

# Ferdinand Augustin Hallerstein on Giuseppe Castiglione's Art

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## Abstract

Ferdinand Augustin Hallerstein (1703–1774) (Chinese name Liu Songling) was a Slovenian Jesuit, astronomer and mathematician who made an important contribution to the development of science and astronomy in 18th century China. He arrived in Beijing in 1739, and in 1746 was appointed to succeed Ignatius Kögler as Head of the Imperial Board of Astronomy, a position he would hold until his own death nearly 30 years later. Throughout his four decades in China, Hallerstein maintained a rich correspondence with family members, other Jesuits in Europe, and even with the Queen of Portugal, Maria Anna. He was also a corresponding member of the Royal Societies of London, Paris and St. Petersburg. His letters have only recently been collected and edited.

The present paper will focus on Hallerstein's letters and what they tell us about the life and art of the celebrated Jesuit painter, Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766), especially during the reign of the Emperor Qianlong (1711–1799). After a brief introduction on Hallerstein's life and work, by means of comparative analyses and using an interdisciplinary approach, the paper will explore a) Hallerstein's views on Castiglione and his art, and b) Chinese court painting and Castiglione's position at the court. It will conclude with new evidence concerning Castiglione's artistic achievements.

**Keywords:** Ferdinand Augustin Hallerstein, Giuseppe Castiglione, Jesuit missionaries, astronomer, art, letters

## Izveček

Ferdinand Avguštin Hallerstein (1703–1774) s kitajskim imenom Liu Songling je bil slovenski jezuit, astronom in matematik, ki je pomembno prispeval k razvoju znanosti in astronomije na Kitajskem v 18. stoletju. V Peking je prispel leta 1739 ter je kmalu po tem leta 1746 nasledil Ignacija Köglerja na mestu direktorja Astronomskega urada. Ta položaj je ohranil vse do smrti skoraj 30 let kasneje. V svojem štiridesetletnem bivanju na Kitajskem je vzdrževal bogato korespondenco z družinskimi člani, ostalimi jezuiti v Evropi in celo s portugalsko kraljico Mario Anno. Poleg tega je bil tudi korespondenčni član Kraljevske družbe v Londonu, Parizu in St. Peterburgu. Njegova pisma so bila zbrana in urejene šele v zadnjih letih.

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Pričujoči prispevek se osredotoča na Hallersteinova pisma ter njegove omembe o življenju in delu znanega jezuitskega slikarja Giuseppa Castigliona (1688–1766), ki si je svojo slavo pridobil še posebej v času cesarja Qianlonga (1711–1799). Po kratki predstavitvi Hallersteinovega življenja in dela se prispevek z uporabo interdisciplinarnega pristopa ukvarja a) s Hallersteinovimi pogledi na Castigliona in njegovo umetnost ter b) s kitajskim dvornim slikarstvom in Castiglionovim položajem na dvoru. Prispevek v zaključnem delu nadalje poda nove dokaze, ki zadevajo umetniške dosežke slikarja Castigliona.

**Ključne besede:** Ferdinand Avguštín Hallerstein, Giuseppe Castiglione, jezuitski misijonarji, astronom, umetnost, pisma

## Introduction

In the memorial park of the old Jesuit cemetery in Beijing, located in what is now the School of the Beijing Municipal Committee, the tombstones of many Jesuit missionaries can still be found, providing a vivid testimony to the Order's remarkable work and achievements in the Qing court, between the 16th and 18th centuries. While their primary aim was performing missionary work in China, thanks to their advanced knowledge of astronomy, mathematics and cartography, as well as clockmaking and new artistic techniques, the Jesuits exerted considerable influence on the Chinese Emperors. Impressed by their advanced scientific knowledge, the Qing Emperors entrusted them with revising the calendar and rewarded them with key positions on the Imperial Board of Astronomy. Due to their outstanding scientific abilities, a number of missionaries, i.e. Adam Schall von Bell (1591–1666), Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688), and Ignatius Kögler (1680–1746), were even appointed to head the Imperial Board of Astronomy. This group included a Slovenian Jesuit from Carniola, Ferdinand Augustin Hallerstein (1703–1774), whose Chinese name was Liu Songling 劉松齡. After Kögler's death in 1746, he took over as Head of the Imperial Board, and would occupy this position for almost 30 years, until his own death in 1774. Chinese and Latin inscriptions on a large tombstone located in the last row of the Jesuit cemetery and surmounted by a dragon ornament, commemorate his role on the Imperial Board of Astronomy. The Chinese inscription reads as follows:

耶穌會士劉先生諱松齡號喬年泰西熱爾瑪尼亞國人自幼入會精修大清乾隆四年來京傳教乾隆八年奉旨補授欽天監監副乾隆十一年特授監正乾隆十八年因接送波爾都噶俚國使臣有功賞給三品職銜食俸共在監三十一載勤敏監務敬寅恕屬德業兼著卒於乾隆三十九年享壽七十有二蒙恩旨賜內庫銀二百兩為安葬之資。

The Jesuit, Mr. Liu Songling, with the literary name Qiaonian, was a Germanus from west. As a youth he entered the Jesuit society and came to Beijing for missionary work in the 4th year of Qianlong's reign. In the 8th year of Qianlong's reign he was appointed as Vice-Head of the Imperial Board of Astronomy and as Head of the Imperial Board of Astronomy in the 11th year of Qianlong's reign. Due to his excellent work with the Portuguese royal envoy, he was made a 3rd grade official in the 18th year of Qianlong's reign. He served in this position for 31 years. He was hardworking and dedicated to his work, respectful of his superiors and humble with his inferiors, endowed with many virtues and talents. He died at the age of 72, in the 39th year of Qianlong's reign. The Emperor graciously granted 200 tales of silver for his funeral.

