

THE LAST GIFT FROM BEIJING:  
JESUIT BOTANISTS AND THE EUROPEAN QUEST FOR CHINESE PLANTS  
L'ULTIMO DONO DA PECHINO:

I BOTANISTI GESUITI E LA RICERCA EUROPEA DI PIANTE CINESI

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**Abstract:** Attraverso la lettura attenta di un dipinto di grande formato in cui è presente una varietà di specie botaniche, attualmente conservato presso la Bibliothèque nationale de France, il contributo cerca di rintracciare il graduale mutamento degli scambi botanici sino-europei, effetto del movimento fisiocratico. La committenza del dipinto, attribuito ai missionari gesuiti che si trovavano presso la residenza di Beitang, può rivelare non solo le sue possibili fonti e i protagonisti implicati, ma anche le modalità con le quali le reti globali di conoscenza erano stabilite nel XVIII secolo. Il saggio identifica le piante rappresentate nel dipinto, collegandole al più ampio contesto delle pratiche botaniche dei gesuiti a Pechino, e sottolineando che le piante cinesi da giardino, più che le erbe o altri tipi di flora esotica, costituivano il principale oggetto di desiderio dei committenti europei. Dietro tale domanda, vi era la convinzione dei fisiocratici che la superiorità dell'agricoltura cinese avrebbe dato spinta all'economia, portando vantaggi alle società europee. Il contributo fornisce infine un contesto alla committenza del dipinto, considerandolo come una delle rappresentazioni ordinate da Henri-Léonard Jean-Baptiste Bertin (1720-1792), figura chiave del movimento fisiocratico francese nonché degli scambi sino-europei nel XVIII secolo.

*A Glimpse into the Jesuit Transplanted Space in Beijing*

At the center of our discussion is an unusual, large-format Chinese painting (hereafter: *Paris Painting*, Figure 1) acquired by the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in 1968. In addition to the numerous figures engaged in a solemn ceremony, the painting is highlighted by a splendid European parterre garden together with a monumental church façade, placed in the background.

Regarding its enigmatic subject, Marie-Rose Séguy interpreted this structure to be the Jesuit South Residence, or Nantang 南堂, in Beijing.<sup>1</sup> In 1993 Noël Golvers challenged Séguy's reading, and made the

sound argument that the painting's subject was meant to evoke another ecclesiastical structure: the North Residence (Beitang 北堂), owned by the eighteenth-century French Jesuits.<sup>2</sup> An essential component of this image — a detailed portrayal of a surprisingly wide array of plants —, which seems to have been purposefully included, however, has so far been fully neglected by the scholars. It is thus essential to address these astonishing details, as it may shed light on the commission of this painting and its potential patron.<sup>3</sup>

This enclosed garden space, which, as revealed by the *Paris Painting*, was divided into four square-shaped parterres laid out in symmetrical patterns and accentuated by topiaries, immediately evokes the design of the French formal gardens of the seventeenth century. In addition to the pomegranate trees (*Punica granatum*, Figure 2) placed in the foreground, the parterre garden featured a total of 184 sections of plants. Surprisingly, the morphologies for 116 plants (Figure 3, see also Table 1) are clearly observable; in other words, vegetable details were deliberately included to allow the viewer's close inspection. After careful typological analysis of plant details, at least 18 species (Figures 4–5) that repeatedly appear in the painting can be identified as common summer flowers planted in eighteenth-century Chinese gardens, including perennial herbs and woody plants such as daylily (*Hemerocallis*), mallow (*Malva*), plantain lily (*Hosta*), gardenia (*Gardenia jasminoides*), pomegranate, and a variety of annual and biennial herbaceous plants such as corn poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), balsamines (*Impatiens balsamina*) and cockscomb (*Celosia argentea*).<sup>4</sup> As this essay would suggest, this highlighted interest in Chinese garden flowers would have been linked to the broader context of the physiocracy in eighteenth-century Europe and thus provides references to the purpose of the painting commission.

In the Chinese context, the arrangement


of plants presented here is exceptional as it contradicts the fundamental principle of seasonal garden planting. According to *Michuan buajing* 秘傳花鏡 (Secretly Transmitted Treatise on Flora),<sup>5</sup> a well-known seventeenth-century horticultural treatise compiled by Chen Haozi 陳淏子 (active second half 17th century), the planting, rooting, and transplanting of plants must be performed in-line with seasonal changes. The ultimate aim was to achieve a 'four-season garden', with flowers blooming all year round. Precise rules were given. For instance, that "hollyhock, rose, gardenia, and pomegranate must be planted in the first month of the lunar year; in the second month of the lunar year, pomegranate, plantain lily and hollyhock should be rooted, and the daylily should be planted".<sup>6</sup> More explicit examples included: "If balsamines and cockscombs were planted between March and April as recommended, [you would get a garden] flooded with balsamines and cockscombs".<sup>7</sup>

