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Teodorico Pedrini: The Music and Letters of an 18th-century Missionary in China

BY

PETER C. ALLSOP, D.PHIL., AND JOYCE LINDORFF, D.M.A.

Corelli's legacy in China

Following the publication in Rome in 1700 of Arcangelo Corelli's Op. 5 *Sonate a violino e violone o cimbalo*, which quickly became the most commercially successful collection of instrumental music of all time, Europe was gripped by a wave of Corelli mania.¹ The fame of these violin sonatas extended far across the seas to the Americas, but few suspected such a transmission to the Far East. Nevertheless, not only do editions of his works from the early eighteenth century still exist in Beijing, but Teodorico Pedrini's set of twelve sonatas for violin and bass under the pseudonym of "Nepridi" bears witness to the fact that the vogue for Corelli imitation had even reached the imperial court of China.² No gentleman musician could have suffered the ignominy of being without the immortal works of the master, and no sooner had Pedrini arrived in Peking than he petitioned his superiors in Propaganda Fide to send, as essential pieces of equipment, 'le opere di Arcangelo Corelli di buona stampa con alcune di Bononcini' (4 March 1711).³

The Correspondence

Much of the contentious debate surrounding Pedrini has been missiological, whereas the motivation for this study was in the first instance musicological. The role of music both as an aid to evangelism and as currency for cross-cultural exchange at the imperial court warranted an extended investigation, and this prompted a preliminary enquiry into Pedrini's Roman background. Initially this was to establish whether the overt Corellian influence on these sonatas was circumstantial or the outcome of direct contact between the two composers, who after all lived a mere stone's throw from each other. This intriguing possibility led, in the first instance, to the archives of the Lazarist Collegio Leoniano in Rome, a search which surpassed all expectations, revealing literally hundreds of pages of letters and diaries either by or directly concerning Pedrini, covering a period of over forty years from 1702 to 1744. Even a brief perusal soon convinced us that here was a priceless repository, the importance of which extended far beyond the concerns of mere musicologists, but penetrated to the very heart of the bitter

¹ Peter Allsop, *Arcangelo Corelli: New Orpheus of Our Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

² See Joyce Lindorff, "Teodorico Pedrini" in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. (London, 2001).

³ Propaganda Fide, Rome: "Scritture originali congregazioni particolari dell'Indie Orientali e Cina," Vol. 26, 295v-296r.



Portrait of Teodorico Pedrini (1671-1746).

M. Beurdeley, *Peintres jésuites en Chine au XVIIIe siècle* (Arcueil, Anthèse: 1997), p. 85.

Courtesy of the authors

internecine dispute over the Chinese Rites issue long suspected of being among the prime causes of the break-down and eventual suppression of the first Catholic mission to China. It soon became abundantly clear that through his own intimacy with a succession of Emperors, Pedrini was a major player in the diplomatic process between the Far East and West in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Training in Rome

Although Pedrini (born 1671 in Fermo, Italy) was evidently a skilled and able musician, there is little reason to suppose he ever considered it as a career. On the contrary, in a letter to his mother of 4 July 1713, he is rather dismissive of the role assigned to him:

I have already written numerous times that the Emperor has given me seven pupils to teach music to, and having heard them recently he is delighted at their progress, so much so that at the end of my days I shall see myself as *maestro di cappella*. What a fine position!⁴

⁴ Collegio Leoniano, Rome: "Missioni straniere."

His earliest biography written, it seems, not long after his death, as one of a number of similar biographies of Vincentians, affirms that he studied at the Roman Collegio Piceno.⁵ The 'Elenco dei convittori del Collegio Piceno in Roma' confirms his attendance there from 16 November 1692 until 7 August 1697, and explains the fact that he was a doctor of both canon and civil law, since along with medicine these were the only disciplines offered.⁶ His family had personal connections with the Collegio as his sister, Maria Teresa, was married to its Rector, Giuseppe Monti. Founded in 1662 by the Confraternità della nazione marchigiana, known as the Pio Sodalizio, its aim was to provide an education for deserving students from Le Marche in the papal states. Of some relevance to Pedrini's later occupation is the obligation imposed by its founder, Cardinal Giambattista Pallotta, that the college should hold as a primary responsibility the provision of music for its services in its church of Santa Maria di Loreto.⁷ In his *Sonate di violino a voce solo*, Giovanni Antonio Leoni underlined the importance of music at its services:

Who does not know that the venerable church of the Virgin of Loreto has been constituted in this city as a sacred Parnassus for the benefit of musicians who innumerable times during the year meet there to demonstrate their noble talents in sweetest consorts of divine praise with harmonious symphonies, imitating the voices of angels...⁸

Among those musicians providing these harmonious symphonies was none other than Arcangelo Corelli, who was commissioned for a number of grand occasions there, and the closest confidant of his patroness, the ex-Queen Christina of Sweden, was another native of Fermo—Cardinal Decio Azzolini, secretary to the Pope, and honorary head of the Pio Sodalizio.⁹

On leaving the Collegio Piceno, Pedrini entered Montecitorio on 24 February 1698. Again, his choice of the Congregation of the Mission was more than fortuitous. It was the Bishop of Fermo, Baldassare Cenci, who was personally responsible for the opening of the new Lazarist house in the city in 1704. Furthermore, there were close connections between Montecitorio and the Collegio Piceno. When, in 1713, new regulations for the institution were drawn up by Fabrizio Paolucci, none other than Secretary of State to Pope Clement XI, he

⁵ Collegio Leoniano, Rome: "Cina."

