
Adding Works to Words: A Letter About Qing Court Painter Jean-Denis Attiret, S.J. (1702–68) in the Getty Research Institute

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On the first of March 1769, Jean Joseph Marie Amiot, S.J. (1718–93, Ch. Qian Deming 錢德明), the head of the French Jesuit mission in China, penned a long letter to sculptor Claude François Attiret (1728–1804) about his cousin, recently deceased French Jesuit painter Jean-Denis Attiret (1702–68, Ch. Wang Zhicheng 王致誠). One copy was deposited in the Bibliothèque du Roi in Paris in 1775, which enabled the letter’s republication in the original French several times since the eighteenth century.¹ The Getty Research Institute holds the second known copy, which is now fully digitized and available online.² The sixty-four-page handwritten letter describes Attiret’s European training and work before and after joining the Society of Jesus. It relates some of his experiences as a court painter to the Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1736–95), quotes Attiret’s own letters about painting at the imperial Mountain Retreat for Escaping Summer Heat (*Bishushanzhuang* 避暑山莊) in summer 1754, and concludes with the artist’s last days in Beijing at the eighteenth-century height of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). It is the single most comprehensive written source on the life and work of this artist. Yet despite more than thirty years in Beijing painting for Qianlong, Attiret remains known less for his art than for his letter of 1743 describing the Qing imperial gardens, which had a profound influence on Chinese taste in eighteenth-century European garden design.³

Attiret’s paintings and personal artistic style remain elusive for several reasons. First, thanks to a longer career in China and more extant signed work, Italian painter Giuseppe Castiglione, S.J. (1688–1766; Ch. Lang Shining 郎世寧) has overshadowed the art historical record of all other European artists serving the Qing court.⁴ Second, European artists served Qianlong’s aesthetic preferences at the expense of their own individual styles, which poses challenges to reading Attiret’s work in China within Jesuit accommodation practices.⁵ In the Qing court workshop system, any painting not meeting imperial expectations was returned for revision or remaking. Third, few extant works bear Attiret’s signature, and collaboratively produced court workshop paintings were typically unsigned. Each artist painted the components for which they were the

most skilled, and the archives of the Qing imperial court workshop (*Zaobanchu* 造辦處) rarely identify which artist painted which elements.⁶ Finally, while Amiot's letter is the most detailed source on Attiret, Amiot does not provide a catalogue raisonné of Attiret's paintings, explaining that doing so would be difficult for him and tedious for the reader because the majority of them depicted Chinese subjects demanding significant explanation.⁷ Amiot also admits that Attiret's best work is inaccessible inside the palace and therefore only describes the few paintings that he had personally seen but does not include either examples or illustrations of Attiret's work.⁸

Father Amiot is an essential figure in the history of Sino-French relations because of his writing about China and his decades of experience there (fig. 1). Born in Toulon, Amiot joined the Jesuit novitiate at Avignon in September 1737 and was ordained as a priest in 1746.⁹ He requested to serve overseas and in August 1751 arrived in Beijing, where he gained command of both Chinese and Manchu, the two key languages of the Qing court. These linguistic skills not only earned him Qianlong's respect and favor but also enabled him to send original research on Chinese topics as well as translations of Sunzi's *The Art of War*, imperial poems, and musical treatises to France for publication.¹⁰ His work contributing information on China to France did not cease after the Parlement of Paris expelled the Jesuits in 1762 and King Louis XV (r. 1715–73) abolished the Society of Jesus in France in 1764. Quite the opposite: Louis recognized the Jesuit mission's significance as the key French source of insight into China, and in 1765 sent two Chinese Christian converts, Aloïs Ko and Étienne Yang, from France back to China to serve as informants.¹¹ Perhaps counterintuitively, the period from 1765 to 1792, enduring through Pope Clement XIV's formal suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773, marked "Amiot's most fruitful period as a writer" as well as the time in which he produced "the greatest volume of correspondence in the history of the French mission."¹² Father Amiot was the most influential contributor to French statesman Henri-Léonard Jean-Baptiste Bertin's (1720–92) major publication projects intended to satisfy the French demand for empirical observations and in-depth knowledge about China. Art historian John Finlay has demonstrated that Bertin believed words without accompanying illustrations to be insufficient for understanding China, so Amiot sent many images of China produced by Ko and Yang as well as Chinese prints and paintings that later appeared in Bertin's publications.¹³ Consequently, it is surprising that none of Attiret's work seems to have accompanied Amiot's necrology for the artist, especially during the precarious period when the Beijing Jesuits were under pressure to demonstrate their continued relevance by providing firsthand experience of and information about China.

Amiot's reliance on written words rather than Attiret's own works established a pattern that persists in modern scholarship in which Attiret is considered predominantly through written descriptions in European missionary letters or factual records from the Qing imperial workshop archives.¹⁴ The sole Western-language monograph on Attiret uses only European-language sources, omitting Chinese records entirely, and therefore also leaves out several paintings not held in European collections.¹⁵ Scholarship that seeks to balance writing about Attiret with his own



FIG. 1. — Attributed to Giuseppe Panzi (Italian, active in China, 1734–1812). *Le Père Joseph-Marie Amiot, jésuite français missionnaire à Pékin au XVIII^e siècle* (Father Joseph-Marie Amiot, French Jesuit missionary in Beijing during the eighteenth century), before 1789, oil on Korean paper, 63 × 47 cm. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, N-4. Image © BnF, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.

paintings is the exception rather than the rule. Curator Anne Dary's 2004 exhibition catalog and scholar Ming Xiaoyan's article of 2005 stand out for their efforts to include Attiret's works, but each of these uses only scholarship and primary sources available in either French or Chinese, respectively, not both.¹⁶

As a contribution to the significant body of scholarship that now exists on art history of the global eighteenth century and on Sino-French relations during that period, this essay asks what can be learned about Attiret when his art is reintegrated with Amiot's letter as well as with primary textual sources in French and Chinese. Paintings that were either signed by Attiret or paintings for which we have documentary evidence that firmly demonstrates his authorship provide a clear sense of a painter meeting the very different demands of the Catholic Church and the Qing court. Recovering Attiret's works of art not only follows the period practice of gleaning knowledge directly from the source but also helps us to understand the evolution of Attiret's painting before and after his arrival in Beijing. By reincorporating the French and Chinese visual and material evidence of these moments of transcultural exchange alongside written records in both languages, the essay follows the French

Enlightenment mode in which Amiot wrote the letter as well as Attiret's own experience of working across French and Qing cultures.

