

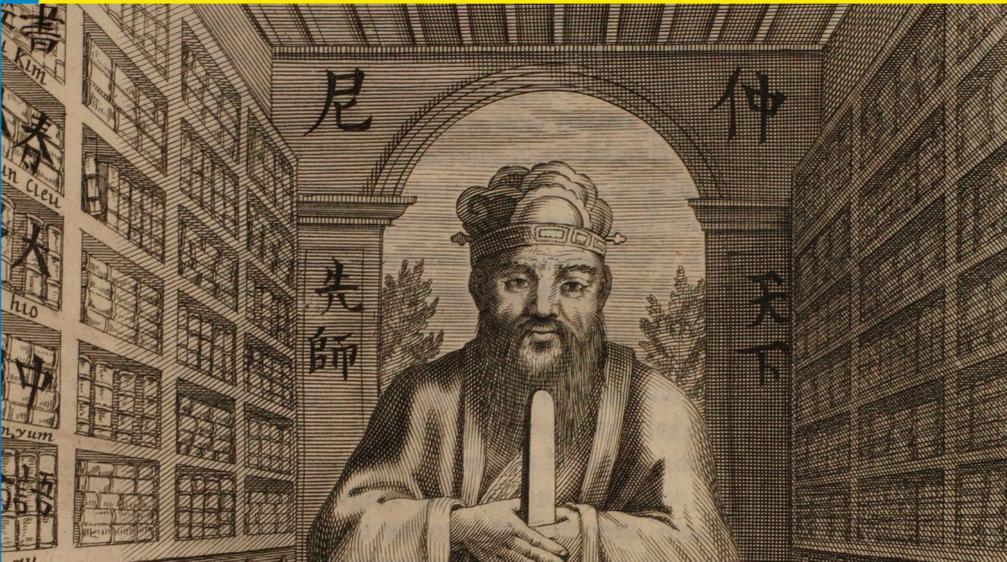
*The Handpress World 81*

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# PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CHINESE RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1595-1700

*The Chinese Imprint*

Trude Dijkstra



BRILL *Series edited by Andrew Pettegree*

Printing and Publishing Chinese Religion and Philosophy  
in the Dutch Republic, 1595–1700

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*The Chinese Imprint*

*By*

Trude Dijkstra



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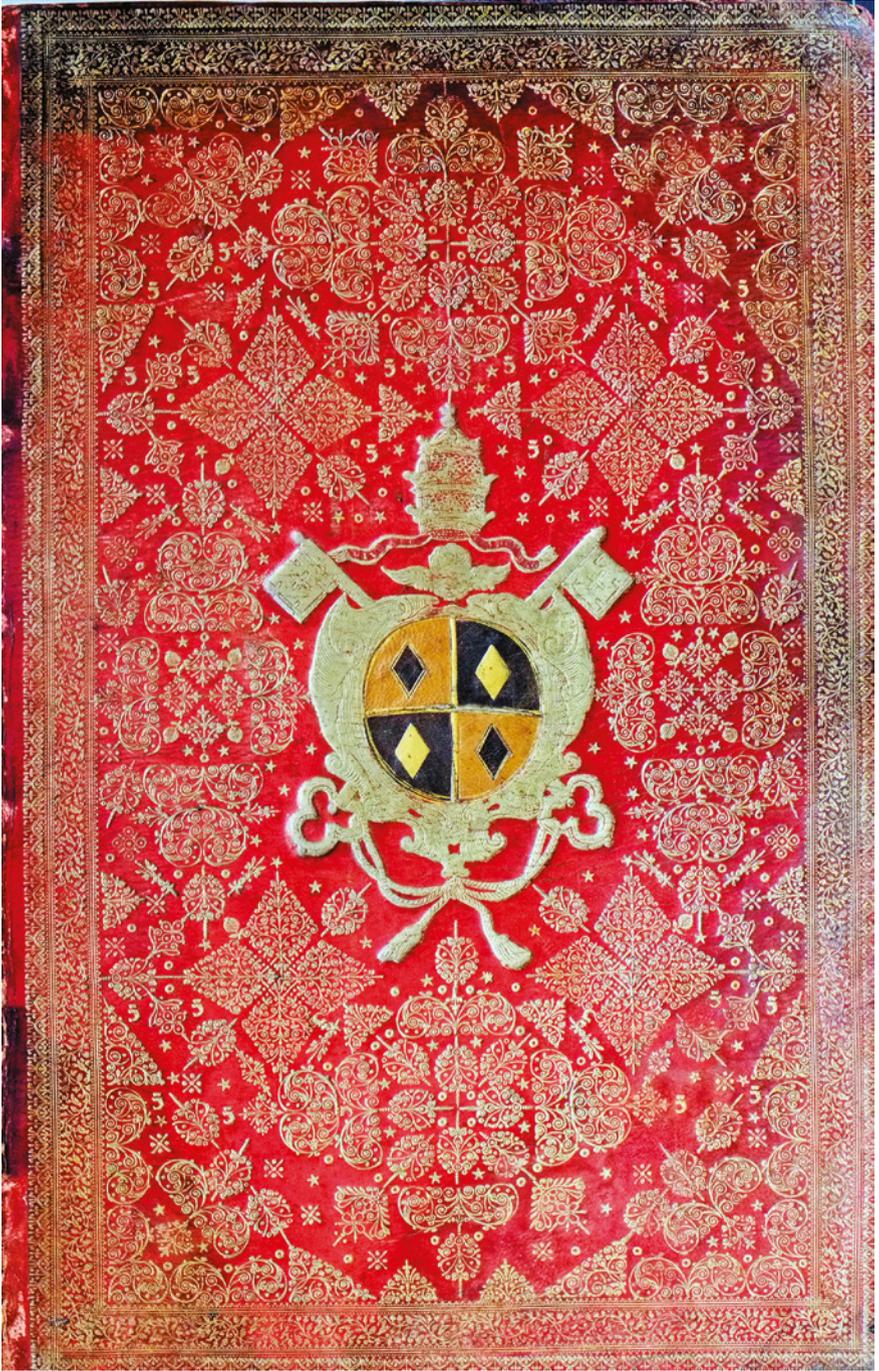


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# Introduction

On 27 June 1667, the publisher Jacob van Meurs was summoned before the Amsterdam notary Hendrick Westfrisius for his illegal publication of Athanasius's Kircher's monumental description of China, *China illustrata* (1667). Fellow Amsterdam publisher, Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, had instigated the summons, as he was the holder of a privilege issued by the States of Holland to publish the book.<sup>1</sup> Much was at stake here: a publication such as *China illustrata* could do much to further a publisher's career. China held a great appeal to the Dutch public, and printers and publishers were quick to recognise the commercial possibilities. As a result, what started out as a trickle of works on China at the end of the sixteenth century soon swelled to a deluge of publications. Over the course of the seventeenth century, many books, journals, newspapers, and pamphlets would devote their attention to this so-called Middle Kingdom (Zhongguo 中國).

Van Waesberge had good reason to worry over the illegal publishing antics of his competitor, Van Meurs. For, even among the hundreds of works on China published in the Dutch Republic, Kircher's *China illustrata* stood out. Not only was it a veritable encyclopaedia of the Chinese Empire, ranging from religious practises, social customs, and languages to China's natural wonders, it was also a beautifully produced book: illustrated with many fine engravings, charts, and maps. Due to its alluring form and compelling content, the work promised to be a commercial success from the outset. The publication also came at the right moment as the 1660s were an opportune time for printed works on the Middle Kingdom. In 1667, Dutch readers could turn to the now-regarded 'classics': Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinerario* (1595), Juan González de Mendoza's *D'histoire ofte beschryvinghe van het groote rijck van China* (1595), or Willem Lodewijksz's and Cornelis Matelief's reports on the earliest Dutch expeditions to Asia. If readers wished, perhaps, for something more current, they could always consult Jesuit accounts of China, which were also regularly published in Holland: Matteo Ricci and Martino Martini proved exceptionally popular. On top of that, a growing number of overviews of the Chinese Empire had been published: Johan Nieuwhof's *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham, den tegenwoordige keizer van China* (1665) being one of the most eye-catching.

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1 I.H. van Eeghen, 'Arnoldus Montanus's book on Japan', *Quaerendo*, 2.4 (1972), pp. 150–272; John Fletcher, 'Athanasius Kircher and the distribution of his books', *The Library*, 13.2 (1968), pp. 108–117.

Moreover, newspapers, journals, and news digests with further reports were widely available. This steady flow of information coming from the Middle Kingdom fuelled public debates in print on the implications of intercultural contacts between China and Europe, and readers always seemed to be clamouring for more.

Chinese religion and philosophy, especially the teachings of Confucius, played a particularly important role in these books and printed works. Missionaries of the Society of Jesus in China had transformed Confucius into the protagonist of Europe's interactions with the Middle Kingdom, presenting the sage and his teachings as essentially compatible with Christianity. This position was influential and not without success. For instance, in 1667, the same year Kircher's *China illustrata* was published, the Dutch playwright Joost van den Vondel could even exclaim that: 'Confucius, known throughout China, ... twenty centuries ago planted golden morals on the land, and in the cities'.<sup>2</sup> However, the last quarter of the seventeenth century saw the first stirrings of what came to be known as the Chinese Rites Controversy. Not happy with the Jesuit interpretation of China and its religion and philosophy, Roman Catholic authorities began to push back against this accommodating approach towards Confucianism. Polemics and justifications were written back and forth and, as a result, the volume of works on China increased further still.

No wonder Van Meurs wanted a piece of the action in 1667, much to the chagrin of Van Waesberge. The latter had paid Kircher the considerable amount of 2,200 *scudi*, entitling him to the sole rights to all his books. Additionally, the publication of a book like *China illustrata* was an expensive venture on account of its large folio size, high quality of paper, and numerous copper engravings and maps. It comes as no surprise that, when Jacob van Meurs issued a pirated edition, Van Waesberge started legal action. Nonetheless, it did not get out of hand: notary Westfrisius ordered Van Meurs to hand over all remaining copies to Van Waesberge, together with the copperplates and woodcuts. In return, Van Waesberge paid Van Meurs 3,400 guilders for his losses.