⁶ The 'Elenco' is printed in Sandro Corradini, "La Comunità marchigiana in Roma vista da Pier Leone Ghezzi" in *Cultura e società nel settecento: 3. Istruzione e istituzioni culturali nelle Marche. Atti del XII convegno del centro di studi avellaniti* (Gubbio: Fonte Avellana, 1988), pp. 291-301. We are grateful to Mons. Corradini for his generous assistance.

⁷ The librarian, Maria Antonietta Laganà, kindly allowed us to read the script of her forthcoming study of the Pio Sodalizio. See also her *Storia della biblioteca e catalogo delle sue cinquecentine* (Rome: Pio Sodalizio dei Piceni, 2000).

⁸ Op. III (Rome: Vitale Mascardi, 1652).

⁹ For Corelli's association with the Collegio Piceno, see Lepanto De Angelis, "Arcangelo Corelli nella direzione di un 'Concerto e Sinfonia' in S. Maria di Loreto dei Marchigiani di Roma," in *Note d'archivio per la storia musicale*, XVII (1940), pp. 105-10.

exhorted the students to go every day to hear the orations at Montecitorio.¹⁰

By the turn of the eighteenth century, Montecitorio had therefore assumed a position of considerable importance in the fate of the China Mission. Clement frequently attended its spiritual exercises, and in 1701 he spent an appreciable amount of time in retreat there contemplating the precarious state of the mission, deliberations which led directly to his decision to send a legation to Peking to impose papal authority. His first choice of Legate was none other than the Bishop of Fermo, who declined but recommended his Roman auditor, Charles-Thomas Maillard de Tournon. He was not only another frequenter of retreats at Montecitorio, but also by extraordinary coincidence kinsman to the Lazarist Appiani brothers. (Giovanni was soon to become head of the new Fermo house, while Luigi Antonio was to act as de Tournon's translator in the fateful Peking audiences with the Kangxi emperor, a position which earned him a period of imprisonment for almost 30 years.) The Congregation of the Mission had evidently become a bastion of support for the papacy, and therefore Clement XI sought within its walls for recruits for his legation. Of those who put their names forward, none was selected. Instead, the choice was Teodorico Pedrini, who had not volunteered. Why did Clement choose him? First, he was a Lazarist (they might even have shared the same spiritual adviser from Montecitorio, Fr. Anselmo), and secondly, like himself and Fabrizio Paolucci, Pedrini was from Le Marche.

Music and the Rites Controversy

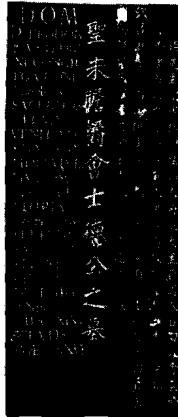
Most recent studies concerning Pedrini have dealt primarily with his role in the Chinese Rites controversy, often alleged to be the crucial issue in the collapse of the Catholic mission to China; and since these have largely been written from a Jesuit perspective, Pedrini has been cast as the villain of the piece.¹¹ In few of these writings has much investigation been made of his position as music master at the imperial court, despite the fact that it was key to his unequalled intimacy with a succession of Chinese emperors (a relationship which would seem to contradict the accepted historical status of missionaries of his persuasion at the Chinese court). Since the disastrous Legation of Maillard de Tournon, only those in possession of the imperial *piao* (permit) were to be allowed residence, and this supposedly

¹⁰ *Regole, e costituzioni dell'Almo, ed Insigne Collegio Piceno di Roma* (Rome: de Martiis, 1713).

¹¹ In his authoritative article, "Maillard de Tournon: Papal Legate at the Court of Peking," Francis Rouleau, S.J., exhaustively displays the limitations of 'anti-Jesuit' accounts of the Emperor's audience with de Tournon, including that of de Tournon himself, and settles upon a lengthy manuscript record of Kilian Stumpf, S.J., "made on the spot with such circumstantial completeness that it comes close to being a *procès-verbal*, or what may be termed the secretarial minutes of the eventful meeting' (p. 279). Later (p. 282) he waxes lyrical about Stumpf's virtues, "a sharp observer of action taking place around him, plus a penetrating eye to discern its meaning. Joined to this was a flair for detecting the nuances of personal moods, expressions of speech, the human-interest trivialities of everyday intercourse. His too was a German's instinctive bent for meticulous detail... and the exact verification of every statement or document." Pedrini saw Stumpf in a different light: "in his report, it can be seen that Fr. Kilian clearly wished to imply quite the contrary to what His Majesty had said. It is difficult to explain the confusion with which he reported them, and how he set about twisting the words, and also changed the meaning of the words he had spoken in the past." July 1715 (Collegio Leoniano, Rome: "Cina").

required allegiance to the Jesuit 'rule of Matteo Ricci.' Not only would Pedrini never have signed his name to any such agreement, which directly contravened the papal rulings condemning the Chinese Rites, but as an Apostolic Missionary of Propaganda Fide, he believed himself to have been expressly chosen to uphold the cause of the Holy See against the blatant flouting of papal authority by the 'enemies of the Sacred Congregation.'

