

Painting for the China Mission during Matteo Ricci's time: Manuel Pereira 游文輝 and Jacobe Niva 倪一誠

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Abstract

Among the small group of nine young Chinese, mainly from Macau, who joined the Society of Jesus during Matteo Ricci's time, two are identified explicitly as painters. One of them, Manuel Pereira/You Wenhui 游文輝 carried out several other activities along with that of painter, and became better known as the author of Ricci's famous portrait. The other is Jacobe Niva/Ni Yicheng 倪一誠, exclusively classified as a painter and whose talent was unanimously praised by his European confrères. This article will focus on these two men, trying to follow their trajectories and artistic production.

Resumo

Entre o pequeno grupo de nove jovens chineses, maioritariamente naturais de Macau, ingressados na Companhia de Jesus e associados à missão da China, no tempo de Matteo Ricci, deparamo-nos com dois elementos especificamente indicados como pintores: Manuel Pereira/You Wenhui 游文輝, que exerceu simultaneamente várias outras actividades e que ficou sobretudo conhecido por lhe ser atribuída a autoria do célebre retrato de Ricci; e Jacobe Niva/Ni Yicheng 倪一誠, exclusivamente pintor e unanimemente elogiado pelos demais jesuítas europeus seus contemporâneos. É, pois, sobre estes dois elementos que nos iremos debruçar no presente artigo, procurando observar os seus percursos e produção artística.

要旨

概ね全員がマカオ出身で、マテオ・リッチの時代にイエズス会に入信し、中国布教に携わった九人の若者たちが集う小さなグループの中で、画家として特に注目される二人に焦点をあてる。一人目はマヌエル・ペレイラ/You Wenhui (游文輝)。同時に複数の職業活動をし、リッチの有名な肖像画の作者として知られる人物。次にヤコブ・ニヴァ/倪一誠。他に生業(なりわい)を営まない画家で、彼の現代的作風により、西洋人イエズス会士たちが例外なく評価していた画家。我々は、本稿で人生の軌跡や芸術作品の観察を試みながら両人物を論点にする。

Keywords キーワード

Manuel Pereira/You Wenhui, Jacobe Niva/Ni Yicheng, Jesuit painters, Matteo Ricci, China Mission, Chinese Jesuits, Macau, Japan.

Manuel Pereira/You Wenhui, Jacobe Niva/Ni Yicheng, Pintores jesuítas, Matteo Ricci, Missão da China, Jesuítas chineses, Macau, Japão.

マヌエル・ペレイラ, ヤコブ・ニヴァ, イエズス会画家, マテオ・リッチ, 中国布教, 中国人イエズス会士, マカオ, 日本

Introduction

Like in the Japanese mission, in China devotional images assumed an important role in the Jesuit missionary strategy from an early stage.¹ Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and some of his confrères made a few requests to Rome for European oil paintings to impress the Chinese.² Despite the demands, not many paintings reached the mission during Ricci's time.³ Thus it is without surprise that we find local artists producing paintings in China, after European models. Amid those artists, two joined the Society for the China mission before Ricci's death, i.e. prior to 1610. They were Manuel Pereira/You Wenhui 游文輝 and Jacobe Niva/Ni Yicheng 倪一誠, both of them trained in European painting techniques under the Jesuits. Niva was a talented painter, who studied in Japan, where he was born, and was assigned to the China mission due to his artistic skills. There, he produced a number of religious paintings, mostly Saviors and Virgins, the most commonly depicted subjects. As for Pereira, only two of his works are known, but one of these is the still existing portrait of Ricci.

We will look now at both Pereira and Niva's biographies, before focusing on their artistic production.

1 For a general overview on the topic of European images in the China mission, namely painting, see Paul Pelliot, "La peinture et la gravure européennes en Chine au temps de Mathieu Ricci" in *T'oung Pao*, vol. 20, series 2, 1921; Pasquale D'Elia, *Le Origini dell'Arte Cristiana Cinese*, Rome: Reale Academia d'Italia, 1939; John McCall, "Early Jesuit Art in the Far East IV: In China and Macao before 1635" in *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 11, n° 1/2, 1948; Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773*, Toronto-Buffalo-London: University of Toronto Press, 2001, pp. 82-111. See also the entry on paintings (in the seventeenth century) by Erik Zürcher in Nicolas Standaert (ed.) *Handbook of Christianity in China I, vol. 1: 635-1800* (henceforth HCC), Leiden-Boston-Köln: Brill, 2001, pp. 809-810, 814-822. Regarding the promotion of images by the Jesuits, see Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "Le style jésuite n'existe pas: Jesuit Corporate Culture and the Visual Arts" in John W. O'Malley & Gauvin Alexander Bailey et al. (eds.), *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts*, Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999, pp. 38-89.

2 Along with paintings, the missionaries made extensive use of prints and engravings, that were by far the most influential religious pictures of the time. See Gauvin A. Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, pp. 91, 98; and HCC, pp. 809-814. See also for the Ming and Qing periods, Cheng-hua Wang, "Prints in Sino-European artistic interactions of the Early Modern Period" in Rui Oliveira Lopes (ed.), *Face to Face. The transcendence of the arts in China and beyond-Historical Perspectives*, Lisbon: Artistic Studies Research Centre, Faculty of Fine Arts University of Lisbon, 2014, pp. 424-436.

3 Anyway, those that arrived from places such as Europe and the Jesuit seminaries in Japan seem to be characterized by their high quality. Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, pp. 91-92.

1. Biographies: Pereira and Niva

Born respectively in Macau in 1575, and in Japan in 1579, Manuel Pereira⁴ and Jacobe Niva⁵ were both sons of Chinese Christians. If the available sources regarding Pereira's parentage are clear enough, the same is not true for Niva. Being referred to as "half-Japanese" ["mezzo giapponese"]⁶ or even "Japanese" ["Japam"],⁷ expressions that we believe were related to his place of birth, and gave rise to the common assumption that Niva was a Chinese-Japanese *mestizo*, of Chinese father and Japanese mother.⁸ However, to my knowledge, there is no evidence to corroborate this belief. Conversely, it may be