In addition to this funerary inscription, a number of Chinese documents also refer to Liu Songling as a German (or Germanus) from Carniola and it was only in the last decade of the 20th century that Liu Songling was revealed to be a "Slovenian" astronomer and Jesuit, whose original name was Ferdinand Augustin Hallerstein. He had always been identified as German or Austrian because Carniola was part of the Austrian Empire during his lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter<sup>2</sup> to his brother Weichard, dated 4 November 1729, Hallerstein states that there were 34 Catholic missionaries in Beijing, all but three of whom came from Europe<sup>3</sup> (Welt-Bott IV, 587: 92). Among them was Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766), an Italian Jesuit lay brother and artist, whose skill as a painter attracted the interest and admiration of three Chinese emperors—Kangxi 康熙 (1662–1722), Yongzheng 雍正 (1723–1736) and Qianlong 乾隆 (1736–1795). Hallerstein not only knew Castiglione, but after moving from the Southern Church to the Church of St. Joseph some time before the end of 1743, actually lived with him and other missionaries (Šmitek 2009, 78) in the same residence. It is thus quite natural that Hallerstein should mention Castiglione and his art

- 1 The Carniola region was an Austrian province with a Slovenian population. After World War I, it became part of the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which then became Yugoslavia. After the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, it became part of the Republic of Slovenia.
- 2 All of Hallerstein's letters were collected and edited beginning in 1990. Except for the letters with a purely scientific content, they have all been translated into Slovenian (Hribar 2003), English (Saje 2009) and Chinese (Saje 2015).
- 3 At the time of Hallerstein's arrival in 1739, there were three Catholic churches in Beijing: the Eastern Church or the Church of St. Joseph with the Jesuit residence (Dongtang 東堂) housing six missionaries; the Southern Church with the college (Nantang 南堂) and twelve missionaries, and the Western Church with the French residence (Xitang 西堂), where Hallerstein counted thirteen missionaries. Two other missionaries lived outside the city, while the missionary, Teodorico Pedrini, had his own chapel in Beijing.

repeatedly in his letters, and his correspondence offers valuable insights into both his art and his role in the Imperial court, as well as on court painting in general. The letters also contain descriptions of the Jesuit community in Beijing, and shed light on his personal relationship with Castiglione.

The present paper will focus on Hallerstein's letters and his references to Castiglione's art and his official role at the court during the reign of the Emperor Qianlong. After a brief introduction on Hallerstein's life and work, by means of comparative analysis and using an interdisciplinary approach, the paper will explore a) Hallerstein's attitudes towards Castiglione and his art; b) Chinese court painting and Castiglione's position at the court and c) it will conclude with some new evidence concerning Castiglione's artistic achievements.

## Hallerstein's Work and Achievements

While Giuseppe Castiglione (Lang Shining 郎世寧 in Chinese), the most famous and influential of Western missionary-artists, has already been the subject of numerous studies and articles in both the West and China, due to historical circumstances Hallerstein's achievements at the Qianlong's court have been overlooked or forgotten for more than 200 years. Hallerstein occupied an important position in Beijing and contributed greatly to the development of scientific and astronomical knowledge of 18th century China. As a member and correspondent of the Royal Societies of London, Paris and St. Petersburg, he also played a significant role as a cultural link between Europe in China, while the astronomical, scientific and socio-political contents of his letters often appeared in the scientific journals of that period. Given his achievements and his historical role, he is a figure that certainly deserves to be better known.

Ferdinand Augustin Hallerstein was of noble origins. His parents, Janez Ferdinand Hallerstein (1669–1736) and Marija Suzana Elizabeta Erberg (1681–1725), lived in the family castle (Ravbar Castle or Hoffsmannburg) in Mengeš, a small town near Ljubljana. He was born on 27 August 1703 and baptized one day later in Ljubljana.<sup>4</sup> After he had completed his studies in the Jesuit Collegium of Ljubljana, he decided to devote his life to the Jesuits, and entered the Order on 26 October 1721, in Vienna. Before leaving for Vienna, he had also completed three years of philosophical studies in Ljubljana, and later continued to study mathematics, astronomy and theology in Vienna and Graz.<sup>5</sup> In 1727, he made

4 For detailed biographical data, see Južnič 2012, and Šmitek 2009, 62–64.

5 For a detailed description of his studies, see Južnič 2012, 316–21.

the request to do missionary work in China, but eight years would pass before his request was approved by the Jesuit leadership, and another year before he received permission to leave for China. In the autumn of 1735 he travelled via Trieste and Genoa to Lisbon, where he remained for more than a year, studying Portuguese and astronomy. In Lisbon, he also became acquainted with the Queen of Portugal, Maria Anna of Austria (1683–1754), with whom he would correspond during his entire stay in China. In April 1736, he sailed for the Far East, arriving in Canton more than two years later, in September 1738, due to extended layovers in Mozambique and Goa.<sup>6</sup> In Macao, he began to study Chinese, and also prepared a map of the town and its surrounding territory at the request of the Governor. The following year he went to Beijing, where he joined the other Jesuits on the Imperial Board of Astronomy, which was directed by the German Jesuit, Ignatius Kögler (Dai Jinxian 戴進賢) (1680–1746). After Kögler's death in 1746, he was appointed to succeed him, and would remain the Head of the Board for nearly 30 years (1746–74, or from the 11th year to the 39th year of Emperor Qianlong's reign), the longest this post was held by any westerner.

Soon after his arrival in Beijing, he assisted Ignatius Kögler in revising the classical astronomical treatise, *Lingtai yixiang zhi* 靈臺儀象志 (*Treatise on Imperial Observatory Instruments*) from the time of Qianlong grandfather Kangxi, which was edited by Ferdinand Verbiest (Nan Huai ren 南懷仁) in 1674. After the revision was completed in the 17th year of Qianlong's reign (1752), Emperor Qianlong renamed it *Yixiang kaocheng* 儀象考成 (*Complete Studies on Astronomical Instruments*) and wrote the introductory text himself. Ju Deyuan already pointed out the importance of Hallerstein's work for this star book as he was in charge to complete the revision after the death of Kögler in 1746 (Ju 2009, 170). The book was published in 30 volumes with a table of 3083 stars (as opposed to the 1319 stars of the original version, and thus with the addition of 1764 stars), and represented a singular achievement in 18th century astronomy and science, not only in China, but also in Europe. Published in China in 1757, it finally appeared in the West in a French translation by Tsuchihashi and Chevalier (Tsuchihashi and Chevalier 1914).