Despite his open opposition to accommodation to Confucian practices necessitated by the *piao*, he remained in Peking for a period of 35 years. After 1724 his church, not those of the *Compagnia*, became the only one in Peking tolerated by the Chinese authorities. This would suggest that far more telling than the possession of the *piao* was the fact that the emperor Kangxi was in dire need of a court musician to replace Tomás Pereira, who had held that post from 1672 until his death in 1708.¹² On hearing of the arrival in Macao of a group of missionaries, the emperor sent a royal mandate to de Tournon asking what qualifications they possessed. Hearing that Pedrini was a musician, the emperor was anxious to have him transported to the court. Europeans were valued according to their utilitarian abilities, and Kangxi particularly cultivated the Western sciences of astronomy, cartography, mathematics, and medicine, as well as the Fine Arts and music. Pedrini therefore found himself as permanent unpaid laborer holding the position of music master and keeper of instruments. He was the first Lazarist to settle in Peking, where he remained until his death in 1746.



A rubbing of the gravestone of Pedrini (no longer in existence).

A.B. Duvigneau, C.M., Théodoric Pedrini: *Prêtre de la Mission, Protonotaire Apostolique, Musicien à la Cour Impériale de Pékin*, unpublished, n.d.

Courtesy of the authors

Prior research

We were, of course, by no means the first historians to be attracted (or repelled) by this extraordinary priest. Pedrini's twelve sonatas for violin and bass, Op. 3, are in fact the only known western musical manuscript left in China from

¹² See Lindorff, "Tomás Pereira" in *New Grove Dictionary of Music*.

this period. However, for almost two centuries after his death, the music remained unknown due to political upheaval in China. Its re-emergence over the past 70 years has served to shed light on this fascinating musician-priest whose life was defined by adventure, strife and deep faith.

In the early part of the last century, Pedrini's music and biography caught the attention of two priests in China. During the mid-1930's, Aymard-Bernard Duvigneau, C.M., wrote a series of articles on Pedrini for the *Bulletin catholique de Pékin*,¹³ of which he was editor. These articles formed the basis of later biographies authored by Duvigneau. Father Theodore Rühl, a violinist, played the eighth sonata in a recital at Catholic University in Beijing. He was about to publish an edition of the complete Pedrini Sonatas, Op. 3, for the Lazarist Press in Peking. This was to include the manuscript facsimile, a version with modern notation, and a realized figured bass.¹⁴ It never materialized, though, a casualty of the Japanese invasion and ensuing chaos in China. A number of biographical accounts of Pedrini's life followed, of which the most detailed are by N.S. Rossiter, C.M.,¹⁵ and Stafford Poole, C.M.¹⁶

A detailed biographical article of 1952 by Fernand Combaluzier, C.M., concluded with an invaluable inventory of Pedrini's letters, comprising no fewer than 140 entries.¹⁷ From 1928 until his death in 1981, Combaluzier remained at the Maison-mère delving into archival documents.¹⁸ Evidently, he compiled his list of correspondence entirely from his base in Paris, including a substantial number of letters both from and to Pedrini located in Missions Etrangères, which has had the advantage of remaining intact since the 17th century, unlike the Vincentian Mother House in Rue de Sèvres where no original Pedrini documents survive. Nonetheless, its archives hold a large box entitled 'Pedrini' which, among other treasures, contains invaluable typed transcriptions of the majority of Pedrini correspondence found in Missions Etrangères. This may well have provided the material for much of Combaluzier's article. Yet while his autograph does appear sporadically, the hand most in evidence on these typescripts and which indeed completes the letter of 31 October 1723, is in fact that of Jean-Marie-Vincent Planchet, whose *Histoire de la Mission de Peking* was published in Paris in 1923 under the pseudonym of A. Thomas.

Planchet served in the Chinese mission from 1894 until 1932, when he was recalled to France, dying in Paris in 1948. Apart from marginal annotations, he

¹³ In *Bulletin catholique de Pékin* (1935), p. 88, note 3, Henri Bernard had mentioned Pedrini's sonatas in an article on European music in China. The ensuing series of articles by A.B. Duvigneau in the 1937 volume are found on pp. 312-325, 363-375, 436-444, 475-488, 535-546. Like Pedrini, Duvigneau suffered imprisonment in China (in the year 1951, when he was 77 years of age).

¹⁴ Eugen Feifel, "Book Reviews," *Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies of the Catholic University of Peking*, 2 (1936-1937), 259.

¹⁵ N.S. Rossiter, C.M., "Father Theodorice Pedrini, 1670-1746," in *Some Vincentian Missionaries* (Australia, 1955).

¹⁶ Stafford Poole, C.M., Ch. 18, "China," in *History of the Congregation of the Mission: 1625-1843* (Santa Barbara, California, 1974).

¹⁷ "Théodorice Pedrini. Le missionnaire. Le musicien à la Cour impériale de Pékin," in *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 8 (1952), pp. 270-87; "Miscellanea," 9 (1953), pp. 149-51.

¹⁸ Fr. Paul Henzmann, C.M., identified these hands and provided short biographies of Combaluzier and Planchet.

was also in the habit of inserting Chinese characters with which Combaluzier was unfamiliar. Of still greater importance, the box also contains two bound volumes entitled 'Quelques lettres des premiers Lazaristes venus en Chine,' and these yield photographs of a further 33 original letters in Pedrini's unmistakable hand, addressed to his erstwhile colleagues Matteo Ripa and Giuseppe Cerù between 1723 and 1735. Combaluzier wrongly classified these as "un dossier de photostats (Nanchang)," but his supplement of 1953 correctly placed them in the archives of Hankow, since each one bears an official stamp "Arch. Archidioec. de Hankow." Could Planchet have been responsible for these photographs of them?¹⁹