With this in mind, the ways in which the flowers were arranged in the parterres, as displayed in the *Paris Painting*, seems to go against the ideology of Chinese gardening as the garden only includes flowers for a single season. A large variety of rare flowers, vines, shrubs, and trees commonly included in the standard layout of a typical Ming-Qing garden, since 'rarities', considered one of the important criteria for assessing a garden, are also absent; the majority of the species represented here were quite common. As reported by Pierre-Martial Cibot (Han Guoying 韓國英, 1727–1780), a Jesuit botanist at the Beitang residence, the planting layout of the eighteenth-century Chinese imperial gardens, for example, not only included ordinary garden flowers such as crepe myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*), Chinese peony (*Paeonia lactiflora*), camellias (*Camellia japonica*), oleander (*Nerium oleander*) and jasmine (*Jasminum*), but also an abundance of rare aquatic plants and different tree species.<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, each part of the garden should feature a mix of herbaceous plants and trees that would keep flowering from spring through winter.

As displayed in the planting layout for the Garden of Perfect Brightness (*Yuanming yuan* 圓明園, Figure 6), the Qing imperial garden contained yulan magnolias (*Magnolia denudata*), laurel cherry (*Prunus* L.) and pine trees (*Pinus*). During the reign of the Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1735–1796), the imperial garden was also enriched by trumpet vines (*Campsis grandiflora*), cotton roses (*Hibiscus mutabilis*), Chinese peonies, shrub peonies (*Paeonia suffruticosa*), peaches (*Prunus*), and pears (*Pyrus*). In contrast to the imperial gardens, which featured a large variation of seasonal flora, herbaceous plants and trees expected to be blooming all year round,<sup>9</sup> the *Paris Painting* likely meant to represent a sample of European parterres transplanted with Chinese summer flowers. It is worth noting that the *Paris Painting* was the first time European audiences were exposed to some of these flowers. For example, the plantain lily (Figure 7) and the bleeding heart (*Lamprocapnos spectabilis*, Figure 8), were recorded as native Chinese flora that bloomed in the summer season. In the accompanying text to Chen Haozi's treatise, the morphology and growth habits of the bleeding heart (Figure 9), recorded as *hebao mudan* 荷包牡丹 from the northern plain of China, were detailed as follows: "The formation of roots takes place in February. The flower stalk grows out at the beginning of July. Each plant has more than ten narrow leaves [...]. After blooming, the flower looks like a hairpin".<sup>10</sup>

As a matter of fact, the plantain lily, or *yuzan* 玉簪 (jade hairpin) in Chinese, was unknown to Europeans until the late eighteenth century. In 1781, in Pierre-Joseph Buc'hoz's (1731–1807) well-known *Herbier, ou Collection des plantes médicinales de la Chine*,<sup>11</sup> both the white and the purple plantain lily (Figure 10) were not listed as



garden plants but rather as medicinal plants. This categorization also discloses their possible sources. Given the mirror-image relationship, Buc'hoz's purple plantain lily was likely taken from the *Recueil de plantes ou Collection des plantes vénéneuses de la Chine* (henceforth: *Collection des plantes*, Figure 11),<sup>12</sup> which was transmitted to France before the Buc'hoz herbal compendium.

Similar to the plantain lily, the bleeding heart shown in the *Paris Painting* arrived in Europe at a later date, presumably no earlier than the nineteenth century. It is reasonable to conclude that one of the major ideas behind the commission of the *Paris Painting* was to present an idealized view of a European parterre garden stocked with (partially unknown) native Chinese flowers, taking the Jesuit Beitang garden as a model. However, this aspiration, mirrored in the painting, significantly differed from the seventeenth-century European demand for Chinese *bencao* 本草 (herbal) illustrations, which was triggered by early Jesuit publications on botany. In order to deepen our understanding of this shift, a glimpse of the botanical practices of the Beijing Jesuits and their interactions with their European mentors and patrons is presented in the sections that follow.

### *The Beitang Garden and Jesuit Botanical Practices: A Quick Glance*

The botanical practices at the Jesuit Beitang residence did not begin until the first decade of the eighteenth century, when a garden space was created by order of the Kangxi 康熙 Emperor (r. 1662–1721).<sup>13</sup> The ground plan captured in a map of Beijing (Figure 12) from the Qianlong period, based on a contemporary on-site survey, suggests that the garden was built on a plot of land in the south of the Beitang residence. The residence was located inside the Xi'an Gate (*Xi'an men* 西安門) in the imperial city and formally belonged to a Manchu minister,

who gave it to the French Jesuits in 1693. In 1699, a huge property measuring 700 x 350 feet (equal to 222 x 104 meters) was requested by the Jesuits.<sup>14</sup> Following the model of the Paris Académie des sciences, the impetus behind such a generous imperial endowment was Kangxi's effort to establish an academy at the court where privileged European knowledge would be produced for Manchu elites.

