Christian-Muslim Relations
A Bibliographical History

Volume 12. Asia, Africa and the Americas (1700-1800)

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LEIDEN • BOSTON
2018

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Mémoires concernant les Chinois

Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages, & c. des Chinois. Par les Missionnaires de Pékin, 'Memoirs concerning the history, sciences, arts, customs, usages, etc. of the Chinese. By the missionaries in Beijing'

DATE 1776-1814
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE French

DESCRIPTION
Mémoires concernant les Chinois is a collection of missionary letters, translated texts and essays from the 18th-century Jesuit mission to China, including writings by prominent missionary figures such as Jean Joseph Marie Amiot (Chinese: Qian Deming, 1718-93) and Pierre-Martial Cibot (Chinese: Hánguó Yīng, 1727-80). References to Islam and more regularly to Muslims are scattered through 12 of the 16 volumes. It is possible to categorise these references as follows:

1. Muslim involvement in miscellaneous secular topics.
2. Conflict with Muslims through rebellion and war.
3. The presence and nature of Islam and Muslims in China.
4. The place of Muslims in Chinese history, drawing upon Chinese sources.

In many cases these categories overlap. A portion of the references to Muslims are fleeting and miscellaneous, focusing on Muslim involvement in secular aspects of Chinese society such as the production of silk or the trade in jade. They are descriptive in nature and lack either positive or negative comment on the Muslims involved. Muslims or Islam are not themselves the primary subjects but are mentioned in these passages by virtue of their association with the topic of discussion. Nevertheless, whilst seemingly insignificant for Christian-Muslim relations because they lack detail and assessment, such references illustrate that the Christian missionaries who authored them were willing and able to record the place and roles of Muslims in Chinese society without recourse to any

anti-Muslim biases which they may (or may not) have held. The authors commonly use the term 'Mahométans' to refer to Muslims and 'Mahométisme' to refer to Islam. They also tend to favour national and ethnic categories such as 'Hoei-tsee' (Chinese: *Huíhuí*), 'Turcs' (Turks), and 'khalife' (caliph). On occasion, they use the term 'Musulmans'.

The first references to Islam and Muslims appear in the very first volume of the *Mémoires*, in Jean Joseph Marie Amiot's (Chinese: Qián Démíng, 1718-93) *Monument de la conquéte des Eleuths* ['Memorial on the conquest of the Oirats'] (*Mémoires*, vol. 1, pp. 329-99). This explores the expedition of the Qiánlóng Emperor (1711-99) against the Dzungar, and includes extensive notes on the Chinese military, the Dzungar government, and geography (A. de Backer and A. de Backer, *Bibliothèque des écrivains de la Compagnie de Jésus*, vol. 3, Liège, 1886, p. 34) with the first mention of Islam in a footnote to Amiot's description of east Turkestan (here denoted as 'Hoa-men' or 'Hoei-pou'). He notes that Hoei-pou (Chinese: *Huìbù*) meaning 'the horde of Mahometans' is the general term used by the Chinese to refer to Tartars (p. 379). Following this, he describes briefly the conquest of east Turkmenistan by the former Dzungar leader Galdan Tseren (d. 1745), noting that Tseren gave the Muslims laws (p. 379). Amiot then provides an account of the rulings regarding the Muslims and military campaigns against them following their revolt (pp. 381-94). He refers, in reported speech, to particular Muslims as barbarous (p. 383). The footnotes from pages 381-94 provide extensive information on these events and the Muslims to which Amiot refers. However, the text appears to record primarily secular events in which Muslims were involved and, despite the apparent negative slant of the Christian chronicler, the record is essentially arreligious in nature.

Muslims are also referred to in secular accounts of political changes and governance in Amiot's *Monument de la transmigration des Tourgouths des bords de la mer Caspienne dans l'empire de la Chine* ['Memorial on the transmigration of the Tourgouths from the shores of the Caspian Sea in the Empire of China'] (*Mémoires*, vol. 1, pp. 401-18, particularly pp. 406, 409), as well as in his *Extrait d'une lettre du P. Amiot, missionaire en Chine, à M. Bertin, Ministre et Secrétaire d'Etat* ['Extract from a letter from P. Amiot, missionary in China, to Mr. Bertin, minister and secretary of state'] (*Mémoires*, vol. 1, pp. 419-27, particularly p. 425).

Interestingly, references to Muslim rebellions and Sino-Muslim wars are extensive. These appear very frequently in vols 1, 9, 11, and parts of 15 and 16. The lengthy explorations of Sino-Muslim conflict suggest

that it was of importance. For the most part, the relevant passages are descriptive in nature, recording events in chronological sequence based on the Chinese sources available to the authors. Although the lack of overt personal judgement or comment on the involvement of Muslims in these events is notable, this does not mean that the recording of the events lacks interpretation. Indeed, the Christian authors tend to favour the imperial opinion on events, offering the perspective of the emperor or other high-ranking figures rather than their own. By favouring the Qīng discourse, the authors present an image of Muslims that is simultaneously both positive and negative – there are both acceptable and unacceptable Muslims. An example of this comes in vol. 11, where Amiot quotes the emperor's proclamation that rebellious Muslims should be punished, whilst law-abiding Muslim citizens should come to no harm. In the same volume, Amiot labels the white-capped Muslims as the main perpetrators of the rebellion and, although he notes that there was quarrelling between the red- and white-capped Muslims, comment on the other sects generally remains neutral.

Vols 2, 3, 7 and 12 appear to feature no references to Muslims or Islam. However, in vol. 4, a chapter composed by the French Jesuit Pierre-Martial Cibot (Chinese: Hánguó Yīng, 1727-80) entitled *Observations de physique et d'histoire naturelle de l'Empereur Kang-hi* ['Observations on physics and natural history of the … Emperor Kang-Hi'] (*Mémoires*, vol. 4, pp. 452-83) refers to Muslims on two occasions. On the first, Cibot notes the dispatch of Muslims to Hāmì and the fear that they had been incapacitated due to the extreme heat of the region (p. 459). However, on returning to Beijing because of illness, the Muslims reported that Hāmì was high up and had a large fresh water supply, meaning that the drawbacks of the hot weather could easily be overcome (p. 459). The second brief reference is to Muslims in the north-west of China and is concerned with the type of silkworms they breed, and the advantages of these silkworms in comparison to those elsewhere in China (p. 471).