Combaluzier does appear not to have examined any of the extant documents in Italy personally. For these, his immediate source of information was Streit's *Bibliotheca Missionum*, which he references rather than the primary sources themselves.²⁰ In turn, this derived information not from the originals but mainly from French translations included in the *Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission*.²¹ The fate of this remarkable compilation is almost as bizarre as the life of Pedrini himself, since strenuous efforts were made to have it withdrawn from circulation and destroyed on account of its allegedly libelous criticisms of the Society of Jesus. Whether or not these allegations had merit, there is no doubt the *Mémoires* breached the papal embargo imposed in 1710, which prohibited further discussion in print of the Rites issue. It was eventually reissued in 1911 as a politically correct 'nouvelle édition, revue, corrigée et continue,' abridging the nine volumes to three, and removing the lengthy passages critical of the Jesuits, notably those by Pedrini.²²

Despite its blatantly partisan stance, the *Mémoires* is deeply impressive for its wealth of documentation, transcribing not only a large selection of Pedrini's correspondence, but also that of other Lazarists in China (Luigi Antonio Appiani and Johannes Müllener), along with much relevant contemporary matter. Most of this was translated from manuscripts kept at Montecitorio, but later removed to the Collegio Leoniano, where, apart from one or two which remain unbound, Pedrini's letters are preserved in the volumes entitled "Missioni Straniere" and "Cina." For the present study, the *Mémoires* acquires a new importance since a significant number of letters known to Gabriel Perboyre, who was responsible for the China volumes (IV-VII), are now lost and therefore survive only in his French translations. Of the Roman manuscript letters known in 1865, it cannot escape comment that all those of the last seventeen years of Pedrini's life survive, whereas no less than eight have vanished from the critical period of 1714 until Pedrini's imprisonment by the Jesuits in 1721—precisely those which are vehemently censorial of the Jesuits.

¹⁹ The originals of these letters have now been located in the Fondo Hankou of the archives of the Curia Generalizia dell'Ordine Frati Minori, Rome.

²⁰ Johannes Dindinger and Robert Streit, *Bibliotheca Missionum*, Vol. VII (Münster: Internationales Institut für Missions-wissenschaftliche Forschung, 1931).

²¹ A. Launay, ed., *Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission* (Paris: Maison principale de la Congrégation de la Mission, 1865-6). We are extremely grateful to John Rybolt, C.M., for providing us with copies of the relevant volumes scanned by Claude Lautissier, C.M.

²² For a short account of the writing of the *Mémoires*, see L. Mezzadri and F. Onnis, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione*, II/1 (Rome: CLV Edizioni Vincenziane, 1992), pp. 449-52.

Combaluzier's inventory therefore comprised the rich holdings in MEP, of which Perboyre was unaware, and the Italian sources cited in the *Mémoires* through the intermediary of Streit. Perboyre and Streit also drew heavily on secondary sources containing transcriptions or translations, such as the 'Giornale' of Pedrini's close associate in the Chinese mission, Matteo Ripa,²³ and those anti-Jesuit writings which looked to Pedrini for ammunition—Michel Villermaules, *Anecdotes sur l'état de la religion dans la Chine*;²⁴ Platel's *Mémoires historiques sur les affaires des Jesuits avec la Saint-Siège*;²⁵ and Viani's *Istoria*.²⁶ Therefore, these made up the very substantial number of letters listed by Combaluzier, but he wisely concluded with the statement 'Il y a sûrement d'autres.'

Sure enough, in his supplement of 1953, Combaluzier pointed to another remarkable secondary source, the *Documenti e titoli sul privato fondatore dell'attuale R. Istituto (antico Collegio dei cinesi in Napoli) Matteo Ripa sulle missioni in Cina nel secolo XVIII e sulla costituzione e consistenza patrimoniale della antica fondazione R. Istituto orientale in Napoli*, which contains both transcriptions and facsimiles of fifteen otherwise unknown Pedrini letters, the majority of which are to Carlo di Orazi da Castorano, Vicar General to the Bishop of Peking.²⁷ This now presented us with a formidable quantity of correspondence, and perhaps some sense of relief that so little seemed to have survived of his voluminous outpourings to Propaganda Fide over many years. In fact, the inventory provides just three listings amounting to an insignificant total of eight pages, all from volumes of the *Fondo S.C. Indie orientali Cina*, all incorrectly referenced.²⁸ As the most likely recipient of his reports, such a lack would certainly seem curious if not sinister, but even more incredible is the fact that no one had ever investigated this most obvious find. Propaganda Fide may now finally assume its rightful position as by far the largest single source of Pedrini's correspondence, amounting to around 1,000 pages, vastly increasing the total number known to Combaluzier.²⁹ There are certainly others.³⁰

²³ A modern transcription of Ripa's "Giornale," with critical commentary, is being edited by Michele Fatica in the series "Collana 'Matteo Ripa': as yet, Vol. I [1705-1711] and Volume II [1711-1716] (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1991 and 1996).

²⁴ Michel Villermaules, *Anecdotes sur l'état de la religion dans la Chine*, Vol. IV (Paris, 1734).

²⁵ C.P. Platel, *Mémoires historiques sur les affaires des Jesuits avec la Saint-Siège* (Lisbon, 1766).

²⁶ Servite Viani, *Istoria delle cose operate nella China da Monsignor G. [sic] A. Mexzzabarba, Patriarca d'Allessandria, Legato Apostolico in quell'impero* (Paris, 1739).

²⁷ Gherardo de Vincentiis, *Documenti e titoli sul privato fondatore dell'attuale R. Istituto (antico Collegio dei cinesi in Napoli) Matteo Ripa sulle missioni in Cina nel secolo XVIII e sulla costituzione e consistenza patrimoniale della antica fondazione R. Istituto orientale in Napoli* (Napoli: G. Salvati, 1904). The originals of these letters have now been located in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples, and in the archives of the Istituto Universitario Orientale, Naples.