Following this aim, this garden was adopted by Dominique Parrenin S.J. (Ba Duoming 巴多明, 1663–1741) and by his successor Pierre Nicolas Le Chéron d'Incarville S.J. (Tang Zhizhong 湯執中, 1706–1757) as an experimental ground to “raise foreign or European plants.”<sup>15</sup> In 1723, in addition to his report to the Académie des sciences in Paris, Parrenin noted that 13 European garden plants and herbs were not available in the Qing imperial gardens.<sup>16</sup> A small number were not made available until d'Incarville's arrival in Beijing in 1740.

Compared to Parrenin, d'Incarville's interest in Chinese botany seems to have been more serious. Pursuing his career as correspondent of the Académie des sciences and a passionate botanist, d'Incarville not only introduced Chinese plants to Europe, but also established networks with botanical gardens in Paris (Jardin des Plantes), Oxford (Oxford Botanic Garden), London (Chelsea Physic Garden) and St. Petersburg (Botanical Garden of Peter the Great) through his mentor, Bernard de Jussieu (1699–1777), the director of the Jardin du Roi, and his brother Antonie de Jussieu (1681–1758).<sup>17</sup> In 1742, shortly after d'Incarville's arrival in Beijing, dried seeds and specimens of Chinese plants were collected. In October of the same year, a number of plants from Europe mentioned by Parrenin were added to d'Incarville's request list and finally brought to Beijing: for example, garden sage, basil, and several varieties of tulips.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to Jussieu, one of d'Incarville's correspondents was Cromwell

Mortimer (c. 1693–1752), the secretary of the Royal Society in London.<sup>19</sup> The dried seeds that d’Incarville received from his European colleagues, including the sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica* L.), poppy anemones (*anämöni*), and garden nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*), were successfully cultivated both in the Beitang garden and in the Qing imperial garden. In addition, two other transplanted garden spaces in Beijing assigned by the emperor, were also mentioned in d’Incarville’s letter dated September 20, 1742: “I herborize in a park that we had here and in our cemetery; I had collected a few seeds there; there were a few special ones, most of them the same species as in Europe.”<sup>20</sup>


The successful cultivation of these plants, particularly the sensitive plants, soon helped d’Incarville to gain access to the Qing imperial gardens and to transplant European flora into Qianlong’s European garden.<sup>21</sup> Some of d’Incarville’s achievements were well documented in contemporaneous Qing court paintings, including two sensitive plants he presented to the emperor in 1753.<sup>22</sup> These plants were grown in Beijing, but d’Incarville probably obtained their seeds from South America via Mortimer from a member of the Royal Society, Peter Collinson (1694–1768).<sup>23</sup> In 1757, two years before the completion of the second phase of Qianlong’s European garden, known as “European Multi-storied Buildings” (*Xiyang lou* 西洋樓), eight European plants cultivated in this garden were documented in an album entitled *Haixi jibui* 海西集卉 (Collection of the Flora from the West Ocean). Among them were de Jussieu’s anemones and nasturtiums, respectively translated into Chinese as *Anmimani* 安尼麻尼 (French: *Anémone*) and *Gabuyang* 嘎不辛 (French: *capucin*, Figure 13) after their French pronunciation.

Major changes to Beitang’s transplanted garden spaces were achieved following d’Incarville’s arrival. In addition to the residence’s south garden, the previously

noted map of Beijing (Figure 12), dated between 1746 and 1750, supports the existence of a parterre garden in front of the Beitang church. The coexistence of both the south garden and the parterre garden within an enlarged, square shape, as represented in the *Paris Painting*, was confirmed in later sources, including a panoramic drawing (Figure 14) commissioned by the 10th Russian Ecclesiastical Mission. As an authentic formal garden *à la française*, this was the second transplanted garden space inside the Beitang residence and its creation was likely the work of d’Incarville and his French colleagues.<sup>24</sup>

Although d’Incarville was passionately dedicated to the collection of Chinese plants and pursued serious scientific research, his primary interest did not lie at garden plants. On the one hand, he commissioned illustrations from the Chinese herbal compendium, the *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目, and sent them back to Europe; parts of these illustrations were included in the *Collection des plantes* and served as templates for a number of European herbal compendiums.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, d’Incarville randomly collected unknown plants for his European mentors. The Musée national d’histoire naturelle in Paris still has the botanical specimens that he collected along his route from Macao to Beijing. Among the samples he sent to Jussieu in Paris, 149 of the wild plants gathered from the greater Beijing area, including the plantain lily (after d’Incarville, the *Funkia subcordata*, Spr.), the dwarf rhododendron (*Rhododendron micranthum*), wild iris (*Iris* L.), asparagus (*Asparagus trichophyllus*) and the common day flower (*Commelina communis*), and entered the collection of the Jardin de Plantes’ herbarium.<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting, however, that these specimens, including wild herbaceous plants, shrubs, trees and in particular *Incarvillea* (Figure 15), which was named after him, were not domesticated as garden plants.