Attiret's Life and Work Before China

Attiret was baptized on 31 July 1702 as the son of Claude-Françoise Guinard (life dates unknown) and Jean-Claude Attiret (1669–1733), a painter and master carpenter active in Dole.¹⁷ Born into an influential family of artists, artisans, and architects, Attiret was educated in Jean-Claude's studio, after which his father's patron, Claude-Joseph Froissard (1657–1750), the marquis of Broissia, helped finance several years of professional training in Rome. Although Amiot refuses to discuss most work that Attiret completed prior to joining the novitiate, he mentions a few portraits of area notables. Several surviving paintings dateable to the early 1730s include monumental history paintings depicting Old Testament subjects such as *Yaël and Sisera* (fig. 2), *Judith and Holofernes*, and *The Adoration of the Golden Calf*, all likely intended for church decoration.¹⁸ The combination of personal portraits and large-scale figure paintings for building decoration laid the foundation for some of the genres that Qianlong would later demand of Attiret, even if the finished works differed dramatically.



FIG. 2. — Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68). *Yaël and Sisera*, 1730, signed and dated on reverse: “Attiret pingebat Dola 1730,” oil on canvas, 170 × 235 cm. Dole, Musée de Beaux-Arts, inv. 389. Black-and-white image © Jean-Loup Mathieu (Eurêka), used by permission; studio Chechillot; Catherine Scheck.

Attiret entered the Jesuit novitiate in Dole on 31 July 1735, not long after one last intimate encounter with the secular world: In February 1736, Attiret formally recognized his illegitimate son, Jean-Claude, born to one Claude Perciot (life dates unknown).¹⁹ Whether he told Amiot about his son is unknown, but Attiret never mentions either

the boy or his mother in surviving letters, and Amiot's inclusion of such a detail in the necrology would not have supported Jesuit goals. While Amiot offers no specific insight into what prompted Attiret to join the church at age thirty-three, he differentiates Attiret from other novices because of his age and maturity as well as for the willing sacrifice of his established artistic talents and future worldly fortune. Yet Amiot explicitly links two events that ultimately resulted in both Attiret's return to painting and his China posting. Writing from Beijing, Fathers Dominique Parrenin (1665–1741, Ch. Ba Duoming 巴多明; fig. 3) and Valentin Chaliér (1693–1747, Ch. Sha Ruyu 沙如玉) noted the Qing emperor's artistic regard for Castiglione, and thus for the Portuguese mission in China, to which the Italian artist was attached. The two Jesuit missions in eighteenth-century China—French and Portuguese—competed actively for imperial attention and resources. Consequently, Amiot reported, the French mission requested that a French Jesuit painter be sent to Beijing to increase French influence at the Qing court.²⁰ Simultaneously, Amiot reported that the Jesuit Novitiate Church of Saint-Louis in Avignon was negotiating with a local artist to paint their early seventeenth-century chapel. The artist questioned why the Jesuits wished to employ an outsider when they already possessed a talented painter in Attiret, who would also save them the cost of a commission from outside the order. "It was like this," Amiot wrote in the necrology, "on the word of a great artist and for similar motivations, that the Jesuits in Rome were once willing to consent to the famous Pozzo giving the first evidence of a talent which has immortalized his name."²¹ By invoking the name of painter Andrea Pozzo, S.J. (1642–1709) and his famed illusionistic ceiling in the Jesuit church of Saint Ignatius of Loyola in Rome, which was established by the Society of Jesus founder of the same name, Amiot compares Attiret not only with the famed Pozzo but also implicitly with Castiglione, who had claimed to follow Pozzo's example in painting similar illusions for Beijing churches.²²

In the former Jesuit chapel in Avignon, Attiret's frescoes on the pendentives depict the Four Evangelists and their symbols.²³ His Saint Luke, patron saint of artists, is depicted as a white-haired, vigorous man absorbed in sketching on a board gripped in one muscular hand, forearm bulging from the effort (fig. 4). Amiot notes that during Attiret's two years as a novice he also painted episodes from the life of Christ, described as both grisaille and chiaroscuro, which, together with the pendentives, made the novitiate church a sightseeing stop for travelers passing through Avignon.²⁴ By increasing church visitation even during Attiret's lifetime, Attiret's talents helped support the Jesuits and the faith both at home and abroad. The chapel is now part of the Hotel Cloître Saint-Louis, and the pendentive paintings are mentioned in tourist guides for the city of Avignon.²⁵



FIG. 3. — Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68). *Portrait of Father Dominique Parrenin (1665–1741)*, engraving from *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 2nd ed., vol. 19 (Paris, 1781), opposite p. 257. Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, Boston College Libraries.



FIG. 4. — Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68). *Saint Luke pendentive*, ca. 1735–37. Avignon, Chapelle Saint-Louis. Photograph by Studio Ohlala.

During the two years of his novitiate, Attiret continued to paint for the Society of Jesus, dedicating himself to portraiture and history paintings. In the autumn of 1737 Amiot and Attiret overlapped briefly at Avignon, where Amiot began his novitiate in September, a few months before Attiret departed France forever for Beijing on 8 January 1738. But the two men would meet again in 1751, when Amiot arrived in Beijing, and they would work closely together at the small French mission there for the rest of Attiret's life.

Painting for the Qing Emperor

Attiret landed in Macao on 7 August 1738 and received the order to travel to Beijing on December 2, finally reaching the capital on 13 June 1739 in the company of other newly arrived Jesuits serving either the French or Portuguese missions. Attiret was formally introduced at court with the Chinese name Wang Zhicheng, the first name Zhicheng 致誠 connoting the meaning of “conveying sincerity” or “genuinely devoted” (in the sense of dedicating efforts to a task). The identity of Attiret's namer is unrecorded, but Father Parrenin and his Beijing mission colleagues Antoine Gaubil (1689–1759, Ch. Song Junrong 宋君榮) and Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla (1669–1748, Ch. Feng Bingzheng 馮秉正) were all skilled Chinese speakers who were well-read in Confucian classics, easily capable of creating a meaningful and appropriate Chinese name. Describing an introduction at court that he did not observe firsthand, Amiot reports that Attiret presented Qianlong with a painting depicting the Adoration of the Magi, which is an appropriate subject for a Christian ruler but a bold choice for a foreign emperor notably uninterested in Christianity.²⁶ Likely unaware of (or at least unconcerned by) the symbolism, Qianlong accepted the painting into the palace and the artist into imperial service, which marked the start of both Attiret's decades of court success as well as the bearing of “his pains and his crosses” that made the position challenging both personally and professionally.²⁷