²⁸ Combaluzier gives neither the volume numbers nor the exact pagination.

²⁹ These are contained chronologically in the *Fondo S.C. Indie orientali Cina*, and the *Scritture originali congregazioni particolari dell'Indie Orientali e Cina*.

³⁰ Our investigations have been greatly aided by the work of two indefatigable researchers from Pedrini's hometown, Fabio Galeffi and Gabriele Tarsetti, to whom we are deeply indebted.

Life in China

Pedrini had traveled from Rome to China in an odyssey that lasted nine years—from 1702 to 1711. His astounding route saw the ship blown off-course to South America, where it rounded Cape Horn. Pedrini traveled from Chile to Peru, then Guatemala; overland to Mexico, and finally boarded a ship to Manila. In a letter to his father, written on 16 May 1705, in Lima, Pedrini described the hardships of his voyage:

One day, even though it was noon, we ran into great danger due to contrary winds and violent currents. The wind broke a couple of our sails and we were thrown towards the land with great fury. The captain despaired of saving the ship which he foresaw broken into a thousand pieces. At that moment two Jesuit fathers and myself withdrew into the captain's chamber to pray to God to deliver us from this peril, while the captain and mariners tried every means of saving the ship. But throughout the day the wind blew ever stronger and the critical moment approached. We then made a vow to the Holy Virgin promising that we priests would say nine masses each and that the others would say confession and take communion. As soon as we had made the vow the wind began to calm itself which gave us time to make ourselves safe. This mishap, in which we lost four cables and two anchors, made it impossible for us to continue our voyage by this route, and we resolved to leave there and go by way of... the Terra del Fuoco...³¹



Portrait of Emperor Kangxi.

L. Pfister, *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine, 1552–1773* (Shanghai, Imprimerie de la mission catholique: 1932), reprinted (San Francisco, Chinese Materials Center: 1976), p. 504.
Courtesy of the authors

³¹ Collegio Leoniano, Rome.

The Vatican had sent a group of priests to bring the Cardinal's cap to de Tournon, who was imprisoned in Macau by the Portuguese authorities, and Pedrini joined them in Manila. In a feat that fully reveals his courage and imagination, Pedrini shaved off his beard, donned the garb of a ship's captain, and with little skill or experience, somehow sailed the boat to Macau, narrowly avoiding its destruction. They landed successfully, and the layman's disguise readily facilitated contact with de Tournon.

Very shortly afterward, the Emperor Kangxi invited him to court and, on 3 March 1711, Pedrini first appeared before him. In this remarkable first meeting the emperor quizzed Pedrini on the niceties of contemporary European music theory.³² That same day, the arriving priests were instructed in imperial protocol—how to execute the nine prostrations known as *kow-towing*.

Pedrini immediately found favor with Kangxi. His tuning skills were approved. And even though he did not speak the Chinese language, Kangxi was not concerned, declaring that "the harpsichord is tuned with the hands, not the tongue." Thereafter Pedrini's musical livelihood in the Chinese court included not only tuning and performance, but also instrument building, instruction, and theoretical writing. He was given accommodations close to the emperor to fulfill the important function of tuning "the harpsichords, big and small, which the emperor possessed in great number and which he had received as presents."³³ Because the fundamental tone is called *huangzhong* (Yellow-Bell), and stands for the emperor himself, Pedrini's tuning had great worth within the Chinese court. His musicianship, along with his charismatic personality, eventually won him the trust and respect of Kangxi.

But despite the friendship and goodwill engendered by Pedrini's music, Kangxi was a harsh and tyrannical monarch. The full-blown Rites Controversy,



View of the Summer Palace at Jehol.

Bishu Shanzhuang Qishi Er Qing (China Science Academy Publishing House, Beijing: 1993). Painting by Shen Yu, Calligraphy by Wang Zengqi of poetry attributed to the emperor Kangxi. Plate 14.

Courtesy of the authors

³² This is discussed in detail in Peter Allsop and Joyce Lindorff, "Da Fermo al corte imperiale di Cina: Teodorico Pedrini, musico e missionario apostolico," *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia*, forthcoming.

³³ A.B. DuVigneau, C.M., *Théodorice Pedrini: prêtre de la mission, protonotaire apostolique musicien à la cour impériale de Pékin* (Bulletin Catholique de Pékin, 1937), pp. 321-3. DuVigneau cites M. Ripa, *Storia della fondazione della Congregazione e del Collegio dei Cinesi* (Napoli: Tipografia Manfredi, 1832), Vol. I, pp. 371-4.

meanwhile, aroused passionate hostilities between Pedrini and the Jesuits and they successfully sought to discredit him before the emperor. As a result the confidante of Kangxi and music teacher of the princes found himself cruelly beaten and sent to prison, where he nearly died. Nevertheless, Pedrini accompanied the emperor on his summer holidays at Jehol, where he was treated with great favoritism. Yet Pedrini was in jail when Kangxi died in 1722; his son and successor, the emperor Yongzheng, released him. The next emperor, Qianlong, although strongly opposed to Christianity, respected music and especially wanted to restore the instruments of his grandfather, Kangxi. For that reason Pedrini was able to live out his life freely as a missionary in China.