Although not as extensive as vol. 1, vol. 5 (1780) contains several key references to Muslims. At the beginning of his *Idée générale de la Chine (i), Et de ses premières relations avec l'Europe* ['General ideas on China (i), and its first relations with Europe'], Cibot notes the celebration of the lives of Mongol leaders by contemporary Arab historians (*Mémoires*, vol. 5, p. 2). He provides an account of Louis IX of France's (1214-70) visit to Palestine and his belief in the existence of Prester John, although it lacks reference to Louis's interactions with Muslims (p. 3). Following this, he provides an account of the journeys of the Franciscan missionary

William of Rubruck (1220-93), noting that he was obliged to return to Europe following disputes with Muslim 'priests', idolaters and Syrian Christians (p. 4). He covers other early Sino-European relations, including the journeys of Marco Polo (1254-1324) and the early Jesuit missions, although these lack reference to Islam or Muslims (pp. 4-22) as such. The first and only direct reference to Muslims in connection with the 17th-century Jesuit missions comes with his discussion of the astronomical controversies between the Jesuits (especially Johann Adam Schall von Bell, 1591-1666) and Muslims (p. 22). Here he notes that the Chinese emperor expelled the Muslim mathematicians, and comments that they had been present for some three centuries following the foolish decision of the Mongols to introduce them to China (p. 22).

In the third part of the treatise, entitled 'De la chronologie, de l'histoire et des religions de la Chine' ['Chronology, history, and religions of China'], Cibot makes several further references to Muslims. He notes that he has little to say with regard to their religion (p. 67). It was introduced, he argues, by the Mongols, and continued under the Míng dynasty (p. 67). He goes on to say that the Muslims monopolised the Bureau of Astronomy, upon when Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-88) successfully illustrated their ignorance and had them dismissed (p. 68). Furthermore, he argues that Muslims are tolerated in China because they are quiet, do not quarrel with each other, and do not evangelise (p. 68). Finally, he notes that in total there are only 5,000 to 6,000 Muslim families, all of low income (p. 68). The second part of the final chapter of this volume, entitled 'Pour compléter ce cinquième volume, on y a joint quelques notices sur différens objets, III. Notices du royaume de Ha-mi' ['To complete the fifth volume, we have attached some notes on different objects. III. Notices on the Kingdom of Hāmì'], written by Cibot, contains a lone reference to Muslims. This is a historical note to the effect that, following the fall of the Táng dynasty, the Muslims (already in control of Persia, the Caspian and other areas) conquered Hāmì (p. 488). Cibot notes that the area retained a ruler, though he was dependent on Mongol patronage (p. 488).

In vol. 6, a single reference to Muslims appears in *Extrait d'une lettre de M. Amiot, à M ***, du 28 septembre 1777. Observations sur le livre de M. P**, intitulé: Recherches philosophiques sur les Egyptiens et les Chinois* ['Extract from a letter from M. Amiot to M ***, September 28, 1777. Observations on the book of M. P**, entitled: Philosophical investigations on the Egyptians and the Chinese']. Writing about the abandonment of

children in China, Amiot notes among some other examples that there are those who hope when they abandon a child that some charitable Muslim, wanting to provide proof of their faith, will seek to save them (*Mémoires*, vol. 6, p. 327). He states that by saving the child's life the Muslim will be able to create a new convert (p. 327).

A single short reference to Muslims occurs in vol. 8 (1782) in a portion entitled *Extrait d'un lettre d'un missionnaire: Ecrite de Pékin le 16 novembre 1778, sur le retour de l'Empereur Kien-Long, qu'on avoit cru mort* ['Extract from the letter of a missionary: Written from Peking on 16 November 1778, on the return of Emperor Qiánlóng, who had been thought dead'], written by François Bourgeois (Chinese: Cháo Jùnxiù, 1723-92). In this, Bourgeois notes that an affair (unspecified in content) involving Muslims had been resolved following the emperor cutting off the Chinese who had vexed them (p. 289).

Vol. 9 (1783) contains several references to Muslims. In *Observations: De M. Law de Lauriston, sur l'ouvrage intitulé: Voyage de M. Sonnerat aux Indes orientales & à la Chine* ['Observations: From Mr. Law of Lauriston, on the work entitled: M. Sonnerat's voyage to the East Indies and China'], Cibot explores the design of some rupees which refer to the second son of Aurangzeb (Muḥyī l-Dīn Muḥammad, 1618-1707), here rendered Cha Alem (Bahadur Shah, 1643-1712) (*Mémoires*, vol. 9, p. xx). The inscription on the coins describes Cha Alem as a defender of Islam and a person blessed with the goodness of God. Nevertheless, beyond this quoted description from the coins, no assessment or further details are provided. More pertinent in this volume are references in Amiot's *Extrait d'une lettre. Ecrite par M. Amiot, missionnaire, contenant, 1°. les services rendus par Akoui; 2°. une lettre de l'empereur au Talaï-lama* ['Extract from a letter written by M. Amiot, missionary, containing 1. The services rendered by Akoui; 2. A letter from the emperor to the Dalai Lama']. The letter records military campaigns undertaken by the Manchu general Āguì (1717-97) during the 1781 rebellions of the Muslim Salar people in Lánzhōu. Amiot writes that, whilst Āguì was working on strengthening fortifications in north-west China, the emperor dispatched a courier to inform him that Muslims from Níngxià and those in the provinces under Āguì's charge had begun causing disturbances in Hotcheou (Turfan) (*Mémoires*, vol. 9, p. 442). These Muslims had destroyed bridges and were besieging Lánzhōu, and the emperor therefore requested Āguì to act against them. Āguì successfully broke the siege but, instead of waiting for reinforcements, he sought to chase down the fleeing Muslim armies only to find

his own forces surrounded by them and their local supporters, though he was eventually able to defeat the Muslim forces (pp. 442-4). The report also contains the quoted speech of Āguì, including reference to the Muslim forces (p. 445). The second part of the letter, which is a quoted letter from the emperor to the Dalai Lama, includes one reference to Muslims, which notes that Muslim ambassadors (among those of other races and nations) paid homage to the emperor at his summer residence in Gehol (modern-day Chéngdé) (p. 449).