However, the damage was done and the relations between the two publishers remained frosty. When a contract was drafted in 1672 between Van Waesberge and the engraver Coenraet Decker, the latter was explicitly prohibited from working with Van Meurs: 'That also the same Coenraet Decker, as long as he is working on any drawings or designs of the aforementioned Van Waesberge that belong to the aforementioned books, he cannot etch or cut any

---

2 'Konfutius, gansch Sina door bekent [...] plante goude zeden, voor twintigh eeuwen op het lant, en in de steden', Joost van den Vondel, *Zungchin of ondergang der Sineesche Heerschappye. Treurspael* (Amsterdam: Widow Abraham de Wees, 1667), p. 21.



FIGURE 1 Frontispiece of Athanasius Kircher, *China illustrata* (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, 1667) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (Band 4 B 5)



FIGURE 2 Frontispiece of Athanasius Kircher, *China illustrata* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1667) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (OM 63-728)

plates or such alike for any other person, whether they are bookseller, plate cutter, printers of plates or others, whoever they are, and he especially may not etch or cut for Jacob van Meurs, nor provide any advice, help and assistance or instructions to the same Jacob van Meurs or to anyone else.<sup>3</sup>

In the decades to come, Van Meurs and Van Waesberge would both go on to publish books on China. In 1670, Van Meurs issued Olfert Dapper's monumental *Beschryving der keizerryks van Taising of Sina* (Description of the empire of China or Taising). Reissues of Johan Nieuhof's embassy of the East India Company to China and other travelogues and geographies by authors like Jan Jacobsz Struys and Arnoldus Montanus also emerged at this time. Van Waesberge, in turn, made good use of his privilege by publishing another ten of Kircher's books, which included translations of *China illustrata* in Dutch and French. Together with newspapers, journals, news digests, and pamphlets, these books brought the Middle Kingdom to readers in the Dutch Republic, opening up the way for extensive and far-reaching discussions and polemic debate. Numerous Dutch authors, translators, editors, printers, binders, and publishers earned their living in this segment of the book market.

This study discusses how Chinese religion and philosophy were represented in printed works created in the Dutch Republic between 1595 and 1700. Focusing on a variety of printed media, the aim is to shed new light on the representation of an often-contentious subject matter to readers and the publishing strategies of the producers. To this end, an analysis of form, content and material-technical aspects of various text types, mainly in Dutch and French, will provide insight into the ways an early modern public of readers (very much divided on religious, political, economic, and linguistic fronts) could take note of Chinese religion and philosophy. Furthermore, this analysis hopes to reveal the ways this knowledge was embedded into seventeenth-century Dutch perceptions of themselves and the foreign world.

Over the course of the following chapters, the notion is put forward that the interpretations and understandings of Chinese religion and philosophy were the result of processes of textual transmission in which producers played a fundamental role. The transmission of texts and images never follows a

---

3 'Dat oock deselve Coenraet Decker, soo lange hij eenige teekenningen ofte ontwerp van de voorsz. Waesberge ... tot het voorsz. werck ofte boecken, behorende, sal onder hem hebben, niet en sal vermogen eenige platen ofte diergelijcken voor andere personen ende 't zij boeck-vercopers, plaetsnijder, printdruckers ofte anderen wie het oock soude mogen wesen ende veel min nochte geensints voor Jacob van Meurs te etsen ofte snijden noch te eenige raedt, hulpe ende adsistentie ofte instructie daertoe aen denselven van Meurs ofte aen anderen te verlenen', in M.M. Kleerkooper and W.P. van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam. Voornamelijk in de 17e eeuw* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1914–1916), p. 1341.

straightforward course and much can be learned by tracing processes of transtextuality from creator to consumer, by accounting for publishing strategies and marketing structures, and by studying the reciprocal effects of print on the intended audiences.<sup>4</sup> In other words: this study assesses the importance of authors (including translators), printers, publishers, editors, illustrators, and booksellers in shaping the cultural consumption of China. Accordingly, the focus is on text type *and* content and the analysis assigns equal importance to both. As such, this examination will show that there was no singular image of Chinese religion and philosophy during the seventeenth century, but rather a varied array of notions on the subject. Perceptions often differed according to type and aim of publication, in addition to a variety of motives and considerations related to the cultural, political, religious, or economic background of the producers.<sup>5</sup>

Scholarship on the Middle Kingdom and Europe during the early modern period has been increasingly inclusive in its approach towards the Western interpretation and appreciation of Chinese religion and philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Researchers are becoming aware of the intricacies involved in the various processes of textual transmission; however, there remains a gap in knowledge of how the printing press influenced and facilitated the dissemination of early modern perceptions of the Middle Kingdom. And while the field of book history has shown itself mindful of concepts related to textual transmission through print, there are few studies that combine these subjects. As such, this study examines which images of Chinese religion and philosophy were put forward through text, paratext, and illustration of printed works produced in the Dutch Republic between 1595 and 1700. It further explores how these images reflected

4 David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, *An introduction to book history* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 1–5.

5 D.F. McKenzie, 'Typography and meaning. The case of William Congreve', rep. in Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez (eds.), *Making the meaning. 'Printers of the mind' and other essays* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), pp. 198–236; D.F. McKenzie, 'The sociology of texts. Orality, literacy and print in early New Zealand', *The Library*, 6.4 (1984), pp. 333–365; Jerome J. McGann, *The textual condition* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991); Adrian Johns, *The nature of the book. Print and knowledge in the making* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

6 For a brief overview of interactions between the Middle Kingdom and Europe from the perspective of the Chinese see Lennert Gesterkamp, 'Red-haired barbarians. The Dongxi Yangkao (1617) and its portrayal of the Dutch in China', in Thijs Weststeijn (ed.), *Foreign devils and philosophers. Cultural encounters between the Chinese, the Dutch, and other Europeans, 1590–1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 57–81; Michael Yahuda, 'The Sino-European encounter. Historical influences on contemporary relations', in David Shambaugh etc. (eds.), *China-Europe relations. Perceptions, policies, and prospects* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 11–31. For the study of Europe in Asia, see Georg Wiessala, *European studies in Asia. Contours of a discipline* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2014).

contemporary Dutch artistic, literary, religious, and philosophical discussions in order to ask the following questions: to what extent did the type of publication influence the manner in which China was discussed, and to what degree were these viewpoints enabled, shaped, and limited by processes of textual and visual transmission?

To answer these cultural-historical questions, this study turns to tools and methods provided by the interdisciplinary field of book history. The study of the history of the book as a physical object carrying some form of text, be it in the form of a scroll, codex, or digital file, dates back to well before the invention of print, indeed, to the invention of the written word itself.<sup>7</sup> Texts and their physical presence were often regarded not only as carriers of knowledge, but as objects of aesthetic pleasure as well. This estimation of textual carriers has made the book an object of study, where the physical form in which texts are contained takes centre stage.<sup>8</sup> By studying, codifying, and classifying books and manuscripts, scholars tried to make sense of them.

This research implements a qualitative case-study approach, meaning that each chapter deals with one particular carrier of printed text: books, journals, newspapers, and pamphlets, which is a practical means to illuminate the impact of the physicality of the printed material on its content and on the dissemination of information.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, and in keeping with the methodology

7 Finkelstein, *Introduction to book history*, p. 7.

8 Michael F. Suarez and H.R. Woudhuysen, *The Oxford companion to the book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); G. Thomas Tanselle, *The history of the book as a field of study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); Paul Hoftijzer and O.S. Lankhorst, *Drukkers, boekverkopers en lezers in de Republiek. Een historiografische en bibliografische handleiding* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgevers, 2000).

9 Many of the books, journals, newspapers, and pamphlets perused for this research are available through the comprehensive collection of the Allard Pierson Amsterdam. They have been supplemented by works present in the collections of Leiden University, The Royal Library in The Hague, the Radboud University of Nijmegen, Utrecht University, the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, and the British Library in London. In addition, various digital tools and databases have tremendously facilitated this research. In fact, the emergence of the new electronic revolution may prove the latest frontier for the study of the history of the book, perhaps rivalling the print revolution of old in its scope. Research tools have been made available through such illustrious institutions as the Royal Library in The Hague, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Bibliotheca Sinica 2.0, and the Catholic University of Leuven, to name but a few: Delpher Newspapers via [Delpher.nl](http://Delpher.nl); Royal Library, The Hague via [KB.nl](http://KB.nl); Gallica Bibliothèque National de France via [Gallica.BnF.fr](http://Gallica.BnF.fr); Bibliotheca Sinica 2.0 via [Univie.ac.at/Geschichte/China-Bibliographie/blog](http://Univie.ac.at/Geschichte/China-Bibliographie/blog); Chinese Christian Texts Catholic University of Leuven via [Arts.KuLeuven.be/sinology/CCT](http://Arts.KuLeuven.be/sinology/CCT); Le Gazetier Universel via [gazetier.universel.gazettes18e.fr](http://gazetier.universel.gazettes18e.fr); ePistolarium Huygens Institute via [CKCC.Huygens.KNAW.nl](http://CKCC.Huygens.KNAW.nl); Encyclopedie Nederlandstalige Tijdschriften via [Ent1815.wordpress.com](http://Ent1815.wordpress.com); La bibliothèque numérique sur la Chine ancienne via [Chineancienne.fr](http://Chineancienne.fr).

of book history, the specific thematic cases have been selected based on the hypothesis that they showcase differing degrees of transtextuality; for instance, books reference other texts in a different fashion than newspapers do. The advantage of this approach is that it provides insights into the extent of representativity, or conversely, atypicality, of a given textual discourse. Put more concretely: this study not only explores various ‘versions’ of Chinese religion and philosophy in Dutch representations, it also reveals how widespread specific perceptions may have been. In sum, this type of assessment based on a combination of content, production, and materiality has the potential to disclose to us the complexities of the early modern representation of Chinese religion and philosophy.

Today, as in the seventeenth century, China holds a special place in the scholar’s imagination.<sup>10</sup> The country exudes an air of intellectual possibilities, making images of China the subject of a great number of scholarly publications over the last decades.<sup>11</sup> As the humanities become increasingly focused on a global perspective towards history, these publications often emphasise the interconnectedness between cultures in Asia and Europe. A wide range of topics has been covered by scholars, from (for instance) Sinology and art history to economic history and philosophy: often with a focus on the interactions facilitating the transmission of goods, such as porcelain, lacquerware, silks and spices as well as knowledge about medicine, philosophy, writing systems, and how this dissemination of goods and knowledge impacted upon the respective societies in which they were introduced.<sup>12</sup> European interactions with Chinese religion and philosophy were of especial importance for the formation of

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10 James Belich etc. (eds.), *The prospects of global history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Charles R. Boxer, *South China in the sixteenth century. Being the narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da ruz, O.P. [and] Martín de Rada, O.E.S.A. (1550–1575)* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1953).