Attiret's Chinese name first appears in the Imperial Workshop (*Zaobanchu*) archives on 30 August 1739 in an order sent to the Wish-Fulfilling Studio (*Ruyiguan* 如意館), which housed Qianlong's best painters and artisans, including Castiglione. Attiret was ordered to produce oil paintings of an unspecified subject on a set of hanging scrolls for the Hall of Universal Peace (*Wanfang anhe* 萬方安和), one of the named scenic areas within the imperial Garden of Perfect Brightness (*Yuanmingyuan* 圓明園).²⁸ Work such as this, conducted deep inside the Yuanmingyuan where the Wish-Fulfilling Studio was also located, led to Attiret's familiarity with the imperial garden and therefore his famous letter describing its design. But this first imperial order for oil paintings in the hanging-scroll format also epitomizes the difficulty that Attiret faced in painting across cultures. As he discovered after presenting the emperor with his first work produced as a Qing court painter, Qianlong required certain elements be added or removed and appreciated neither “the shine of oil paints” nor “shadows, particularly when they were a little strong, which seemed to him like stains.”²⁹ Nevertheless, the

workshop archives record numerous orders for Attiret to produce oil paintings (*youhua* 油畫), including oil on glass and mirrors, which historian Tang Kaijian has identified in the *Zaobanchu* archives as one of several major categories of imperial orders for Attiret that distinguished “oil paintings” of many different subjects in addition to the genres of animals, figures, “beautiful women paintings” (*meirenhua* 美人畫), and “scenic illusion paintings” (*tongjinghua* 通景畫).³⁰ This range aligns with the genres Amiot lists for much of Attiret’s Chinese work: landscapes, battles, flowers, animals, architecture, and interior decoration.³¹ While most modern scholarship in English, French, and German treats Attiret as a portraitist, Chinese-language Imperial Workshop archives reveal that most of his work for Qianlong was in other genres.

Amiot spends several pages of his letter recounting how Attiret learned to successfully paint Chinese and Manchu women, a genre known as “beautiful women painting” that depicted a feminine type more than individualized portraits and which was typically only subtly erotic in its court manifestations but could be quite sexualized in other contexts.³² Attiret completed a work depicting Chinese women and their attendants in a landscape, but Qianlong ordered the artist to either change or repaint the figures because they looked like European women wearing Chinese dress rather than Chinese women. Later, a senior court painter explained that elite women and ladies of quality must be differentiated from servants by their visible “modesty, timidity, [and] sweetness” but particularly by their pink hands, slender fingers, and long pink-and-white fingernails with the pinky fingernail longer than the rest.³³ If Attiret wanted the emperor to appreciate this painting, then he was advised by his colleague to “cover the necks of these women up to the chin and their arms up to the wrists; a collar and long sleeves will get you out of trouble for the present; soften the colors of these faces; weaken their brightness through half tones that allow barely any flush to be seen; for we have a maxim that a woman who has a glowing face is addicted to wine.”³⁴ The colleague concluded with the assessment that Attiret would likely be more comfortable painting either foreign or Manchu women, as Manchu women only slowly adopted Chinese habits, implying that Attiret’s representations of the Chinese and Manchu women were not sufficiently delicate or reserved enough to comply with Chinese taste. Yet Attiret absorbed this advice so successfully that the Wish-Fulfilling Studio archives include imperial orders for at least sixty paintings of “beautiful women” between 1747 and 1767—more than any other genre requested of Attiret.³⁵

Two rare draft sketches for “beautiful women paintings” testify to his abilities, depicting dainty young women in high-collared, long-sleeved, Chinese-style robes engaging the viewer from behind curtained doorways (figs. 5a, 5b). Wider foreheads and pointed chins create heart-shaped faces with delicate eyebrows and small mouths through ink line rather than color or wash. The same treatment of the faces and similar framing of the women within interior architecture are also found in a work signed by Attiret and his Wish-Fulfilling Studio colleague Zhang Tingyan 張廷彥 (1735–94) that bears three of Qianlong’s seals (fig. 6).³⁶ Just over 1.7 meters tall, this painting

depicts a court woman gazing downward with a knowing smile as she stands behind the chair of another, while the seated woman looks up dreamily from her ladylike occupation of embroidering flowers and butterflies, together a symbol for heterosexual romantic love. As in the sketches, these women are viewed as if through an aperture, a common treatment suggesting that the viewer is observing the women while remaining unobserved himself. I believe that Attiret most likely painted these women's faces because of his talent for figures over other subjects as well as the fact that Qianlong's European artists regularly painted faces in larger collaborative works, where their distinctive volumetric, brush-concealing style is juxtaposed with the visible Chinese brushwork surrounding those faces.³⁷ The same contrast is found in this painting, where the women's faces are rendered in much finer, paler, and less conspicuous brushwork than the dark ink lines of their clothing and the boldly calligraphic strokes representing textile folds. Zhang was known for landscape, architecture, and figures, but his paintings of women's faces retain firm, perceptible ink lines more consistent with those used for their clothing.³⁸ Furthermore, in this painting and Attiret's sketches, all four women's faces share the same wider forehead and pointed chin, and the eyebrow positioning, gaze direction, and subtle mouth movement in otherwise unmodeled faces indicate thought and emotion. Attiret may have been responsible for other areas of the painting created with Zhang, but the faces are more likely than not his work.



FIGS. 5A, 5B. — Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68). Draft sketches of young Chinese women for scenic illusion paintings, dateable to 1759, ink on paper, 19.7 × 9.9 cm (each image). From *Recueil de pièces diverses, rangées chronologiquement de 1408 à 1845*, compiled 1892, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, NAF 5371, fols. 56–57. Images: BnF.



FIG. 6. — Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68) and Zhang Tingyan (Chinese, 1735–94). *Beautiful Women*, mid-18th century, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 172.8 × 83.8 cm. Private collection. From *Catalogue for The Imperial Sale*, auction cat., Christie's Hong Kong, 30 May 2005, lot 1217.

Both sketches bear yellow imperial paper slips (*huangtiao* 黃條) stating that the finished paintings were to be installed in the Clear View Pavilion (*Chengguan'ge* 澄觀閣) in the Eternal Spring Garden (*Changchunyuan* 長春園), next to the Yuanmingyuan (see figs. 5a, 5b).³⁹ These slips, together with workshop records, help identify the nonextant, final paintings for which the sketches were destined as “scenic illusion paintings” (*tongjinghua*), or monumental illusionistic works in color on silk. Such works were produced by the Qing Wish-Fulfilling Studio artists, who incorporated linear perspective and volumetric representation to create life-size works mounted on walls and ceilings, and were intended to deceive the viewer, through placement and representational techniques, into thinking that the painting subject and the space depicted were real.⁴⁰ Amiot describes one such painting by Attiret: approximately five *pieds* (likely referring to *pieds du roi*, “royal feet”) by three-and-a-half *pieds* wide (slightly more than 1.6 meters tall by 1.1 meters wide), it depicted a woman adjusting a flower in her hair in front of a mirror. While the subject falls squarely within the genre of “beautiful women paintings,” Amiot’s description of the size and deceptively realistic depiction of the space identifies it as a scenic illusion painting: “The mirror is what is most surprising in this painting. One would take it for a real mirror, in which one recognizes everything in the apartment that is within reach of being represented. The illusion is perfect; art cannot go further.”⁴¹ Attiret is specifically named in at least eleven sets of orders for scenic illusion paintings.⁴² But as an artist serving in the Wish-Fulfilling Studio, he was likely involved in many more, confirming that beautiful women and scenic illusions were both major categories of Attiret’s Qing court oeuvre.