Before the last decades of the eighteenth



century, only a limited number of Chinese garden plants were found in European botanical gardens. According to Emil Bretschneider (1833-1901), a Beijing-based Russian doctor and sinologist at the Russian Embassy, only the China pink (*Dianthus chinensis*) and the hollyhock (*Alcea rosea*) were known in Europe before 1780.<sup>27</sup>

D'Incarville died in Beijing in 1757. As a key figure in the era after d'Incarville, Cibot joined the Beitang residence in 1760 and published at least 14 detailed reports on Chinese botany in the *Mémoires concernant la Chine et les Chinois* (henceforth: *Mémoires*). Although he continued d'Incarville's work in Chinese botany, his focus gradually shifted to collecting Chinese garden plants, gardening techniques, and herbal medicine for the benefit of Europe. In the third volume of the *Mémoires*, for example, Cibot discussed Chinese garden plants and shrubs and also introduced Chinese garden flowers such as the Chinese lotus flower (*Nelumbo nucifera Gaertnera*), yulan magnolia, begonias (*Begonia grandis*), jasmine, sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*), shrub peonies, and tuberose, among others, to a European audience.<sup>28</sup> It is remarkable how much weight Cibot's writing puts on the plants' economic and practical values and the possibility of planting them in European gardens. In *Observations sur les plantes, les fleurs et les arbres de la Chine, qu'il est possible et utile de se procurer en France* (henceforth: *Observations sur les plantes*, Figure 16), published in the eleventh volume of the *Mémoires*, Cibot further discussed the climatic differences between Beijing and Paris, the growth of fruit trees in the Qing imperial gardens, and the advanced gardening techniques, such as irrigation systems, found in southern Chinese provinces.<sup>29</sup>


In collaboration with his Jesuit colleagues in Beijing, Cibot commissioned an album titled *Plantes et fleurs de la Chine*. *Phyllodes placentaria* in 1772, which contained an extensive herbal compendium with color

illustrations.<sup>30</sup> This compendium, which reached Paris two years later and enriched Cibot's previously published reports, was considered an essential supplement to the herb compendium compiled by d'Incarville. Its content is, by and large, consistent with Buc'hoz's *Collection des plantes*. Keeping this in mind, we can observe two different kinds of botanical practices represented by d'Incarville and Cibot. By the 1760s, focus gradually shifted from the occasional collection of wild or unknown plants to the possibility of cultivating Chinese garden plants and fruit trees, as well as the use of advanced Chinese gardening techniques in Europe. Personal interests aside, this abrupt change seems to have been closely linked to the Jesuits' European patrons and can only be understood within the broader context of the rise of physiocracy in eighteenth-century France.

#### *Henri Bertin and the Quest for 'Chinese Garden Layouts': A Hypothesis*

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the theory of physiocracy began to flourish among enlightened French economists. The core of this theory was grounded in the belief that the wealth of nations derives from the value of land use or development, and that agricultural products thus should be highly valued.<sup>31</sup> Given the decades-long correspondence with the Jesuit missionaries based in China and the publication of an extensive number of China encyclopedias, the elites of the French Enlightenment tended to believe that China's advanced agricultural technologies had overtaken all other countries. As a result, the fascination for China, at least in France, gradually changed from pure imagination, as reflected in the peculiar Chinoiserie-style of gardens and artifacts, to rational acceptance and active study of the advanced techniques and methods of Chinese agriculture.

One of the most important pioneers of




the physiocratic movement in France was Henri-Léonard Jean-Baptiste Bertin (1720-1792; Figure 20), a French statesman and general controller of finance for Louis XV (r. 1715-1774), who believed deeply in the superiority of Chinese agriculture. In order to gain a more precise and systematic knowledge about China, Bertin employed travelers to collect relevant material, and from 1766 to 1792, he maintained a correspondence with the French Jesuits at the Beitang residence.<sup>32</sup> The information he requested was sent as a series of questionnaires. Jesuit missionaries like Cibot, Joseph-Marie Amiot (Qian Deming 錢德明, 1718-1793) and François Bourgeois (Zhao Junxiu 晁俊秀, 1723-1792) followed his wishes and prepared scientific reports and commissioned translations of Chinese botanical and pharmaceutic manuscripts, illustrations and albums, and sent them along with seeds and plant specimens to Paris.