11 Donald F. Lach, *China in the eyes of Europe. The sixteenth century* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1965); Jonathan Spence, *The Chan’s great continent. China in Western minds* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998).

12 Craig Clunas, *Pictures and visibility in early modern China* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997); Christiaan J.A. Jörg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China trade* (The Hague: Springer, 1982); T. Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company as recorded in the Dagh-Registers of Batavia Castle, those of Hirado and Deshima and other contemporary papers, 1602–1682* (Leiden: Brill 1954); Jan van Campen and Titus Eliën (eds.), *Chinese and Japanese porcelain for the Dutch Golden Age* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2014); William Bernstein, *A splendid exchange. How trade shaped the world* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008); J. Bruijn etc. (ed.) *Dutch-Asiatic shipping in the 17th and 18th centuries* (3 vols., Houten: Springer Media, 1979).

representations of the Middle Kingdom and will be discussed in a later paragraph of this introduction, after we have considered some more general points.

Of special note are the comprehensive overviews of Dutch and Portuguese interactions with China by colonial historian Charles R. Boxer, and the monumental and indispensable *Asia in the making of Europe* (1965–1993) by historians Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. van Kley.<sup>13</sup> These and subsequent studies have been invaluable in establishing the interconnectedness between Asia and Europe during the early modern period. These contacts primarily came about through trade and conquest, and missionary efforts by the Society of Jesus: both which have been the subject of extensive research. The role of commerce has, notably, been studied by maritime historian John E. Wills and sinologist Leonard Blussé.<sup>14</sup> Wills was the first to publish a work solely devoted to the interactions between the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and China, while Blussé made invaluable contributions to the field by expanding the geographic focus beyond the Netherlands to include Batavia (then, the capital of the Dutch East Indies) into the research perspective.<sup>15</sup> The Jesuits were Europe's principal intermediaries with China during the seventeenth century.<sup>16</sup> After

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- 13 Charles R. Boxer, *The Dutch seaborne empire, 1600–1800* (New York: Knopf, 1965); Charles R. Boxer, *The Portuguese seaborne empire, 1415–1825* (London: Hutchinson, 1969); Donald F. Lach and Edwin van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe* (4 vols., Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1965–1993).
- 14 Leonard Blussé and Floris-Jan van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2008); John E. Wills, *Pepper, guns and parleys. The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622–1681* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).
- 15 In recent years, the scope has been widened to include studies of Formosa (present day Taiwan) as a Dutch trading outpost, and the Dutch embassies to the Chinese emperor in the second half of the seventeenth century: Charles R. Boxer, 'The siege of Fort Zeelandia and the capture of Formosa from the Dutch, 1661–1662', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 2.7 (1930), pp. 15–48; Tonio Andrade, *Lost colony. The untold story of China's first great victory over the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Tonio Andrade, *The gunpowder age. China, military innovation, and the rise of the West in world history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Jing Sun, 'The illusion of verisimilitude. Johan Nieuwhof's images of China', PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2013; Michael Keevak, *Embassies to China. Diplomacy and cultural encounters before the Opium Wars* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). For a bibliography on the subject of the Dutch East India Trading Company see John Landwehr, *VOC. A bibliography of publications relating to the Dutch East India Company, 1602–1800* (Leiden and Utrecht: Brill and Hes Publishing, 1991); Gerrit Knaap, *Grote atlas van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Voorburg: Asia Maior, 2007); Kees Zandvliet (ed.), *De Nederlandse ontmoeting met Azië, 1600–1950* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2002); Tristan Mostert, 'Economisch onmisbaar maar politiek kop van jut. Chinezen in Batavia', *Geschiedenis Magazine* (2018), pp. 17–22.
- 16 Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East. The Jesuit mission in China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Michela Fontana, *Matteo Ricci. A Jesuit*

arriving in the area at the end of the sixteenth century, they began the process of writing histories of their mission. As such, they were fundamental to the early study of China, which could be considered a form of ‘proto-Sinology’.<sup>17</sup> David Mungello has carried out fundamental research on the intellectual consequences of these interactions, and Nicolas Standaert and Thierry Meynard have made many indispensable primary sources available, appending them with extensive commentary and analysis.<sup>18</sup>

In recent years, scholars studying interactions between China and Europe have increasingly approached the exchange of culture and knowledge in terms of mutual influence and circulation.<sup>19</sup> Historians and sinologists have also begun to implement ideas and methods about the physical transfer

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*at the Ming court* (New York and Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), Frasië Hertroijs, ‘Hoe kennis van China naar Europe kwam. De rol van Jezuïten en VOC-dienaren, circa 1680–1795’, PhD thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2014; Paul Rule, ‘K’ung-tzu or Confucius? The Jesuit interpretation of Confucius’, PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1972; Jonathan Spence, *The memory palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books, 1984); Qiong Zhang, *Making the new world their own. Chinese encounters with Jesuit science in the age of discovery* (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2015).

- 17 *The Boston College Jesuit bibliography. The new Sommervogel Online*, Brill Online Bibliographies, <https://jesuitonlinebibliography.bc.edu/>, last accessed 16 August 2021; Benoît Vermander, ‘Jesuits and China’, *Oxford handbook online*; Francisco Leão, *Jesuítas na Ásia. Catálogo e guia* (Macao: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1998); R.G. Tiedemann, *Reference guide to Christian missionary societies in China. From the sixteenth to the twentieth century* (London and Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2009); P. Louis Pfister, *Notices biographique et bibliographique sur les jésuits de l’ancienne mission de China, 1552–1773* (Shanghai: Imprimerie de la Mission catalogue, 1932); Joseph Dehergne, *Répertoire des Jésuites de Chine de 1552 à 1800* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1973).
- 18 Nicolas Standaert (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in China* (2 vols., Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2001–2010); Ad Dudink and Nicolas Standaert, *Chinese Christian texts database*, [www.arts.kuleuven.be/sinology/cct](http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/sinology/cct), last accessed 16 August 2021; David E. Mungello, *Curious land. Jesuit accommodation and the origins of sinology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985); David E. Mungello, *Leibniz and Confucianism. The search for accord* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1977); David E. Mungello, ‘Confucianism and the Enlightenment. Antagonism and collaboration between the Jesuits and the philosophes’, in Thomas H.C. Lee (ed.), *China and Europe. Images and influences in sixteenth to eighteenth centuries* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1991), pp. 99–128; Thierry Meynard (ed.), *Confucius Sinarum philosophus (1687). The first translation of the Confucian Classics* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2011); Thierry Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius. The first translation of the Lunyu published in the West* (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2015).
- 19 Simon Schaffer etc., *The brokered world. Go-betweens and global intelligence, 1770–1820* (Sagamore Beach: Sagamore Publishing, 2009); Kapil Raj, *Relocating modern science. Circulation and the construction of knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650–1990* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

of goods into a broader perspective of cultural and intellectual change.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, scholars are increasingly aware of the major influence of social, economic, religious, and political factors in the transmission of cultural information from China to Europe.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, historians of the early or 'radical' Enlightenment have considered the way in which the intellectual world of early modern Europe assessed and classified the Chinese 'other'.<sup>22</sup> Recently, it has been noted how Chinese thought became an important instrument within early modern intellectual discourse in Europe. For instance, Thijs Weststeijn, Jonathan Israel, and Joan-Pau Rubiés have all underlined the influence of China on the broad spectrum of European intellectual thought.<sup>23</sup>

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- 20 M.J. Bok, 'European artists in the service of the Dutch East India Company', in Thomas Da Costa Kaufmann and Michael North (eds.), *Mediating Netherlandish art and material culture in Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014); Ann Bermingham, 'The consumption of culture. Image, object, text', in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (eds.), *The consumption of culture, 1600–1800. Image, object, and text* (London: Routledge, 1995); Maxine Berg, 'In pursuit of luxury. Global history and British consumer goods in the eighteenth century', *Past and Present*, 182 (2004), pp. 85–142; Siegfried Huigen, Jan L. de Jong, and Elmer Kolfin, *The Dutch trading companies as knowledge networks* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010); Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's hat. The seventeenth century and the dawn of the global world* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2009); Timothy Brook, *Mr. Selden's map of China. Decoding the secrets of a vanished cartographer* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2013); Michael Keevak, *Becoming yellow. A short history of racial thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Michael Keevak, *The story of a stele. China's Nestorian monument and its reception in the West, 1625–1916* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008).
- 21 Simon Shapin and Stephen Schaffer, *Leviathan and the air-pump. Hobbes, Boyle, and the experimental Life* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1985); Peter Burke, *A social history of knowledge. From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000); Joseph Needham, *Science and civilisation in China* (7 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954–[2019]); Benjamin A. Elman, *On their own terms. Science in China, 1550–1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Sextants of Beijing. Global currents in Chinese history* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000).
- 22 Jonathan Israel, *Enlightenment contested. Philosophy, modernity, and the emancipation of man, 1670–1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); T.L. Mazurk, 'Buddhism and idolatry', in R. Sachdev and Q. Li (eds.), *Encountering China. Early modern European responses* (Lanham: Bucknell University Press, 2012), pp. 161–196; Nicolas Standaert, *The interweaving of rituals. Funerals in the cultural exchange between China and Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); T.H. Barrett, 'Chinese religion in English guise. The history of an illusion', *Modern Asian Studies*, 39.3 (2005), pp. 509–533.
- 23 Virgile Pinot, *La Chine et la formation de l'esprit philosophique en France (1640–1740)* (Paris: Geuthner, 1932); Jonathan Israel, 'The battle over Confucius and classical Chinese philosophy in European early Enlightenment thought (1670–1730)', *Frontiers of philosophy in China*, 8.2 (2013), pp. 183–198; Thijs Weststeijn, 'Spinoza Sinicus. An Asian paragraph in the history of the Radical Enlightenment', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 68.4 (2007), pp. 537–561; Thijs Weststeijn, 'From hieroglyphs to universal characters. Pictography in the early modern Netherlands', in Eric Jorkink and Bert Ramakers (eds.) *Art and science*

Of particular interest to this study is how these varied notions of China trickled down from a narrow circle of merchants, missionaries, and radical thinkers into printed publications intended for a more general audience. Indeed, if the seventeenth century marked a defining moment in the history of intercultural contacts between China and the Dutch Republic, it was also a distinguishing moment in the history of print.<sup>24</sup> First of all, Chinese religion and philosophy could never have become such an integral part of the intellectual discussion before this moment, as neither the content nor the medium of distribution had been in such an abundance before.<sup>25</sup> Second, the emergence of cheaper print in this period, combined with the increased literacy among the Dutch, facilitated the dissemination of knowledge across a more varied audience. However, as we will discover, various physical elements of the printed works concerned had a strong bearing on this process of dissemination, with important ramifications for how the intended audience could perceive China and Chinese thought.