The majority of vol. 10 (1784) contains an index to previous volumes, noting instances where Muslims and Islam were referred to. In many cases, this list, entitled *Table générale des matieres contenues dans les dix précédens volumes des mémoires concernant les Chinois* ['General table of subjects contained in the ten previous volumes of memoirs concerning the Chinese'], provides background details on figures and events mentioned that were not explicitly marked as relating to Islam or Muslims in the text itself. For example, the index lists several figures, including details of their religious affiliation or their interactions with Muslims, as well as geographical notes regarding areas with high numbers of Muslims (pp. 181, 261, 296, 478 and 498). These are noted in some cases as absent in the text in previous volumes. The index entry on 'Chinese wars' refers to exploration in vol. 9 of Āguì's battles against revolting Muslims in Lánzhōu (p. 258); the entry on silk refers the reader to references to Muslims in vol. 4 (p. 403); and the entry on religions in China points the reader to vol. 5 for details regarding Islam (p. 389). Entries on Amiot, stone, the Emperor Qiánlóng, salt and Chinese superstitions also refer to Muslims or Islam (pp. 189, 356, 379, 394, 415). Explicit references to 'Mahométans' and 'Mahométisme' in the index point the reader to Amiot's account in vol. 1, and Cibot's introduction to Chinese religions in vol. 5 (p. 310).

There are two references to Islam in vol. 11 (1786). The first occurs in *Observations sur les plantes, les fleurs & les arbres de Chine, qu'il est possible & utile de se procurer en France* ['Observations on the plants, flowers and trees of China which it is possible and useful to obtain in France'] by Cibot. Here, Cibot argues that China is set apart from other Muslim and heretical empires by doing more for its colonists through treaties, to which it owes much of its power, wealth and peace (*Mémoires*, vol. 11, p. 259). The second reference is extensive and appears in *Extrait d'une lettre de M. Amiot, ecrite de Pé-king le 29 Novembre 1784* ['Extract of a letter by M. Amiot, written in Peking on 29 November 1784']. Describing

the area of Gānsù and north-west China, Amiot notes that it is divided into several hordes (p. 590). All openly profess their religion (that of the Qur'an) known as Hoei-tsee (*Huíhuí*) (p. 590). The Muslims are divided into three sects, the 'Houng-mao-hoei-tsee' (*Hóng mào Huíhuí* – Uyghurs) who wear red caps, the 'Pe-mao-hoei-tsee' (*Bái mào Huíhuí* – Arabs) who wear white caps, and the 'Tchan-teou-hoei-tsee' (*Chántóu huí* – another term for Uyghurs) who wrap their heads with a turban only when paying tribute to the emperor or receiving permission to gain a new sultan (pp. 590-1). He does not note the black-capped Muslims (*Hēi mào Huíhuí*), a term used to refer to Persians (Ting and Xiansheng, 'Hui people', p. 124). Amiot notes that the red- and white-capped Muslims were involved in religious disputes, and due to their high numbers in the province of Gānsù such disputes entered public life (*Mémoires*, vol. 11, p. 591). These quarrels were tolerated unless they caused disorder in Chinese cities (p. 591). The document goes on to give details on Āguì and Lǐ Shìyáo (d. 1788), focusing on the events of the 1781 Muslim rebellions in the province, and notes that Lǐ was promoted following Āguì's recommendation, but, accustomed to tranquil places where his orders were followed, Lǐ was unable to have his orders instated efficiently in Gānsù. Lǐ ordered the Muslims to live in peace with one another and refrain, under threat of punishment, from disputes that affected public peace (pp. 591-2). However, the Muslims continued to quarrel as usual, and became more enraged following their punishment (p. 592). Amiot notes that the main aggressors were the white-capped Muslims, who regarded all other Muslims as degenerate, urging them to follow the Qur'an more purely (p. 592). It is interesting to note that, in this statement regarding the white-capped Muslims' dislike of other Muslims, Amiot uses the term 'Musulmans' rather than his usual 'Mahométans' (p. 592). Lǐ considered the Muslims to be foreigners and fewer in number than they had been in the past, and he therefore decided to expel rebellious members of the white-capped Muslims, totalling approximately 10,000 families, without informing the emperor (p. 592). The protests of those to be expelled fell upon deaf ears, although Lǐ declared that they could still visit for trade if they did not disturb the peace (pp. 592-3). Amiot notes that in their anger the exiled Muslims became 'rebellious, fierce and cruel' (p. 593) and began preparations for war (p. 593). They rallied around a descendant of a former ruler who, because of his youth, had been spared in the massacres in Dzungar when the Qīng had conquered the region (described in vol. 1), and persuaded him to lead them

(pp. 593-5). Amiot then covers logistics and military preparations as well as the beginning of the rebellion (pp. 595-7). Lǐ's forces were outnumbered and, not wanting to act without imperial permission, he sent a courier to request assistance from the emperor. In the meantime, he dispatched a limited number of his men to face the rebellion (p. 597). Some of the forces he sent were wiped out by the more numerous Muslim forces, whilst others hid and later reported the situation to him (p. 597). He dispatched these reports to the emperor, who also received letters from other Chinese living in the region (p. 597). The emperor arrested and tried Lǐ, who was found guilty of harshness, negligence and failure to report the unstable nature of his province to the emperor (p. 597).