Bertin's questionnaire covered a wide range of areas of Chinese agriculture, from the influence of weather and climate on food production to animal husbandry, food storage, division of labor during the harvest, the social status of farmers and the acquisition of land, among other topics. After receiving the Jesuits' reports, Bertin studied them carefully and participated in the editing and publication of his self-financed *Mémoires*, in which Cibot's reports were published. Many of Cibot's articles and their supplementary illustrations, particularly the *Observations sur les plantes*, explicitly responded to Bertin's questions. For his report, *Serres chaudes des Chinois et fleurs qu'ils y conservent*, published in the third volume of the *Mémoires*, Cibot also commissioned supplementary materials: an album (Figure 17–18) of the same name provides illustrations detailing the structure of Chinese greenhouse, the storage of flowers, and the system of temperature maintenance for outdoor seedlings during the winter season.<sup>33</sup> Given its dating (the album arrived in Paris in 1777, three years

before Cibot's death), we can reasonably speculate on the approximate timeframe of Bertin's commission. In addition to the *Serres chaudes des Chinoises*, the Beitang Jesuits sent a large number of Chinese illustrations and album leaves to Bertin, including the album *Haitien. Maison de Plaisance de l'Empereur de Chine*<sup>34</sup> and the *Pierres employées pour ornemens dans les jardins chinois*.<sup>35</sup> Both are now kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France. The latter was commissioned to supplement a section in Cibot's article, *Observations sur les plantes*, about the use of stones in Chinese gardens.

It is interesting that Bertin's interest included Chinese horticulture. Instead of simply creating a Chinoiserie-style garden flooded with a purely oriental fantasy, Bertin hoped to build an authentic Chinese garden, taking advantage of the knowledge he gained from his Jesuit agents in Beijing.<sup>36</sup> In addition to Cibot's writings on the Chinese garden, entitled *Essai sur les jardins de plaisance des Chinois*, and the seeds he received, Bertin wrote letters to Bourgeois, the director of the Beitang residence, in the hope that "Chinese architects would provide one or two designs for parterre layouts and that you could send more details about planted shrubs and flowers".<sup>37</sup> A similar European request of this kind has been ever made was in 1687, when a Chinese mandarin named Michael Shen Fuzong 沈福宗 (1657–1691), who had travelled to Oxford, presented the first Chinese garden layout entitled *Hortus chinensis in quo Grande saxum* [...].<sup>38</sup> It was unlikely, however, that this layout, which was owned by the librarian of the Bodleian Library, Thomas Hyde (1636–1703), was utilized in any seventeenth-century garden in England.

Bertin's desire highlighted a transitional moment in the history of European reception of Chinese garden, as he intentionally requested a first-hand garden layout from the Beijing-based Jesuits. It was not clear whether he ever received a response



to his request. The enormous number of garden plants that can be seen in the *Paris Painting*, however, seems to have specifically fulfilled Bertin's wish for such an example of parterre design and details of 'shrubs and flowers' from China. Given the difficulty of having four seasons of flowers at once, we can speculate that the Beijing Jesuits would have commissioned a large-format painting detailing indigenous summer flowers, which offered an alternative for planting Chinese plants in European parterres. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that the *Paris Painting* served a similar purpose as Cibot's supplementary illustrations and presented an idealized example of how Chinese plants could be reconfigured in European parterres and introduced unknown Chinese plants to Europe. Through close inspection, for example, a detailed portrayal (Figure 19) of a parterre placed in the northwest corner also represented an example of the Chinese grafting technique discussed in Cibot's *Observations sur les plantes*, published posthumously in 1786.

Cibot died in 1780. Given the timeframe of Bertin's request for parterre layouts, we can thus assume that the *Paris Painting* was likely commissioned after 1786 by Amiot or Bourgeois. If this hypothesis is untenable, this 'last gift' from Beijing thus primarily served as an epistemic image which captures a forgotten episode of the eighteenth-century Sino-European botanical exchanges, in which the French physiocrats played a dominant role. Although Bertin might have not received this painting before his death, the plantain lily, which was cultivated from the dried seeds sent from Beijing, began to blossom in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris as early as 1784. Around the same time that Bertin's request arrived in Beijing, the Count of Provence (later Louis XVIII, r. 1815-1824), the brother of Louis XVI (r. 1774-1792), began to collect Chinese garden plants for the Parc Balbi in Versailles.<sup>39</sup> When garden construction was

finished, it was graced neither with peculiar Chinoiserie pavilions, nor by the distinctive pagoda towers found in the Anglo-Chinese gardens of other European palaces, but was full of plants native to China. Meanwhile, French botanists began to study and cultivate the seeds collected and sent by d'Incarville and Cibot, leading to spectacular results in both nineteenth-century Parisian botanical garden and gardens elsewhere in Europe.

#### *Acknowledgements*

This essay was inspired by a storage visit to the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, funded by the FoF3 research project, "Reframing Chinese Objects: Collecting and Displaying in Europe and the Islamic World, 1400-1800" (2017-2018), Heidelberg University. I would like to thank the volume's editor, Prof. Maurizio Paolillo and the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments, and Mrs. Xu Chang, the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, for sharing her valuable knowledge about Chinese botany. I also owe thanks to Dr. Vanessa Selbach of the Department of Prints and Photography at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, for patiently guiding me through the study of this painting, and Dr. John Finlay, Centre d'études sur la Chine moderne et contemporaine, Paris, for sharing his study of Bertin.