4 Alessandro Valignano, "Catalogo das casas e residencias...", October 1603 in Josef Franz Schutte (ed.), *Monumenta Historica Japoniae* I, Rome: Monumenta Historica Soc. Iesu, 1975, p. 455; Niccolò Longobardo, First Catalogue 1621, Hangzhou, 30/11/1621, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 134, f. 301v; letter from Manuel Dias Júnior to Superior General, Nanchang, 1/11/1633, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 18 I, f. 141v; etc. According to the 1614 and 1620 catalogues, Manuel Pereira had been born some years earlier, in 1573. However, these catalogues also stated that he had joined the Society before the real date (1614 catalogue, December 1614, BA 49-V-7, f. 82; First catalogue 1620, September 1620, BA 49-V-7, f. 189v). For an earlier treatment of Pereira's biography, see, for example, Louis Pfister, *Notices Biographiques et Bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l'Ancienne Mission de Chine, 1552-1773*, San Francisco: Chinese Material Center, 1976 (1st edition: 1932-1934), p. 102; Pasquale D'Elia, *Le Origini dell'Arte Cristiana Cinese*, pp. 36-38; Joseph Dehergne, *Répertoire des Jésuites de Chine de 1552 à 1800*, Rome-Paris: Institutum Historicum-Letouzey & Ané, 1973, pp. 199-200; Charles E. O'Neill E., SI & Joaquín M^a Domínguez SI (eds.), *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesus* (henceforth *DHC*), Rome-Madrid: Institutum Historicum-Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2001, p. 4060; *HCC*, p. 816.

5 First catalogue 1623 (December 1623, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 25, f. 136b). The 1614 and 1620 catalogues suggest that he was born in 1576. However, we should stress, once again, that the dates provided by both these catalogues are not reliable (1614 catalogue, December 1614, BA 49-IV-66, f. 112v; First catalogue 1620, September 1620, BA 49-V-7, f. 189v). Another version of the 1614 catalogue, states that Niva was by then 38 years old, meaning that he had been born in 1584. Most likely this is an error introduced by the copyist (BA 49-V-7, f. 82v). For an earlier treatment of Niva's biography, see, for instance, Pfister, *Notices*, p. 124; D'Elia, *Le Origini dell'Arte Cristiana Cinese*, pp. 38-42; *Fonti Ricciane: Storia dell'Introduzione del Cristianesimo in Cina, scritta da Matteo Ricci*, ed. Pasquale M. D'Elia, S.J., Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1942-1949 (henceforth *FR*), II, p. 258 (note 1); *DHC*, p. 2824; *HCC*, p. 815.

6 Letter from Matteo Ricci to Superior General, Beijing, 15/8/1606, *Opere Storiche del P. Matteo Ricci*, ed. P. Pietro Tacchi Venturi, S.J., Macerata: Premiata stab. tip. F. Giorgetti, 1911-1913 (henceforth *OS*), vol. II, p. 305.

7 "Lista dos Padres e Irmãos do Collegio de Macau", September 1635, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 25, f. 141a; First catalogue 1614, BA 49-IV-66, f. 112v. Fernão Guerreiro refers to him as being "of Japanese nation" ["japão de nação"]. *Relação Anual* II, New edition by Artur Viegas, Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1930-1942, p. 93 [1st edition: Lisbon, 1605].

8 See, for example, D'Elia, *Le Origini dell'Arte Cristiana Cinese*, p. 38; Dehergne, *op. cit.*, p. 185; Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, Lanham-New York-Boulder-Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999, p. 28; *DHC*, p. 2824; Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1997, p. 44 (actually this author says that his mother was Chinese and his father Japanese); and *HCC*, p. 815. By contrast, Louis Pfister (*Notices*, p. 124) and Peter M. Engelfriet (*Euclid in China: The Genesis of the First Chinese Translation of Euclid's Elements, Books I-VI (Jihe yuanben; Beijing 1607) and Its Reception up to 1723*, Leiden: Brill, 1998, p. 70) say that he was the son of Chinese parents. Also Aloysius Chang states that his forefathers were from Guangdong, despite he had been born in Japan ("Final Address, The True Significance of the College of St. Paul" in John W. Witek (ed.), *Religion and Culture: an Internacional Symposium Commemorating the Fourth Centenary of the University College of St. Paul, Macau*: ICM, 1999, p. 377).

inferred from a few references that most likely Niva was of Chinese origin alone. For instance, even though Ricci stated in his *Storia* that he was “the son of a Chinese father” [“figliulo di un Cina”], and omitted information about his mother,⁹ in a letter dated 1608, he explicitly asserted that the four novices that had just joined the Society for the China mission, amongst which we find Niva, were all born of “Chinese father and mother” [“di padre e madre cinesi”].¹⁰ Similarly, Nicolas Trigault (1577-1628) reported him as being Chinese from nation, though born among the Japanese.¹¹ Also, in “Sacerdotes nostra Societatis natione sinica”, he was mentioned as “parentibus sinis natus in Japonia”.¹² It is worth noting that, at the time, a significant number of Chinese people lived in Japan. For instance, by 1568, around a decade before Jacobe Niva was born, about 3,000 Chinese merchants were settled in Nagasaki alone, and ca. 20,000 to 30,000 were dispersed all over Japan.¹³

Both Pereira and Niva were educated at the schools of the Society of Jesus from an early age. Pereira is specifically indicated as having learned Portuguese and Latin in Macau.¹⁴ In addition, his parents seem to have decided to send him to India for further studies, but we have no evidence as to whether this occurred.¹⁵ What we do know, based on the 1621 Catalogue, is that Pereira studied Humanities and apparently was the first Chinese Jesuit to do so.¹⁶ As for Niva, he also attended the reading and writing classes (of Portuguese), as well as Latin, though in Japan.¹⁷ Besides he is reported as having

9 Which certainly further contributed to the idea that he was the son of a Japanese mother (FR II, N. 687, p. 258).

10 Letter from Matteo Ricci to Fabio de Fabii, Beijing, 23/8/1608, OS II, p. 372.

11 Nicolas Trigault, S.J., *Histoire de l'Expédition Chrétienne au Royaume de la Chine 1582-1610*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer (henceforth Trigault, HECRC), 1978, p. 522 [1615: first edition in Latin]. By 1617, Niccolò Longobardo, in his report on the Chinese Jesuits from Macau [“Informação dos Irmãos Chineses naturales de Macao pera ver o nosso Padre Geral em Roma”], made a distinction between Niva and the other Jesuit brothers, based alone on the fact that Niva wasn't born in Macau (a “son of Macau”/“filho de Macau”), but in Japan (Hangzhou, 4/10/1617, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 17, f. 91v). In other words, he was a Chinese born in Japan.

12 S.d., BA 49-IV-6, f. 230.

13 James W. Tong, *Disorder under Heaven. Collective Violence in the Ming Dynasty*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991, p. 147. On the Chinese community established in Nagasaki and its remarkable growth since the early seventeenth century, see Aloysius Chang, *The Chinese community of Nagasaki in the first century of the Tokugawa period (1603-1688)*, Ann Arbor: UMI, cop. 1970.