The complicated processes of textual transmission and intercultural exchange in print have recently been studied by Benjamin Schmidt. His *Inventing exoticism* (2015) assesses how Europeans came into contact with the foreign worlds of Asia, Africa, and the Americas through books printed in the Dutch Republic. He argues that the success of Dutch books came about through the ‘neutrality’ of their descriptions in print of the overseas world. According to Schmidt, Dutch printers and publishers, first among them the aforementioned defendant Jacob van Meurs, took a more universal perspective when representing the ‘exotic’ world, thereby foregoing mere ‘local’ interests. Schmidt also argues that

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*in the early modern Netherlands. Yearbook for History of Art* (2011), pp. 238–281; Thijs Weststeijn, ‘Vossius’s Chinese utopia’, in Eric Jorink and Dirk van Miert (eds.), *Isaac Vossius (1618–1689). Between science and scholarship* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), pp. 207–242; David E. Mungello, ‘European philosophical responses to non-European culture’, in Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, *The Cambridge history of seventeenth-century philosophy* (2 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 87–100; Walter W. Davis, ‘China, the Confucian ideal, and the European Enlightenment’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44.4 (1983), pp. 521–548; Joan-Pau Rubiés and Manel Ollé, ‘The comparative history of a genre. The production and circulation of books on travel and ethnographies in early modern Europe and China’, *Modern Asian Studies* 50.1 (2016), pp. 259–369; Joan-Pau Rubiés, ‘From Christian apologetics to deism. Libertine readings of Hinduism, 1650–1730’, in William J. Bulman and Robert G. Ingram (eds.), *God in the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 107–135.

24 Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world. Making and trading books in the Dutch Golden Age* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), pp. 11–28.

25 Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing exoticism. Geography, globalism, and Europe’s early modern world* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

Dutch book producers prepared their products ‘for appropriation as commodities’ by consumers all over Europe.<sup>26</sup>

As he also takes the book-historical properties of early modern works on China into account, Schmidt makes an important contribution to the history of the dissemination of knowledge and ideas about the Middle Kingdom. By further addressing the composition, mediation, survival, and transformation of written communication in print, the following aims to bring additional understanding of production, distribution, and reception of early modern knowledge about Chinese religion and philosophy to the fore. In doing so, I strive to move beyond the traditional hierarchy of contemporary sources. Historiography has given much attention to books by ‘great men’ such as Jan Huygen van Linschoten, Johan Nieuhof, and Athanasius Kircher. Their travelogues, itineraries, and histories have been rightfully pulled from their shelves time and again to emphasise the influence they had on the formation of European images of China and, subsequently, on the emergence of Chinoiserie in the early eighteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

Yet, the writings of these great men of travel and erudition represent just the tip of the iceberg of publications on China produced in the Dutch Republic between 1595 and 1700.<sup>28</sup> As scholarship in general has moved away from the theory of ‘great men’, should we not also aim to move away from the idea that the history of China is but the biography of ‘great’ books? Much is to be found beneath the surface of the often-invoked histories of China in folio. Readers bought Athanasius Kircher’s *China illustrata* for its intellectual exposition and affluent (yet more general) readers turned to Jan Huygen van Linschoten, Olfert Dapper and Johan Nieuhof. People with less money to spend were supplied with information on China by Simon de Vries, and those wishing for sensational stories of travel and shipwreck could probably have afforded the small price for Bontekoe’s famous journal. Bringing these and other publishing strategies to light will both broaden and deepen our understanding of early modern representations of Chinese religion and philosophy.

Research about interactions between Asia and Europe has often used books for its sources, yet learned journals, newspapers, pamphlets, and periodicals

26 Schmidt, *Inventing exoticism*, pp. 227–324.

27 Chi-ming Yang, *Performing China. Virtue, commerce, and orientalism in eighteenth-century England, 1660–1760* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), pp. 142–152.

28 A list of books on China printed in the Dutch Republic between 1595 and 1700 was compiled using *The Short Title Catalogue Netherlands*, the *Bibliotheca Sinica 2.0, Gallica* of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, *The Universal Short Title Catalogue*, *The Short Title Catalogue Flanders*, and *The Christian Texts Database* of the Sinology Research Unit at the Catholic University Leuven.

have received less attention.<sup>29</sup> One of the reasons for this paucity may be related to their ephemeral nature. Unlike monumental books in folio, usually furnished with a beautiful binding, many of these were never meant to last a month, let alone the three centuries or more that separates their production from today's scholarly interest.<sup>30</sup> Yet much has been preserved in libraries and collections the world over, and the expansion of digital tools certainly helped to spread the word on different types of publications and, at the same time, making them more easily available. While books are certainly among the most extensively used sources of this study, they are complemented by journals, newspapers, and pamphlets. The specific benefit of this varied source base is that it allows for a more thorough exploration of the influence of the form and presentation of print on the way in which knowledge about China and its religion and philosophy was transmitted. Furthermore, they affirm the varied nature of early modern European perceptions of the Middle Kingdom.

This research tries to avoid regarding the author as the sole manufacturer of the information found within the works bearing their name. While writers gained new prominence in the seventeenth-century world of printing, in

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29 Edwin van Kley, 'Qing dynasty China in seventeenth-century Dutch literature', in Willy vande Walle and Noël Golvers (eds.), *The history of the relations between the Low Countries and China in the Qing era (1644–1911)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), pp. 217–234; Edwin van Kley, 'News from China. Seventeenth century European notices of the Manchu conquest', *The Journal of Modern History*, 45.4 (1973), pp. 561–582; Michiel van Groesen, *The representations of the overseas world in the De Bry collection of voyages (1590–1634)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012).

30 There are three stages to the survival of print: creation and initial reception, resting without intensive use, and works that are later discovered to be desirable for collecting or research. Chances of survival beyond the first stage is dependent on physical form, size, and popularity. Large books in sturdy bindings last longer while small books will be used more and thus disappear: this may be offset by larger print runs. Some books are, from the outset, prized and thus not read, making their chances of survival higher. And while popularity is good for the text, it is bad for the books. Furthermore, print survives if it finds its way to a library or private collection. Some works may also survive because they are forgotten in a cupboard or back room. At the second stage, works may survive if they get to a library or a second-hand buyer, yet their general chances of survival drop. At the third stage, archival or rare book preservation is dependent on fashion and the rise and fall of intellectual interests. A new bibliography could spur interest, while an innovative collector could also spark others to collect similar materials: see Thomas R. Adams and Nigel Barker, 'A new model for the study of the book', in Nigel Barker, *A potency of life. Books in society. The Clark lectures, 1986–1987* (London: British Library, 1993), pp. 5–43; Jan Bos, 'Overlevingskansen van het boek', in Marieke van Delft and Clemens de Wolf (eds.), *Bibliopolis. Geschiedenis van het gedrukte boek in Nederland* (The Hague: Koninklijke Bibliotheek), pp. 153–154; Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world*.

practice they still had little control over the creation of their books.<sup>31</sup> Very few early modern publications, and those on China are no exception, were ever the product of their stated author alone. This study encounters numerous individuals who fundamentally influenced form and content of Dutch publications on China.

The key role in the process of production was played by the publisher. He or she drew up contracts with authors, built alliances with booksellers, negotiated with authorities, handled finances, supplies, shipments and publicity.<sup>32</sup> Different people were involved with providing copy: most notably, the author, editor and translator. These were beholden in various degrees to the publisher: editors of newspapers and learned journals often had more autonomy than translators or professional writers. Throughout the hand press period (c. 1500–1800), publishers were sometimes also responsible for printing; yet, this was by no means always the case. Print shops employed numerous people, among them journeymen working the presses, typesetters, compilers, proof-readers, correctors, and printer's devils or flies (the apprentices whose duties included inking type, cleaning, and hauling). With the exception of a few notable printers (Plantin-Moretus in Antwerp first among them), shops in this period very rarely had more than six presses. Books were generally issued in editions ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 copies, which were soon reprinted if the work proved successful. These were then sold by booksellers or in the publisher's or printer's own shop, which sold a variety of books as well as stationery such as notebooks and pens. Vendors traded stock with their colleagues (also internationally), ensuring a varied offering of printed works. It should be noted that print shops did not produce complete books but, rather, sheets of printed paper that the buyer could take to a binder. He or she would sew together the stacks of paper, often affixing an attractive cover made from flexible vellum or one attached to stiff wooden boards.<sup>33</sup>

In the seventeenth century, printed works were often illustrated with engravings and/or woodblocks. These were not necessarily the responsibility of the printer of the text, primarily because the relief technique of printing text and woodcuts was incompatible with the intaglio manner in which etchings and engravings were produced. Relief printing is a method where the printing block or woodcut is brought into contact with paper. Those areas with ink leave

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31 Stephen Dobranski, 'Authorship in the seventeenth century', in *Oxford Handbooks Online*.

