:

<sup>31</sup>Fang, *Zhongyi jiaotong shi*, 54; see also Chen, “Nantang yuanqi kao,” 51: “. . . 左池水上高三四尺, 右池水四道, 上噴高四五尺。左右另築有小方窖, 設機竅, 用水四散噴注, 以灌溉竹木。”

<sup>32</sup>Georg Andrea Böckler, *Architectura curiosa nova, Das ist: Neue, Ergötzliche, Sinn- und Kunstreiche, auch nützliche Bau- und Wasser-Kunst* . . . , vol. 3 (Nürnberg: Paul Fürstens, 1664); see also Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning*, chapter 5.4.18.

<sup>33</sup>A detailed list of European treatises on architecture and garden, collected in Jesuit libraries in Beijing, is compiled by Zou Hui, “The jing of a perspective garden,” *Studies in the History of Garden & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2012): 317–20.

<sup>34</sup>Lee Gi-ji, *Iram Yeongi* 一菴燕行日記 (*Yi An's Notes on Travels to Beijing*), in *Hanguo hanwen Yanxing wenxian xuanbian* 韓國漢文燕行文獻選編 (Selected Works of Korean *Yeon Heng Rok* written in Chinese), vol. 13 (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2011), 21–3; quoted in Liu Xiang 劉香, “Chaoxian fujing shichen de xiyang renshi, shiqi zhi shijiu shiji: yi Yanxingluquanji wei zhongxin 朝鮮赴京使臣的西洋認知 (17-19世紀) — 以《燕行錄全集》為中心 (The Cognition of Korean Envoys to the Western World, seventeenth to nineteenth Century: Centered on Complete Works of *Yeon Heng Rok*)” (Master's thesis, Northeast Normal University, 2013), 21: “. . . 花木中有石頭, 假山高數丈, 而上顛湧水二三丈, 四散如珠如霧, 亂散於花卉, 若細雨輕霖”.

<sup>35</sup>Lee Gi-ji, *Iram Yeongi*, 23; quoted in Liu Xiang, “Chaoxian fujing shichen de xiyang renshi, shiqi zhi shijiu shiji,” 22: “西洋大家花園內戲法。”

[I saw] another building similar to a pagoda which consists of a stone basement (or basin) and over ten layers of flat disk-shaped metal basins (“copper dishes”). At the bottom of the pagoda, there are four [sculpted] dragon heads on the ground. The water [streams] are issuing from the dragon heads reaching several *zhang* high and scattering in the metal basins on the thickest part of the stone basement. [Nevertheless,] there are also water [streams] gushing from the edges of the pagoda’s top, discharging in a jet to the sky and then scattering into the ten layers of metal basins [of the pagoda]. The disk-shaped metal basins look like covered with small carriage wheels. [Then I saw] water issuing from the third storey [of a building]. The streams were dropping down along the roof. The four sides [of the building] looked like covered with a curtain of water. [Ultimately, I saw] a bathroom, from its roof beam water [streams] were falling down like a light rain shower’s drizzles. Inside, there is someone taking a shower. . . .<sup>36</sup>

All the described water installations are various forms of European fountains. Even though Lee Gi-ji, by modern standards, did not express his impressions in precise terms, it is evident that they seem to match at least three images in the third volume of *Architectura Curiosa Nova*, a book that concentrates primarily on various methods and forms of water handling.<sup>37</sup>

Although European water features and the watering system were added to the Xitang garden, its spatial arrangement was still designed in a Chinese manner, which created an array of vistas and a certain separation of different “landscape scenes,” as first encountered by Matteo Ricci in the garden of Xu Hongji 徐弘基 (fl. 1590–1640), *Weiguo gong* 魏國公 (Duke of Weiguo), by the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

Taking the Wanlan-Pavilion as an example: the fact that it was specifically designed as a single scene within the garden structure rejects the “Western ideals of exhibiting grandeur of dimension through axes and prospects, or using geometrical elements like avenues and fountains to articulate the various parts of the composition.”<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, Huang Biao’s description suggests that Grimaldi’s garden was unprecedented in Jesuit garden history. Most probably, it was in its general layout a Chinese garden with a classical space arrangement but incorporating certain European elements and relating to symbolic European understandings of the representation of time through the displayed transience of mechanically manipulated water flows. In other words, it incorporated Eastern and Western elements as well as symbolic meanings.

