

Corpus Nestorianum Sinicum: “Thus Have I Heard on the Listening of Mishihe (the Messiah)” and “Discourse on the One-God” (序聽迷詩所經及一神論)

A short summary on the content of the dissertation is the following:

In his dissertation, Victor Aguilar, affirmed that “looking back at the history of Christianity in China we realize how for centuries the missionaries have struggled to confront many challenges related to the inculturation of the Gospel. More specifically during the Yuan and Ming Dynasties we may recall Franciscan, Dominican and Jesuit missionaries who have distinguished themselves in this great labour. However, the Gospel of Christ has more ancient roots in the mission of the Eastern Syrian monks who at the beginning of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) announced for the first time the story of Jesus to the Chinese people using Chinese language”.

The formidable task, accomplished by the so-called “Nestorian missionaries” or the members of the “luminous teaching” (“Jingjiao”) community, chronologically constitutes the first documented engagement between Jesus’ message and the Chinese people. Two manuscripts, entitled “Thus have I heard: On the listening of the Messiah” and “Discourse on the One-God” studied during the doctoral dissertation present a focus on the individuation, exposition, and explanation of the Christian view on God with its Christological and Soteriological concepts.

Moreover, the dissertation featured the Chinese face of the pastoral and missionary enterprise carried out by the members of the “luminous teaching” community highlighting its efforts of ‘understanding’, ‘translating’, ‘explaining’, and ‘transmitting’ the story of Jesus into Chinese categories. The model of inculturation developed by these early missionaries in China is the first invaluable approach and will remain a reference for Christian and missionaries in the Chinese context they should always learn from.