32 Robert Darnton, 'What is the history of books?', *Daedalus* (1982), pp. 65–83.

33 Paul Dijstelberge, *Wat is een boek? Een kleine geschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018); Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world*, pp. 7–11.

an impression on the paper, while the recessed areas are left blank. Intaglio illustrations, copper engravings and etchings, must be printed separately on a different type of press. Here, the image is incised (by etching, engraving, dry point, mezzotint or the later-developed aquatint) into a surface whereby only the lines hold ink. When paper is placed on top of the plate, high pressure is applied by a rolling press, which pushes the paper into the lines of the plate. Relief and intaglio illustrations can only appear on the same page if a sheet of paper is printed twice, on two different presses.<sup>34</sup>

Printing and publishing was a thriving industry in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, employing numerous people responsible for form, content, and material. A focus on the various producers, combined with attention for the various external circumstances that have a bearing on the production process, will show that images of Chinese religion and philosophy were more of a collaborative undertaking than the product of any single pen. This means that, in assessing a specific piece of printed work on China, the motives and rationale of its author should be supplemented by those of its producers.<sup>35</sup> One of the most decisive of these motives would be economic considerations related to cultural consumption. Booksellers first and foremost wanted to sell books and, in order to sell as many as possible, their works needed to appeal to potential readers. This process is reflected in the form and content of the extant books, newspapers, journals, and pamphlets. Therefore, the printed works not only reflected the author's perceptions of China, but also very much the publisher's strategies.

Following economic rules that often govern cultural consumption, the sheer number of printed materials on China would indicate that the area indeed held a special place in the imagination of early modern European readers. Contact between Europe and China dates back as far as Hellenistic Greece; but, before the thirteenth century, interactions between the Middle Kingdom and Europe remained scarce. A period of uninterrupted contacts only commenced during the first decades of the fifteenth century when the Portuguese started trading in Southern China. These contacts further advanced over the course of the 1500s and, at the end of the century, various Europeans exhibited an ever-growing interest related to the Middle Kingdom. Unsurprisingly,

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34 Elmer Kolfin and Jaap van der Veen (eds.), *Gedrukt tot Amsterdam. Amsterdamse prentmakers en -uitgevers in de Gouden Eeuw* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2018); Joseph Blumenthal, *Art of the printed book 1455–1955* (London: David Godine Publishing, 1979); Phillipe Gaskell, *A new introduction to bibliography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); W.G. Hellings, *Copy and print in the Netherlands. An atlas of historical bibliography* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1962).

35 Darnton, 'What is the history of books?', pp. 65–83.

as China took a firmer hold on the European imagination, it also became a more viable avenue of economic and cultural production in the form of print.

While Sino-European interactions and the European perceptions of China have been studied extensively, the focus has been less on the Dutch Republic. This is somewhat surprising, as the United Provinces did function as a nucleus in shaping Western images of the Middle Kingdom.<sup>36</sup> Studies are generally concerned with visual or intellectual culture, in which a focus on France, England, and Germany during the eighteenth-century fashion of Chinoiserie stands out. However, when intellectual and material culture are to be studied in an integrated manner, a fuller picture emerges. Early modern European images of China originated in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, where art and ideas interacted: this affected both low and high culture.

The VOC imported millions of pieces of Chinese porcelain, which not only stimulated Asiatic trade but also fed the intellectual impact of intercultural contact with the Middle Kingdom. Furthermore, Delftware increasingly began to imitate Chinese porcelain from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards. By producing a cheaper alternative for porcelain, potters not only fuelled the demand for material objects but the cheaper availability of Delftware that they enabled also encouraged a broader engagement with China. The ubiquity of Chinese material culture thus provided the background for intellectual interests in the Middle Kingdom.<sup>37</sup> The Dutch also provided a unique infrastructure that, in addition to facilitating the transportation of products between China and Europe, also expedited the transmission of ideas. The VOC assisted Jesuit missionaries travelling to China who, in turn, provided

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36 Schmidt, *Inventing exoticism*, pp. 1–25; Vande Walle and Golvers (eds.), *The history of the relations between the Low Countries and China*; Thijs Weststeijn 'The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries. Sinology in the seventeenth-century Netherlands, in J. Maat, Rens Bod, and Thijs Weststeijn (eds.), *The making of the humanities. From early modern to modern disciplines* (vol. 2, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), pp. 209–241; John E. Wills, *Embassies and illusions. Dutch and Portuguese envoys to Kang-hsi, 1666–1687* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); Leonard Blussé, *Strange company. Chinese settlers, Mestizo women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Dordrecht, Foris, 1986); J.J. Duyvendak, 'Early Chinese studies in Holland', *T-oung Pao*, 32.5 (1936), pp. 293–344.

37 Willemijn van Noord, 'Nicolas Witsen's Chinese mirror and the logistics of translating Han dynasty seal-script at the turn of the 18th century', in Tjeerd de Graaf etc., *The fascination of inner Eurasian languages in the 17th century* (Amsterdam: Pegasus, 2018), pp. 579–602; Willemijn van Noord, 'Verbeeldingen van Chinezen op zeventiende-eeuwse wandtegels', in Thijs Weststeijn and Menno Jonker (eds.), *Barbaren & wijsgeren. Het beeld van China in de Gouden Eeuw* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2017), pp. 83–89; Willemijn van Noord, 'Between script and ornament. Delftware decorated with pseudo-Chinese characters, 1680–1720', *Journal of design history*, 34.1 (2021), pp. 1–20.

Dutch publishers and scholars with first-hand information. Dutch colonial settlements in Batavia, for instance, also played important intermediary roles.

The Dutch Republic proved ideally suited to benefit from the exchange of knowledge with the Middle Kingdom. Consequently, a number of scholars were willing to explore a Sinophilia that moved beyond accepted European opinions. This more radical approach would become prevalent in eighteenth-century England, France, and Germany; yet, it first took root in the United Provinces during the seventeenth century. Moreover, societal developments and economic growth created an increasing number of potential buyers and readers. Improved economic conditions after 1600 led to the emergence of a disposable income: money that could be spend on books, porcelain, or Delftware. The sale of print was further stimulated by the relatively high rates of literacy among the Dutch.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, around 60 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women could read.<sup>39</sup>

The history of European representations of China began in the seventeenth century in a period when the Dutch Republic became not only Europe's hub for products from Asia, but also for the creation of images of the Middle Kingdom through the medium of print. A variety of circumstances made the printing presses of the Dutch Republic ideally suitable to present the Dutch and broader European public with ideas of China that were not so much obstructed or distorted by political, religious, or cultural influence or interference as elsewhere in Europe. A key example of this, explored extensively in the first chapter, were the many Jesuit writings that would find a reading audience through (predominantly Protestant) Dutch publishers.

As this study is not only concerned with the material production of books on China but also with the representation of its beliefs, we must engage with the contentious early modern European notions of 'religion and philosophy' itself. At the same time, a clear understanding of what these terms signified when printed works referred to the Middle Kingdom lies at the heart of what this research attempts to reconstruct. It may be obvious, but when Dutch works of print referenced China's religion and philosophy, the terminology employed was never neutral. Authors, printers, and publishers made a decision, either deliberately or subconsciously, about the vocabulary to use: this decision in itself could be meaningful. For example, texts used terms like 'religion', 'philosophy', 'idolatry', and 'superstition' to convey an explicit or implicit message concerning the nature of the discussed subject matter.

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38 Carlo M. Cipolla, *Literacy and development in the West* (London: Penguin Books, 1969).

39 Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, *Dutch culture in a European perspective. 1650, hard-won unity* (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2004), pp. 236–237.

Furthermore, these terms underwent considerable changes over time: our definitions today differ from those of the seventeenth century, while Chinese religion and philosophy is also distinct from European perceptions of the same. In various fields of study, a definition of religion has been a controversial subject, and most fields fail to arrive at a general consensus. *The Oxford handbook of the study of religion* devotes no less than 23 pages to the definition of religion alone, including four pages of references!<sup>40</sup> Paradoxically, as definitions strive for universal applicability, their uses become progressively limited.<sup>41</sup>

If 'religion' is difficult to define, the concept of 'philosophy' is perhaps even more ambiguous. After all, should we consider the philosophical traditions of Asia along the same lines as we now understand them, or rather in terms of how early modern Europeans understood them? For instance, we might ask whether the seventeenth-century term philosophy was perhaps inextricable from religion, and does this mean that everything related to the Jesuit mission in China should therefore automatically be defined as 'philosophy' as well? Purely from a seventeenth-century European perspective, the answer to that question would be a resounding 'yes', since people of that day and age considered disciplines such as astronomy, cartography, and mathematics all part of philosophy.<sup>42</sup> As such, a variety of definitions for the terms religion and philosophy abound, without an overall consensus for either.<sup>43</sup>

This research therefore takes a pragmatic approach to the problem of defining 'religion' and 'philosophy'. This means that it will follow the recent trend, which proposes that a loose and common-sense conceptualisation of religion is sufficient 'to get on with our primary purpose of exploring its sociologically interesting features'.<sup>44</sup> In general, I take my lead from Nicolas Standaert's

40 Michael Stausberg and Mark Q. Gardine, 'Definition', in *The Oxford handbook of the study of religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 9–32.

41 Jan Platvoet, 'To define or not to define. The problem of the definition of religion', in Jan Platvoet and A. Molendijk, *The pragmatics of defining religion. Contexts, concepts and contests* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1999), pp. 41–72; W. Hanegraaff, 'Defining religion in spite of history', in Platvoet and Molendijk, *The pragmatics of defining religion*, pp. 337–378.

42 James A. Harris, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford handbook of British philosophy in the eighteenth century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Nicolas Standaert, 'Christianity as a religion in China. Insights from the *Handbook of Christianity in China. Volume (1635–1800)*' *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, 12 (2011), pp. 1–21.

43 As example see James Leuba's list of more than fifty definitions of religion: *A psychological study of religion. Its origin, function, and future* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912); Doug Oman, 'Defining religion and spirituality', in *Handbook of psychology of religion and spirituality* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2013).