Hallerstein also headed the project for constructing the terrestrial and celestial globes and helped design a new equatorial armillary sphere, the *Jihengfuchenyi* 璣衡撫辰儀. The sphere, which was used for making precise astronomical observations, was completed in 1754, and is still in place in the old observatory in Beijing. Hallerstein's astronomical observations were also published in Europe in *Observationes astronomicae*, in 1768, under the orders of Maximilian Hell, Director of the

6 For a description of his voyage to China, see Šmitek 2009, 65–75; Južnič 2012, 321–29.

Imperial Astronomical Observatory in Vienna.<sup>7</sup> His astronomical observations and other scientific writings also appeared in *Philosophical Transactions*, the bulletin of the British Royal Society, and *Novi Comentarii*, the official publication of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.

In addition to his achievements in astronomy, he also made important contributions in other scientific fields, including a series of experiments on inductive electricity (see Južnič 2009, 119–57), while his work in cartography, geography and demography was of great importance in both China and Europe. For example, he calculated the geographical length of Beijing from the orbits of Jupiter's satellites, based on the time difference between the meridians of Beijing and St. Petersburg (Šmitek 2009, 95). He was the first to make precise calculations of the total population of China for the years 1760 and 1761, with 196,837,977 inhabitants in 19 provinces and 198,214,533 inhabitants,<sup>8</sup> respectively. In addition to his map of Macao, he also mapped the Mulan 木蘭 in Manchuria, the Emperor Qianlong's hunting reserve, and collaborated in other projects, such as the Big Atlas of China, published by the Jesuits in 1761.<sup>9</sup>

Hallerstein was also a skilled diplomat and in a period of limited contact between China and Europe, he played an important role as diplomat and mediator in Chinese political matters, a function in which was greatly aided by his fluency in six languages. His most important diplomatic role was as intermediary during the Portuguese diplomatic mission to Beijing in 1753. From a letter to his brother Weichard, dated 21 October 1753, we learn that he had been appointed to escort the Portuguese Royal envoy at the recommendation of the Portuguese Queen, but also with the full approval of the Emperor Qianlong (Pray 1781, 3: XXIX–XXXII). The diplomatic mission was a great success and the Emperor rewarded Hallerstein with the title of official (mandarin) of the 3rd rank. Only four European Jesuits ever held a higher official rank than Hallerstein during the entire Qing dynasty: 1st rank was granted to Adam Schall von Bell in 1658, while 2nd rank was awarded to Ferdinand Verbiest in 1679, Ignatius Kögler in 1725 and Felix de Rocha in 1755 (Kovačič 2003, 100).

All these functions and activities were carried out in parallel with his basic missionary service in Beijing, and his official work at the court. This work included observations of astronomical phenomena, calculating the calendar, forecasts of solar and lunar eclipses and of natural disasters, determining the position of planets, etc. The Qing dynasty archive, in the National Palace Museum in Taipei, contains

7 For more details on this publication, see Šmitek 2009, 56–58.

8 His data on the population of China was often cited abroad. See also Šmitek 2009, 95–96.

9 For his work in geography, see Ju 2009, 176–83.



two documents related to his astronomical observations.<sup>10</sup> Both documents date from the 34th year of Qianlong's reign (1769), five years before his death, and are official reports made by Hallerstein and the Board of Astronomy to the Emperor concerning the appearance of one star, possibly a comet: “東南方有似彗星形狀一星在昴宿之下” (“In the southeast there is a star under the lunar lodge Mao which resembles a comet”) (Liu Songling, 1 August 1769, National Palace Museum, Taipei, No. 010377). He goes on to say that “According to the ancient books, the appearance of a comet in the Lunar lodge Mao indicates disease” (“按占書曰彗星出昴為病禍所在者”) and that he will make another report if the star should disappear (“觀候消退不見再行具奏為此”). These documents confirm the very detailed and precise work he did for Qianlong's court and show that he was directly responsible to the Emperor, who received and approved all of his reports.

The intense research on Hallerstein over the last two decades has brought to light numerous documents, scientific reports and letters, which were scattered among numerous European archives (in Austria, Italy and the Vatican, Portugal, Russia, France, England, Belgium, and Slovenia). Much of this new material was collected in the first comprehensive monograph in English, *A. Hallerstein - Liu Songling: The Multicultural Legacy of Jesuit Wisdom and Piety at the Qing Dynasty Court*, edited by Dr. Mitja Saje (2009b). The monograph is especially valuable because it also includes the English translation of most of his letters (excluded the purely scientific ones).

## Hallerstein's Letters

Throughout the four decades of his sojourn in China, Hallerstein maintained a rich correspondence with other Jesuits in Europe, his brother Weichard, also a Jesuit, his sister Ana and even with the Queen of Portugal, Maria Anna. As already mentioned, he was also a correspondent member of the Royal Societies of London, Paris and St. Petersburg, and published his scientific and other articles with these Societies. For example, his two letters from 1747 and 1753 to Cromwell Mortimer, Secretary of the British Royal Society, were published in the Society's official bulletin, *Philosophical Transactions*. The Society also published two descriptions of astronomical observations in 1742/43 and 1745/46, and while Hallerstein is not named explicitly, they were probably based on his data (Šmitek 2009, 55–56). The St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences also published two letters with astronomical data in *Novi comentarii*, in 1764 and 1775 (Šmitek 2009, 56). In addition to some scientific correspondence, his most significant astronomical observations and data

10 I am grateful to Dr. Zhou Weiqiang from the National Palace Museum in Taipei for bringing these documents to my attention.

appeared in his book, *Observationes astronomicae*, which also published the records of Kögler, Pereyra and Slavíček in Beijing, in the years 1717 to 1752.