Portraits

Although court workshop archives record few specific orders for Attiret to paint portraits, Amiot estimates that Attiret painted more than two hundred oil portraits of sitters including but not limited to “Manchus, Mongols, Tartars, Chinese, men, women, children, emperors, princes, magistrates, [and] warriors,” often as bust portraits.⁴³ Ten or twelve portraits, Amiot notes, were life-size and depicted the sitter in formal dress; sitters included the emperor, a Tibetan lama, an unnamed princess, and Qianlong’s brother, the fifth prince (likely referring to Hongyan 弘瞻, the Prince Guo 果, 1733–65). Curiously, Amiot omitted a very significant portrait from his list: On 29 May 1753 Attiret received an imperial order to paint the visiting Portuguese ambassador, Francisco Xavier Assis Pacheco de Sampaio; he would later produce two unofficial versions of this portrait, including one for the French mission.⁴⁴ In September 1754 Qianlong ordered that Pacheco’s portrait be attached to a nine-panel screen in the Palace of Harmonious Delights (*Xieqiqu* 諧奇趣) within the recently constructed European Palaces (*Xiyanglou* 西洋樓) precinct of the Yuanmingyuan.⁴⁵ The fact that the Frenchman Attiret completed the Portuguese ambassador’s portrait (rather than Castiglione, involved as he was with the Portuguese mission and the Pacheco embassy) was meaningful enough to the French Jesuits to earn a mention in the 1758 volume of the first edition of the

Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus (Edifying and curious letters, written from the foreign missions by some missionaries of the Society of Jesus), a thirty-four volume set of letters written by Jesuits serving in the French overseas missions and published in Paris between 1703 and 1776 for a broad audience.⁴⁶ The inclusion of this event in the *Lettres*, read widely both in France and across Europe, makes its omission from Amiot's necrology even more unexpected.

More than a dozen unsigned bust portraits in oil on Korean paper depicting important Qianlong court figures still exist. Korean paper (*Gaoli zhi* 高麗紙) is a thick, sturdy paper made of mulberry bark and heavily sized to minimize absorption, which made it an ideal surface for oils.⁴⁷ Until very recently, all were attributed to Attiret: two of Qing court princes sold at Bonhams London on 7 November 2024; eight of Mongol leaders held in the Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin; one of a consort in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dole; and, in the Musée Guimet, Paris, a bust portrait of Qianlong (fig. 7) along with one of a consort.⁴⁸ All the portraits indicate trained European Jesuit hands—either Attiret, Castiglione, or their colleague Ignatius Sichelbarth, S.J. (1708–80, Ch. Ai Qimeng 艾啟蒙)—through confident use of color, highlighting, and subtle shading (rather than Chinese-style visible linework and brushwork) to create individualized faces with mass and volume. More concrete attributions are difficult, due in part to the fact that some (such as the Mongol leaders) were painted outside of the palace workshops at other imperial sites away from Beijing. Palace Museum researcher Wang Youmin and Rijksmuseum curator Wang Ching-ling have used various court documents other than workshop archives to argue for reattributing the portraits' collective authorship away from Attiret, instead dividing it among the three Jesuit painters serving the court at that time.⁴⁹ Epitomized by the Musée Guimet portrait of Qianlong wearing ceremonial armor, these paintings consistently position the sitters frontally in the traditional poses of formal Chinese portraiture, which emphasize the face for insight into the person and use costume to mark status. However, all are set against blue or gray backgrounds, a more European treatment than unpainted grounds. Attiret took the same approach to his portrait of Father Parrenin published in the second edition of the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* (1780–83), only slightly angling the French mission-leader's body and face but retaining the bust length, dark ground, and formal Chinese attire (see fig. 3). Attiret seems to have inaugurated this approach, which other missionary artists continued, such as in the portrait attributed to Giuseppe Panzi, S.J. (Ch. Pan Tingzhang 潘廷章) of Father Amiot circa 1789 (see fig. 1).⁵⁰

Attiret's only signed portraits depict horses, which Qianlong regularly received as tribute gifts. Bearing the signature "Respectfully painted by the court servitor Jean-Denis Attiret" (*Chen Wang Zhicheng gong hui* 臣王志誠恭繪, using a variant of the character *zhi*), Attiret's album *Ten Fine Horses* (*Shi junma tu* 十駿馬圖) is the only work bearing his signature that is both documented in the former imperial painting collection and still held in the Palace Museum in Beijing.⁵¹ Each painting in the album is inscribed



FIG. 7. — Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68). *Portrait of the Qianlong Emperor*, mid-18th century, oil on Korean paper, 119 × 91.5 cm. Paris, Musée National des Arts Asiatiques–Guimet, MG 26504. Photograph by Ghislain Vanneste, © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.

with the horse's name in Manchu and paired with a leaf of Qianlong's Chinese calligraphy praising the creature. The horses are depicted in landscapes but exist with greater solidity than their surrounding environments, which often include a view into the distance created by a curving path or body of water. In *The Fine Horse Myriad Auspiciousness* (*Wan Ji Shuang* 萬吉驕), the bend in the path repeats the curve of the horse's turned head, strengthening the connection between the animal and its setting (fig. 8). The path extends vertically up the right side of the composition, along an uptilted ground plane in the traditional Chinese mode of representing distance, rather



FIG. 8. — Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68). *The Fine Horse Myriad Auspiciousness* (Wan Ji Shuang 萬吉驪), ink and color on paper, 24.2 × 29.1 cm, from the album of paintings *Ten Fine Horses* (Shi junma tuce 十駿馬圖冊), dateable to 1743. Beijing, Palace Museum, 新 00146057. Image provided by the Palace Museum.

than with the low horizon line and vanishing point of European geometric linear perspective in which Attiret was originally trained. The horses in this album do not cast shadows on the ground. Yet the very subtle shading on their bodies, and slightly more visible shading and highlighting on their hooves, reveals that they were painted as if lit by a single light source. Their muscles are visible through their coats, and the discernible detail of the underlying anatomy combined with invisible brushwork adds to the animals' solidity in a landscape shaped using Chinese texture strokes. This combination of European and Chinese painting styles reveals not only how Attiret's skills expanded in court service but also the distinctly Qing transcultural painting style that Qianlong expected of his artists.