44 Steve Bruce, 'Defining religion. A practical response', *International Review of Sociology*, 21.1 (2011), pp. 107–120; Jan Platvoet, 'Contexts, concepts & contests. Towards a pragmatics

definition; he has shown how the modern European viewpoint on religion differs from the early modern European understanding on three key points.<sup>45</sup> First, understandings in recent European scholarship have often been confined to ‘quintessentially religious’ aspects such as theology, liturgy, and catechetics. However, before the modern era, cultural elements like mathematics, geography, and astronomy were often also included into the concept of religion. Second, and closely related to the first point, before the Enlightenment, there was no strict institutional and conceptual separation between ‘science’, or rather ‘sciences’, and religion. The chief importance of this lack of separation is that early modern Europeans connected various subjects that we would consider secular to concepts of religion.<sup>46</sup> As Standaert explains: ‘One needed to know mathematics well, in order to master astronomy well, in order to understand the whole cosmos and the God who was behind the different spheres of the universe.’<sup>47</sup> The third key difference indicated by Standaert is that seventeenth-century Europe knew no academic or scientific discipline which concerned itself with the study of religions *plural*. In other words: there were no attempts to consider non-Christian beliefs or belief systems on the same plane as Christianity, let alone accord these a shared label like ‘religion.’<sup>48</sup> No distinction between ‘religion’ and ‘non-religion’ was necessary, for the simple reason that theology held that all people had an inborn knowledge of God, that is, the god of Christianity.<sup>49</sup>

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of defining “religion”, in Platvoet and Molendijk, *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion*, pp. 463–516.

- 45 Nicolas Standaert, ‘Early Sino-European contacts and the birth of the modern concept of religion’, in Dirk Kuhlmann, Barbara Hoster and Zbigniew Wesolowski, *Rooted in hope: China – religion – Christianity. Festschrift in honor of Roman Malek S.V.D.* (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 3–27; Ernst Feil, ‘From the classical *religio* to the modern *religion*. Elements of a transformation between 1550 and 1650’, in Michel Despland and Gérard Vallée, *Religion in history. The word, the idea, the reality* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992), pp. 32–56; Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The meaning and end of religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1963); Carmen Bernard and Serge Gruzinski, *De l’idolâtrie. Une archéologie des sciences religieuses* (Paris, Seuil, 1988); Henri Krop, ‘From religion in the singular to religions in the plural. 1700, a faultline in the conceptual history of religion’, in Jo Spaans and Jetze Touber (eds.), *Enlightened religion. From confessional churches to polite piety in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 21–59.
- 46 John Hedley Brooke, *Science and religion. Some historical perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- 47 Standaert, ‘Early Sino-European contacts’, p. 3.
- 48 Walter H. Capps, *Religious studies. The making of a discipline* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).
- 49 Colin Campbell, *Towards a sociology of irreligion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1971 (reprint 2013)); Standaert, ‘Early Sino-European contacts’, p. 5.

Of course, this changed once Europeans began to engage in continuous interactions with people of other belief systems, especially from the sixteenth century onwards. Over time, this process of interaction fundamentally altered the meaning of the term religion. As Standaert argues, the contemporary discussion about religion took off especially after missionaries began to encounter Chinese cultures and their traditions of Buddhism, Taoism and, most notably, Confucianism. All of a sudden, a differentiation between ‘true religion’ and ‘false religion’ was necessary.<sup>50</sup> Various examples in Dutch print about China show how early modern Europeans struggled, both with the fundamental change in meaning of the term religion, and with the introduction of the concept of non-religion.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, it would at least take another century and the interference of several high-profile thinkers, before European intellectuals would reach some sort of consensus about religious terminology.

This study adopts a rather broad and loose conceptualisation of religion, which includes many subjects reasonably relatable. After all, for all their complexities, the seventeenth-century discussions about ‘religion’ were quite clearly part of an ontological spectrum on which present-day conceptions of religion and philosophy existed side by side. So, ‘religion’ is here taken to refer to the variety of behaviours and practises which relate people to the transcendental and supernatural. At the same time, this study expressly attach religion to everything that can be understood as belonging to ‘philosophy’, which is to say: that which concerns universal notions about existence, knowledge, values, reason, and mind.<sup>52</sup> In practice, when it comes to the discussion of Chinese religion and philosophy, the printed works examined brings these two subjects together.

This study is divided into five chapters, arranged along the lines of chronology and publication type. Due to a fruitful coincidence, the types of printed

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50 Standaert, ‘Early Sino-European contacts’, p. 6; Daniel Barbu, ‘Idolatry and the history of religions’, *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, 82.2 (2016), pp. 537–570.

51 In 1596 Jan Huygen van Linschoten refers to the Chinese system of beliefs as ‘religion and ceremonies’, Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Itinerario, voyage ofte schipvaert naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien 1579–1592* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1596), p. 30 (USTC 423615). Juan Gonzáles de Mendoza makes use of the term ‘Chinese gods’, while 70 years later, Johan Nieuhof uses both ‘religions’ plural as well as ‘philosophy’. Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reyno de la China* (Rome: Bartholomeus Grassi, 1585) (USTC 342999); Johan Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665).

52 It is also of importance that some scholars, chief among them Jonathan Israel, have argued that reason and morality became increasingly separate from religion during the later seventeenth century.

works studied: books; learned journals; and newspapers; and periodicals, emerged roughly in chronological order, which not only facilitates the analysis but the narrative as well.

Accordingly, the first and second chapters concern the beginning of a period of uninterrupted contacts between China and Europe at the end of the sixteenth century. During the First Global Age (c. 1500–1800), Europe's relationship with China increasingly intensified. Travelogues and reports from Jesuit missionaries and merchants that documented these growing intercultural contacts were frequently published in the Dutch Republic from the end of the sixteenth century onwards. They were an attractive commodity for printers and publishers, finding an ever-growing public of readers due to the increasing rate of literacy and demand for exotic subjects. Books on China revealed many natural, geographical, and cultural phenomena, chief among them the religion and philosophy of the Chinese. These descriptions changed considerably over the course of the seventeenth century; while early travellers described the Chinese as idolaters and devil-worshippers, by the end of the century knowledge about China's beliefs reached its early modern apogee with the publication of the first Latin translation of the writings of Confucius.

By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Confucius had become the central figure in European interactions with China. Missionaries of the Society of Jesus translated the Confucian Books, which were published in Paris in 1687 as *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. This book soon became the primary intermediary for European intercultural contacts with the Middle Kingdom. The third chapter, 'the vernacular and Latin translations of Confucius', discusses how Confucius was represented in print between 1675 and 1700 and to what extent the involvement of Dutch printers and publishers, authors and translators shaped the portrayal of Confucianism as a moral teaching that was essentially compatible with Christianity. The late seventeenth-century dissemination of Confucius was a varied and global project, demonstrated by the Dutch involvement. This chapter also considers transtextual processes related to translation and how these facilitated and influenced different readings and interpretations of Confucius's teachings. Significantly, the first printed vernacular translation was published in Dutch in Batavia in 1675. Its writer, Pieter van Hoorn, turned to Confucius for instructions on how to live a virtuous life and, while the small booklet may have had little clout beyond Batavia, it nevertheless demonstrates how Dutch contacts with China may have changed the manner in which readers related to Chinese religion and philosophy. This chapter furthermore discusses the afterlife of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* through two partial translations in French, published in Amsterdam and Paris in 1688. This discussion illuminates how Confucius, through the Jesuit translation of

his works, became a subject employed, and sometimes exploited, in furthering the cultural and economic causes of author, printer, and publisher.

The *nachleben* of Confucius and *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* is further examined in the fourth chapter, 'Confucius in Dutch-made learned journals'. The impact of the Jesuit translation came primarily about through its discussion in erudite periodicals, rather than through any dissemination of the work itself, which was neither reprinted nor translated. Yet the publication of numerous reviews suggests that the book nevertheless had a considerable impact on the learned European world. Indeed, it was the only book published in 1687 that was discussed in every major learned journal. The Republic of Letters became increasingly preoccupied with China during the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and the broadly disseminated journals brought the Middle Kingdom truly to the fore as a learned phenomenon as they focused heavily on the religious and philosophical consequences of the intercultural interactions between Europe and China.

This chapter investigates how China and Confucius were represented in Dutch-made erudite periodicals and to what extent the involvement of Dutch editors and translators, printers and publishers influenced the discussion of the Middle Kingdom and its religion and philosophy as an intellectual phenomenon. This examination highlights how the country became a complex and transnational subject of debate, in which the periodic press facilitated access to Confucius's teachings by means of its Jesuit translation beyond national, cultural, societal, and linguistic borders. Now for the first time, knowledge that had traditionally been the privilege of a small group of intellectuals was made public, whereby the editor and publisher acted as the mediator of information.

The fifth chapter, 'China in Dutch newspapers', examines the discussion of China and its religion and philosophy in newspapers printed in the Dutch Republic. The chapter focuses on the reports and discussions of Confucius and the Chinese Rites Controversy at the end of the seventeenth century in newspapers and news digests. It sheds light on the representations of a mostly Catholic debate to a European readership through newspapers in French and Dutch produced by Dutch printers and publishers. Reports on China often went beyond informing readers about events proper, instead offering up their own interpretation of occurrences in both Asia and Europe. News was influenced by a variety of considerations, including the source of information, the strategy of the publisher and editor, and the presumed interests of the potential readership. Especially Catholic polemics on Chinese rites in Rome and Paris had a major influence on the missionary efforts of the Jesuits and on representation of China. This chapter, however, reveals that Dutch-made papers in French and Dutch often gave very different accounts of the same event. Whereas reports in

Dutch were mainly concerned with those events that could have an economic, political or military impact on Dutch activities in Asia, French reports increasingly focused on the presumed Catholic interests of their readers and (as such) were rather outspoken in their anti-Jesuit sentiments.

The period of intercultural contacts between China and the Dutch discussed was one of great mutual rapprochement and cultural, economic and intellectual development, leading to perhaps even bigger debates. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Dutch merchants and Jesuit missionaries were still grappling with the only recently discovered religion and philosophy of the Middle Kingdom. Trying to make sense of them and to justify their own goals of trade and mission, VOC and Jesuit travels to China sought to fit the customs and beliefs of China into their own frame of reference. When, over the course of the century, more knowledge reached Europe, representations and interpretations of both China proper and the consequences of the developing intercultural Sino-European contact began to evolve.

In this process, print made information more easily available to an ever-increasing readership clamouring for books, newspapers, journals, and pamphlets discussing China, the Jesuit missionaries, and the Chinese Rites Controversy. Developments in both China and Europe increasingly led to an alienation between the Chinese Emperor and missionaries in his circle on the one hand, and Catholic powers in Rome and Paris on the other. The polemics eventually intensified to such a degree that the attitude towards Confucius and the Jesuit China missionaries at the beginning of the eighteenth century may be succinctly summed up by the title of Johannes Mauritius's, *Afgoden-dienst der Jesuiten in China* ('Heathendom of the Jesuits in China'), published in 1711 by Jacobus Borstius of Amsterdam.<sup>53</sup> Mauritius, a lapsed Dominican who turned into a Reformed merchant, did not mince words when it came to expressing his feelings towards the Jesuit mission in China. He generally condemned them for their idolatry and false pretences: an attitude not uncommon at the turn of the eighteenth century.