A number of Hallerstein's personal letters—mostly epistolaric in nature—were also fortunately preserved in two 18th century works: eight letters were published in German in the compendium of Jesuit missionary letters, *Der Neue Welt-Bott*, in 1755 and 1758, while another eight letters, in Latin translation, were included in *Imposturae a. CCXVIII in dissertatione R. P. Benedicti Cetto, Clerici Regularis a Scholis Pii de Sinensium Imposturis detectae et convulsae*, compiled by the Hungarian Jesuit and historian, György Pray, in 1781. In addition to the published letters, two transcripts of his letters to his sister, Maria Ana, are kept in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, while the Jesuit Archives in Rome preserves ten official letters (two applications for missionary work, eight letters by Hallerstein), and seven letters addressed to him by various correspondents (Šmitek 2009, 59).<sup>11</sup>

Table 1: Hallerstein's written legacy—personal correspondence

Date	Place	Addressee	No.	Publication
Dec 7, 1735	Lisbon	Father Franz Molindes, Provincial of Austria	No. 584	<i>Der Neue Welt-Bott</i> , Book IV, Part XXX, Franz Keller, ed., Vienna, 1755, letter no. 584, pp. 71–73.
April 24, 1736	Lisbon	Father Weichard Hallerstein, his brother	No. 585	Ibid. letter no. 585, pp. 74–76.
Jan 13, 1738	Goa	Idem	No. 586	Ibid. letter no. 586, pp. 76–78.
Nov 4, 1739	Beijing	Idem	No. 587	Ibid. letter no. 587, pp. 79–93.
Nov 6, 1740	Beijing	Idem	No. 588	Ibid. letter no. 588, pp. 93–97.
Oct 10, 1741	Beijing	Idem	No. 675	<i>Der Neue Welt-Bott</i> , Book IV, Part XXXIV, Franz Keller, ed., Vienna, 1758, letter no. 675, pp. 39–42.
Oct 6, 1743	Beijing	Idem	No. 1	Pray, G. <i>Imposturae CCXVIII in Dissertatione R. P. Benedicti Cetto, Clerici Regularis e Scholis Pii de Sinesium Imposturis Detectae et Convulsae</i> , Budae 1781, letter I, pp. I–XVI

11 For a comprehensive bibliography of Hallerstein (including his scientific letters), see Urbanija 2003, 283–5. For additional details on his letters, see Šmitek 2009, 59–61; Maver 2009, 209–35.



Date	Place	Addressee	No.	Publication
Nov 1, 1743	Beijing	Father Joseph Ritter, member of the Society of Jesus and provincial, Confessor to the Portuguese Queen.	No. 681	<i>Der Neue Welt-Bott</i> , Book IV, Part XXXIV, Franz Keller, ed., Vienna, 1758, letter no. 681, pp. 74–78.
Nov 28, 1749	Beijing	Nicolò Giamprimo, Society of Jesus, Naples province	No. 696	Ibid. letter no. 696, pp. 125–128.
Nov 28, 1749	Beijing	Father Weichard Hallerstein, his brother	No. 2	Pray, G. <i>Imposturae CCXVIII in Dissertatione R. P. Benedicti Cetto, Clerici Regularis e Scholis Pii de Sinesium Imposturis Detectae et Convulsae</i> , Budae 1781, letter II, pp. XVII–XXIX
Oct 31, 1750	Beijing	Maria Ana, his sister	AS 730, Dol Manor, fasc. 194	Archives of the Republic of Slovenia
Nov 22, 1751	Beijing	Maria Anna de Austria, Queen of Portugal		Arquivo Curiae Lusitanae S. J. Lisbon
Oct 21, 1753	Canton	Father Weichard Hallerstein, his brother	No. 3	Pray, G. <i>Imposturae CCXVIII in Dissertatione R. P. Benedicti Cetto, Clerici Regularis e Scholis Pii de Sinesium Imposturis Detectae et Convulsae</i> , Budae 1781, letter III, pp. XXIX–XXXII
Sept 11, 1756	Beijing	Maria Ana, his sister	AS 730, Dol Manor, fasc. 194.	Archives of the Republic of Slovenia
Oct 6, 1757	Beijing	Father Weichard Hallerstein, his brother	No. 4	Pray, G. <i>Imposturae CCXVIII in Dissertatione R. P. Benedicti Cetto, Clerici Regularis e Scholis Pii de Sinesium Imposturis Detectae et Convulsae</i> , Budae 1781, letter IV, pp. XXXIII–XXXVII

Date	Place	Addressee	No.	Publication
Oct 29, 1761	Beijing	Idem	No. 5	Ibid. letter V, pp. XXXVII–XL
Sept 12, 1764	Beijing	Idem	No. 6	Ibid. letter VI, pp. XL–XLIV
Oct 27, 1765	Beijing	Idem	No. 7	Ibid. letter VII, pp. XLV–XLVIII
Sept 24, 1766	Beijing	Idem	No. 8	Ibid. letter VIII, pp. XLIX–LV

As we can see, thirteen of the nineteen surviving personal letters were sent to his brother, Weichard Hallerstein, who was also a Jesuit and Confessor to Prince Karl of Lorraine, Governor of the Netherlands. One letter was to Father Franz Molindes, the Provincial of the Austrian province, one to Father Joseph Ritter, Confessor to the Portuguese Queen, one to Nicolò Giampriamo, member of the Society of Jesus from the Naples province, and two to his sister, Maria Ana. There is also one letter to the Queen of Portugal, Maria Anna, kept in the *Arquivo Curiae Lusitanae S. J.*, in Lisbon. Based on his letter from 1736 (Welt-Bott IV, 585: 75), there must be additional correspondence with the Queen, as he writes his brother that he had met her several times and had promised to keep her informed on his work in China. This correspondence was acquired in transcripts by the Portuguese historian, Francisco Rodrigues, who mentions another Hallerstein letter to Queen Maria Anna, dated 8 December 1752, and sent from Canton, in his study, *Jesuitas Portugueses Astronomos na China 1583–1805* (1925) (Šmitek 2009, 60). However, much of his correspondence was certainly lost,<sup>12</sup> and the communications between Europe and China were so precarious that letters would sometimes take several years to reach their destination.

Of the surviving letters, those to his brother are both the most numerous and interesting. In fact, with their lengthy descriptions of Chinese habits, beliefs, religion, clothing, we can consider Hallerstein a sort of Slovenian “protosinologist”. In one of his first letters to his brother (4 November 1739), he gives a detailed account of his long journey from Lisbon to Macao via Mozambique, Goa and Malacca, and then from Macao to Beijing. He then recounts his first audience with the Emperor and provides a detailed description of the Jesuit residences and their missionary occupants in Beijing (Welt-Bott IV, 587: 79–93), making this letter

12 In his letter to his brother Weichard, dated 4 November 1739 (Welt-Bott IV, 587: 79–93), he mentions two letters that he had written during his journey from Lisbon to Beijing, in 1738, one of which was sent from Macao. This letter is apparently lost.

an extremely valuable document, both as 18th century travelogue, and for the information it provides about the Jesuit community in the Beijing of that period.