The Jesuits rejected the total acceptance of Chinese aesthetics and instead created a hybrid garden space. As an innovative solution invented by the seventeenth-century

<sup>36</sup>Lee Gi-ji, *Iram Yeongi*, 23; quoted in Liu Xiang, “Chaoxian fujing shichen,” 22: “又有石埧銅盤數十層，若塔狀，其下平地繞塔有四龍頭，水自龍頭湧起數丈，落於埧腰銅盤，而其水卻自塔顛之旁湧出，射天折而下散落於十層銅盤，若罩輕轂。又有水自三層顛湧而出，細布簷端而下，四面作水簾。又有浴室，水自屋樑散下，若細雨，室中人作浴狀. . .”

<sup>37</sup>In proper order, they are: the fol. 35 (*Ein schöner Bronn/in Gestalt eines Kruges/mit einer Grotta*), fol. 36 (*Ein schöner Bronn mit einer Gaul und Kronen/so Wasser von sich gibt/samt vier spielenden Krugeln*), and fol. 20: (*Ein schöner Bronn mit einer umlaufenden Kaiser-Cron/und etlichen Adlern/so Wasser von sich geben*). Nevertheless, it is still unclear where the last copperplate that Lee mentioned may have come from, which suggests that they were also other European treatises available in the same library.

<sup>38</sup>See also Clunas, “Nature and Ideology,” 154.

<sup>39</sup>Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, 182.

China-missionaries, this strategy was inherited and practiced by the first generation of French Jesuits at the Beitang. Beside the park/planting beds (*Jardin*) for collecting and studying plants, this later generation of Jesuits also built a single garden in Chinese-style, with a remarkable European fountain added on top of artificial rocks.

The early Jesuit gardens in Beijing, both the Xitang and the Beitang, gradually became a dynamic space, in which the Jesuits' ambivalent attitude toward the aesthetics of Chinese gardens are reflected. The Jesuits of the seventeenth century, as Rinaldi has indicated, presented "a sort of prejudice against the Chinese gardens they entered, considering them modest compared to the grand European gardens they had been accustomed to."<sup>40</sup> Compared to their increasing botanical interests in researching Chinese plants, as initiated by Boym, their desire for Chinese garden aesthetics was, to a certain extent, of minor interest.

As their mission prospered, their attitude also changed fundamentally in the first decade of the eighteenth century, during which the Beitang garden came into being. In line with their deepening understanding of Chinese culture, their initial preconceived notion gave way to a clearer awareness and increasingly also an appreciation for Chinese garden aesthetics. This attitude reached its peak in 1743 when Attiret's report on Qianlong's imperial gardens reached Europe. Against this background, however, it might sound contradictory that Attiret and d'Incarville attempted to install a garden space in a Europeanized taste, as captured in the wall hanging discussed at the very beginning of this essay.

To better understand this apparent contradiction, a brief visit to Jesuit-related places and gardens throughout Europe will help to recapture the historical context of Attiret's transmission of a French-style garden to Beijing.

## Gardens as Vehicle: La Flèche and the Tradition of Jesuit Symbolic Gardens

Within the Jesuit agenda, the centrality of representations of "tamed nature" in a garden provided a means of displaying human control over nature's wildness, and by extension represented the civilizing force of Christianity.<sup>41</sup> In this regard, Jesuit educational institutions like the College at La Flèche played a significant role in the transfer of botanical, medical, and pharmaceutical knowledge between Europe and the "rest of the world." As the second most important Jesuit college in France, after the Louis-le-Grand in Paris, La Flèche was established and financed by the French king, Henry IV (r. 1572–1610), in 1604 as the "College Royal Henry-Le-Grand."<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup>Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, 176.

<sup>41</sup>An introduction to Jesuit participation in gardens can be found in Davidson, "The Jesuit garden," 86–107.

<sup>42</sup>An introduction to the history of the Jesuit College at La Flèche is provided in Camille de Rochemonteix, *Un collège de Jésuites aux XVII & XVIII siècles: le collège Henri IV de la Flèche*, vol. 3 (Le Mans: Leguicheux, 1889); see also Anne-Gaël Dugua-Blanc, "Le Prytanée national



Functioning as a critical site and intellectual center of cosmopolitan learning, the college not only trained many missionaries who went to the Americas and China but also attracted numerous secular scholars and philosophers. Upon the death of Henry IV, the college went through a number of remarkable expansions and additions including the introduction of a “courtyard or a garden which is conducive to meditation,”<sup>43</sup> which was erected no later than 1612.

As clearly seen in a layout designed by a Jesuit architect named Étienne Martellange (1569–1641) in 1614 (Fig. 5), the college building has three garden spaces in accordance with the design of Château de Bury, an iconic garden of the French Renaissance built between 1511 and 1524. The first is a square garden inside the Father’s yard (*cour des pères*, or *Area Collegy*) similar to the Beitang garden after 1740, which is divided into six parterres with a fountain as the central axis. Behind the college, there is a walled garden (*horti Rogy*) that consists of sixteen parterres created in geometric shapes and partially in *broderie*.