Lǐ was sentenced to be executed, but Amiot notes that Āguì's influence may eventually have saved him from punishment (pp. 597-8). He then provides an account of the putting down of the rebellion by Āguì and comments on the war in general for his European audience (pp. 598-603). He notes that the emperor promised that he would ensure no harm came to ordinary Muslims who did not revolt (p. 598). Indeed, Amiot provides a quotation from the emperor following the suppression of the revolt, in which the emperor argues that he had graciously allowed the Muslims to live according to their own religion, laws and customs, but they had forgotten this, seeking instead to slaughter his officers, rob his granaries and treasury, sway the opinions of his subjects, and take the empire. Such a treacherous nation, he argued, should be destroyed (pp. 603-4). Those under the age of 15 would be spared and given as slaves to Muslims who had remained faithful to the empire (p. 604). Amiot notes that the order was carried out, and the land was cleared to make way for a new nation, though in Amiot's opinion this could in the future also rise against its masters (p. 604). Āguì wrote to the emperor asking him to grant the land to well-deserving subjects and to settle Chinese there, to build a city, and to keep Lǐ's successor Fúkāng'ān (1753-96) in his position as head of the province (p. 605). He details the promotions and other practical actions taken in the province by the emperor (pp. 605-9), and in the postscript he writes that Lǐ's fate remains unclear, although the emperor seems to be showing him mercy (p. 609).

Vol. 13 (1788) contains two references to Muslims in Cibot's *Seconde notice sur les pierres de Yu, par le même* ['Second notice on jade']. Noting the rarity of jade, Cibot writes that most comes from the north-west and is found by the Muslims who reside there (*Mémoires*, vol. 13, p. 393). The second reference reiterates the first, noting again that both the Muslims

and the Chinese search riverbeds and areas near mountains to find jade (p. 394). Vol. 14 (1789) contains numerous references to Muslims, the majority found in Amiot's *Introduction à la connoissance des peuples qui ont été ou qui sont auctuellement tributaires de la Chine* ['Introduction to the knowledge of peoples who have been or currently are dependent on China'], which occupies most of the volume. Amiot first refers to the *Sìyí guǎn* (Institute of four foreign languages), noting its subdivisions (*Mémoires*, vol. 14, p. 7). The premier department is the *Huíhuí* or Muslim department (p. 7), which has produced several works, including a dictionary (p. 7). Amiot provides details on the Muslim *Huíhuí* with a sub-chapter devoted to them in which he notes that their department is responsible for all matters in the kingdoms of a Muslim majority (pp. 9-10). One of the areas supposedly under the department's remit is Japan, but Amiot argues that this must be a mistake as Islam does not exist there (p. 10).

Contrary to the Chinese indifference to foreign religions, which Amiot notes are categorised according to their exterior similarities, he argues that the Chinese are quite familiar with Islam; they are aware of Muḥammad (stylised here as 'Mo-han') and his status, and of the kingdom of Medina ('Mo-te-na') (p. 10). Amiot writes that the *Huíhuí* honour heaven, but they lack representations of their object of worship (pp. 10-11). Furthermore, they own many books, and one town contains a library comprised of 30 interconnected departments with a total of some 3,000 volumes (pp. 10-11). Amiot also claims that there may be a link between their written language and French (p. 11). He notes that the first Muslims in China came during the Suí dynasty (581-618) (p. 11) and provides the name *Sa-ha-pa-sa-ngan-ty-kan-see-ke* as the first Muslim visitor (p. 11). This appears to be a reference to someone linked to Muḥammad, as indicated by the term *Sa-ha-pa* ('Sahaba'). It is possibly a reference to one *Sa-ha-ba S-a-di Gan-go-sz'*, who is referred to by E. Bretschneider in *Medieval researches from Eastern Asiatic sources* (London, vol. 1, 1888, p. 266).

Amiot provides further details of the arrival of Islam in China in his footnotes (*Mémoires*, vol. 14, p. 11, n. 2). Using Chinese sources, he claims a probable date of 590 or, in his opinion, around 596, marking the middle of the Emperor Wén's (here rendered as Kai-hoang; r. 581-604) reign (pp. 11-12, n. 2). In the same footnote, Amiot writes also about the origins of Islam. He notes that Muḥammad was not seeking to found a new religion but rather declared himself a prophet in order to hide from his wife,

Khadīja (here rendered 'Chadighe'), the true cause of the convulsions he suffered (p. 12, n. 2). Debating the date of the birth of Muḥammad, he rejects later dates provided by other historians (p. 12, n. 2). Focusing on the year 571, he notes that Muḥammad's first marriage would have occurred in 596 when he was 25 years old (p. 12, n. 2). With such dating, he argues, it would be unlikely that Muslims visited China during Wén's reign, as Muḥammad, at the age of 25, would not yet have disciples to dispatch as emissaries to foreign lands, and indeed he did not begin to systematise his teachings until he was 40 years old (p. 12, n. 2). However, following other scholars, Amiot notes that if Muḥammad was born in 560 and married in 585, he would have had time to make followers who could have visited China within his and Wén's lifetime in or before 604 (p. 12, n. 2). Accepting this dating, Amiot notes that it would be possible for Muslims to have visited China in the middle of Wén's reign (as attested in Chinese sources) (p. 13, n. 2).

Continuing his description of Muslims in China in the main body of his text, Amiot states that Muslims have their own cities, palaces, gardens and markets, and that they are involved in astronomy, medicine and the arts (pp. 12-13). He comments briefly on religious practices, noting that Muslims do not eat pork, they fast for one month each year and wash during that time, pray in a westerly direction every day, and have one unified religion (pp. 12-13). He notes they make velvet, flannel, cloth and canvases, and that they possess lions, rhinoceroses, camels and horses (pp. 13-14). Finally, he notes the receiving of ambassadors in 1426 in the reign of the Emperor Xuāndé (r. 1399-1435) (p. 14). In the subchapter exploring the region of Turfan (Tourfan), he refers to Muslims within this region, arguing that their poor relations with other Chinese Muslims are due either to different interpretations of the Qur'an or to their use of idols (pp. 23-4).