NW	NE	SW	SE	SL/SR
NW-1 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	NE-1 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	SW-1 Crepe-myrtle (Lagerstroemia indica)	SE-1 Iris (Iris L.)	SL-1 Pomegranate
NW-2 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	NE-2 Iris (Iris L.)	SW-2 Common poppy (Papaver rhoeas)	SE-2 Oleander (Nerium oleander)	SL-2 Pomegranate
NW-3 Garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	NE-3 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SW-3 Iris (Iris L.)	SE-3 Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)	SL-3 Pomegranate
NW-4 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	NE-4 Garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	SW-4 Red garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	SE-4 Dwarf lilyturf (Ophiopogonjaponicus)	SL-4 Pomegranate
NW-5 Oleander (Nerium oleander)	NE-5 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	SW-5 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SE-5 Garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	SL-5 Pomegranate
NW-6 Cape jasmine (Gardenia jasminoides)	NE-6 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SW-6 Crepe-myrtle (Lagerstroemia indica)	SE-6 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SL-6 Oleander (Nerium oleander)
NW-7 Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)	NE-7 Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora)	SW-7 Chrysanthemum	SE-7 Garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	SL-7 Pomegranate
NW-8 Oleander (Nerium oleander)	NE-8 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SW-8 Red hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	SE-8 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SL-8 Pomegranate
NW-9 Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora)	NE-9 Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)	SW-9 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SE-9 Chrysanthemum	SL-9 Pomegranate
NW-10 Oleander (Nerium oleander)	NE-10 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SW-10 Chrysanthemum	SE-10 Cape jasmine (Gardenia jasminoides)	SL-10 Pomegranate
NW-11 hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	NE-11 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	SW-11 Lila Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)	SE-11 Garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	SR-1 Pomegranate
NW-12 Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora)	NE-12 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SW-12 Garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	SE-12 Dwarf lilyturf (Ophiopogonjaponicus)	SR-2 Pomegranate
NW-13 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	NE-13 Oleander (Nerium oleander)	SW-13 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	SE-13 Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora)	SR-3 Pomegranate
NW-14 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	NE-14 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	SW-14 Iris (Iris L.)	SE-14 Iris (Iris L.)	SR-4 Oleander (Nerium oleander)
NW-15 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	NE-15 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SW-15 Rhododendron	SE-15 Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)	SR-5 Pomegranate
NW-16 Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora)	NE-16 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	SW-16 Dwarf lilyturf (Ophiopogonjaponicus)	SE-16 Asian bleeding-heart (Lamprocapnos spectabilis)	SR-6 Pomegranate
NW-17 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	NE-17 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SW-17 Chrysanthemum	SE-17 Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)	SR-7 Pomegranate
NW-18 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	NE-18 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SW-18 Garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	SE-18 Common poppy (Papaver rhoeas)	SR-8 Pomegranate
NW-19 Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora)	NE-19 Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)	SW-19 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SE-19 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SR-9 Pomegranate
NW-20 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)		SW-20 Rhododendron	SE-20 Garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	SR-10 Pomegranate
NW-21 Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)		SW-21 Dwarf lilyturf (Ophiopogonjaponicus)	SE-21 Jasmine (Jasminum)	
NW-22 Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora)		SW-22 Garden balsam (Impatiens balsamina)	SE-22 Cockscomb (Celosia cristata)	
NW-23 Pomegranate		SW-23 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	SE-23 Daylily (Hemerocallis fulva)	
		SW-24 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)	SE-24 Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)	
		SW-25 Rhododendron	SE-25 Common poppy (Papaver rhoeas)	
		SW-26 Iris (Iris L.)		
		SW-27 Plantain lilies (Hosta plantaginea)		
		SW-28 Common poppy (Papaver rhoeas)		
		SW-29 Hollyhock (Alcea rosea)		

Table 1 Identification of the plants in Beitang's parterre garden.



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## Note

<sup>1</sup> Marie-Rose Séguy, "A propos d'une peinture chinoise du Cabinet des estampes à la Bibliothèque Nationale," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, 88 (1976), pp. 228-230.

<sup>2</sup> Noël Golvers, *The "Astronomia Europea" of Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J. (Dillingen, 1687). Text, Translation, Notes and Commentaries* (Nettetal, Steyler, 1993), pp. 12-13; see also Wang Lianming, "Church, a Sacred Event and the Visual Perspective of an 'Etic Observer'. An

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<sup>3</sup> A preliminary study of this aspect is provided by Wang Lianming 王廉明, “*Beijing yesubui beitang be zhongguo zhiwu tuxiang: Shiba shiji zhongxi yuanyi xue jiaoliu de yize yishi* 北京耶穌會北堂和中國植物圖像：十八世紀中西園藝學交流的一則軼事”, *Zijincheng* 紫禁城, Vol. 10 (2018), pp. 62-73; see also the partial translation in Wang Lianming, *Jesuitenerbe in Peking: Sakralbauten und transkulturelle Räume 1600-1800* (Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag Winter, 2020), pp. 350-368.