Each leaf is impressed with one or several of Qianlong's seals, which articulate and reiterate the emperor's pleasure in viewing and reviewing the works. His seal "Treasure of the Retired Emperor" (*Taishang huangdi zhibao* 太上皇帝之寶) is impressed across the top of the written and painted leaves, permanently marking his presence and approval. According to the third chapter (*juan* 卷) of the *Precious Collection of the Stone Moat Second Series* (*Shiqu baoji xubian* 石渠寶笈續編), part of the cataloging project for the secular works in Qianlong's imperial painting collection, the album was stored in the Forbidden City's Palace of Tranquil Longevity (*Ningshougong* 寧壽宮) where Qianlong originally planned to retire.⁵² This further identifies the work's significance as well as its persistent appeal to the emperor over his lifetime.

Attiret at the Mountain Retreat for Escaping Summer Heat

The third section of Amiot's letter focuses on events that occurred between 1753 and 1760, which he describes as the height of Qianlong's reign for the return of various

Mongol tribes to the Qing fold and imperial military victories in Central Asia.⁵³ Future generations, Amiot predicts, will be equally impressed by what occurred during this period as by “what painting will put before our eyes,” implying Attiret’s role in that success.⁵⁴ This period is also when Attiret received the most concentrated imperial favor and attention, beginning on 26 June 1754, when Qianlong ordered him to travel to the Mountain Retreat for Escaping Summer Heat to record the celebrations surrounding the submission of several thousand Dörbet Mongols and their leaders.⁵⁵ Attiret then spent two frenetic months painting at the Qing imperial retreat in Hebei province, approximately 150 miles away from the capital and north of the Great Wall, writing to Amiot about his experiences in letters both excerpted in the necrology and published in France.⁵⁶

Although Attiret was not originally part of the entourage that left Beijing, while en route Qianlong sent for him to join the imperial progress, which arrived at the Retreat on 2 July.⁵⁷ On 4 July 1754, Attiret recounted that a minister arrived at 11 p.m. with an order to paint the next day’s Great Banquet (*Da Yanyan* 大筵宴). Under orders to produce a draft sketch for imperial inspection before the banquet even occurred, Attiret chose the moment of the emperor’s arrival at the ceremony, drafted the image that same day as requested, and received imperial approval to proceed with the painting. Although the draft has been lost, the monumental finished work based on Attiret’s sketch, *Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees* (*Wanshuyuan ciyan tu* 萬樹園賜宴圖) was completed the next year with the assistance of Castiglione and Sichelbarth (fig. 9).⁵⁸ Scholars often praise the painting’s ability to communicate imperial authority and a sense of truthful representation through its blend of European linear perspective and Chinese isometric perspective for the main scene and the surrounding landscape as well as its identifiable portraits of the Mongol leaders and the individualized faces of the major court officials.⁵⁹ These portraits are connected with those in Berlin, but far more important for Attiret at the time was the fact that he painted the emperor’s portrait as part of the banquet scene. Continuing the system of imperial approvals practiced in the Beijing palace workshops even while away from the capital, upon inspection of the draft, Qianlong found that his figure was leaning too far backward in his seat. To help Attiret correct the problem, Qianlong posed for him. Due to the extreme heat combined with Attiret’s persistent illness while at the Mountain Retreat, the emperor not only allowed the artist to remove his hat but also to sit. Attiret noted, “one is always on his knees when one does something in the presence of His Majesty,” marking these permissions as acts of extraordinary favor.⁶⁰

Qianlong’s satisfaction with this portrait led to an order to depict him practicing archery at the Retreat, which Attiret painted in oil on Korean paper (fig. 10).⁶¹ The emperor stands flanked by servants and officials while preparing to release an arrow toward a suspended target. Large rockeries, a stream, and a pavilion wall measure the significant distance between the emperor and the target, while colorful foliage in a mountainous setting identify the space as the Mountain Retreat. On the back of the painting, an imperial yellow slip reading “As-You-Like-It Island, Double-Pine Study”



FIG. 9. — Giuseppe Castiglione (Italian, active in Italy and China 1688–1766), Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68), and Ignatius Sichelbarth (German-Bohemian, active China 1708–80). *Imperial Banquet in the Garden of Ten Thousand Trees* (*Wanshuyuan ciyan tu* 萬樹園賜宴圖), 1755, hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk, 221.2 × 419.6 cm. Beijing, Palace Museum, 故00006275. Image provided by the Palace Museum.



FIG. 10. — Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68). *Qianlong Practicing Archery* (*Qianlong shejian tu* 乾隆射箭圖), dateable to 1754, oil on Korean paper, 95 × 213.7 cm. Beijing, Palace Museum, 故00008760. Image provided by the Palace Museum.

(*Ruyizhou Shuangsong shuju* 如意洲雙松書屋) identifies where in the Mountain Retreat it originally hung.⁶² Attiret reported that Qianlong assessed his work as “very good,” pairing a transliteration of the emperor’s “hen hao” (很好) with its French translation “très bien” in a rare use of the Chinese language, with which Attiret struggled. Depicting the emperor in action meant representing both his imperial visage and skill in an activity essential to his Manchu cultural and ethnic heritage. Attiret retained the blue sky, atmospheric perspective, figural modeling with highlights, and oil paints of his French training. Yet the uptilted ground plane, landscape texture strokes, and complete

lack of cast shadows reflect his successful absorption of Qianlong's preference for blended European and Chinese techniques.

Amiot only briefly mentions the events and characters that led to Qianlong's 1755–59 military campaigns in Xinjiang but describes in detail the triumphal procession into Beijing in 1760 that he observed.⁶³ That same year, Jesuits Attiret, Castiglione, and Sichelbarth, together with the Augustinian Qing court painter Giovanni Damasceno Salusti (1727–81, Ch. An Deyi 安德意), produced monumental paintings of the battles and the victory celebrations; these were installed in the Pavilion of Purple Splendor (*Ziguangge* 紫光閣), west of the Forbidden City.⁶⁴ Only fragments of the paintings survive today, but the images are better known through *Les conquêtes de l'empereur de la Chine* (The conquests of the emperor of China), a series engraved and printed in France in 1774 based on designs by European artists. Attiret contributed three designs: *Le combat d'Arcul* (The battle of Arcul), *La victoire de Khorgos* (The victory of Khorgos) (fig. 11), and *On offre les prisonniers de la pacification des tribus musulmanes* (Presenting the prisoners of the pacification of the Muslim tribes).⁶⁵ Researcher Niklas Leverenz argues that a group of draft sketches held in the Tenri Central Library of Tenri University in Japan are the preparatory images for these lost paintings, one depicting the Qing victory at Khorgos with an imperial yellow paper label identifying it as Castiglione's work, and another depicting the battle at Arcul that has lost its yellow labels.⁶⁶ Attiret is named as the designer for both of these images in the engraved series, an incongruity that leads Leverenz to suggest that Castiglione may have designed the original painting while Attiret prepared the drawing sent for engraving. Amiot does not mention Attiret's designs for the prints in his necrology; the sketches were only sent abroad the year before his death and returned a decade later, so Amiot could not have predicted the profound impact they would have on both Paris and Beijing in the later eighteenth century.