Following this, and using Chinese sources, he refers to Mecca (rendered by Amiot as 'Tien-fang' – in Chinese pinyin *Tiānfāng*). Here, he returns to the topic of the ambassadors received by Xuāndé during the Míng dynasty (1368-1644) (p. 24). In the footnotes, he provides details on the Chinese Muslim Zhèng Hé's journey to Mecca, quoting from Zhèng (pp. 24-6, n. 2), who notes that the residents of Mecca follow the religion of Muḥammad and describes a temple in which there are five chapels, one of which is reserved for the clergy (p. 25, n. 2). Zheng records that the inhabitants of Mecca are wise and always happy, and mentions the time it takes for pilgrims to arrive by sea or foot from Hormuz and Calcutta or Cochin (pp. 25-6, n. 2).

A second quotation refers to 'Kou-ly', which Amiot identifies as Calcutta or Cochin. Amiot provides some comments on place names and their rendering in Chinese (pp. 25-6, n. 2). In the main text here, he provides a description of Mecca as a place of temperate climate, where men and women shave their heads and drink mare's milk, where there is no taxation, no thieving, and where there is a lunar aspect to the priest's worship (p. 26). He notes the existence of a square temple within the city, made of wood, fine yellow marble and stones of all colours (pp. 26-7). The city is home to precious stones, coral and horses (p. 27). Amiot states that the city has maintained relations with China from the reign of Xuāndé to the current emperor (p. 27). In his discussion of 'Koua-oua' (perhaps Borneo or Java), Amiot notes that the religion of the people there is Islam (p. 101), as is the case with 'Man-la-kia' (Malacca) (p. 124).

A final reference to Muslims in vol. 14 appears in *Parallèle des mœurs et usages des Chinois, ou les mœurs et usages décrits dans le Livre d'Esther: Extrait d'un commentaire sur ce livre, par seu M. Cibot, missionnaire à Péking* ['Parallels between the customs and usages of the Chinese and the customs and usages described in the Book of Esther: Extract from a commentary on this book, by M. Cibot, missionary in Beijing'], where Cibot notes Muslims amongst recently conquered peoples (p. 432).

Vol. 15 (1791) also contains extensive references to Muslims. The first part is *Suite de parallèle des mœurs et usages des Chinois, avec les mœurs et usages décrits dans le Livre d'Esther* ['Continuation of parallels of the customs and usages of the Chinese, with the customs and usages described in the Book of Esther'] by Cibot, a continuation of the extract in the previous volume. Exploring the presence of Jews in Persia, he provides comments on the presence of Muslim Oriats (Eleuths) in China, noting that they came with their wives and children and were distributed throughout various small towns (*Mémoires*, vol. 15, p. 188). He notes that, although the group is hated by the Chinese, the government does not interfere with their religion but rather treats them honestly because they are foreigners (pp. 188-9).

All the remaining references to Islam or Muslims in the volume are found in Antoine Gaubil's (Chinese: Sòng Jūnróng, 1689-1759) *Abrégé de l'histoire de la Chinoise de la grande dynastie Tang* ['Abridged history of the Chinese of the great Tang dynasty']. Exploring the region of Arabia as recorded in Táng dynasty (618-907) histories, Gaubil notes that Muḥammad, having found a black stone on a mountain near Medina,

took it and deceived the people, eventually founding a state (*Mémoires*, vol. 15, p. 407). He goes on to note that Muḥammad's descendants conquered Persia (p. 408). Later he records the Turks and the *Huíhuí* among the four great powers that warred with Táng China (pp. 408-9). He also notes that both Christianity and the religion of Islam and the caliphs were recorded in the history of the Táng dynasty (p. 409). The final references appear in footnotes mentioning wars, battles and related secular events in which Muslims were involved (p. 450, n. 2; pp. 455-6, n. 3; p. 468, n. C; p. 474, n. 2). These are not substantial in terms of content.

Vol. 16, the final one of the series, published in 1814, some 23 years after vol. 15, also contains references to Islam and Muslims. These all occur in Gaubil's continued version of his *Abrégé de l'histoire de la Chinoise de la grande dynastie Tang* in a text entitled *Suite de l'abrégé de l'histoire de la Chinoise de la grande dynastie Tang* ['Continuation of the abridged history of the Chinese of the great Tang dynasty']. First, Gaubil focuses on Táng expansion into Turkish regions, noting Turkish defections to the Chinese side and the allocation of land to these Turks (pp. 8-9). He records the presentation of the title 'Ko-han' (Chinese: *Dēnglì Kěhàn*, often rendered 'Tengri Qaghan') to a ruler selected by the Turks, and that this leader was desirous to build cities and temples (pp. 10-11). He also notes Turkish uprisings in 717 against the Chinese that followed these events, which involved troops from Tibet and the caliphate (probably referring to the Türgesh Kaganate) (pp. 11-12). They attacked towns in Kashgar, but the Chinese, assisted by other Turks, were able to lift the sieges. Settlements with the Tibetans and with western and northern Turks were made the following year (p. 12). In 719, he notes several envoys asking for Chinese protection against the caliphate (p. 12). In the footnotes, Gaubil states that the Táng histories record that the emperor received a lion from Syria or the Roman Empire (the kingdom of Ta-tsin, in pinyin rendered *Dàqín* – Gaubil suggests this refers to Greece) (p. 13, n. 2). The kingdom also sent a priest of great virtue (p. 13, n. 2). Gaubil writes that, due to the wars with Muslims, the roads that these envoys took were dangerous and difficult (p. 13, n. 2). Throughout the rest of the main text, he continues to record intermittently details about wars and the eventual peace settlement with the Turks, and subsequently mentions Islam directly in a reference to a monk who used Muslim mathematical methods (p. 16, n. 2).

Much later in the text Gaubil turns to the topic of Muslims, but again only in his footnotes. Here he records details of an emissary from the

fifth ʿAbbasid caliph, Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786-809, here referred to as 'le Khalifie Ga-lun'), who took part in a Chinese ceremony to greet the emperor (p. 144, n. 3). Gaubil argues that the first ambassadors had difficulty with Chinese ceremonies (p. 144, n. 3), noting that the Chinese histories record that the Muslims initially objected to kneeling as they only knelt as part of religious ceremonies. However, following explanations of Chinese ceremonies, their objections thawed (p. 144, n. 3). In a further footnote focusing on the spread of foreign religions, Gaubil states that the Táng histories recorded that Muslims honour the spirit of heaven, and that this religion is generally practised in Tibet and in western countries (p. 229, n. 10).