Of particular interest are Hallerstein's views on the Chinese, and his early letters criticise the Chinese for their suspicious nature and their tendency to detect conspiracy everywhere. In his letter to Father Joseph Ritter (1 November 1743), he describes the uncertain future of the missionary delegation and the hostility of the Chinese bureaucracy:

This uncertainty cannot be ascribed in such measure to the Emperor's disfavour towards us or to our Holy Faith. It is certain that that the Emperor, although he does not favour us, also does not disfavour us. The guilt lies with the offices here and especially the office for morals, which deals with issues of faith in the country, and which is extremely disdainful towards our faith. However, the Emperor himself resisted these judges of morality when they once approached him with complaints, responding that Mohammedan and Christian faiths, prophesying and astrology were never forbidden in China. However, one cannot build anything on these uncertain rumours, nor on the friendliness and politeness of some assessors of this office. The Chinese and Tatars are cunning and crafty people, who cannot be trusted without exposing oneself to the danger of being deceived. (Welt-Bott IV, 81: 77; English translation in Saje 2009a, 307)

In letters to his brother and Nicolas Giampriamo, written in 1749, he calls the Chinese coddled and weak, and expresses a certain resentment which is doubtless related to the persecution of Christians and Jesuits in southern China. But by the end of his life, his attitudes had changed completely, and his letters contain nothing but praise for the Emperor and the Chinese. When writing about Qianlong's campaigns against the Dzungars in the years 1753–58, and the large territory the Emperor had added to his empire, his pride in Qianlong's military success is evident.<sup>13</sup> Towards the end of his life, he even described the Chinese and Europeans as fundamentally opposed, claiming that the Chinese were essentially peace-loving, while the Europeans were always inclined towards war:

The Chinese empire is an empire of peace and order. That is how it is, at least now, and how it has been for many years. To the same extent that the Europeans favour war, the Chinese favour peace. Is it perhaps thus because the European kingdoms were built on war, while the Chinese empire was founded on peace and grew voluntarily? Or is it this way, if

13 See his letters to brother Weichard, dated 29/10/1761, 12/09/1764 and 27/10/1765.

we speak of the primary reasons, because the empire is subject to one, while the European ones have many lords? It is sure that in the time when the strength of the Chinese Emperor was at its lowest and many princes were waging war against each other, one of them asked the philosopher Mencius when it would be possible to establish peace again. He responded that it would be at the time they all turned towards a single person. (Pray 1781, 8: LIV; English translation in Saje 2009a, 362).

He concludes this letter by expressing his great admiration for the Emperor Qianlong:

I would not be able to finish if I began to thank or even just to describe the Emperor's consistency, vigilance and prudence in carrying out his duty, either at home or abroad, at the hunt or when visiting the provinces. Order and the preparedness to obey are most conducive to the success and safe conclusion of his enterprises. The Chinese thus know how to command and to obey. I will never finish, if I do not interrupt the tale. In Beijing, September 24, 1766. (Pray 1781, 8: LV; English translation in Saje 2009a, 362).

English translations of the most of the correspondence, based on the Slovenian versions (Maver 2003, 227–81), are now published in the monograph, *A. Hallerstein – Liu Songling: The Multicultural Legacy of Jesuit Wisdom and Piety at the Qing Dynasty Court*, (Slovenia, 2009), making them finally available to an international readership. In his letters, Hallerstein not only discusses religious matters and the work of the Jesuits in China, but also provides descriptions of the Chinese climate, fauna, local customs and habits, his role at the court and his relations with the Emperor, and his contrasting views on Qianlong's political and social order. Given the strict censorship during Qianlong's reign, these letters provide rare and valuable information on 18th century China.

### Giuseppe Castiglione in Hallerstein's Letters

In his letters, Hallerstein also makes important observations on court painting, especially with regard to Qianlong's favourite painter, Giuseppe Castiglione. Castiglione and his art are mentioned in seven of the surviving letters, written over a period of 27 years. The first letter which mentions Castiglione was written soon after Hallerstein's arrival in Beijing in 1739, while the last one reports the news of the painter's death, in 1766. All but one of these letters were sent to his brother Weichard. Although Weichard was chiefly interested in the life, habits and customs of the Chinese people, often making specific inquiries in his own letters, Hallerstein

could not avoid mentioning Castiglione's work. In one letter, he tells his brother that Castiglione had painted their church so skillfully that a priest recently arrived from Rome, who was himself an accomplished painter, had been quite impressed, stating that the artist's work would be praised even in the capital of Christendom (*Welt-Bott* IV, no. 681). His letters also mention other examples of the painter's works, e.g. the large painting "*A Hundred Steeds*", portraits of the Emperor and Empress, his architectural plans for several palaces in the European style in Yuanming Yuan 圓明園, a series of battle scenes to be printed in Europe, together with important information regarding Castiglione's life at the court (Table 2).

Table 2: References to Castiglione in Hallerstein's letters

Date	Place	Addressee	No.	Publication	Content
Nov 4, 1739	Beijing	Father Weichard Hallerstein, his brother	No. 587	<i>Der Neue Welt-Bott</i> , Book IV, Vienna, 1755, letter no. 587, pp. 79–93.	Short description of Castiglione's art and his residence after Hallerstein's arrival in Beijing
Oct 10, 1741	Beijing	Idem	No. 675	<i>Der Neue Welt-Bott</i> , Book IV, Vienna, 1758, letter no. 675, pp. 39–42.	Court painting; Castiglione's <i>A Hundred Steeds</i> ; portrait of the Emperor and Empress
Oct 6, 1743	Beijing	Idem	No. 1	Pray, 1781, letter I, pp. I–XVI	Decoration of Residence of St. Joseph; Castiglione hears conversation between two Chinese
Nov 1, 1743	Beijing	Father Joseph Ritter, Confessor to the reigning Portuguese Queen.	No. 681	<i>Der Neue Welt-Bott</i> , Book IV, Vienna, 1758, letter no. 681, pp. 74–78.	Castiglione in the residence of St. Joseph; his decoration of the church
Nov 28, 1749	Beijing	Father Weichard Hallerstein, his brother	No. 2	Pray, 1781, letter II, pp. XVII–XXIX	Construction of a small palace in European style by Castiglione
Sept 12, 1764	Beijing	Idem	No. 6	Pray, 1781, letter VI, pp. XL–XLIV	Battle scenes to be printed in Europe
Sept 24, 1766	Beijing	Idem	No. 8	Pray, 1781, letter VIII, pp. XLIX–LV	Death of Castiglione