In line with the symmetrical design of its prototype, the axis reaches from the entrance of the square garden to the far end of the back garden. The third garden is actually a huge compound of planting beds laid out in *patte d’oie*, which displays a wide variety of trees that are functionally similar to the orchard in the Xitang garden. Although the gardens were built at the same level, this triplet-division (courtyard garden, parterre-garden, planting beds/*hortus*), seems to be related to the idea of a terraced garden, which was adopted from the Villa Medici at Fiesole through the French gardens of the Château de Blois, which itself preceded the Renaissance spaces of Château de Bury, and formed the prototype for La Flèche. The same division between the parterre garden and the planting beds can also be seen in a number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Jesuit residences. In the example of the widely circulated copperplate of the Jesuit College in Coimbra, where the later Chinese court painter and Jesuit Castiglione had sojourned between 1711 and 1714 before he sailed eastwards, the *hortus* is separated from the building complex and established as an autonomous area. This tradition continued in the Beitang residence of the eighteenth century.

Starting in the second half of the sixteenth century, the ambitions of European royal houses met Jesuit eagerness to discover and convert the non-Christian rest of the world, which in the view of the Jesuit Order was supposed to be a desolate wilderness. At about the same time when the La Flèche garden was built, Pierre Biard (1567–1622), a Jesuit from Grenoble, emphasized that there was no nobler

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militaire de la Flèche: du monument historique au site touristique,” in *Mémoires de patrimoines*, ed. Jean-Pierre Vallat (Paris: Harmattan, 2008), 53–70; and Allison Gopnik, “Could David Hume Have Known about Buddhism? Charles Francois Dolu, the Royal College of La Flèche, and the Global Jesuit Intellectual Network,” *Hume Studies* 35, no. 1&2 (2009): 7–9.

<sup>43</sup>Dugua-Blanc, “Le Prytanée national militaire de la Flèche,” 55: “cour ou [un] jardin propices à la méditation. . .”