Towards the end of the text, Gaubil includes a chapter entitled *Additions a l'historie de la grande dynastie Tang* ['Additions to the history of the great Tang dynasty'], which contains a subsection entitled *Sur les Mahométans* ['On the Muslims']. This contains the most substantial material on Muslims. Gaubil records a story from the Táng histories of incidents occurring in the reign of Emperor Yáng (569-618) of the Suí dynasty (p. 372). Although he does not openly state that this is a story of the origins of Islam, the story's position in the text and also the footnotes suggest that this is the case. He writes that a man who was guarding his flock on a mountain heard the voice of a beast, which said that to the west of the mountain were caravans, good weapons and a black stone, the owner of which would become king (p. 372). The man found these items, took up arms and, by deceiving many people, made himself king (p. 372). In the footnotes, Gaubil notes that this story was about incidents that occurred in Arabia (pp. 372-3, n. 1) and that sources only distinguish between Persia and Arabia following the beginning of the reign of Muḥammad (p. 373, n. 2). He records that Chinese historians of later periods assert that Muḥammad sent two of his disciples to China to preach the religion, and that, according to the Táng histories, the first Arab visitors to China introduced the religion (p. 373, n. 3). The text does not provide details of the early Muslim conquests (see p. 373, n. 4).

In a second set of footnotes, but numbered in the same fashion as the preceding ones, he records historical inaccuracies in the text (p. 372, n. 1) and the position of Arabia in relation to China according to Chinese sources (p. 372, n. 2). Following this passage, Gaubil records in the main text an embassy from Arabia in 651 (p. 373). The first footnote attached to this section explores the origins of the Chinese word for the Arabs and Arabia, 'Ta-che' (*Dà shí*) (pp. 373-4, n. 1), and an additional footnote states that this term referred to Muslim countries in general (p. 373, n. 4). The

editors explore the term further, noting its links to the Persian term *tazi* (p. 374, n. 1). In the second footnote to the main text, Gaubil makes brief notes about some of the genealogies of Middle Eastern leaders and caliphs recorded in the Táng histories (p. 374, n. 2). The third footnote states that the Táng histories record the existence of a mosque in Si-gan-fou (Xī'ān), however, it also states that Gaubil himself has been unable to confirm whether or not this was so (p. 375, n. 3). The fourth footnote refers to the invasion of Transoxiana by armies of the caliphate, with Gaubil noting that 'the Chinese history clearly speaks of this irruption of Muslims' (p. 375, n. 4).

In the fifth footnote, Gaubil states that the number of Muslims in Táng China cannot be accurately ascertained (p. 375, n. 5). He suggests that figures given in other academic texts are probably exaggerated (p. 375, n. 5). Like the fourth footnote, the sixth records some further descriptions of Muslim wars and tributary relationships which appear in the Táng histories, and distinguishes between the Turks and the caliphate (p. 375, n. 6). Further references to Islam appear elsewhere in *Additions a l'historie de la grande dynastie Tang.* In an exploration of the Nestorian stele, Gaubil argues that the term 'Yu-see' (Yēsū?) refers to Christ and followers of his religion, and is derived from Arabic, Persian and Transoxianan Muslim terminology (p. 382). Some further brief notes regarding the geographical spread of Muslims are also given (p. 390, n. 7), and these record the Chinese receiving deputies from the Muslims during a war with Tibetans and the caliphate in 716 (pp. 594-5, n. 9).

The authors of the *Mémoires* in various passages write about the nature and presence of Islam in China. Although these are shorter in length than descriptions of Sino-Muslim conflict, they are arguably of greater significance for understanding Christian-Muslim relations in the period as they encapsulate direct Christian comment of Muslim practices. For the most part, these references are descriptive. In some cases, it appears that the authors wish to portray Islam as insignificant. In Amiot's *De la chronologie, de l'histoire et des religions de la Chine*, Islam is the last religion he explores. He states that he has little to say regarding the religion, and he draws attention to the small size of the Muslim population. Nevertheless, Amiot also provides a positive and somewhat apologetic assessment of the religion. Seeking to answer the question of why Muslims are tolerated, he notes that they neither quarrel nor evangelise. It is perhaps significant that he must explain the toleration of Muslims, though his answer illustrates to his European audience that quarrelling and evangelisation are not typical of Islam. But Amiot appears to retract

such comments in his *Extrait d'une lettre de M. Amiot, ecrite de Pé-king le 29 Novembre 1784*, which describes the three Islamic sects present in China. In this he refers to quarrelling between the sects.

This might illustrate a development in Amiot's thought and understanding of Islam in China, but it may also reflect the propensity of the authors to accept the Qīng imperial discourse. His descriptions of Islam in *Introduction à la connoissance des peuples qui ont été ou qui sont auctuellement tributaires de la Chine* are mostly neutral in tone. However, his linking of the *Huíhuí* language with French and his praise of their libraries betray a positive assessment of the Chinese Muslims. Overtly negative assessments of Muslims in China are also given: Cibot's *Suite de parallèle des mœurs et usages des Chinois, avec les mœurs et usages décrits dans le Livre d'Esther*, for instance, notes that Muslims are hated by the Chinese, but tolerated nevertheless.

