CHRISTIANS AT CHÊN-CHIANG FU

BY

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The existence of Christian Churches at Chên-chiang in the thirteenth century is recorded by Marco Polo in his chapter on that place, which reads as follows:

Ci deuise de la cite de Cinghianfu.

Cinghianfu est une cite dou mangi. les iens sunt ydules & sunt au grant kaan. & ont monoie de carte il uiuent de merchandie & dars il ont soie aseç il font dras dores & de soies de maintes faisonz il hi a riches mercant & grant il ont ueneionç & chaceison de bestes & de osiaus aseç. il ont grant planteei des bles & des chouses de uiure il hi a deus eglise de cristienz nestorin & ce auint des .m.cc.lxxviii. anz. de lancarnasionz de crist en ca. e uoç dirai comant il auint. il fu voir qe unques nei auoit eu moistier de cristienz. ne neis en dieu cristien? iusque a .m.cc.lxxviii. ang. hi fu seignor por le grant kaan trois anz marsarchis qui estoit cristienz nestorin. Et cestui marsarchis hi fist faire celles .ii. eglise & de celestens en cha hi a eu glise que deuant nei auoit: eglise ne cristienz ne or nos partiron de ceste mainerie. & uoç conteron dune autre cite mout grant qe est apelles tinghingiu. 1)

This passage has been corroborated in the most interesting way and very much amplified by the notices of Christians which were discovered by the late Archimandrite Palladius about forty-five years ago in the Chih-shun Chén-chiang chih. Palladius published versions of some of these first in Russian, we believe, in 1873 and then in English in The Chinese Recorder, 1875, pp. 108–113. The most important of the Chinese texts was printed by the late H. Havret S.J. in Variétés Sino-logiques No. 12, 1897, pp. 385, 386. For further acquaintance with the Chinese texts we are indebted first to Monsieur P. Pelliot who very kindly placed at our disposal the extracts he had made at Moscow, and secondly to the bookshop of the Church of England Mission at Peking which under Bishop Norris’ prompt and energetic management has obtained for us a copy of the book itself. This is now the property of M. Pelliot.

Neither the Chih-shun Chén-chiang chih nor the still older Chia-ting Chén-chiang chih is included in Ch’ien-Iung’s Great Catalogue. They were not known to be extant until a manuscript copy came into the possession of 阮元 Yüan Yüan in 1795. He presented this to the Imperial Palace, after making two transcripts, one of which he deposited in the Library of the 焦山 Chiao-shan Monastery; the other he kept in his own 文選楼 Wén-hsüan lou. Both works are anonymous; but the 書錄解題 Shu lu chieh t‘i names 盧憲 Lu Hsien as the author of the earlier topography, while the Yüan work, in the opinion of 柳賓叔 Liu Pin-shu, came from the hand of 俞希魯 Yü Hsi-lu, a native of Chén-chiang. This attribution is confirmed by 陸心源 Lu Hsin-yüan 2).

Chinkiang on the right bank of the Yangtze about 140 miles from its mouth and at the point where the Grand Canal crosses the river. For il hi a deus eglise etc. the Paris MS Latin No. 3195 (printed in the Recueil etc. tom. I, p. 423) reads: In ista civitate sunt tres ecclesiae christianorum nestorinorum.

2) CSGCC, c. xix, f. 9 v°; 校勘記, c. i, ff. 1–8; 前宋樓藏書志, c. xxxi, fol. 13, 14; 善本書室藏書志, c. xi, fol. 14 r°, 15 r°.