14 Niccolò Longobardo, First catalogue 1621, Hangzhou, 30/11/1621, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 134, f. 301v; First catalogue 1626, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 134, f. 304.

15 João Fróis, annual letter from China for 1633, 20/9/1634, BA 49-V-11, f. 50.

16 Niccolò Longobardo, First catalogue 1621, Hangzhou, 30/11/1621, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 134, f. 301.

17 FR II, N. 687, p. 258; letter from Matteo Ricci to Superior General, Beijing, 15/8/1606, OS II, pp. 300, 305.

studied European painting under the guidance of the Italian Jesuit Giovanni Niccolò (ca. 1558-1626),¹⁸ also in Japan.¹⁹

It should be noted that, according to some scholars, Manuel Pereira would also have been a pupil of the same Italian master during the 1580s or the 1590s, in either Macau or Japan. However, there is no documentary evidence to corroborate this assumption.²⁰ Furthermore, the idea of Macau seems highly unlikely when we consider that Niccolò was there for no longer than a year, between 1582 and 1583, at a time when Manuel Pereira would be no more than seven to eight years old.²¹ On the other hand, the possibility of Pereira having further developed his painting skills with one of Giovanni Niccolò's disciple, in particular, Jacobe Niva, who he was with in Beijing 北京 during 1605 and 1606, should not be discarded, even though the first reference to his work as a painter precedes that time.²²

Meanwhile, in 1597, Manuel Pereira left Macau and went to mainland China. The oldest reference to him that we could find dates from the following year, when he joined the small group of missionaries, lead by Ricci, who traveled to Beijing in a first attempt to establish a mission post there. In 1600, Pereira was once more among the members of the group that, again with Ricci, went to Beijing and, this time, succeeded in getting permission to live there.²³

18 Giovanni Niccolò or Cola was the most prominent European artist working in Japan for a long period spanning thirty years, from 1583 to 1614, and in Macau from 1614 until his own death. He was the author of several paintings sent to the China mission, namely a large *Salvator Mundi*, dispatched to the house of Zhaoqing 肇庆 in 1583. On Giovanni Niccolò see, for example, Alexandra Curvelo & Angelo Cattaneo, "Le Arti Visuali e l'Evangelizzazione del Giappone. L'Apporto del Seminario di Pittura dei Gesuiti" in *Asiatica Ambrosiana*, 3, Bulzoni Editore, 2011, pp. 37-41, 48. See also Alexandra Curvelo, "Nagasaki. An European Artistic City in early modern Japan" in *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies*, 2001, pp. 28-31; *DHCJ*, vol. I, pp. 838-839; and F. García Gutiérrez, "Giovanni Cola (Joao Nicolao). Un hombre del Renacimiento italiano transplantado a Japón" in *Temas de Estética y Arte*, Real Academia de Bellas Artes de Santa Isabel de Hungría, Seville, n° 25, 2011, pp. 96-124.

19 Letter from Matteo Ricci to Ludovico Maseli, Beijing, February 1605, *OS II*, p. 254.

20 According to D'Elia, Pereira had been Niccolò's pupil, in Macau (*FR II*, N. 506, pp. 9-10, n. 7; D'Elia, *Le Origini dell'Arte Cristiana Cinese*, p. 36); John McCall (*op. cit.*, p. 49), and Mungello (*op. cit.*, p. 28) advocated that he have studied in Japan in the 1590s (from 1593 until 1598). Also Michael Sullivan indicates Japan as the place where he would have carried out his studies on painting under Niccolò (*op. cit.*, p. 44), as well as César Guillen-Nuñez ("The Portrait of Matteo Ricci. A Mirror of Western Religious and Chinese Literati Portrait Painting" in *Journal of Jesuit Studies I*, Brill, 2014, p. 450), who further says that this could have occurred at Arie.

21 Giovanni Niccolò reached Macau in August 1582, along with Matteo Ricci. Around one year later, he embarked to Japan, where he had already arrived in late July.

22 As we will see below, this first reference dates back to 1600. Michael Sullivan states that Pereira had later continued his painting studies under Niccolò in Macau, when the Italian returned to that port in 1614 (Michael Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p. 44). However, to my knowledge, this assertion lacks any evidence. Besides, Pereira remained living inside the mission for the rest of his life.

23 On these two trips to Beijing, see for example Ronnie Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City, Matteo Ricci 1552-161*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 202-211.

As for Niva, who left Japan on his way to Macau in 1601,²⁴ at age 22, he was chosen by Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606) to help the China mission,²⁵ since painting was a fairly required skill there, not only to be displayed in the missionary houses and churches, but also to be offered to Chinese elites. In other words, to be used as missionary tools and gifts. As Longobardo later claimed, in 1612, Niva had been sent from Japan to the China mission in order “to paint the images of this Christianity” [“veio ca de Japão pera pintar as imagens desta Christandade”].²⁶ In 1617, the superior added that Niva had been assigned to the China mission with the goal of “painting the images that we offer here to the Christians” [“pintar as imagens que damos ca aos cristaos de presente”].²⁷ Indeed, the paintings that reached the mission from Europe, Japan and even New Spain and Manila were relatively few.²⁸ Thus, by summer of the following year, Niva reached Beijing,²⁹ where he would live for the next four years, until 1606 when he returned to Macau.³⁰

Having, at first, been in the China mission as students, Pereira and Niva began their novitiates respectively in 1605 and 1608, both aged ca. 30. As a matter of fact, after eight years in the mission, on August 15th, 1605, Pereira started his two-year novitiate in Beijing, under Ricci,³¹ along with two other Chinese,³² and completed it in

24 Cf. FR II, N. 687, p. 259.

25 *Lettre de la Chine de l'An 1601. Escrite par le P. Valentim Caruaglio Recteur du College de Macao au T.R.P. Claude Aquauiuua General de la Compagnie de Iesus*, Paris: Claude Chappelet, 1605, p. 5; FR II, N. 687, p. 258; OS I, p. 439. According to Trigault, Niva «avait assez bien appris l'art de peinture parmi les nôtres au séminaire, et lequel le Père visiteur avait jà dès le Japon destiné à cette expédition», *HECRC*, p. 522. On the role of Valignano in the Japanese mission as far as arts is concerned, see Fernando García Gutiérrez, S.J., “Valignano and the introduction of Western Art in Japan” in Adolfo Tamburello, M. Antoni J. Üçerler, S.J. & Marisa di Russo (eds.), *Alessandro Valignano S.I. Uomo del Rinascimento: Ponte tra Oriente e Occidente*, Rome: IHSI, 2008, pp. 175-183.