There are also references that draw heavily on Chinese sources regarding the place of Muslims in Chinese history. These are mostly descriptive in nature, but occasionally they include the author's own interpretations in footnotes. Such descriptions include details of the arrival of Islam in China, Sino-Middle Eastern embassies, and the origins of Islam. Amiot offers his own opinions in footnotes, providing a lengthy argument regarding the date of Muḥammad's birth based on the Chinese dating of the arrival of Islam in China. These passages, which for the most part do not offer any assessment, are significant as they seek to interact with contemporary European texts and to contribute to European debate. Gaubil's work in *Abrégé de l'histoire de la Chinoise de la grande dynastie Tang* and *Suite de l'abrégé de l'histoire de la Chinoise de la grande dynastie Tang* are significant as early European explorations of the Chinese written histories. While parts of the work appear to be anti-Muslim in nature, these aspects are supposedly present in Gaubil's sources and therefore do not directly reflect Gaubil's own thought. Gaubil's footnotes occasionally illustrate doubt regarding the spread of Islam in the China of the past, as in his note that he could not confirm the existence of a mosque in Xī'ān or his note that the population of Muslims cannot be accurately estimated. Such statements possibly betray the author's potentially anti-Muslim sentiment. However, these judgements are not particularly polemical in nature and are perhaps better understood as a means of questioning the accuracy of the Chinese historical sources.

Arguably the most important text for Christian-Muslim relations on the place of Islam in Chinese history appears to be Cibot's *Idée générale de la Chine (i), Et de ses premières relations avec l'Europe*, as it broaches

the topic several times. Muslims are said to be partially responsible for Rubruck's return to Europe, and the positions of Jesuits such as Schall von Bell and Verbiest are defended with reference to Muslim mathematical error and ignorance, as well as the foolishness of the Mongols for having employed them in the first place. These statements are simultaneously the only direct references to Christian-Muslim interaction in Chinese history within the volumes and the most overtly anti-Muslim statements throughout the volumes. This suggests, in the case of Cibot at least, that he held anti-Muslim views when Muslims negatively influenced Christian missionaries.

Nevertheless, while these statements refer directly to Christian-Muslim relations they are insubstantial in terms of length, and appear to repeat in shortened form the details and judgements of earlier Jesuit texts from the region. The references illustrate the use of earlier sources to inform contemporary opinions on Christian-Muslim relations, although they do not appear to have been particularly significant for shaping the future of these relations. As with other references to Muslims in the *Mémoires*, the relevance of these references is grounded in the fact that there are few other documents written by Christians referring to Muslims or Islam in China during the period. The *Mémoires* also appear to have been used regularly by scholars in the 19th century.

In summary, there appear to be four approaches to Muslims and Islam in the descriptions of their character and presence in China: mostly neutral descriptions, positive assessments, negative assessments, and assessments drawn from the imperial Chinese perspective. Both positive and negative assessments could be overt or unobvious. Due to the rarity of information about Muslims in China authored by Christians during the 18th century, these assessments and descriptions are highly significant for the history of Christian-Muslim relations in the region. The references do not hint that the missionaries directly interacted with Muslims, although they provide important European historical descriptions of Muslims and Islam in the region and period.

It is difficult to assess the views of the missionaries about their Muslim counterparts other than that they appeared more to accept the imperial Chinese position than any European attitudes. It is likely that this allowed the authors to portray China as good and Muslim rebels as bad without further need for anti-Muslim polemical argumentation. However, the imperial position offers a slightly more nuanced vision of Islam, in which both good (or at least not bad) Muslims and bad Muslims exist.

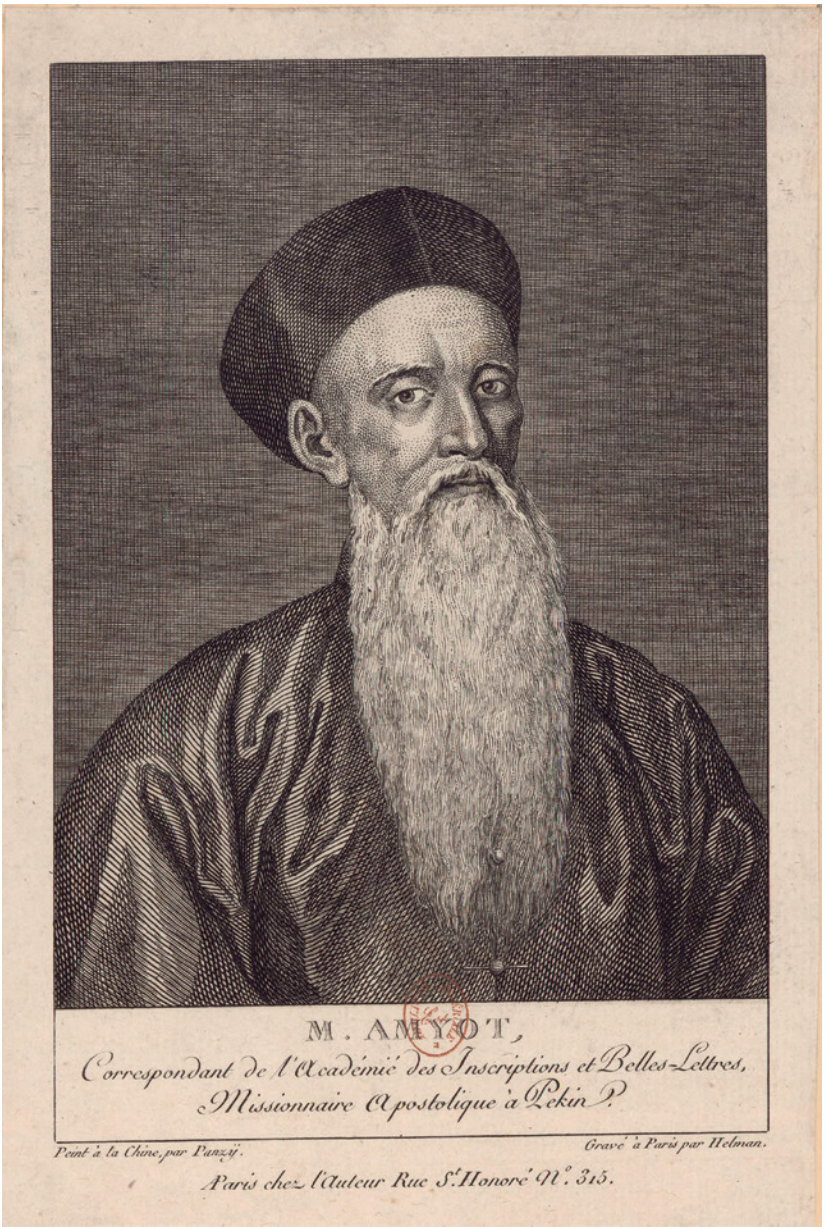

Illustration 15. Engraving of Jean Joseph-Marie Amiot wearing Chinese dress, in *Recueil. Portraits de Joseph Marie Amiot, le Révérend Père (1718-1793), missionnaire en Chine*