Attiret's last Wish-Fulfilling Studio order, dated 14 May 1768, was for a figure painting to be placed on the wall of a palace building.⁶⁷ He died shortly thereafter, on 8 December 1768, and was buried in Beijing's French Jesuit cemetery (*Zhengfusi* 正副寺), which was destroyed during the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901).⁶⁸ Qianlong provided two hundred silver taels for Attiret's funeral, equivalent to one thousand five hundred livres in Amiot's estimation.⁶⁹ This was such a mark of honor that the imperial donation was recorded in Latin and Chinese on his tombstone, now held in the Beijing Stone Carving Art Museum.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Using the language of art, Amiot describes his letter as a portrait, but admits that it is “embellished by the colors of friendship rather than traced lightly by the simple pencil of truth.”⁷¹ He justifies its length as a means of conveying some of Attiret's thoughts on Chinese painting, which the painter had hoped to publish as a text useful to artists and interesting to curious Europeans. This emphasis on accurate empirical



FIG. 11. — Jacques Philippe Le Bas (French, 1707–83), engraver; Jean-Denis Attiret (French, active in France and China, 1702–68), designer; and Charles-Nicolas Cochin II (French, 1715–90), printer. *La victoire de Khorgos* (The victory of Khorgos), etching and engraving, 100.7 × 65.4 cm (sheet), from the series *Les conquêtes de l'empereur de la Chine* (The conquests of the emperor of China), 1774. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 45.100.4, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1945.

observation and the suggestion of Attiret's unfulfilled publication aspirations reflect period European approaches for firsthand information about China. But as the head of the French mission in China in the precarious years immediately after the Society of Jesus was abolished in and expelled from France, Amiot would also have intended that this letter's publication would fuel eighteenth-century French fascination with China and demonstrate the continued relevance of the Jesuit mission in Beijing. By returning images of Attiret's works to the necrology, we not only fill in the visual gaps but also meet the expectations of the letter's own time.

When Attiret's work in France and China is considered holistically, it is clear that his paintings differed dramatically depending on country, patron, and audience. While those differences complicate efforts to pinpoint his style, the flexibility revealed by the paintings is also the marker of his success. Specifically, the ability to adapt European styles and materials to Qing imperial demands was essential to his continued court service and therefore his usefulness to the Jesuit mission and to France. Read against Attiret's extant oeuvre, Amiot's letter acquires additional value for what it omits as much as for what it reveals. With the Society officially dissolved at home, Amiot's necrology for Attiret navigates a balance between information about China and the Jesuit painter's biography and experiences. Amiot may have described only paintings that he personally had seen, but in doing so he epitomizes the eighteenth-century French intellectual trend of empirical observation. When we reintegrate extant paintings and Chinese archival sources with Amiot's letter, Attiret's life and work

contribute meaningfully to the material and textual evidence of eighteenth-century Sino-French cultural interactions.

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Notes

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1. “Extrait d’une lettre de père Amiot du 1 mars 1769, de Péking, content l’éloge du Frère Attiret,” *Journal de sçavans* (June 1771): 406–20; “Jean Denis Attiret, peintre et missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jésus. Lettre inédite du Père Amyot,” in *Collections de précis historiques, littéraires, scientifiques* (Brussels, 1856), 437–53, 461–77, 485–500; Henri Bernard, S.J., “Le Frère Attiret au service de K’ien-long (1739–1768): Sa première biographie,” *Bulletin de l’Université l’Aurore* 4, no. 1 (1943): 30–82; and Henri Bernard, S.J., “Le Frère Attiret au service de K’ien-long (1739–1768): Sa première biographie (Suite),” *Bulletin de l’Université l’Aurore* 4, no. 2 (1943): 435–74.

2. Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, letter to Claude-François Attiret regarding Jean-Denis Attiret, 1 March 1769, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute (GRI), 2013.M.13, <http://hdl.handle.net/10020/2013m13>.

3. Jean-Denis Attiret, “Lettre du Père Attiret, peintre au service d l’empereur de la Chine, à M. d’Assaut, à Pékin, le 1er novembre 1743,” in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* [...], vol. 27 (Paris, 1749), 1–61; and Jean-Denis Attiret, *A Particular Account of the Emperor of China’s Gardens near Peking* [...], trans. Sir Harry Beaumont (London, 1752).

4. Marco Musillo, *The Shining Inheritance: Italian Painters at the Qing Court, 1699–1812* (Getty Research Institute, 2016); and Marco Musillo, “Reconciling Two Careers: The Jesuit Memoir of Giuseppe Castiglione, Lay Brother and Qing Imperial Painter,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 42, no. 1 (2008): 45–59.

5. Jeffrey Muller, “My Eyes and Taste Are Grown a Little Chinese’: Jean-Denis Attiret, SJ, Recognizes the Equal Value of European and Chinese Art,” in *From Rome to Beijing: Sacred Spaces*

in *Dialogue*, ed. Daniel M. Greenberg and Mari Yoko Hara (Brill, 2024), 135–55; and Jeffrey Muller, “The Jesuit Strategy of Accommodation,” in *Jesuit Image Theory*, ed. Wietse de Boer, Karl A. E. Enenkel, and Walter S. Melion (Brill, 2016), 461–92.

6. *Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan* 中国第一历史档案馆 First Historical Archives, *Qinggong zaobanchu dang’an zonghui* 清宮造辦處檔案總會, 55 vols. (Beijing Renmin Chubanshe, 2005).

7. Amiot, letter to Claude-François Attiret, GRI, 36.

8. Amiot, letter, GRI, 58.

9. For biographies of Amiot, see “Le P. Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot,” in *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l’ancienne Mission de Chine 1552–1773*, by Louis Pfister, vol. 2 (Shanghai: Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique, 1932), 837–60; Yun Long 龙云, *Qian Deming: Shiba shiji Zhong-Fa jian de wenhua shizhe* 钱德明: 18世纪中法间的文化使者 (Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 2015); and Michel Hermans, “Appendix 2: Amiot’s Life,” in *The Mandate of Heaven: Strategy, Revolution, and the First European Translation of Sunzi’s Art of War (1772)*, by Adam Parr (Brill, 2020), 224–74.