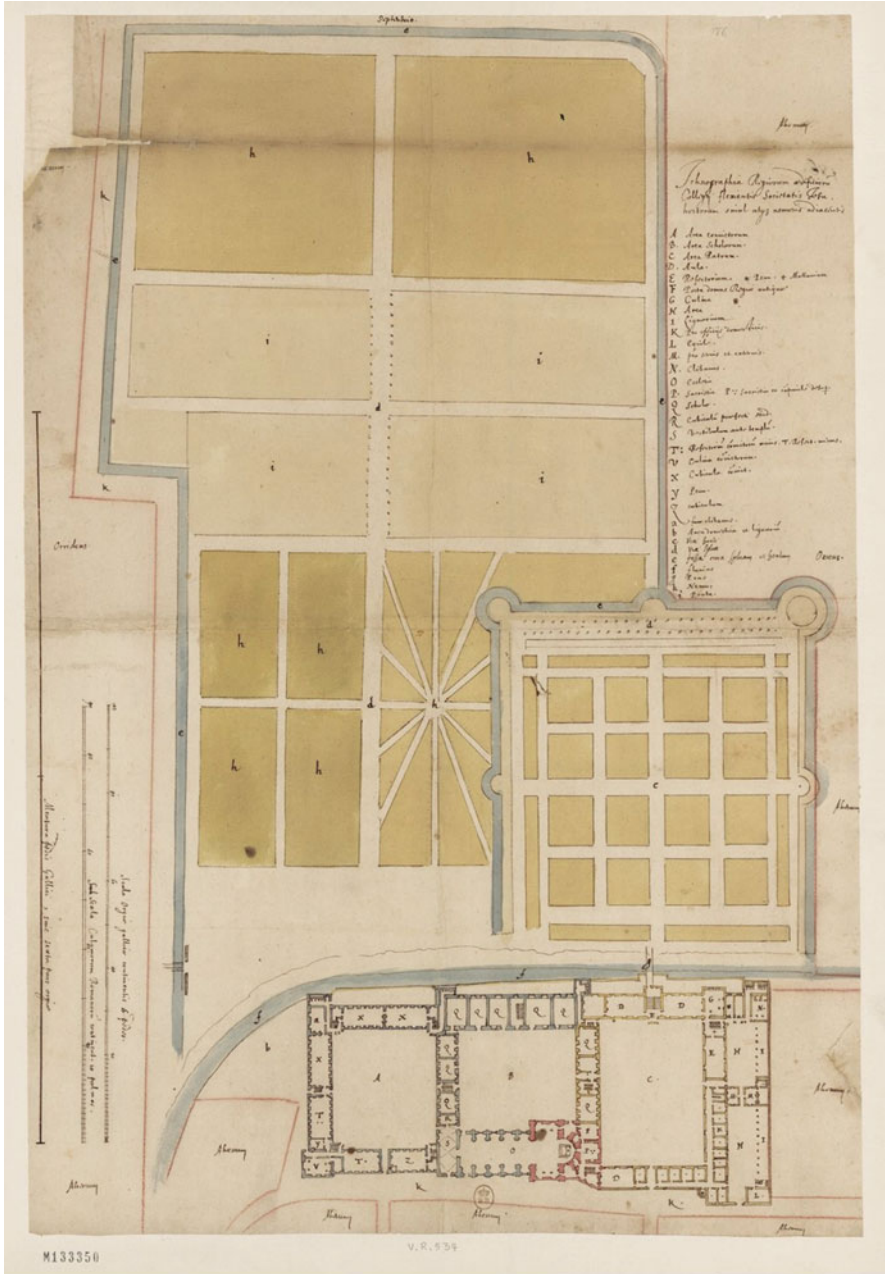


Fig. 5 Étienne Martellange, *Ground plan of Collège Henri IV, La Flèche*. Color and drawing on paper. Dated 1614. Bibliothèque National de France, Paris

Christian task than to “make a Garden out of the wilderness.”<sup>44</sup> His proposition can be traced back to the Jesuit understanding of tangible gardens as a presentation of tamed wilderness, where the hostile forces of nature were modified through human labor and re-arranged in to an orderly, even sacred, space.

In the seventeenth century, the Jesuits published extensively on their ways of dealing with horticulture to create an impact on the publications of their contemporaries. Taking the Sant’ Andrea al Quirinale, the famous Jesuit Novitiate in Rome as an example, Louis Richeôme (1544–1625), the author of *La peinture spirituelle* (1611), compared the central position of the fountain as displayed on the upper terrace to the earthly paradise of Eden, which could also be seen in the cases of Bury and La Flèche.<sup>45</sup> Two decades later, the perception of the Edenic nature of walled gardens had been theorized and conceived in the “mental garden/memory garden” dedicated to the Virgin Mary and conceptualized by the English Jesuit Henry Hawkins (1577–1646) in his *Parthenia sacra* (1633).<sup>46</sup>

To Jesuit scholars, both publications were fundamental. Stimulated by Richeôme’s symbolic interpretations, a Jesuit writer named Giovanni Battista Ferrari (1584–1655) published in 1633 (the same year as Hawkins’s publication) an encyclopedic treatise on the flower garden, *De florum cultura*, elaborating on the symbolic meanings of five layout designs for gardens. As for the square garden, he stated: “If it might be a pleasure to someone to design within the bounds of a garden the blessed seat of the Holy City in its eternal stability, laid out in four quarters of celestial beauty, and to acclimatize something heavenly on the earth.”<sup>47</sup>

In fact, a pattern like this, in Meredith B. Sayre’s words “an aestheticization of power,”<sup>48</sup> was originally developed from sixteenth-century botanic gardens after Europeans had conquered parts of South America. As seen in the botanical garden of Padua (started 1545), the four sections are re-imagined as a microcosm of the plant biota of the world and used to mirror the world’s four continents and thus an empire’s power to collect and assemble a wide variety of plants from overseas.<sup>49</sup>

This mode soon became a pan-European phenomenon. In the well-known case of Bury’s square garden, a royal project led by Florimond II Robertet (1531–1567), French secular power was charged with divine meanings.<sup>50</sup> Obviously, awareness of

<sup>44</sup>Meredith Beck Sayre, “Cultivating Soils and Souls: The Jesuit Garden in the Americas” (Master’s thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2007), 1.

<sup>45</sup>See also Davidson, “The Jesuit Garden,” 93.

<sup>46</sup>Henry Hawkins, *Parthenia sacra* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1971); see also William E. Engel, “Mnemonic Criticism & Renaissance Literature: A Manifesto,” *Connotations* 1, no. 1 (1991): 18.

<sup>47</sup>Giovanni Battista Ferrari, *De florum cultura* (Rome: S. Paulinus, 1633), fol. 25; translation quoted from Davidson, “The Jesuit Garden,” 94.

<sup>48</sup>Sayre, “Cultivating Soils and Souls,” 17.