Multiculturalism in the Manchu court

Pedrini was at the heart of an amazing exchange which took place because of two coinciding factors: the European missionary presence in China, and a powerful interest in the international cultivation of knowledge on the part of the emperor Kangxi. This unique environment lasted throughout the 17th century, and much of the 18th, when it abruptly ended, again due to political and religious factors. Because of his Manchu heritage, the Qing emperor Kangxi held a surprisingly pluralistic attitude toward a variety of religions in his court.³⁴ From childhood he had been tutored by western missionaries, so his education was international in scope. Moreover, the Manchus, who had invaded from the north, had cultivated an adaptability and desire to take what was best from a variety of cultures.³⁵ This contrasted with the more continuous and rigid traditions of the Han Chinese. Indeed, the Manchus privately maintained their own Shamanist religious practices, while publicly practicing Confucian customs;³⁶ in addition, Taoism and Tibetan Buddhism was patronized so as to discourage unrest among those populations. This attitude explains why a certain degree of religious tolerance was maintained, even during periods of anti-Christian sentiment. Furthermore, by Kangxi's time, the Manchu concept of heaven had evolved from the idea of several heavens to that of a single deity. The court ceremonies were not Confucian, nor were they limited to those of high rank.³⁷ Both of these principles were congruent with Christian ideas of God, and religious practice by people from all classes.

Qing multiculturalism extended to music, which played an integral role in court ceremonies. The enthusiasm shown by Kangxi for western music brought by the Europeans might even have been related to that role. The Manchus incorporated a variety of musical influences into their rituals, including Chinese, Mongol, Korean, Vietnamese and Nepalese, among others.³⁸ Western music would not have seemed out-of-place, considering this international context.

³⁴ Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 264.

³⁵ Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951), 123.

³⁶ Karl A. Wittfogel, *History of Chinese Society* (New York: MacMillan, 1949), 14.

³⁷ Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 234-35.

³⁸ Siu-Wah Yu, *The Meaning and Cultural Function of Non-Chinese Music in the Eighteenth-Century Manchu Court* (Dissertation, Harvard University, 1996), 42.

Perhaps most telling is Kangxi's attitude toward the meaning of music. In engaging Pedrini to teach his third, fifteenth, and sixteenth sons, his edict of 1714 specifically focuses on theoretical principles:

To the disciples of the foreigner Pedrini, my purpose was not to just let them (the princes) play the keyboard. What I wanted them to study is the origin of the pitch-pipes [theory of music]. If I wanted musicians, what kind of players am I lacking? ... You should tell Pedrini explicitly, ask him to teach them with his heart. What he should teach is the foundation of music theory.³⁹

Perhaps had he known this at the time, Pedrini, as quoted earlier in a letter to his mother, might not have bemoaned his fate as music master.

Significantly, Pedrini finished a unique treatise on western music theory begun by Pereira. This appeared as the *Xubian*, the third volume of the *Lülü Zhengyi*.⁴⁰ This study of western and Chinese instruments and musical theory had been commissioned by Kangxi, inspired by western music as presented to him by Pereira on his arrival in 1672. The *Lülü Zhengyi* appears within two massive works: the *Lülü Yuanyuan* of 1723, and the *Siku Quanshu*, a 1500-volume encyclopedia of the late 18th century. Thus Teodorico Pedrini's theoretical writing appears within two major collections of Chinese imperial scholarship.

The sonata manuscript

Pedrini's sonatas were archived with the holdings of all the Catholic orders in China, as a part of the extensive Beitang Library. The former property of the Catholic Church, most of this material is now in the Beijing National Library, and Pedrini's manuscript has been tightly guarded for many years. Although physically in China, and largely withheld from researchers, ownership of the Beitang Library's contents remains contested. Fortunately, the manuscript had been photographed by Duvigneau and deposited in the libraries of L'École César Franck (Paris) and the University of California at Berkeley, which made the microfilm available. Finally, The Beijing National Library granted a first examination of the manuscript in December of 1996. Access was again granted to both of the present authors in November 2004 and November 2007.⁴¹

Inspection of the original copy of Pedrini's sonatas, listed as number 3397 in the Beitang Library Catalogue, offered insights on binding materials, construction, ink and corrections, along with clues to its place, but unfortunately not its date. The title page reads: Sonate a violino solo col basso del Nepridi, Opera

³⁹ Fang Hao, "Jiaqing qian xiyang yinyue liuchuan zhongguo shilue," in *A Brief History of the Transmission of Western music in China before Jiaqing*, Dalu Zazhi, Juan 4, no. 10 (1952), 7.

⁴⁰ *Siku quanshu* (facsimile of the Wenyuan Pavilion version), Shanghai, Shanghai guji chubanshe; Xinhua shudian Shanghai faxing suo faxing (1987), Vol. 215.

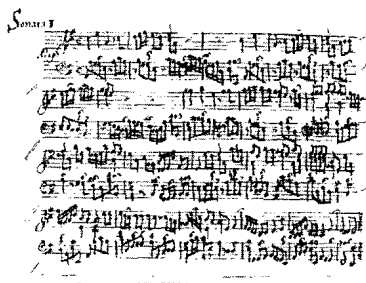
⁴¹ Recently an extremely limited edition of the manuscript facsimile was privately printed in Beijing, but copies are not readily available.