10. Yoko Nii, “The Jesuit Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot and Chinese Music in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Europe and China: Science and the Arts in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. Luís Saraiva (World Scientific, 2013), 81–92; Kee Il Choi, “Father Amiot’s Cup: A Qing Imperial Porcelain Sent to the Court of Louis XV,” in *Writing Material Culture History*, ed. Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 33–41; Parr, *The Mandate of Heaven*; Xuan Fang and Dorothee Schaab-Hanke, “Circulation That Had Its Price: Roussier and His Role as an Early Recipient and

Disseminator of Amiot's Knowledge about Chinese Music," *Journal of Asian History* 56, nos. 1–2 (2022): 159–86; and Peter Revers, *Jean-Joseph Marie Amiot in Beijing: Entdeckung und Erforschung chinesischer Musik im 18. Jahrhundert* (Sächsische Landesbibliothek; Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, 2023).

11. John R. Finlay, "Ko and Yang and the Mission Française de Pékin," chap. 1 in *Henri Bertin and the Representation of China in Eighteenth-Century France* (Routledge, 2020), 8–39.

12. Hermans, "Appendix 2," 254.

13. Finlay, *Henri Bertin*.

14. George Gazier, "Un artiste comtois a la cour de Chine au XVIIIe siècle, le frère Attiret (1702–1768)," *Mémoires de la société d'émulation du Doubs* 6 (1911): 2–40; Jean Hézard, "Jean-Denis Attiret, missionnaire comtois, Premier peintre d'un Empereur de Chine (1702–1768)," *Nouvelle revue franc-comtoise* 4 (1954): 219–26; Jean Hézard, "Jean-Denis Attiret, missionnaire comtois, Premier peintre d'un Empereur de Chine (1702–1768)," *Nouvelle revue franc-comtoise* 5 (1955): 29–38; Deborah Sommer, "A Letter from a Jesuit Painter in Qianlong's Court at Chengde," in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, ed. James Millward (Routledge Curzon, 2004), 171–84; Wei Yu 韋羽, "Qinggong huajia Faguo chuanjiaoshi Wang Zhicheng (Jean-Denis Attiret) 清宮畫家法國傳教士王致誠 (Jean-Denis Attiret)," *Aomen lishi yanjiu* 澳門歷史研究 4, no. 12 (2005): 72–82; Léo Keller, "'Un pinceau utile pour la bien de la religion': Jean Denis Attiret (1702–1768), dit Wang Zhicheng, peintre jésuite à la cour de Chine," in *La chair et le verbe: Les jésuites de France au XVIIIe siècle et l'image*, ed. Édith Flamarion (Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2008), 47–74; Tang Kaijian 湯開建, "Qinggong huajia Faguo yesuishi Wang Zhicheng zai Hua huodong kaoshu 清宮畫家法國耶穌會士王致誠在華活動考述," *Aomen ligong xuebao* 澳門理工學報 4 (2011): 190–201; George R. Loehr, "Der Künstler Jean-Denis Attiret und der Einfluss seiner Beschreibung der kaiserlichen Gärten," in *George Robert Loehr Jr. (1892–1974) und die forschung über die Peking jesuitenkünstler*, ed. Hartmut Walravens (Books on Demand, 2019), 207–20; and Muller, "'My Eyes and Taste.'"

15. Violette Fris-Larrouy, *D'un soleil à l'autre: Jean-Denis Attiret, missionnaire jésuite peintre de l'Empereur de Chine* (Éditions de la Bisquine, 2017).

16. Anne Dary, ed., *Jean-Denis Attiret: Un docteur du XVIIIe siècle à la cour de l'empereur de Chine* (Dole: Musée des beaux-arts, 2004); and Ming Xiaoyan 明曉豔, "Qinggong Yang huajia

Wang Zhicheng 清宮洋畫家王致誠," *Wenhua zazhi* 文化雜誌 (*Revista de Cultura*) 57 (2005): 165–82.

17. Bénédicte Gaulard, "Une famille de peintres et de menuisiers: Les Attiret à Dole de la fin du XVIIe siècle au milieu du XVIIIe siècle," in Dary, *Jean-Denis Attiret*, 18–19.

18. Catherine Scheck and Jacques Thuillier, *Musée des beaux-arts de Dole: XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles; Peintures françaises* (Dole: Le Musée, 1995), 76–77. The reproduced image of *Yaël and Sisera* from the Dole collection is the best available; the work is in very poor condition and cannot be rephotographed (author's personal correspondence with Samuel Monier, July 2025).

19. Archives municipales de Dole, GG 89 Dole B.M.S. 1734–1737, cited in Anne Dary, "De Jean-Denis Attiret à Wang Zhicheng," in Dary, *Jean-Denis Attiret*, 8.

20. Amiot, letter, GRI, 9–10.

21. Amiot, letter, GRI, 10.

22. On Pozzo's ceiling and Castiglione's claim to follow this model, see Kristina Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions: Crossing Pictorial Boundaries in the Qing Palaces* (University of Washington Press, 2015), 78–82. On the Beijing churches, see Shin Ik-Cheol, "The Experiences of Visiting Catholic Churches in Beijing and the Recognition of Western Learning: Reflection in the Journals of Travel to Beijing," *The Review of Korean Studies* 9, no. 4 (December 2006): 11–31; Anthony E. Clark, *China Gothic: The Bishop of Beijing and His Cathedral* (University of Washington Press, 2019), 73–96; and Alan Richard Sweeten, *China's Old Churches: The History, Architecture, and Legacy of Catholic Sacred Structures in Beijing, Tianjin, and Hebei Province* (Brill, 2020), 71–147.

23. Writing in the nineteenth century, Augustan Canron suggested that Attiret painted only Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and that a M. Mariotty fils painted John. Augustin Canron, *Guide de l'étranger dans la ville d'Avignon et ses environs* (Avignon, 1858), 75.

24. Amiot, letter, GRI, 11.

25. Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, *Journées européennes patrimoine 17–18 Septembre 2016: Patrimoine et citoyenneté* (Studio Muchir Descloids, 2016), 32, <https://www.calameo.com/books/002622573dec6cb2c412e>.

26. Amiot, letter, GRI, 21.

27. Amiot, letter, GRI, 21.

28. *Ruyiguan* 如意館 QL 4/7/27 (30 August 1739), in First Historical Archives, *Qinggong zaobanchu dang'an zonghui*, vol. 9 [1739–41], 171–72. This site is the thirteenth depicted in *Forty*

Scenes of the Yuanmingyuan (Yuanmingyuan sishijing 圓明園四十景; 1744), album of forty paired leaves of calligraphy and painting, ink and color on silk, painted by Shen Yuan 沈源 (act. eighteenth century) and Tangdai 唐岱 (1673–1752?), and now held in the Bibliothèque National de France, Département des Estampes et Photographie, RESERVE FT 6-B-9, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b550083263>.

