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Paper Title: **“Beijing as a Missionary Translation Center in the Eighteenth Century”**

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Abstract

After the establishment of the Qing dynasty, the missionary community in Beijing became an important scholarly center for the study and translation into European languages of Chinese and Manchu philosophical, religious, historical, artistic, and scientific texts; the production of translations in Chinese and Manchu of European materials in numerous fields; and the compilation of linguistic materials for the study of Chinese and Manchu. Libraries of Western and Chinese books in the missionary residences, a flourishing local book market, and scholarly networks in China and abroad, offered a basis for such studies.

This paper will attempt to understand the *logistics* of book circulation, study of texts, and translation in Beijing, especially during the period of proscription of Christianity (1724-1848). Using primary published and archival sources, I will consider not only the better-known French and Portuguese Jesuit missions, but also the small and almost unknown mission of the Propaganda Fide Congregation, established under papal authority in the imperial capital in the 1710s. For comparative purposes, I will also use secondary research to describe the contemporary scholarly activities of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, and consider its interaction with Beijing’s Catholic circles.

Building upon recent research on China’s missionary libraries, book circulation, and translation studies in the late imperial period by Noël Golvers, Nicolas Standaert, Wu Huiyi and others, I aim to reconstruct the ‘materiality’ of a broadly conceived ‘missionary translation project’ in Qing Beijing, including examination of lesser known actors, types of raw materials used, location of activities, transportation and circulation of written materials, and economic factors aiding or hindering the enterprise. In doing so, I wish to historically contextualize the development of this transnational initiative, bridging the Qing court, native scholarly circles, and European counterparts in Rome, Paris, London, Lisbon, St. Petersburg and Berlin, and explain, at least preliminarily, the multiple reasons that motivated it.