26 Niccolò Longobardo, annual letter from China for 1612, Nanxiong, 20/2/1613, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 113, f. 225v.

27 By this reference to the painting of images to offer to the Christians, we probably should understand the coloring of prints. Niccolò Longobardo, “Informação dos Irmãos Chineses naturaes de Macao”, Hangzhou, 4/10/1617, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 17, f. 91v.

28 See Paul Pelliot, “La peinture et la gravure européennes en Chine au temps de Mathieu Ricci”, p. 8; Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, pp. 91-92.

29 In July, according to FR II, N. 687, p. 258 and OS I, p. 439; or in August 9th, according to the information provided by Matteo Ricci in a letter to Niccolò Longobardo, dated September 6th, 1602, where Ricci mentioned that Dias had arrived on the eve of Saint Lawrence's day, i.e., August 9th. This information was included in the annual letter from Macau for 1602. In João Paulo Oliveira e Costa & Ana Fernandes Pinto, *Cartas Anuas do Colégio de Macau (1594-1627)* Macau: CTMCDP-Fundação Macau, 1999, p. 111.

30 FR II, N. 687, p. 259.

31 Letter from Matteo Ricci to Ludovico Maseli, Beijing, February 1605, OS II, p. 253; letter from Matteo Ricci to Fabio de Fabii, Beijing, 9/5/1605, OS II, p. 262; letter from Matteo Ricci to Superior General, Beijing, 26/7/1605, OS II, pp. 286-287; letter from Matteo Ricci to Superior General, Beijing, 15/8/1606, OS II, p. 304.

32 The other Chinese were: António Leitão/Xu Bideng 徐必登 (ca. 1581-1611) and Domingos Mendes/Qiu Liangbin 邱良稟 (1579/1581-1652). For biographical details, see my book, *Jesuitas Chineses e Mestiços da Missão da China (1589-1689)*, Lisbon: CCCM, 2011, pp. 308-315.

1607.³³ In March of the following year, it was the time for Niva to begin his novitiate, together with three other Chinese youngsters from Macau.³⁴ The training was held at the Jesuit house of Nanchang南昌, under the guidance of Gaspar Ferreira (1571-1649).³⁵ Two years earlier, Ricci and some other Jesuit priests had already expressed to Valignano their desire for Niva to be admitted to the Society, according to what the Visitor wrote in a letter dated January 18th, 1606, just before his death. In the letter, he claimed that the best way to achieve such a goal would be to send Niva to Macau, to paint the panels of the Church of Madre de Deus. In any event, Valignano left the issue with Ricci, who should eventually decide.³⁶ Following this “not very clear” [“non molto chiara”] permission left by Valignano, and shortly after the Visitor’s death, Ricci, together with his consultors and those from Macau, approved Niva’s admission sometime before August 15th, 1606. At this time, Ricci reported the news in a letter addressed to the Superior General. He further informed that, under the deceased Visitor’s suggestion, he was sending Niva to Macau to cooperate in the decoration of the Church of Madre de Deus,³⁷ thus lending continuity to the work produced there in 1601. Therefore, in late 1606 Niva was already listed among the novices in the college of Macau’s catalogue for that year.³⁸ Though, as mentioned above, only in the first half of 1608, after returning to the mission, did he actually begin his novitiate,³⁹ which was concluded two years later, around April 1610, when he took his vows.⁴⁰

The evolution of events in the mission, namely the outbreak of the Nanjing 南京 crisis in 1616, that led to the edict of expulsion of the European missionaries to Macau in 1617, took Pereira and Niva on different pathways. Pereira, engaged in several critical

33 Matteo Ricci, annual letter from China for 1606-1607, 18/10/1607, OS II, p. 307; Manuel Dias *Sénior*, annual letter from China for October 1607-April 1608, Nanchang, 27/4/1608, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 113, f. 65. It should be noted that already in 1603 we can find the first reference, in that year’s catalogue, to the fact that Pereira had been admitted as a novice. However, apparently this was postponed, since in 1604 he was not mentioned in that rank, only reappearing as such in 1605.

34 Those three Chinese were: João Fernandes/Zhong Mingli 鍾明禮 (1581-after 1622), Francisco de Látea/Shi Hongji 石宏基 (1585-1647), and Pascoal Mendes/Qiu Lianghou 邱良厚 (1584-1640). For biographical details, see Isabel Pina, *Jesuítas Chineses e Mestiços*, pp. 319-333.

35 FR II, N. 881, p. 466; letter from Matteo Ricci to Superior General, Beijing, 22/8/1608, OS II, p. 358; letter from Matteo Ricci to Fabio de Fabii, Beijing, 23/8/1608, OS II, p. 372.

36 Letter from Alessandro Valignano (signed by Valentim Carvalho and Manuel Gaspar), Macau, 18/1/1606, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 14 II, f. 231v.

37 Letter from Matteo Ricci to Superior General, Beijing, 15/8/1606, OS II, pp. 300, 305.

38 “Catálogo dos Padres e Irmãos que estão em Macao”, 15/11/1606, in *Monumenta Historica Japoniae* I, p. 497.

39 Manuel Dias *Sénior*, annual letter from China for 1608, Nanchang, 3/11/1608, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 113, f. 75. In the 1608 Macau’s catalogue, Niva is still listed among the novices, as “Brother Jacobe, painter” [“Irmão Jacobe, pintor”] (*Monumenta Historica Japoniae* I, p. 512). In the 1609 Macau’s catalogue, his name no longer appears (15/1/1609, *ibid.*, p. 514).