SIGNIFICANCE

To identify the significance of this material, which, prima facie, seems rather tangential to the history of Christian-Muslim relations, we need to return to the categories noted at the outset of the Description and explore each in turn, and also the whole corpus as reflecting something of the nature and state of Christian perceptions of and interest in Islam and Muslims. While many passages record important descriptions of an aspect of Muslim history, they do not seek to be particularly polemical or apologetic, and therefore do not consciously attempt to influence the contemporary state of Christian-Muslim relations in Europe, China or elsewhere. Nevertheless, this material did, and does, have a wider significance for Christian-Muslim relations.

In Europe, the collection became an important resource for the study of China in the 18th century. In a general sense, the fact that the collection devoted a large amount of space to describing Islam in China (in comparison to the description of other minority religions) probably influenced conceptions abroad on the place of Islam in China and the country's religious make-up. Following its publication, there appears to have been an increase in the number of European texts referring to the place of Islam in China. This may reflect advances in printing as much as it reflects the text's influence, of course. Nevertheless, the *Mémoires* was referenced as early as 1778, when Amiot's *Monument de la conquéte des Eleuths* appeared in German in Liborius von Bergmann (1754-1823) and Christoph Meiners's (1747-1810) *Abhandlungen sinesischer Jesuiten* ['Treatises of the Chinese Jesuits']. Following this (and until the late 19th century), the *Mémoires* became a widely-used resource in scholarship on Islam in China. Like the *Mémoires* itself, most of these works recorded Muslim involvement in miscellaneous secular topics, Muslim conflicts and the place of Muslims in Chinese history. An example is the *Bulletin de géographie historique et descriptive* ['Bulletin of historical and descriptive geography'](Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques. Section de géographie historique et descriptive, *Bulletin de géographie historique et descriptive*, vols 9-10, Paris, 1894), a government publication that draws on Amiot's descriptions of Muslim presence in Western China (p. 124). Another example is Joseph Toussaint Reinaud (1795-1867) and William MacGuckin Baron de Slane's (1801-78) introduction to their *Géographie d'Aboulféda* (Paris, 1840), a translation of Abū l-Fidā''s *Taqwīm al-buldān*, which draws heavily on Gaubil's history of the Táng Dynasty in order to describe the spread of Islam in China (pp. 374, 385 396, 398, 400). Indeed,

this text has had a long influence, being reprinted in 1963 in Baghdad and adding to ongoing discussions on the place of Muslims in China (among other topics) into the 20th century. These sorts of predominantly French-language texts are relatively common, with numerous works on China referencing passages in the *Mémoires* on the place of Muslims in China. Nevertheless, other works by the contributors not included in the *Mémoires* appear to have had a wider influence on discussions of Islam in China, such as Gaubil's translation of the *Yuán shi* (*Histoire de Gentchiscan et de toute la dinastie des Mongous ses successeurs* ['History of Genghiz Khan and of the entire dynasty of the Mongols his successors'], Paris, 1739). As many of the texts that reference the *Mémoires* appear to maintain the neutrality they exhibit, it could be suggested that the volumes contributed to a greater neutrality on the topic of Islam in China, and by implication on relations between Christians and Muslims in China, in scholarly texts especially when compared to texts from the 17th century which, due to Christian-Muslim conflict, often sought to demonise the religious other. This is potentially the most important contribution that the *Mémoires* made to discussions of Chinese Islam in Europe.

However, on occasion references from the *Mémoires* are used to make negative judgements on Islam. For instance, Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat's (1788-1832) *Recherches sur les langues tartares, ou Mémoires sur différens points de la grammaire et de la littérature des Mandchos, des Mongols, des Ouigours et des Tibétains* ['Research on the Tatar languages, or memoirs on different points of grammar and literature of the Manchu, Mongols, Uyghurs and Tibetans'] (Paris, 1820) used the *Mémoires* to claim that Islam in China was corrupt and mixed with Buddhist concepts (p. 299). This is particularly interesting, as it illustrates that texts originally containing relatively neutral descriptions of Islam were repurposed to make negative descriptions of the religion, thereby feeding into anti-Muslim sentiment present in Europe. It is most likely that the choice between either upholding the *Mémoires*'s neutral account, or using it to produce negative judgements on Islam in China, fell to the discretion of the later author.

It is surprising to discover that the attempts of the authors of the *Mémoires* to contribute to ongoing debates on Islam, such as discussions on the dating of the birth of Muḥammad, are not referenced in contemporary European scholarship. Indeed, this suggests that the authors' attempts to contribute to European debates on Islam, which could potentially be significant for Christian-Muslim relations, were ignored. Nevertheless, the fact that the texts appear to have popularised not only

discussions on Chinese Islam, but also overwhelmingly non-judgmental treatments of Chinese Islam, illustrates an instructive development in Christian-Muslim relations as pertaining to East Asia, where 17th-century records were polemical and anti-Muslim in nature.

As some of the only European sources written in China, references in this text to Sino-Muslim conflict are certainly significant for the study of Muslim rebellions that occurred in China in the 18th century. However, the narratives primarily describe Sino-Muslim relations and are therefore less significant for Christian-Muslim relations in the period. As the work was compiled for a European audience, it might be the case that it influenced other Christian thinkers, missionaries and religious figures in their own interactions with Muslims. But the mostly neutral way in which the passages refer to Muslims probably allowed readers to impose their own assumptions and judgements onto the text. Certainly, texts that have a direct bearing on the contemporary conduct of Christian-Muslim relations in China are rare.

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