<sup>4</sup> Based on a close inspection of this painting in the BnF storage, conducted in May 2018, I would like to retrieve an error, that the parterres exhibit European and non-Chinese flora, appeared in Wang Lianming, “From La Flèche to Beijing: The Transcultural Moment of Jesuit Garden Spaces”, in Anna Grasskamp, Monica Juneja (eds.), *EurAsian Matters. China, Europe, and the Transcultural Object, 1600-1800* (Cham, Springer, 2018), p. 103.

<sup>5</sup> Chen Haozi 陈淏子, *Michuan Huajing* 秘傳花鏡 (6 juan, printed 1688; National Diet Library, Tokyo, Special 7-469).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, juan 1, pp. 4, 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, juan1, pp. 9, 12, 24; juan 5, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Bianca Maria Rinaldi, *Ideas of Chinese Gardens: Western Accounts 1300-1860* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp. 182-185; cf. Zhang Enyin 張恩蔭, *Yuanmingyuan shengqi zhiwu zaojing chutan* 圓明園盛期植物造景初探, *Gujian yuanyin jishu* 古建園林技術, 3 (1989), pp. 12-15; see also Wu Xiangyan 吳祥艷, Song Guxin 宋顧薪, Liu Yue 劉悅 (eds.), *Yuanmingyuan zhiwu jingguan fuyuan tushuo* 圓明園植物景觀復原圖說 (Shanghai, Shanghai yuandong chubanshe, 2014), p. 230.

<sup>9</sup> Wu et al., *Yuanming yuan zhiwu jingguan*, p. 237.

<sup>10</sup> Chen, *Huajing*, juan 5, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Pierre-Joseph Buc’hoz, *Herbier, ou Collection des plantes médicinales de la Chine, d’après un manuscrit peint et unique qui se trouve dans la bibliothèque de l’empereur de Chine, pour servir de suite aux planches enluminées et non enluminées d’histoire naturelle et à la collection des fleurs qui se cultivent dans les jardins de la Chine et de l’Europe*, Paris 1781 (BnF, RES FOL-TE143-31).

<sup>12</sup> Anonymous, *Recueil de plantes ou Collection des plantes vénéneuses de la Chine*, 2, fol. 73. The album is kept at the BnF, PETFOL-OE-137.

<sup>13</sup> For the genesis of the Beitang garden, see Wang, “From La Flèche to Beijing”, pp. 103-109; see also Wang, *Jesuitenerbe in Peking*, pp. 89-91.

<sup>14</sup> Kilian Stumpf to [unknown addressee], written in October 1699, in: ARSI, Jap.-Sin. 166, fol. 390v-391r; See also Sebald Reil, *Kilian Stumpf (1655-1720): ein Würzburger Jesuit am Kaiserhof zu Peking* (Münster, Aschendorff, 1978), p. 78; Wang, *Jesuitenerbe in Peking*, pp. 79-87.

<sup>15</sup> Henri Bernard-Maître, “Un correspondant de Bernard de Jussieu en Chine: Le Père Le Chéron d’Incarville, missionnaire français de Pékin d’après de nombreux documents inédits”, *Archives Internationales d’Histoire des Sciences*, 2 (1949), p. 349.

<sup>16</sup> Dominique Parrenin to [unknown addressee], written on March 1, 1723 in Beijing, in: Charles le Gobien, Yves Mathurin, M.T. Querbeuf et al. (eds.), *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses: écrites des missions étrangères* 19 (Paris, Chez J.G. Merigot le jeune, 1781), pp. 188-189. See also Emily Byrne Curtis, “A Botanical Exchange: ‘The Emperor likes Flowers’”, *Chinese Cross Currents*, 8, 2 (2011), p. 2. More on Parrenin see Susan Richter, *Pflug und Steuerruder. Zur Verflechtung von Herrschaft und Landwirtschaft in der Aufklärung* (Köln and Wien, Böhlau Verlag, 2015), pp. 179-180.

<sup>17</sup> Jane Kilpatrick, *Gifts from the Gardens of China. The Introduction of Traditional Chinese Garden Plants to Britain 1698-1862* (London, F. Lincoln Publ., 2007), p. 64; see also Lai Yuchih, “You Lang Shining ‘Haixi zhibishicao zhoukan ouzhou zhiwuxue wangluo zai Qinggong’ 由郎世寧海西知時草看歐洲植物學網絡在清宮”, *ASCDC e-Newsletter* 21 (2015).