40 Letter from Manuel Dias *Sénior* to Superior General, Macau, 11/11/1609, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 14 II, f. 331; Niccolò Longobardo, annual letter from China for 1609, Shaozhou, 21/12/1609, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 113, f. 113; letter from Niccolò Longobardo to Superior General, Shaozhou, 23/11/1610, OS II, p. 488.

activities for the daily survival of the mission, such as the liaison trips to and from Macau and between the various houses, remained hidden inside the mission.⁴¹ In late 1617, we find him at the house of Hangzhou 杭州 where, in the chapel of Yang Tingyun 杨廷筠 (1557-1627), on December 25th, he took his last vows, in the presence of the mission superior, Niccolò Longobardo (1565-1655).⁴² After this, he can sometimes be found at this house and, at other times, at the one in Nanchang, where he seems to have been between 1620 and 1621, as well as in 1629;⁴³ in 1626 and 1628, and again in 1632 and 1633 it is likely that he was living in Hangzhou.⁴⁴

Having gone back to Beijing in 1611, Niva seems to have stayed there during the next five years, until late 1616 when he departed to Macau, most certainly as a consequence of the crisis mentioned above.⁴⁵ In Macau, he must have joined his former master Giovanni Niccolò, who had returned from Japan in 1614, due to the expulsion of the missionaries. Together with a few other Japanese painters,⁴⁶ Niccolò had just established a seminary of painting in Macau, thus proceeding with the activity that was interrupted in Nagasaki.⁴⁷ From 1617 onwards, except for a temporary return to China proper in 1620,⁴⁸ Niva seems

41 This brother was not very engaged in catechetical activities. The same is true for Niva.

42 Vows, ARSI, Lus. 27, f. 4; Niccolò Longobardo, 1621 First catalogue, Hangzhou, 30/11/1621, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 134, f. 301v.

43 Francisco Furtado, annual letter from China for 1620, Hangzhou, 24/8/1621, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 114, ff. 241v-242; António de Gouveia, *Ásia Extrema*, III, ed. António de Araújo, [Lisbon:] Fundação Oriente, 2005, pp. 76-77; letter from Nicolas Trigault, 31/10/1622, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 114, ff. 335-335v; letter from Gabriel de Matos to Superior General, Macau, 1/11/1622, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 18 I, f. 14v; letter from André Palmeiro to Superior General, Macau, 1629, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 161 II, f. 122.

44 1626 First catalogue (ARSI, Jap.Sin. 134, f. 304); 1628 First catalogue (ARSI, Jap.Sin. 134, f. 308).

45 Letter from João da Rocha, Nanchang, 22/11/1616, BA 49-V-5, f. 173v. Third catalogue from the College of Macau and Cochinchina (June 1618, BA 49-V-7, f. 148v).

46 Following the expulsion of the missionaries, several Japanese painters, whether brothers or still *dojocu*/students, departed either to Macau and Philippines. Among those who went to Macau, we can mention brother Mancio Taichiku (1574-1615), as well as "brother Tadeu painter" ("Irmão Tadeu pintor"). The latter lived in Macau from 1618 until his death in 1627. See Alexandra Curvelo & Angelo Cattaneo, "Le Arti Visuali e l'Evangelizzazione del Giappone", pp. 47-48; Alexandra Curvelo, "Nagasaki, An European artistic city in early modern Japan", p. 29; id., "The artistic circulation between Japan, China and the New-Spain in the 16th-17th centuries" in *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies*, 2008, 16, p. 63.

47 In Japan, the Jesuit seminary of painting was apparently first established in Katsusa, around 1590. Two years later, it was transferred to the city of Shiki (Kunamoto, Amakusa), and between 1594 and 1596, to Arie (Amakusa). In the following year, the seminary was moved to Nagasaki, even though until 1602 there was some related activity in Shiki and Arima. From that time until 1614, the activities of the seminary were concentrated in Nagasaki, and after transferred to Macau. One of the main features of this seminary of painting was its itinerancy. See Alexandra Curvelo & Angelo Cattaneo, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-45.

48 According to China's First catalogue for 1620 (September 1620, BA 49-V-7, f. 189v). At the same time, we don't find him mentioned in the College of Macau's catalogue for that same year (September 1620, BA 49-V-7, ff. 181-186v).

to have remained in Macau,⁴⁹ probably working at the seminary. However, his extended stay in that city was by any means consensual: it gave rise to harsh criticism from the missionaries in China, who even addressed the Superior General to ask for the return of “Brother Jacobe painter” [“Irmão Jacobe pintor”], as reported by Visitor André Palmeiro (1569-1635) in 1628⁵⁰.

Nonetheless, the request did not succeed and was strongly opposed by the missionaries from Japan, who argued that Niva had studied in their Province. Moreover, they stressed that in Macau the brother was quite useful to the China mission, as he was still painting images to support it. In any event, according to Palmeiro, the main reason that prevented Niva's return to mainland China was his physical weakness.⁵¹ This was confirmed by the earlier 1614 and 1620 catalogues, that mentioned his “weak forces and health” [“fraco de forças e saúde”].⁵² Thus, Niva remained in that city, where we find records of him once again in 1635, listed among those who had already taken their public vows.⁵³ Deceased in Macau, on October 26th, 1638, he was buried at the Church of Madre de Deus, close to Saint Michael's altar,⁵⁴ whose main painting, that of Saint Michael, already lost, was most likely authored by him.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, in 1633, five years before Niva's death, Pereira had also passed away, within the mission. That year, returning from Guangzhou 廣州 on his way back to Hangzhou, he fell ill. Unable to pursue his journey, he was forced to retire to Nanjing, where he eventually died some months later.⁵⁶

49 Letter from Niccolò Longobardo to the Portuguese Assistant, Hangzhou, 12/8/1619, ARSI, Jap. Sin. 161 I, f. 37; Niccolò Longobardo, 1621 First catalogue (Hangzhou, 30/11/1621, ARSI, Jap. Sin. 134, ff. 301-302); 1626 First catalogue (ARSI, Jap. Sin. 134, ff. 303-304); 1628 First catalogue (ARSI, Jap. Sin. 134, ff. 307-308).

50 Letter from André Palmeiro to Superior General, Macau, 14/5/1628, ARSI, Jap. Sin. 161 II, f. 99v. On André Palmeiro, see Liam M. Brockey, *The Visitor. André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia*, Cambridge (Mass.)-London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014.

51 Letter from André Palmeiro to Superior General, Macau, 14/5/1628, ARSI, Jap. Sin. 161 II, f. 99v.

52 1614 catalogue (BA 49-V-7, f. 82v); 1620 First catalogue (September 1620, BA 49-V-7, f. 189v).

53 “Brother Niva Jacobe Japanese and painter” [“Irmão Niva Jacobe Japam e pintor”]. “Lista dos Padres e Irmãos do Collegio”, September 1635, ARSI, Jap. Sin. 25, f. 141a.

54 Father Montanha, 23/6/1740, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, cod. 1659, f. 105v.

55 According to Alexandra Curvelo, the main painting on this altar, most likely that of Saint Michael, was probably destroyed during the great fire of 1835. The surviving painting of Archangel Uriel has been often confused with that of Saint Michael. See Curvelo, “The artistic circulation between Japan, China and the New-Spain...”, pp. 66-67; Rafael Moreira, “Uma fachada-retábulo em Macau” in *El Museo de Pontevedra*, T. LIII, Pontevedra, 1999, p. 163.