Title page of Pedrini's Sonatas.
Ms. in Beitang Library, Beijing National Library.
Courtesy of the authors

Terza. The volume, 75 pages in length, is covered in silk, which is now discolored and stained with ink. Chinese characters can be seen on the inside covers. The title pages of Part One and Part Two are hand drawn. Instead of the composer's name, the anagram Nepridi appears. The paper used was not of consistent thickness or texture; most leaves consist of two sheets glued back-to-back. The exception is Sonata no. 3, leading in to the first part of Sonata no. 4. These pages consist of one sheet of rice paper with very thin papers glued to each side. Ink density is inconsistent, with some pages appearing much fainter than others. Often passages seem to have been notated in a hurry. Staves are mostly rostrum ruled; some were added freehand as necessary. Cross hatching, rubbing out, and glued-on paper are the three correction methods used. The binding is in delicate condition, but the torn inside of the cover affords a look at the underside of the binding fabric—a shining gold filament threads the center, and bits of elaborately woven silk brocade are visible. Most interestingly, glued paper margin reinforcements appear on several pages: music notation is written over one of these, suggesting that the volume was bound prior to the entering of the sonatas.

Pedrini's title page imitates the *passee-partout* found on the frontispiece of the second part of Corelli's Op. 5. Manuscript copies of that work would have



Sonata I, first page.
Ms. in Beitang Library, Beijing National Library.
Courtesy of the authors

been in circulation much earlier than their publication, but Pedrini's borrowing of the design confirms that he had seen the published edition. Overall, his volume is a music notebook, pieced together with various papers. The silk cover, as well as the ink texture, point to its having been assembled in China. The unusual manner in which the papers were glued together, along with frequent indications of haste, suggest a want of supplies and leisure. It seems safe to say then, that the manuscript was certainly copied, if not composed, in China, during Pedrini's life from 1711 to 1746. Although they cannot be dated, one intriguing conjecture is that the sonatas might have occupied Pedrini's time during his imprisonments, perhaps intended as a musical attempt to win back the favor of the unpredictable emperor. It is entirely possible that they were performed by priests in the court, or given as instructional material to the emperor's sons. Although the sonatas are tantalizingly identified as Op. 3, no earlier works of Pedrini are known yet there are references to other works in the letters⁴².

At least some of Corelli's works are definitely known to have been present in China during that time. Sonatas Opp. 1 through 4 appear in the Beitang Catalogue as number 3251. This catalogue, completed in 1949, was the ten-year project of its librarian, H. Verhaeren, C.M. In his introduction he calls the collection "an ancient inheritance, which grew bit by bit, successively, through all sorts of vicissitudes, during a period of two centuries. It started with the arrival in China of Matteo Ricci in 1583 and closed with the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773."⁴³ The library's 5,133 volumes were gathered from the Jesuit, Lazarist, and other missionary libraries. The Corelli works in the collection are the Roger edition of the complete trio sonatas, with a publication date-range of 1723 through 1742. These would have arrived in China during the last twenty years of Pedrini's life.⁴⁴

The music and Corelli's influence

Op. 5, published shortly before Pedrini left for China, does not appear in the catalogue, but it is highly probable that Pedrini had access to it during the composition of his own sonatas, judging from the literal quality of its impact. The format is followed almost exactly. Both sets contain a total of twelve sonatas, although they are divided differently into Parts One and Two. While Corelli's are divided equally into six sonatas each, there are eight sonatas in Pedrini's Part One, and only four in his Part Two. Corelli's Part One sonatas have five movements each, and he employs the indications Grave, Allegro, Adagio, Vivace, and Giga-Allegro. Pedrini's Part One sonatas have the same headings, but additionally use Largo, Cantabile and Balletto-Allegro. Both composers' second parts use the dances: Preludii, Allemande, Correnti, Sarabande, Gavotte, and Gigue. Like Corelli, Pedrini often adds a tempo indication, such as Preludio-Vivace, Corrente-Allegro, and Sarabanda-Vivace.

⁴² See Peter Allsop and Joyce Lindorff, *op. cit.*

⁴³ *Catalogue of the Pei-T'ang Library*, H. Verhaeren, ed. (Beijing: Lazarist Mission Press, 1949), p. V.

⁴⁴ Thanks are due to Rudolf Rasch for supplying these details.

Some of Pedrini's movements go beyond influence and are in fact somewhat derivative. Often a motive begins as a quote, then continues differently; Corelli's techniques and figurations are freely drafted into duty. For example, Pedrini opens his collection with a melody from the first movement of Corelli's Sonata no. 1. The first Allegro movement of Pedrini's same sonata makes use of quick, repeated alternating notes, much like the figuration in Corelli's Sonata 11. The harmonic sequencing is similar, although the harmonies differ. Another of Corelli's techniques of outlining chords in the melody appears in the Vivace of his Sonata 6 in Bb. Most audaciously, Pedrini begins his Sonata no. 7 in Bb exactly as the Vivace of Corelli's Sonata 6 in the same key. After a few measures, Pedrini departs on his own path.⁴⁵

In spite of these obvious borrowings, Pedrini's own personality shines through. His sonatas contain interesting and unusual moments—desirable oddities among some evident errors. The sonatas are beginning to receive attention, and performances have resulted—some, possibly, for the first time ever.⁴⁶ This music is gradually being introduced to a wider audience through concert and recorded performances.

Pedrini's sonatas offer us a glimpse into one aspect of his enormous spirit. We know that in some fashion they were intended as political currency for the agenda of the Pope in the Rites Controversy; but it is equally possible to imagine that they served also as religious currency for Pedrini himself, one way of fulfilling his personal devotion to the Chinese mission.

Political intrigue and reconsideration

In the chapter on Western primary sources in the *Handbook of Christianity in China*, the section on letters by Jesuits occupies twelve pages, while that by Lazarists consists of a single sentence plus reference to Combaluzier's article—"Correspondence by Lazarists has hardly been published"—perhaps an unfair verdict on those responsible for the *Mémoires*.⁴⁷ On the basis of surviving letters, Pedrini appears to have been in fact the most prolific correspondent of all missionaries at the Chinese court over the period from 1711-1746. Furthermore, his account of events presents a vastly different perspective from the generally accepted one.