## Hallerstein's Views on Castiglione and His Art

While it is difficult to know much about the relationships and general atmosphere within the Jesuit community in Beijing, given that its members were united by their status as foreigners in a very alien country and by their mission of proselytising the Chinese, there must have been a strong sense of mutual trust and solidarity. It is especially difficult to analyse and evaluate the personal relationships among missionaries in Beijing from their letters, as the regulations of the Order founded by Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) prohibited the members from expressing personal feelings or views in their correspondence. Even the letters to his brother Weichard do not deviate from this norm, and Hallerstein always addresses him as “Most Reverend Father in Christ”. However, in his references to Castiglione Hallerstein reveals all of his admiration and respect for this magnificent painter. Fifteen years his senior, Castiglione had already spent 24 years in the service of three emperors (Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong) by the time Hallerstein arrived in Beijing, in June 1739. We can also conjecture that Hallerstein, originally from Mengeš near Ljubljana and Castiglione who came from Milan, may have felt a certain affinity based on their origins, with the younger Hallerstein soon assuming an almost reverential attitude towards his fellow missionary, who had lived in Beijing since November 1715. Both were inclined towards the missionary work, and saw—especially Hallerstein—the spreading of Christianity as their primary purpose in China. As the following reference indicates, Castiglione confided Hallerstein daily events or incidents about the Christian mission:

Brother Castiglione says that a few days ago, while he was painting at the court, two eunuchs who were quarrelling for some reason passed through the hall, and one said to the other, Am I then a Christian, for not honouring my ancestors? (Pray 1781, no 1; English translation in Saje 2009a, 325).

After his arrival in Beijing, Hallerstein lived in the College, but by the end of 1743 he had moved into the residence near St. Joseph's church, where he shared his living quarters with Domingos Pinheyro, Florian Bahr (1706–71), Ferdinando Moggi (1684–1761) and Giuseppe Castiglione (letter of 1 November 1743). In the long letter to his brother written shortly after his arrival in Beijing (4 November 1739), in which he describes his journey and gives his first impressions of Beijing and the local Jesuit community, Hallerstein also makes his first mention of Castiglione, describing him in the following words:

Brother Giuseppe Castiglione, a magnificent painter, who among other



works of art painted our otherwise small church, and this so expertly and skillfully that a priest who was accomplished in painting and who recently came from Rome, freely exclaimed that even in Rome this church would come to the attention of all. (Welt-Bott IV, no. 587; English translation in Saje 2009a, 283)

He clearly preferred Castiglione to the other Jesuit painters in Beijing, speaking with particular scorn of Jean-Damascène Sallusti (?–1781), the Augustinian priest who would become the Bishop of Beijing after the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773. In one letter, he evaluates the work of the four resident artists as follows:

Otherwise, there are great differences between the pictures. The best are undoubtedly those created by Brother Castiglione. Those by Father Sichelbarth and Brother Attiret follow, though they are not of the same quality as the first. Those of the Roman lag far behind. He is still a novice. (Pray 1781, 6; XLIV: English translation in Saje 2009a, 354)

He also often compared Castiglione's work with contemporary painting in Rome and Europe, with a clear preference for his fellow missionary. He even encouraged young European artists to come to Beijing in order to assist the ailing Castiglione, and learn from the Jesuit maestro, something he felt would also be to the general benefit of the Order and their missionary work.

## Court Painting and Castiglione's Position at the Court

In the main archive of the Order in Rome, we find an unpublished, posthumous memoir of Giuseppe Castiglione entitled *Memoria Postuma Fratris Josephi Castiglione*, which describes his work and sheds light on cultural exchanges between China and Europe in the 18th century.<sup>14</sup> This document provides an important source for understanding Castiglione's position at the court and his services to the Jesuit order, and may have been written by Hallerstein himself, though further research is needed in order to verify this supposition. The *Memoria* tells us that upon his arrival in Beijing, Castiglione was summoned to the court even before he had had a chance to meet his fellow Jesuit missionaries, and was asked to paint a bird in the presence of the Emperor.

Once in the city, the Emperor ordered Castiglione to be conveyed to him even before he had met our people [the Jesuit missionaries].

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14 For a detailed description of the *Memoria*, see Musillo 2008.

Without preamble the Emperor asked Castiglione to paint a bird. Castiglione obeyed and he did it so skillfully that the Emperor was wondering whether the bird was alive or painted. In order not to defraud his people [probably referring to those working in the imperial painting workshops] and to have a noble art practiced by a uniquely skilful artist, the Emperor chose a few disciples and appointed Castiglione as their master. (Musillo 2008, 52)

After this first encounter, Castiglione continued to serve under three different emperors until his death in 1766, skillfully adapting his technique to the norms and artistic principles of Chinese court painting. He enjoyed good relations with all three Emperors, and particularly with Qianlong, who personally inscribed his painting, *Spring's Peaceful Message*, with the following poem in gold paint: "In portraiture [Lang] Shining is masterful, he painted me during my younger days; The white-headed one who enters the room today, does not recognize who this is." (Wu 1995, 25)

While the emperors encouraged western painters to transmit European artistic techniques to the court apprentices and serve the imperial household, the Society of Jesus viewed their artistic members as a way to enhance their influence and guarantee the success of their missionary efforts. This attitude was certainly shared by Hallerstein, who considered the Chinese court's interest in European science to be waning, while European painting was instead much sought after by the Emperor. Thus he saw the art of painting and thus the work of Castiglione the ideal opportunity, which could improve the situation of Jesuit's activities and further contribute to the spread of the Christian religion. In a letter to his brother, dated 10 October 1741, he declares:

We hope that the grace that this humble artist and brother found in the eyes of the Emperor will favourably influence the general position of our Christian affairs. Perhaps precisely this hope could prompt European artists, especially those from our society, with their art, which is now almost the only cause of popularity at the Chinese court, to serve God's churches and help Castiglione, who is already somewhat exhausted. (Welt-Bott IV, 675: 41; English translation in Saje 2009a, 300)

Even though Hallerstein's main task at the Chinese court was his work as astronomer and mathematician, he never forgot his role as a missionary. He devoted much of his energy to promoting Christianity at the court, primarily among the wealthy, high ranking officials. However, the attitude towards the Jesuits in China would change dramatically during the course of the 18th century,

with Emperor Kangxi's tolerance being replaced by suspicion and hostility. This change was partly due to Rome's rigid policies, which forbade the Jesuits to come to any sort of accommodation with the cultures they were intending to proselytise, while the Chinese emperors rejected any form of interference with the existing political and social order, leading to increasingly severe limitations on missionary work (Saje 2009b, 25–26). Hallerstein often mentions the persecution of his fellow missionaries, in remote provinces as well as in Beijing, and was himself accused of distributing Christian publications and devotional materials such as rosaries and sacred images. It was only thanks to the Emperor's personal intervention that Hallerstein and his fellow missionary, the Portuguese Father Felix de Rocha (1713–1781), managed to avoid punishment (Pray 1781, 2: XVII–XXIX).

It was difficult for Hallerstein to accept that their extensive missionary work in Beijing, especially among the nobility, had yielded such meagre results. In reporting Castiglione's death, he declares:

And God granted him mercy before the countenances of three princes. Open to this mercy and with the example of his modesty, humility, prudence and patience, the court could be converted, if this were possible. (Pray 1781, 8: LI; English translation in Saje 2009a, 361).

While the *Memoria* praises Castiglione's work both as a committed missionary and an accomplished painter, Hallerstein's letters deal almost exclusively with his art and high rank at the court, which brought him into direct contact with the Emperor. However, in reporting Castiglione's death in 1766, he emphasizes his missionary work: "On July 16 of this year a brother from our Society, the Milanese Giuseppe Castiglione, a magnificent painter, but an even better priest, died." (Pray 1781, no. 8; English translation in Saje 2009a, 361) In this letter, he not only praises Castiglione's rectitude and saintly life as a priest, but compares his artistic talent with his missionary work in order to give preeminence to the latter, in what appears an attempt to balance these two aspects.

The Emperor Qianlong was instead interested only in Castiglione the artist, giving him many gifts and special benefits, and conferring upon him the title of 3rd civil official rank, in 1748, and the title of Shilang 侍郎—Deputy Head of the Six Boards, after his death (Yang 1988, 46). The Emperor's admiration for Castiglione's art made him the first European who was permitted to enter the private chambers of the Emperor and his wife. Hallerstein describes the painter's privileged position in a letter to his brother, dated 10 October 1741, which deserves to be cited in full:

The high officials of the country also act according to the Emperor's example, and he values almost no other European art except for painting. This has led to our Brother Giuseppe Castiglione being always welcome at the Emperor's, and His Majesty condescends to use the artist's brush of this European master. Years ago Castiglione had, on the order of Emperor Yongzheng, to portray one hundred Tatar horses and riders, each in his colours and bearing, on a six fathom long and two fathom wide canvas. The present Emperor, who was especially fond of this masterpiece, wished to have the same image produced in a smaller form so that he could always have it at hand, and to have it painted on his parasol, which Castiglione, to the Emperor's satisfaction, carried out in a short time so perfectly and scrupulously that all European connoisseurs had to express their praise, both for the first, larger one, and for the second one, the image painted on such a small space. This effort did not suffice for the Emperor. He demanded that Castiglione paint the Emperor in various sizes, and in various poses and clothes. It even occurred—which in the past was unheard of in China—that he summoned this priestly artist into his palace and into the private room of his wife, who before then was not to be seen by any European eyes. He led him there and ordered him also to paint her form with his master's brush. Castiglione thus captured both, the Emperor and Empress, to the complete satisfaction of their majesties. (Welt-Bott IV, 675: 39–42; English translation in Saje 2009a, 299–300)

Castiglione's position at the court clearly depended on the quality of his work and his ability to satisfy the demands and artistic tastes of his great patron, the Emperor, something which he managed to do throughout his long career, always working to the full "*satisfaction of their majesties*".

### Castiglione's Professional Achievements

Castiglione's work had a major influence on court painting. Together with other European painters and their Chinese collaborators, he helped create a new school of painting which combined European skill in oil painting with Chinese ink and pigments. Two new techniques in oil painting and copperplate etching were introduced into court painting, and the Western influence is also quite evident in the use of perspective and chiaroscuro. In order to satisfy imperial tastes, Castiglione painted standard subjects such as flower and plants, animals (horses and dogs), landscapes, architecture, portraits, while also recording contemporary

events. His extraordinary talent was also applied to designing various buildings in the European style. According to Yang Boda, Castiglione was a master in four different areas: oil painting, painting in the *xianfa* 綫法 style (line method), a new school which combined Western and Chinese techniques, and architectural design and construction (Yang 1988, 46). His high rank meant he was granted the privilege of having his paintings exhibited in the great halls of the Forbidden City and other important locations, such as the Lama Temple (Yonghegong 雍和宮), Yuanming Yuan 圓明園, the European Palaces and the summer palace at Chengde 承德 (Yang 1988, 46).

As Hallerstein notes in his letter of 10 October 1741, the Italian painter executed the portraits of the emperor and his consort, even being allowed into the private chambers of the Empress, “who before then was not to be seen by any European eyes” and working to the “complete satisfaction of their majesties”. He also produced several portraits of Qianlong. Because the Emperor thought that facial shadows looked like dirt, he avoided the use shading and chiaroscuro, and instead attenuated the intensity of the frontal lighting.

One of Castiglione’s most famous works is the very large scroll, *A Hundred Steeds*, which he painted at the request of the Emperor Yongzheng and in which he depicted the horses in a realistic manner, and in different poses among trees and in pastureland. Hallerstein’s reference to a smaller version of this painting is of particular interest. According to the Slovenian, at Qianlong’s request, the painter executed a much reduced version of the painting on Qianlong’s parasol so that the Emperor, who was very fond of this masterpiece, could always have it to hand. Unfortunately, this painting is probably lost.