<sup>18</sup> Chiu Che-bing, “Vegetal Travel. Western European Plants in the Garden of the Emperor of

China”, in Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Ding Ning (eds.), *Qing Encounters. Artistic Exchanges between China and the West* (Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2015), p. 98; see also Chang Hsiang-wen 張湘雯, “‘Haixi jibui’: Qinggong yuanyou zhong de waiyang zhiwu 海西集弄清宮苑囿中的外洋植物”, *The National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art*, 396 (2016), pp. 111-113.

<sup>19</sup> Kilpatrick, *Gifts from the Gardens of China*, p. 63.

<sup>20</sup> Bianca Maria Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste: Jesuits and Europe’s Knowledge of Chinese Flora and Art of the Garden in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (München, Martin Meidenbauer, 2006), p. 153.

<sup>21</sup> Chiu, *Vegetal Travel*, p. 97.

<sup>22</sup> Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, pp. 156-157; see also Wang, *From La Flèche to Beijing*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>23</sup> Kilpatrick, *Gifts from the Gardens of China*, p. 63.

<sup>24</sup> Another Jesuit, Jean-Denis Attiret (Wang Zhicheng 王致誠, 1702-1768) seems to have been involved in building Beitang’s parterre garden. For more details, see Wang, “From La Flèche to Beijing”, pp. 110-111.

<sup>25</sup> Georges Métaillé, “Botany”, in Nicolas Standaert (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 1 (Leiden, Boston and Köln, Brill, 2001), pp. 804-805.

<sup>26</sup> Emil Bretschneider, *History of European Botanical Discoveries in China*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, Leipzig Zentral-Antiquariat der Dt. Demokrat. Republik, 1935), pp. 52-56.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127-134.

<sup>28</sup> Pierre-Martial Cibot, *Notices de quelques plantes et arbrisseaux de la China*, in Joseph-Marie Amiot et al. (eds.), *Mémoires concernant la Chine et les Chinois*, 3 (Paris, Nyon l’ai’né, 1778), pp. 437-498.

<sup>29</sup> Pierre-Martial Cibot, *Observations sur les plantes, les fleurs et les arbres de la China, qu’il est possible et utile de se procurer en France*, in Joseph-Marie Amiot et al. (eds.), *Mémoires concernant la Chine et les Chinois*, 11 (Paris, Nyon l’ai’né, 1786), pp. 183-259. For an overview of Cibot’s publication, see Rinaldi, *Ideals of Chinese Gardens*, pp. 182-185.

<sup>30</sup> Pierre-Martial Cibot, *Plantes et fleurs de la Chine. Phyllodes placentaria*, 1772. The album is kept at the BnF, Ms 986-FOLIO127.

<sup>31</sup> Richter, *Pflug und Steuerruder*, pp. 286-298.

<sup>32</sup> As for Bertin’s engagement with Chinese plants, see Marie-Pierre Genest, “Les plantes chinoises en France au XVIIIe siècle: médiation et transmission”, *Journal d’agriculture traditionnelle et de botanique appliquée*, 39, 1 (1997), pp. 30-31.

<sup>33</sup> John Finlay, *Henri Bertin and the Representation of China in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York and Abingdon, Oxfordshire, Routledge, 2020), pp. 67-70; see also Chen Dong, *Qingdai bishubangzhuang de gongting huabui 清代避暑山莊的宮廷花卉*, *Zijincheng 紫禁城*, 9 (2016), pp. 39-40.

<sup>34</sup> BnF, RESERVE PET FOL-OE-21.

<sup>35</sup> BnF, RESERVE OE-44-PET FOL.

<sup>36</sup> As for Bertin’s effort in constructing an authentic Chinese garden at Chatou, see Finlay, *Henri Bertin and the Representation of China*, pp. 40-66; see also Rinaldi, *Chinese Garden in Good Taste*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>37</sup> Marie Genest, *L’introduction et l’acclimatation des plantes en France au XVIIIe siècle*, vol. 3, Ph.D. thesis (École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris 1994), p. 419; see also John Finlay, “Henri Bertin and the Commerce in Images Between France and China in the Late Eighteenth Century”, in Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Ding Ning (eds.), *Qing Encounters. Artistic Exchanges between China and the West* (Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2015), p. 91.

<sup>38</sup> This layout should have been included in the manuscript Sloane 853a, fols. 3, 15, and 16, in the British Library. Besides some folios bearing Chinese characters that refer to gardens, the layout seems to be missing. See more in William Poole, “The China-man and the Librarian. The Meeting of Shen Fuzong and Thomas Hyde in 1687,” Lecture at the Oxford Bibliographical Society, unpublished manuscript, March 1, 2010, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Georges Métaillé, Janet Lloyd (trans.), *Traditional Botany: An Ethnobotanical Approach* (Science and Civilisation in China, vol. 6, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 652.