The adage 'the first bringer of unwelcome news hath but a losing office', certainly applies here. Over the course of the seventeenth century, any critique of China and Confucius was inevitably firmly directed towards the Jesuits and their representations of the Middle Kingdom and its foremost sage. This research hopes to shed light on those developments in print that turned representations of China's religion and philosophy from quiet appreciation into open hostility.

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53 Joannes Mauritius, *Afgoden-dienst der Jesuiten in China. Waar over sy nog heden beschuldigt worden aan het hof van Romem* (Amsterdam: Jacobus Borstius, 1711).

On a final note, this research uses a variety of printed sources dating from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Quotations of the original sources have been translated into English in the main text, with the original citation in the footnote. Spelling, punctuation, and typography have generally been kept as close as possible to the originals, with the exception of *u*, *v*, *w*, *i*, *j*, *s*, and *t* which have been modernised. I have tried to keep the intrusive use of '*sic*' to a minimum.

## China's Religion and Philosophy in Dutch-Made Books, 1595–1687

In 1513, the Portuguese explorer Jorge Álvares landed on an island in the Pearl River estuary of Guangdong province in south China, signalling the first European interaction with the Middle Kingdom by sea.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the First Global Age (1500–1800), travellers and missionaries continued to arrive on the shores of Ming-dynasty China, setting off an often precarious – yet enduring – system of communication. Many Europeans followed in the pursuit of commerce and conversion; and slowly, the stories they brought back home revealed China to western scrutiny, helped along by these travellers' printed reports which appeared from the early sixteenth century onwards: a 'trickle [that] gradually swelled into a deluge of published materials from presses all over Europe'.<sup>2</sup>

At first, accounts of China were published in southern Europe, since most early travellers hailed from the Iberian Peninsula. The principal theme in these stories was the expansion of Spain and Portugal and authors discussed the Middle Kingdom mainly in terms of trade and conquest.<sup>3</sup> Writers such as João de Barros, Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, Damiao de Gois, and Bernardino de Escalante revealed little of Chinese religion and philosophy.<sup>4</sup> Even the most detailed accounts, by the Spanish Augustinian Martín de Rada (1585) and the Portuguese Dominican Gaspar da Cruz (1569), touched only momentarily on

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- 1 J.M. Braga, *China landfall. Jorge Alvares' voyage to China. A compilation of some relevant materials* (Hong Kong: K. Weiss, 1956), p. 10; John E. Wills, 'Maritime Europe and the Ming', in J.E. Wills (ed.), *China and maritime Europe, 1500–1800. Trade, settlement, diplomacy, and missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 25.
  - 2 Donald F. Lach and Edwin van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe. Sixteenth through eighteenth centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Library Society, 1991), p. 9.
  - 3 Tianze Zhang, *Sino-Portuguese trade from 1514 to 1644. A synthesis of Portuguese and Chinese sources* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), pp. 109–128.
  - 4 João de Barros, *Terceira decada da Asia de Ioam de Barros* (Lisbon, Joam de Barreira, 1563) (USTC 346431); Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da Índia pelos Portugueses* (Lisbon: Iohão da Barreyra & Iohão Aluarez, 1551–1563) (USTC 343294); Damião de Góis, *Crônica do Felicíssimo Rei D. Emanuel* (Lisbon: Francisco Correa, 1566–1567) (USTC 346152); Bernardino de Escalante, *Discurso de la navegacion que los Portugueses hacen a los Reinos y Provincias de Oriente* (Sevilla, 1577) (USTC 336107); Robert Richmond Ellis, 'The Middle Kingdom through Spanish eyes. Depictions of China in the writings of Juan González de Mendoza and Domingo Fernández Navarrete', *Bulletin of Hispanic studies*, 83,6 (2006), pp. 469–480.

the beliefs held by the Chinese. Da Cruz briefly summarised the prospects for Christianity in China, observing that the Chinese apparently did not have a religion. Furthermore, he wrote, they seemed to lack any notion of the Mosaic law.<sup>5</sup> Da Cruz did note however that they worshipped and made large sacrifices to the devil as well as the sun and moon.<sup>6</sup>

The First Global Age intensified Europe's relationships with countries and populations all over the world. Travelogues documenting these newly forged contacts were frequently published in the Dutch Republic from the early decades of the seventeenth century onwards. Books on exotic subjects written in the vernacular soon became popular, making the genre an attractive commodity for publishers.<sup>7</sup> For the first time, these publications unveiled the wonders of non-European countries and cultures through expositions on a variety of subjects such as geography, flora and fauna, politics, and culture. Religion and philosophy soon became subjects worthy of consideration, at first mainly by way of accounts brought back by Jesuit missionaries who praised the religious customs of the Chinese as comparable to those of Christianity.

An increase in available knowledge and changes in culture, politics, economy, and theology considerably influenced descriptions of Chinese religion and philosophy over the course of the seventeenth century. By the end of the century, a number of competing claims demonstrate how high the stakes in discussing the religious and philosophical ideas of the Middle Kingdom had become. On the one hand, China's systems of belief became a potentially hazardous theological subject, whereby the threat of idolatry was a constant obstacle that needed to be negotiated.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, when first-hand accounts were published as books, economic and cultural considerations began to play an increasingly important role as well.

Books and their producers often function as agents of change, and the production and circulation of print has been known to influence intellectual, cultural, and social history. As such, the careful study of particular books and their

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5 This is believed to be the first European travelogue specifically dedicated to China. Shorter accounts on the Middle Kingdom, like chapters in João de Barros's *Terceira década da Asia*, or letters of several Portuguese smugglers about their experiences in China had been printed in Europe during the two decades leading up to Da Cruz's treatise. Gaspar da Cruz, *Tractado em que se cõtam muito por estêso ab cousas da China* (Lisbon: Andrés de Burgos, 1569) (USTC 346100). See also: Boxer, *South China in the sixteenth century*.

6 Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe* III, vol. 3–4, p. 1649.

7 R.A. Houston, *Literacy in early modern Europe, 1500–1800* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1–11.

8 Lynn Hunt, Margaret C. Jacob, and W.W. Mijnhardt, *The book that changed Europe. Picart & Bernard's 'Religious ceremonies of the world'* (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2010), pp. 211–246.

makers greatly contributes to a broader discussion of early modern intercultural contacts by taking into account those factors influencing the representation and explanation of Chinese religion and philosophy in Dutch-made books. Motives differed according to type and aim of the respective book, together with a variety of concerns related to the cultural, political, religious, or economic background of the author, printer and/or publisher.

This chapter aims to answer a straightforward question: how were Chinese religion and philosophy represented in books printed in the Dutch Republic between 1596 and 1687, and how did publishing strategies conceived by the producers of these books influence their contents? The first and foremost goal is to examine processes of textual and visual transmission that were used to disseminate descriptions and interpretations of Chinese religion and philosophy in Dutch-made books, and how production and participation in the circuit of communication influenced representations and transmission of content. Scrutinising the connection between publishing processes and the resulting product allows us to probe the complexities that arose when traditional Dutch (Christian) frames of reference first encountered Chinese religion and philosophy. The second goal is to explore Dutch interpretations of Chinese religion and philosophy in books and how these interpretations reflected contemporary discussions in the Dutch Republic. It thereby also delves into how the production of print influenced representations and possible interpretations of Chinese religion and philosophy between 1596 and 1687.

The multitude of Dutch books about China that appeared over the course of the seventeenth century were often conceived through carefully considered publishing strategies. The works that resulted from these strategies served, by no means, only the commercial programme of the publisher; indeed, publishing strategies should be considered as sophisticated ideological mediations in which a variety of interventions benefited the demands of both consumer and producer. The last goal of this chapter is to examine three of these strategies: the mercantile approach, the missionary perspective, and that of the publisher as cultural entrepreneur.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, the Dutch image of Chinese religion and philosophy in print underwent considerable changes, many of which can be attributed to economic rules governing cultural consumption. The Dutch preoccupation with the religion and philosophy of the Middle Kingdom proves that interests went far beyond geography and trade alone.<sup>9</sup> Many

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9 Anthony Grafton, *New worlds, ancient texts. The power of tradition and the shock of discovery* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 1–10; Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous possessions. The wonder of the new world* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), pp. 1–25.

grappled with the newly revealed ideas about Asian images of religion.<sup>10</sup> They struggled to make sense of them and incorporated them in their own worldview that was based on biblical revelation and chronology. Some fundamental developments emerging from the new intercultural contacts would sometimes confirm, and other times contest, traditional notions of the Eurocentric world and the seemingly strange communities beyond. Printed media, as we will see, materialised the manner in which the religious and philosophical ideas about China found a place in the Dutch frame of reference.

## 1 Early Contacts between China and the Dutch Republic

When Dutch merchants were first confronted with Chinese religion and philosophy during the last years of the sixteenth century, they described these practices as 'the most benighted kind of idolatry'.<sup>11</sup> They noted the apparent worship of the devil; and yet, travellers also saw parallels between the Asia and West, remarking that the Chinese believed in the existence of a supreme being who had created all things. This seeming contradiction was partly the result of a mercantile perspective: the idolatry of the Chinese was not condemned outright as it served to justify Dutch commercial activities in Asia.

By describing Chinese religion and philosophy in terms of idol-worship, early Dutch travellers and their publishers presented an ambiguous image of the Chinese belief system: in the descriptions, we encounter merchants eager for profit and therefore willing to turn a blind eye to local heresies, as well as Christians searching for frameworks in which to situate newly encountered worldviews. These economic considerations of cultural consumption and production that the publishers and merchants employed often overlapped with Jesuit missionary motives. Thus, in several textual and visual accounts, this ambiguity came to represent the foreign religion and philosophy of China, resulting in an image of *familiar otherness*, where safe parallels and distinctions could be drawn to meet the expectations of authors, producers, and potential readers.