Hallerstein also refers to other specific works by Castiglione, including a series of battle scenes produced by a group of four European painters: Denis Attiret (1702–1768), Ignaz Sickelbarth (1708–1780), Jean Damascene Sallustio, and Castiglione. Hallerstein devotes nearly three full letters to his brother Weichard (dated 1761, 1764, 1766) to describing Qianlong’s campaigns against the Dzungars in northwest China (from 1753 to 1758), expressing great pride in the Emperor’s military successes. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should speak at length about the battle scenes, in his letter of 1764:

What I forgot in the letter, I will write here. Our Emperor wishes that in Europe they cut out and print sixteen images depicting military battles which have been carried out in the past years against Kalmyks and their neighbours and against the previously subjugated Mohammedans. After the conclusion of the war he had sixteen large paintings made, which

adorned his court. Later he was sent a few images by the Augsburg engraver Rugendas depicting similar scenes. He was pleased with them. He therefore ordered our Brother Giuseppe Castiglione, a Milanese who was eighty years old and had already been in Beijing for forty-nine years, but whose hands and eyes still served him well, the Czech Father Ignaz Sichelbarth, the French Brother Denis Attiret and the Roman Father Damascène, an Augustinian from the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, to render these images in a smaller form. When they finished the first four about four months ago, the images were sent to the Cantonese Viceroy to be loaded onto Europe ships and taken to Europe. Next year four more will follow, and so on. (Pray 1781, XL–XLIV; English translation in Saje 2009a, 353–4)

After Qianlong completed his conquest of Turkestan, sixteen paintings depicting his military campaigns were executed by the four Jesuits. The Emperor then hung the canvases in a hall in the Western part of the Forbidden city, where foreign ambassadors were received. According to Sullivan, the Emperor was inspired by the engravings of Georges Philippe Rugendas of Augsburg (1666–1743) and wished to celebrate his military success with large paintings. (Sullivan 1989, 74) Hallerstein instead states that only after the sixteen battle scenes had been finished did the Emperor see the Rugendas' engravings. Much impressed by these works, he ordered the four Jesuit painters to make small ink copies to be sent to Europe, where one hundred copies of each drawing would be made. According to Hallerstein, the first four scenes were completed in July 1764, and not in 1765 as is generally believed.

After the first four drawings (of sixteen total) were completed, they were sent to Canton to be shipped to Europe. Castiglione wanted the engraving work and prints to be done in Italy, but the French mission in Canton claimed the best engravers were in Paris and convinced the Cantonese Viceroy to ship them to France. In Hallerstein's words:

It is Brother Castiglione's wish that they be prepared and printed in Italy. Because this does not belong to my area of competence, I did not interfere. The Emperor, too, wishes that only one hundred copies of each be printed and that they be sent back here with the figures; the Cantonese Viceroy is to pay for them. (Pray 1781, XLIV; English translation in Saje 2009a, 354)

The first four drawings arrived in Paris in 1766, and the rest by 1772. The drawings were engraved by Jacques-Philippe Le Bas (1707–1783), Augustin de Saint-Aubin (1736–1807) and others, under direction of Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1715–1790)



and were sent back to China in December 1774 (Sullivan 1989, 75). Hallerstein died on 29 October 1774, hence just one month before the prints and original drawings were sent back to Beijing. As his letters indicate, he was very interested in these works, and it is a pity that he did not live to see the completed prints:

I believed that your Eminence would like to be informed about this, so that you will be abreast of what is going on conversation turn to this. If your Eminence finds out something about the place of execution and about the artist, I, too, would be happy to learn this. (Pray 1781, XLIV; English translation in Saje 2009a, 354).

## Conclusion

Due to their close relationship over the course of many years, it was quite possible that Castiglione painted Hallerstein's portrait. Given his fame as an astronomer, it is likely that such a portrait would have been commissioned by Qianlong who, in fact, requested Castiglione to do portraits of other Westerners, including the artist himself.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, no images of Hallerstein are known to exist. The only physical description of the Slovenian is preserved in a report of the head of the Korean mission to China. At age 62, it describes him as in good health, with a keen, searching look, a grey beard and his hair worn in the Chinese style (i.e. with the fore part of his head shaved and wearing a long plait), and attired in the formal dress of a Chinese official (Saje 2009b, 45).

In conclusion, we can confirm that Hallerstein's recently rediscovered letters offer fresh insight into the life and art of the celebrated Milanese painter and Jesuit missionary, Giuseppe Castiglione. They provide important new evidence concerning not only Castiglione's career, but also his position at the court and within the Jesuit community in Beijing. Castiglione, who had first arrived in Beijing, 22 November 1715, died on 16 July 1766, aged 79, after more than a half century in China. In his letter of 24 September 1766, Hallerstein reports the death of this extraordinary painter with the following words:

On July 16 of this year a brother from our Society, the Milanese Giuseppe Castiglione, a magnificent painter, but an even better priest, died. He lived to be seventy-nine years, if we subtract a few days. Fifty of those years he lived for God in this Beijing station and sacrificed

<sup>15</sup> After the Anglo-French allies forces plundered and burned the Round Bright Garden more than 60 portraits of Westerners were lost or disappeared (Ju 2009, 190–1).

himself in His service. And God granted him mercy before the countenances of three princes. Open to this mercy and with the example of his modesty, humility, prudence and patience, the court could be converted, if this were possible. (Pray 1781, 8: XLIX–LV; English translation in Saje 2009a, 361)

Hallerstein would survive his friend by eight years. Given his already failing health, it is possible that the news of the dissolution of the Society of Jesus, which reached Beijing on 5 August 1743, may have hastened his death, which had occurred three months later (Saje 2009b, 49). Both missionaries were buried in the Jesuit cemetery in Beijing.

As we noted above, the posthumous memoir of Castiglione preserved in the main archive of the Order in Rome, may have been written by Hallerstein (Musillo 2008, 58, op. 12). Further research, and especially a comparative linguistic analysis of the memoir with his letters, still needs to be done in order to verify the authorship of this important document. Additional research would also provide new insights on the life and work of these two important Jesuit missionaries, and on their roles and functions at the Chinese Imperial court during that period.

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