29. Amiot, letter, GRI, 22.

30. Tang, “Qing Gong huajia,” 194, 197.

31. Amiot, letter, GRI, 21.

32. Amiot, letter, GRI, 29–35; and James Cahill, *Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China* (University of California Press, 2010).

33. Amiot, letter, GRI, 33.

34. Amiot, letter, GRI, 33–34.

35. These commissions are summarized in Tang, “Qing Gong huajia,” 194, 197.

36. “Treasure of the Qianlong emperor” (*Qianlong yulan zhi bao* 乾隆御覽之寶), “Precious Collection of the Stone Moat” (*Shiqu baoji* 石渠寶笈), and “Treasure of the Painting and Calligraphy Room” (*Shuhuafang jianchang bao* 書畫房鑒藏寶).

37. For example, Castiglione painted only Qianlong’s face in the series of *thangkas* depicting him as the Mañjughosa emperor. See Patricia Ann Berger, *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2003), 54–61.

38. Cf. *The Goddesses Qingnü and Su’e* (*Qingnü Su’e* 青女素娥), mid-late eighteenth century, hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, National Palace Museum, Taipei, acc. no. 中畫00018300000, <https://digitalarchive.npm.gov.tw/Collection/Detail/1753?dep=P>.

39. Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions*, 263–66, 338n87, 339n89.

40. Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions* 3–22.

41. Amiot, letter, GRI, 59.

42. Tang, “Qing Gong huajia,” 194, 197.

43. Amiot, letter, GRI, 42.

44. Jean Sylvain de Neuville, *Relação da jornada, que fez ao Imperio da China, e summaria noticia da embaixada que deo na Corte de Pekim em o primeiro de Mayo de 1753, o Senhor Francisco Xavier Assiz Pacheco e Sampaio* (Lisbon, 1754), n.p. On the embassy, see Antonio Vilhena de Carvalho, “In a Different World: Pacheco de Sampaio in Qing’s China (1752–1753),” in *Three European Embassies to China*, ed. Maria Manuela d’Olivera Martins et al. (Fundação Oriente, 2018).

45. *Ruyiguan*, QL 19/7/23 (9 September 1754), in First Historical Archives, *Qing Gong zaobanchu dang’an zonghui*, vol. 20 [1753–54], 378.

46. L. Patouillet, “Épître aux Jésuites de France,” in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* [...], vol. 28 (Paris, 1758), vii–viii.

47. Kee Il Choi, “Portraits of Virtue: Henri-Léonard Bertin, Joseph Amiot and the ‘Great Man’ of China,” *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 80 (2015): 55n27; and Camille Schmitt, *La médecine de l’art: Conservation des calligraphies et peintures chinoises en rouleaux à partir des textes de la dynastie Ming, 1368–1644* (Éditions Philippe Picquier; Centre de Conservation du Livre, Arles, 2011), 52–53.

48. “Fine Chinese Art,” auction, Bonhams London, New Bond Street, 7 November 2024, lots 141–42; Ethnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 22156, 22228, 22229, 22230, 22242, 24356, 31805; Dole Musée de Beaux-Arts 2001.5.1; and Paris, Musée Guimet, MG 26504, 26588. For the eighth Berlin picture, see Wang Youmin 王幼敏, “Deguo Bolin cang Qingdai Zhunga’er Menggu zu buluo shouling youhua xiang yanjiu 德国柏林藏清代准噶尔蒙古部落首领油画像研究,” *Gugong xuekan* 故宫学刊 20 (2019): 293–310. See also Dary, *Jean-Denis Attiret*; and Martyn Gregory Gallery, *In the Wake of the Indian: Historical Pictures by Chinese and Western Artists 1770–1870* (London: Martyn Gregory Gallery, 2000).

49. Wang, “Deguo Bolin”; and Wang Ching-Ling 王靜靈, “Bolin shoucang de Ziguangge gongchen xiang jiqi xiangguan zuopin xin lun 柏林收藏的紫光閣功臣像及其相關作品新論,” *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 34, no. 1 (2016): 153–214.

50. Choi, “Portraits of Virtue,” 55, 57n33.

51. Nie Chongzheng 聂崇正, “Wang Zhicheng de ‘Shi Junma Tu’ ce 王致誠的《十駿馬圖》冊,” *Zijincheng* 紫禁城 6 (1981): 38.

52. On the Tranquil Longevity Palace within the larger Qianlong Garden of the Forbidden City, see Nancy Berliner, ed., *The Emperor’s Private Paradise: Treasures from the Forbidden City*, exh. cat. (Peabody Essex Museum, 2010).

53. Amiot, letter, GRI, 44–58; and James Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia* (Stanford University Press, 1998).

54. Amiot, letter, GRI, 44.

55. The *Ruyiguan* order on QL 19/7/23 (9 September 1754) dates the order dispatching Attiret to the Mountain Retreat as QL 19/5/7 (26

June 1754), in First Historical Archives, *Qinggong zaobanchu dang'an zonghui*, 20:377.

56. Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot, "Lettre du père Amiot, missionnaire à la Chine, au père de la Tour, de la meme Compagnie, 17 October 1754," in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* [. . .], vol. 23 (Paris, 1781), 302–68; see also the partial translation in Sommer, "A Letter."

57. Amiot, "Lettre du père Amiot . . . au père de la Tour," 315.

58. Yang Boda 杨伯达, "'Wanshuyuan ciyan tu' kaoxi '万树园赐宴图' 考析," *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 4 (1982): 3–21.

59. Lucia Tripodes, "Painting and Diplomacy at the Qianlong Court: A Commemorative Picture by Wang Zhicheng (Jean-Denis Attiret)," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 35 (Spring 1999): 185–200.

60. Amiot, letter, GRI, 54.

61. *Ruyiguan* records for 3 June 1755 (QL 20/4/24) date the order for the painting's creation to 1 August 1754 (QL 19/6/13); Attiret's letter quoted by Amiot dates it to 29 July (Amiot, letter, GRI, 54–55). First Historical Archives, *Qinggong zaobanchu dang'an zonghui*, vol. 21 (1755–56), 301–2.

62. Yang Boda 杨伯达, "'Qianlong shejian youhua guaping' shu kao «乾隆射箭油画挂屏» 述考," *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 1 (1991): 26–38. The workshop archives document cited in this essay, note 61, also records that the painting was hung at the Mountain Retreat.

63. Amiot, letter, GRI, 44–48.

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