<sup>49</sup>Not only in Beijing, but also in South America, the quadripartite garden was very popular among the Jesuit settlements, see Sayre, “Cultivating Soils and Souls,” 16.

<sup>50</sup>Florimond was the secretary for both Louis XII (r. 1498–1515) and Francis I (r. 1515–1547). The best example for this view is the Grand Parterre at the Château de Fontainebleau, built by André Le Nôtre and Louis Le Vau between 1660 and 1664.

the garden's dual nature as a three-dimensional space and as a highly charged symbol of power had a great impact on contemporary Jesuit architects. It was codified in a number of works designed by Martellange, the creator of the La Flèche garden layout, including the Jesuit colleges in Roanne, Dole, and La Flèche, where Attiret and d' Incarville had probably sojourned.

Starting from the first decade of the eighteenth century, the increasing number of French Jesuits working at the Qing court caused increasing conflicts between the French Jesuits and those Jesuits patronized and sent by the Portuguese king. This development peaked after 1710 when the French mission was separated from the Portuguese Vice Province. As Collani has stated, it was "a conflict of mixed national interests (patronage by the Portuguese king against the French king) as well as a competition in science influence."<sup>51</sup>

After the French Jesuits established their own church, Pereira and Grimaldi attempted to raise funds to renovate their Xitang church, which had already become tumbledown after fifty years. From the Kangxi Emperor, they received loans of 10,000 silver taels (about 25,000 crusades) for eight years, from which at least 8000 taels were used to enlarge their church building.<sup>52</sup> In order to compete with the French "royal church," (*Hofkirche*) which was built with the financial support of both Kangxi and Louis XIV, the Portuguese Jesuits assigned Castiglione, who was already known to them as an excellent Italian painter and had arrived in Beijing in 1715, to decorate their new Xitang church.

It was against this backdrop that the Beitang garden, as captured by the wall hanging discussed above, was Europeanized. The quadripartite garden, in which the French king's absolute power over the four continents is visually presented, established a symbolic, constant royal presence within the Beitang residence. Simultaneously, it functioned as a sacred space and a reference to the territory of the Lord of Heaven (Christ). It manifested the European garden's role as a symbol of both, political power and sacred space, materializing royal omnipresence as well as religious metaphor.

## Conclusion: Three Facets of Transcultural Jesuit Garden Spaces

Representing the orderly world and civilization itself only occupies a minor part of the early modern Jesuit symbolic uses and understandings of horticulture. For the early modern Jesuits, their gardens were not simply a legitimate reformulation of the

<sup>51</sup> von Collani, "French Jesuits," 315.

<sup>52</sup> As for the loans to Xitang-Jesuits, see Claudia von Collani, "Thomas and Tournon—Mission and Money," in *The History of the Relations between the Low Countries and China in the Qing Era (1644–1911)*, ed. W. F. Vande Walle and Noël Golvers, Louvain Chinese Studies 14 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 116–7; see also Wang, "Propaganda Fidei," 64–5 (chapter 2.4).

natural environment but also, as practiced by their colleagues in Beijing, a dynamic space in which vivid exchanges of elite botanic and cosmopolitan knowledge took place. Besides collecting books and establishing libraries, the creation of garden spaces was a global moment in Jesuit intellectual history, one which affected the Chinese view of the natural world.

Through gardens as actual and symbolic spaces, new ideas, concepts and techniques were brought into being. Starting from the late seventeenth century, after the Portuguese Jesuits in Beijing had turned their private garden into a pleasure ground for enjoyment and entertainment, the plant beds and water features represented the latest achievements of European mechanics and gardening practice and were on view in the Xitang garden for Chinese and Korean visitors. In this regard, the Beijing Jesuit gardens functioned as an ideal stage for the display of European elite horticulture since the Renaissance.

Among the Jesuit spaces in China, the Beitang garden was probably the only one that carried such explicit political implications. Following the symbolic view of gardens established by Jesuit intellectuals like Richeôme and Hawkins, Jesuit garden spaces were gradually charged with divine as well as secular meanings that unified the actual ambition and God-given power of European royal houses who were eager to conquer Asia and the Americas; this was visually codified in the quadripartite design of parterres. In the context of competition and conflict between French and Portuguese Jesuits, the demand for absolute power from the French king in the Far Eastern mission provides a reasonable explanation for Attiret's choice to transplant the La Flèche-model in a Beijing Jesuit garden space. The latter not only inherited the long tradition of Jesuit horticulture as well as their symbolically charged conceptions of nature, but also functioned as a powerful vehicle for the transfer of both, religious and secular power.

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