56 João Fróis, annual letter from China for 1633, 20/9/1634, BA 49-V-11, ff. 34v, 50v.

Artistic production

On Pereira and Niva's talent and artistic production, some fragmentary details may be gathered from the sources. Niva, as aforementioned, exclusively a painter, was, of course, the one whose mastery was most praised, and to whom the most significant number of works is attributed. His talent or competence as a painter is quite clear through the highly favorable references repeated over the years. For example, Matteo Ricci stated that he was a painter that had a very good knowledge of his art – as already mentioned, the reason behind Valignano's decision to assign him to the China mission.⁵⁷ Also, in the French edition of the annual letter from China for 1601, even though Niva's name was not explicitly mentioned, it was undoubtedly him who was commended by the rector of the College of Macau, Valentim Carvalho (1560-1631). He branded him as a "skillful boy in his craft" ["habile garçon en son mestier"], whose paintings were "so beautiful and accomplished that the Chinese felt pleased" ["si belles & accomplies, que les Chinois y prendront plaisir"].⁵⁸ Later on, António de Gouveia (1592-1677) also proclaimed that Niva "was more than ordinary" ["mais que ordinario"] in the painting of images.⁵⁹ Likewise, Fernão Guerreiro classified him as an "excellent painter" ["excelente pintor"], further adding that Niva was forced to paint "in such great secret, that only two very trusty Christians knew part of this" ["desta arte com tanto segrêdo que só dois cristãos muito fiéis sabem parte disto"]. There was a reason to fear that in case Niva's skill came to the attention of the emperor, the brother would have to work exclusively for him and the most high-ranking officials.⁶⁰ This was explained by Guerreiro to a European audience inclined to believe this kind of exaggerations.

Among the places where Niva developed his activity, two stand out: Beijing (1602-1606, 1611-1616) and Macau (1601, 1606-1608, 1617-1638). However, we should also mention Nanchang, where he lived for a three-year period (1608-1611).

In these three cities, Niva decisively contributed to the decoration of the churches, namely by painting images of the Savior and the Virgin Mary. As early as 1601, the year he reached Macau, and that coincided with the great fire that destroyed the Jesuit church, as well as part of its college, Niva produced two paintings to replace those lost: an Assumption of the Virgin, and the Eleven Thousand Virgins, as recorded by the rector Valentim Carvalho in the annual letter for 1601.⁶¹ During the four years of his first stay in Beijing, between 1602 and 1606, he is described as the author of a copy of the popular

57 FR II, N. 687, pp. 258-259; OS I, p. 439.

58 Valentim Carvalho, *Lettre de la Chine de l'An 1601*, pp. 5-5r.

59 *Ásia Extrema* II, p. 185.

60 *Relação Anual* II, pp. 93-94. Pierre du Jarric, apparently based on a lost letter from Ricci, repeated the words of Fernão Guerreiro, in his work *Troisième partie de l'Histoire des choses plus memorables*, Bordeaux, 1614, pp. 1018-1019 (quoted by Paul Pelliot, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12).

61 This annual letter provided a report on that fire. Valentim Carvalho, *Lettre de la Chine de l'An 1601*, p. 5.

Virgin of Saint Luke with the Child holding the Bible or *Salus Populi Romani*. According to Ricci, it was very well painted.⁶² At Christmas 1604, that painting was placed in the altar of the church in Beijing (Xitang 西堂),⁶³ replacing that of the Savior.⁶⁴ By 1610, returning from Macau, where he had been sent to paint a few more images for the new church,⁶⁵ Niva went to Nanchang. During his stay there, he is credited with authorship of the portraits of the Savior and the Virgin for the altar of the two chapels inaugurated during Christmas time.⁶⁶ In July 1611, Longobardo reported that Ricci's burial was dependent on Niva's arrival to Beijing, since he should paint the image of the Savior for the altar of the homonymous chapel, at Zhalan 柵欄,⁶⁷ to take the place of the idols or *pagodas* previously found there.⁶⁸ Reaching Beijing, before mid-September, Niva

62 Attributed to Saint Luke, the original of this very popular image among the Jesuits is kept in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, in Rome. The Jesuits reproduced this image in vast quantities, and in China a well-known surviving example is a fascinating copy found in Xi'an 西安 (currently kept at the Field Museum, in Chicago). Painted on a vertical paper scroll, the unknown Chinese artist transformed the Virgin into *Songzi Guanyin* 送子觀音, "Guanyin Providing Sons" (The Field Museum, Chicago). On this topic see Pasquale D'Elia, "La Prima Diffusione nel Mondo dell'Imagine di Maria Salus Populi Romani" in *Fede e Arte*, fasc. X, Rome, Oct. 1954, pp. 1-11; Jeremy Clarke, *The Virgin Mary and Catholic Identities in Chinese History*, Hong-Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013, p. 32; Chen Hui-hung, "An interdisciplinary perspective to a historical issue: A Jesuit Madonna case in the seventeenth century", Harvard-Yenching Visiting Scholar Talk, 2013.

63 Called Nantang/南堂 from ca. 1703 onwards.

64 Letter from Matteo Ricci to Ludovico Maseli, Beijing, February 1605, OS II, p. 254. As stressed by Gauvin A. Bailey, at an early stage, Ricci decided to replace some images of the Virgin Mary with those of the Savior, since the Chinese confused the former with Guanyin 觀音, the Buddhist Bodhisattva of Mercy, and Mazu 媽祖, the goddess protector of sailors. However, Ricci's decision did not last very long. In fact, the Jesuits eventually reversed the decision, thus taking advantage of the popularity of both Guanyin and Mazu, and its similarities with the Virgin Mary. Therefore, it is no wonder that the Virgin had become such a familiar image in China and Macau (*Art on the Jesuit Missions*, p. 89). See also Jeremy Clarke, *op. cit.*; and Lauren Arnold, "Folk Goddess or Madonna? Early Missionary Encounters with the Image of Guanyin" in Xiaoxin Wu (ed.), *Encounters and Dialogues, Changing Perspectives on Chinese-Western Exchanges from the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, Sankt Augustin: Steyler Verlag, 2005, pp. 226-238. On the Mazu cult see Roderich Ptak, *O Culto de Mazu. Uma Visão Histórica (Da Dinastia Song ao início da Dinastia Qing)/Der Mazu-Kult. Ein Historischer Überblick (Song bis Anfang Qing)*, Lisbon: CCCM-Fundação Jorge Álvares, 2012.