In Pedrini's version, it was the Jesuits who deliberately set about sabotaging every attempt to promulgate the papal bulls, and who were directly responsible for the imprisonment not only of himself but of de Tournon and subsequent papal representatives, Castorano and Mezzabarba. Over many years they sought to discredit him with the Emperor Kangxi. When the new emperor Yongzheng

⁴⁵ This discussion of the music is duplicated and much extended in Peter Allsop and Joyce Lindorff, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ A modern edition is in progress: *Teodorico Pedrini: Sonatas for Violin and Bass, Op. 3*, Joyce Lindorff, ed. (Madison, Wisconsin: A-R Editions, forthcoming). Five of the sonatas are performed on the compact disc, *Concert Baroque à la Cité interdite, XVIII-21, Musique des Lumières, Astrée E8609*, 1996.

⁴⁷ *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. 1: 1635-1800*, Nicolas Standaert, ed. (Brill, 2001), 179.

unearthed an attempt to overthrow him in favor of his brother, the ringleaders were precisely those most responsible for Pedrini's own imprisonment. He insisted that it was this meddling in state affairs, rather than any papal ruling, which gave rise to the decision to suppress Christianity, while his church, the Xitang, became the only one officially tolerated in Peking.⁴⁸ Pedrini's attitude toward the Jesuit mission was already fully formed from the start of his period at court, succinctly revealed in a letter of 15 August 1712, to his friend Giovanni Appiani, on the opening of the new Vincentian house in Fermo:

May it please the Lord to accept kindly the works of this new house, and above all yours, since you apply yourself with so much fruit to the greater glory of God A.M.D.G. [ad Maiorem Dei gloriam] and not A.M.D.G [al modo dei Gesuiti].⁴⁹

No wonder the Fathers of the Company saw in this fiery and intractable protagonist of Propaganda Fide a mortal threat to their very existence in China; he feared that there was no level to which they would not stoop, to curb his influence at court:

Destitute of all human support, I am often obliged for my consolation to remember these words: *Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea, quem timebo?* When the culpable fall upon me to devour my flesh, when the same come to raise the army of the whole Society [of Jesus] against me, I shall always hope and will never leave off from fighting the fight of the Lord for the sacred law which the Holy See has prescribed to this Mission.⁵⁰

By 1720, Pedrini seriously feared for his life: "Justice and reason require me to address myself to Mons. The Legate, to find in him an asylum against the violent persecution of the Jesuits of Peking, who appear to want my life... I am threatened with losing my life at the hands of the executioners."⁵¹ With the connivance of some court mandarins they eventually succeeded in discrediting him before the Emperor Kangxi, who had him flogged senseless, loaded with nine chains and cast into prison. After ten days Kangxi relented, and in a mistaken act of clemency, released him into the hands of his sworn enemies, the French Jesuits:

My misfortune was that the Emperor calmed down and in order to lighten my imprisonment, had me transferred from the public prison to the house of the Jesuits. That was not without machination

⁴⁸ After decades of neglect, the present Xitang, the third church on this site, is now being lavishly restored.

⁴⁹ Collegio Leoniano, Rome: "Missioni straniere."

⁵⁰ 6 December 1719, to Pier Francesco Giordanini in Rome. Original lost. Translated from *Mémoires*, V:595.

⁵¹ 12 November 1720, to Giuseppe Cerù. Original lost. *Mémoires*, VI:38, quotes from Viani, *Istoria*.

on their part, because they knew full well that among the pagans I would not be watched with so much severity or oppression than if I were in their hands.⁵²

They incarcerated him with “extreme severity and violence,” and after two years only released him on the orders of the new emperor, Yongzheng.

Would it be unduly cynical to suggest that the same post-1865 hand which began the impractical task of hatching out passages incriminating the Jesuits in Pedrini’s letter of 6 July 1708, may also have been responsible for tearing apart the binding and removing these lengthy and much more inflammatory dispatches from the volume now in the Collegio Leoniano?

*Espresso di una lettera in un
 Lemnosa di Cina in Compendio sono pp. 11. M. L. Intrinseca fece
 un Decreto, nel 1704 pubblicò la Decisione della S. Sede emanata
 nel dì 20. febbrajo 1704 - che condannava le Cerimonie di
 Cina, che si ~~facevano~~ defendevano per buon senso. ~~che~~
~~si facevano~~ ~~per~~ ~~buon~~ ~~senso~~, di qui risulterà l'esito di
 quasi tutti gli ~~altri~~ Missionarij Secolari, e Regolari, e parzialmente
 de' Domenicani, che si separarono dalla obbedienza a' n.*

Excerpt from Pedrini’s letter to his father, Manila, 6 July 1708.

Collegio Leoniano, Rome.

Courtesy of the authors

What began as an innocent musicological study has now taken on a far more profound aspect, encompassing the whole question of Pedrini’s relationship with the Jesuits and his role in the Chinese Rites Controversy. Whatever judgment may be leveled on Pedrini’s actions, as revealed through his letters, his is a story that has yet to be told, one which is at serious odds with the present version as viewed through the eyes of partisan historians. Ours will no doubt be as partisan, but through the eyes of this “indegno Prete della Congregazione della Missione.”

⁵² 16 October 1723, to Propaganda Fide. Missions Etrangères, Paris. Vol. 469, pp. 571-601.