65 According to John McCall, one of these paintings may have been a *Salvator Mundi* dated ca. 1607. *Op. cit.*, p. 53.

66 Nicolas Trigault, annual letter from China for 1610-1611, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 117, f. 5b. Other sources provide a different date for the opening of these chapels in Nanchang, the Christmas of 1609. However, these sources have no mention to Niva's paintings (*FR II*, N. 886, p. 469; Trigault, *HECRC*, p. 629). Further information on the images of the Savior and of the Virgin executed by Niva are once again found in the annual letter for 1614. Here it is mentioned the construction of two chapels, a larger one where was hung the Savior on a gilded frame, and a smaller one, where the Virgin was placed (João da Costa, annual letter from China for 1614, 10/8/1615, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 113, ff. 384-384v).

67 For more information on the Zhalan cemetery, see Edward Malatesta & Gao Zhiyu (org.), *Departed, Yet Present: The Oldest Christian Cemetery in Beijing*, Macau-San Francisco: Instituto Cultural de Macau-Ricci, University of San Francisco, 1995.

68 By then, the grave was already concluded. Letter from Niccolò Longobardo to Alfonso Vagnone, Beijing, 16/7/1611, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 15 I, f. 26v; letter from Niccolò Longobardo, Beijing, 14/9/1611,

immediately began his work,⁶⁹ which was already complete by November 1st, the date of the consecration of the chapel.⁷⁰ In 1612, he also produced some paintings for the house of Hangzhou, namely another large Savior that Feliciano da Silva (1579-1614) praised as probably “the best of those made until now by brother Niva” [“o melhor de quantos tem feito o Irmão Niva até’gora”].⁷¹ In 1613, another copy of the Savior, by Niva, was referred to as to be included in the list of gifts to Wanli 萬曆 emperor (r. 1572-1620).⁷² By mid-June 1616, Niva went to Zhalan once again, together with Sabatino de Ursis (1575-1620), with the aim of “painting the image of the house’s church” [“pintar a Imagem da Igreja de Caza”].⁷³ Further to this we should highlight his contribution to the production of maps, notably in the 1603 Beijing edition of Ricci’s world map, *Liangyi xuanlantu* 兩儀玄覽圖, a work in which another five Chinese youngsters from Macau took part, among whom were Manuel Pereira.⁷⁴ Also, in 1612, when in Beijing, Niva collaborated with Diego de Pantoja (1571-1618), on the production of the four maps of the continents, *Sidazhou ditu* 四大洲地圖, intended to be offered to Wanli emperor. Niva painted the maps, which were therefore described as “such a beautiful thing, that even in Europe would be esteemed” [“cousa assas bella, que se ouvera de estimar ainda em Europa”], in the annual letter, written in the usual laudatory tone.⁷⁵ In that same year of 1612, Niva and Pereira were both living in Beijing but, whereas the former was totally “committed to his painting” [“attende a sua

ARSI, Jap.Sin. 15 I, f. 27; Trigault, *HECRC*, p. 689; Álvaro Semedo, *Relatione della Grande Monarchia della Cina*, Rome, 1643, pp. 253-254.

⁶⁹ Niccolò Longobardo to the Priests of Southern China, Beijing, 14/9/1611, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 15 I, f. 27.

⁷⁰ “Lembranças do princípio e mais cousas que pertencem à varela que el rei da China deu aos padres da Companhia para sepultura de Ricci”, 1611, Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid), *Jesuitas Leg.* 21, 9/7236(I), f. 450v.

⁷¹ Niccolò Longobardo, annual letter from China for 1612, Nanxiong, 20/2/1613, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 113, f. 236v; Niccolò Longobardo, “Informação da Missão da China: das casas em particular”, Nanxiong, 28/11/1612, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 113, f. 274.

⁷² Niccolò Longobardo, “Informação da Missão e Casas da China do ano de 1613”, Nanxiong, 13/4/1613, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 113, f. 297. In addition to the image of the Savior, they planned to offer an organ brought from Japan, two large globes, two water machines, a copy of Nadal’s illustrated *Life of Christ*, *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* (Antwerp, 1593), and a planisphere in a copper blade.

⁷³ Sabatino de Ursis, “Principiam as noticias do ano de 1616”, BA 49-V-5, f. 174v.

⁷⁴ Among the several laudatory prefaces by Chinese scholars included in the 1603 edition, there was one signed by Li Yingshi 李应试, that besides praising Ricci, he also praised his six Chinese disciples, among whom were Niva and Pereira. In this preface, Li Yingshi stated that both Niva and Pereira had been involved in the production of this edition. On this map, see Pasquale D’Elia, “Recent Discoveries and New Studies (1938-1960) on World Map in Chinese of Father Matteo Ricci SJ” in *Monumenta Serica* XX, 1961, pp. 82-164.

⁷⁵ After Pantoja has been asked to translate from Latin into Chinese two maps of Europe and America, offered to the Emperor by one eunuch, the missionaries took the opportunity to paint two similar maps, that they put into Chinese, and also to prepare two further maps of Asia and Africa. Niccolò Longobardo, annual letter from China for 1612, Nanxiong, 20/2/1613, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 113, f. 225v.

pintura”], the latter was very busy running the domestic affairs [“esta ocupadissimo com o peso da casa”].⁷⁶

Apparently, not a tiny scrap of any work by Niva has survived to present. However, Gauvin A. Bailey states that in case a *Salvator Mundi*, made in Japan, as early as 1597, and currently kept at the General Library of the University of Tokyo (signed “Sacam Iacobus”), would confirm to be of Niva’s authorship, it would be a striking piece of evidence of his talent, in view of the high quality of this work.⁷⁷ However, we should stress, this is somewhat speculative.

Due to his limited involvement in painting, very little is known of Pereira’s artistic production. Nevertheless, he stands out as the author of the well-known portrait of Ricci, produced shortly after the superior’s death.⁷⁸ Some scholars regarded this portrait as proof of Pereira’s lower artistical ability. However, other authors such as Bailey, and more recently César Guillen-Nuñez in an article devoted to this portrait, point out that this is not a negligible painting, done by a less gifted artist, but quite an interesting piece of work, clearly characterized by a hybrid nature. As stressed by Bailey, the “sweeping, linear curve of the nose and eyebrows recalls Chinese painting conventions, and the figure’s three-quarters pose before a blank background is typical of Chinese portraiture.”⁷⁹ Further taking this analysis, Guillen-Nuñez compares Ricci’s portrait to other specific portraits of Chinese literati, highlighting strong similarities between them.⁸⁰

Besides this portrait of Ricci, taken to Rome in 1613 by Nicolas Trigault, and currently still displayed in the office of the sacristy of Gesù Church, another image of the Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist should also be attributed to Pereira. This one, classed as truly beautiful, was offered to the wife of the *dutang* 都堂/viceroy of Shandong 山东, Liu Dongxing 劉東星(1538-1601), in 1600, during the missionaries’

76 Niccolò Longobardo, “Informação da Missão da China: das casas em particular”, Nanxiong, 28/11/1612, ARSL, Jap.Sin. 113, f. 274.

77 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, p. 96.

78 FR II, N. 964, p. 543. Trigault, *HECRC*, p. 660; Sabatino de Ursis, P. Matheus Ricci, S.J., *Relação Escrípta pelo seu Companheiro P. Sabattino de Ursis, S.J.*, Rome: Missão Portuguesa de Macau, 1910, p. 58.

79 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, p. 96.

80 Namely with the portrait of Shen Zhou 沈周 (1427-1509) dated from 1507. In his very interesting analysis, Guillen-Nuñez also highlights the contemporary European influence in Ricci portrait, reflected in the use of oil on canvas, of richer color harmonies, as well as in the subtleties of Ricci’s facial expression. As the author observes, the result was a work that recalls “the serious spiritual quality of early Counter-Reformation religious portraits and prints”, notably El Greco’s portrait of Antonio de Covarrubias (1595-1600). César Guillen-Nuñez, *op. cit.*, pp. 443-464. For the similar kind of hybrid nature find in the work of the students of the Jesuit Japanese seminar, see for example Alexandra Curvelo & Angelo Cattaneo (*op. cit.*, p. 44, 53-56). Here the authors stress that the artwork produced in Japan under the Jesuits must be seen as a very creative one, rather than mere copies. See also Alexandra Curvelo “Copy to Convert. Jesuit’s Missionary Artistic Practice in Japan” in Rupert Cox (ed.), *The Culture of Copying in Japan. Critical and historical perspectives*, London-New York: Routledge, 2008, pp. 108-127 (particularly p. 124).

journey to Beijing. The *dutang's* wife liked the image the missionaries were carrying with them for the emperor so much, that a copy, painted by Pereira, was given to her on the same occasion.⁸¹ In 1633, according to Manuel Dias *Júnior* (1574-1659), Pereira, by then the oldest brother in the mission, “was very helpful for he was a mediocre painter” [“muito a ajudava por ser mediocre pintor”].⁸² Likewise in his necrology, included in the annual letter for 1633, his painting skills were highlighted as one of his contributions to the China mission.⁸³ This information was further confirmed by some previous catalogues, according to which he “exercuit pictoriam”.⁸⁴

Final remarks

During Ricci's lifetime, only two Chinese admitted to the Society were able to paint, even though painting was a skill in demand in the China mission, since its early years. Manuel Pereira was one of them, and remained there for around thirty-five years. He was, however, engaged in several other tasks and is always reported by his contemporaries as an average painter. The other was Jacobe Niva, regarded as an outstanding painter and exclusively devoted to it. However he remained in the mission for a much shorter period than Pereira, living there for just ca. fifteen years (in fifty-nine years of life). After Ricci's death, we find no more evidence of painters of Jacobe's kind bound to the China mission, *viz.* trained in European painting by a European master and entirely committed to his art. In fact, apart from one other Chinese Jesuit from Macau, Luís Faria/Cai Siming (?) 蔡思命/Hua Li'e (?) 華立娥 (1594-?), admitted in 1620,⁸⁵ who is listed in the secret catalogue for 1626 as having some skill in painting,⁸⁶ it isn't until late seventeenth century that another Chinese painter will join the Society. However, this time the situation was totally different as this man, Wu Li 吳歷 (1632-1718), a literatus from China proper, had been trained following Chinese pictorial conventions and, to my knowledge, never worked as a painter for the mission.⁸⁷ It might well be that local lay painters had been able to fulfill

81 This occurred when the missionaries stopped by in Jining (Shandong), to pay their respects to the viceroy. Cf. *FR* II, N. 579, p. 105; Trigault, *HECRC*, pp. 442-443.

82 Letter from Manuel Dias *Júnior* to Superior General, Nanchang, 1/11/1633, ARSI, Jap.Sin. 18 I, f. 141v.

83 João Fróis, annual letter from China for 1633, 20/9/1634, BA 49-V-11, f. 50v.

84 1621 and 1626 catalogues (ARSI, Jap.Sin. 134, ff. 301v, 304).

85 On his biography, see Isabel Pina, *op. cit.*, pp. 339-340.

86 “Potet mediocriter cathequizare et pingere”, 1626 2nd secret catalogue (ARSI, Jap.Sin. 134, f. 306).

87 On Wu Li, see for example, Jonathan Chaves, *Singing of the Source: Nature and God in the Poetry of the Chinese Painter Wu Li*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993; Xiaoping Lin, *Wu Li (1632-1718), His Life, His Paintings*, Lanham-New York-Oxford: University Press of America, 2000; *Culture, Art, Religion. Wu Li (1632-1718) and His Inner Journey*, Macau: Macau Ricci Institute, 2006.

the requested needs for a long time, whereas the few Chinese Jesuits were far more useful in some other tasks than painting. Indeed, by the mid-seventeenth century, as illustrated by a passage in Álvaro Semedo's work (1585-1658) on China, "at present there are some of them [i.e. Chinese], who have been taught by us, that use oyles, and are come to make perfect pictures".⁸⁸

⁸⁸ *The History of That Great and Renowned Monarchy of China*, London, 1655, p. 56. The cases of Hangzhou, as well as those of Beijing and Changsu 常熟 provide some more examples of local artists commissioned with the production of religious paintings, after European models. In Hangzhou, it is well-known the artist Li Paulo, involved in the production of the seventy-two religious paintings in European-style for the church, following the plans of Prospero Intorcetta, and that were already completed by 1683. See D. E. Mungello, *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994, pp. 48-49. As Noël Golvers draws the attention, Ferdinand Verbiest, in his *Astronomia Europaea*, as well as François de Rougemont, in his Account Book and *Elogium* also provide several information about Chinese artists painting for the missionaries, both in Beijing and in the Jiangnan 江南 region, namely in Changshu, during the 1660s and the 1670s. François de Rougemont, S.J., *Missionary in Ch'ang-Shu (Chiang-Nan) A Study of the Account Book (1674-1676) and the Elogium*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, pp. 466-477.