One of the earliest Dutch accounts on Asia was written by Jan Huygen van Linschoten, a Dutchman who had travelled to the East Indies in the employ

10 John Elliot, *The old world and the new, 1492–1650* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 1–23.

11 Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe* III, vol. 3–4, p. 1648.

of the archbishop of Goa.<sup>12</sup> Van Linschoten's *Itinerario. Voyage ofte schipvaert* was published in 1596 in Amsterdam by Cornelis Claesz and was illustrated with numerous maps and prints.<sup>13</sup> Known as 'The key to the East', *Itinerario* for the first time provided detailed maps of routes to the East Indies; while in Goa, Van Linschoten had meticulously copied charts acquired from the secret archives of the Portuguese. Crucially, these maps also contained nautical data such as the location of islands and sandbanks, currents and depths: all of vital importance for a safe navigation. At last, the greatly coveted passage to the East Indies, together with the sea routes between different Asiatic ports, were within reach of Europeans other than the Portuguese. This information proved fundamental to the establishment of the *Dutch East India Company* (VOC) and, consequently, to Dutch East Asian trading and colonisation.<sup>14</sup>

*Itinerario* became an immediate success with reprints in 1605, 1614, 1623, 1644 and 1663. Johan Wolfe of London published the first English edition in 1605, soon followed by French, Latin, and German translations.<sup>15</sup> While the title page to *Itinerario* proudly displays Jan Huygen van Linschoten's name in a large gothic typeface, the book as we know it would never have existed without its publisher Cornelis Claesz. At that time Claesz was by far the most important producer of books in the Dutch Republic.<sup>16</sup> His production consisted of at least 300 titles: almost as much as all of the surviving production of his contemporaries together.<sup>17</sup> Claesz's firm stood at the centre of an industry that had become increasingly important during the second half of the sixteenth century. In Amsterdam around 1550, on average *one* publisher was active in any given year. Only 50 years later this number had increased twenty-fold.<sup>18</sup> Within this rapidly changing landscape of entrepreneurs, Cornelis Claesz's long and

12 Ernst van den Boogaart, *Civil and corrupt Asia. Image and text in the Itinerario and the Icones of Jan Huygen van Linschoten* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Roelof van Gelder and Jan Parmentier (eds.), *Souffrir pour parvenir. De wereld van Jan Huygen van Linschoten* (Haarlem: Balans, 1998).

13 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world*, pp. 95–98.

14 Robert Parthesius, *Dutch ships in tropical waters. The development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) shipping network in Asia 1595–1660* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), pp. 31–50.

15 A. Payne, 'Hakluyt's London. Discovery and overseas trade', in Claire Jowitt (ed.), *Richard Hakluyt and travel writing in early modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 13–24.

16 Claartje Rasterhoff, 'Carrière en concurrentie in een culturele sector. De Amsterdamse boekhandel, 1580–1800', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 27.2 (2012), pp. 162–179; Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world*, pp. 27–35.

17 Paul Dijkstra, 'De cost en de baet. Uitgeven en drukken in Amsterdam rond 1600', in J.W.J. Burgers etc. (eds.), *Gedrukt in Holland*, 26 (1994), pp. 217–234; C.P. Burger, 'De Amsterdamsche uitgever Cornelis Claesz (1578–1609)', *De Gulden Passer*, 9 (1931), pp. 59–68.

18 Dijkstra, 'De cost en de baet', p. 221.

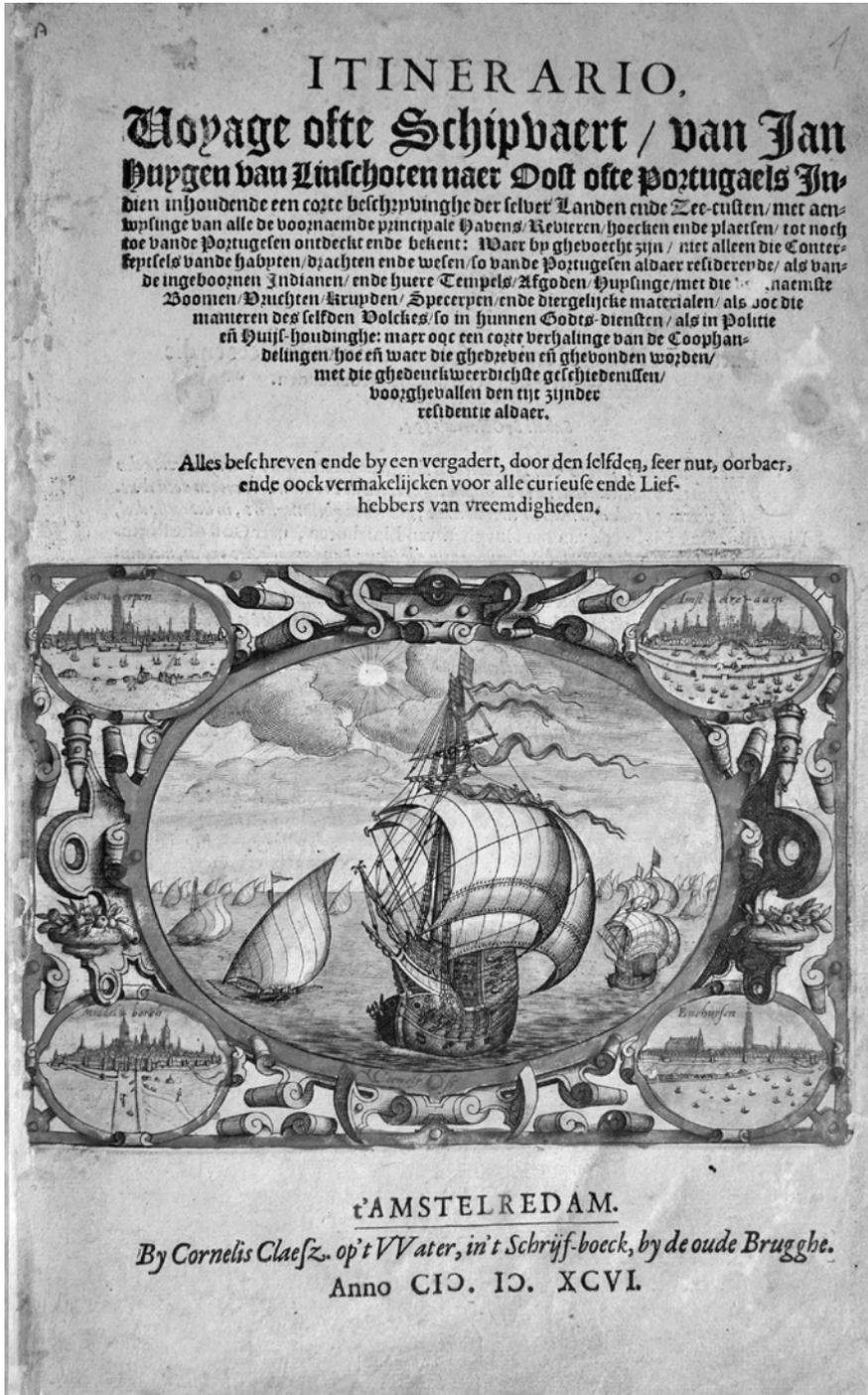


FIGURE 3 Title page of Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Itinerario* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1596) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (OM 63-1535)

productive career made him one of the most influential Dutch publishers of the early seventeenth century.<sup>19</sup>

From his bookshop *In'Schrijfboek op't Water by de oude Brugghe* ('Writing Book on the Water, by the Old Bridge'), Cornelis Claesz sold a rich stock of maritime travel accounts, seamen's guides, cartographic manuals, and atlases concerning all known areas of the world. The shop served as a meeting place for those interested in the foreign world: navigators and sailors, but also traders and investors. In these early years of Dutch commercial activities in the East Indies, Claesz performed a fundamental and propulsive role in the launching of Dutch overseas trade. His books, including *Itinerario* and two accounts of the *Eerste Schipvaart* ('First [Dutch] Expedition') helped to promote the *Voorcompagnie* ('pre-company') between 1594 and 1602, and the establishment of the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* or VOC ('Dutch East India Company') in 1602.

Claesz managed to reach a publication agreement with Van Linschoten on 14 March 1594; in this capacity, the publisher would play an important role in the creation of *Itinerario*. They had met through Berend ten Broeke, or Paludanus by his Latin name. Paludanus is primarily known for his cabinet of curiosities, which attracted visitors from all over Europe. Indeed, Van Linschoten appears twice in the cabinet's guest book. With his deep interest in the world beyond Europe, Paludanus was probably the first to recognize the potential of the notes and drawings Van Linschoten made during his extended stay in Asia. He introduced publisher and author, after which he would go on to write the annotations to *Itinerario*, as well as the African part of Van Linschoten's *Beschryvinghe van de gantsche Custe van Guinea* ('Description of the coast of Guinea'). With the publication set in motion, Van Linschoten requested a privilege from the States General in March 1596 for the 'pascarte met het verhael van de zeevaart naer het Coninckrijk van China', which was granted the following year.<sup>20</sup>

The work was published in four volumes, each with its own title, title page, pagination, and dedication. The first is the eponymous *Itinerario*: Van Linschoten's personal history of the journey from Lisbon to Goa, followed by a more general overview of Asia with descriptions of China and Japan. The

19 Hubert Meeus, 'Jan Moretus en de Noordnederlandse boekhandel, 1590–1610', *De Gulden passer*, 74 (1996), pp. 343–376; Bert van Selm, 'Een menighe treffelijcke Boecken. Nederlandse boekhandelscatalogi in het begin van de zeventiende eeuw' (Utrecht: HES Uitgevers, 1987); Bert van Selm, 'Cornelis Claesz's 1605 stock catalogue of Chinese books', *Quaerendo*, 8.4 (1983), pp. 247–259.

20 'Nautical map with the story of the seafaring to the kingdom China', see also Van Selm, 'Cornelis Claesz's 1605 stock catalogue', p. 255.

second part contains an overview of the income of the Spanish king. The third book is called *Reys-gheschrift vande Navigatien der Portugalaysers in Orienten* ('Travel writings on the navigation of the Portuguese in the Orient'). It outlines the Portuguese sea routes to the East, Portuguese territories, and reports of areas where spices grew. The fourth book, *Beschryvinge* ('Description'), supplies information about the west coast of Africa and the Americas, written by Paludanus as Van Linschoten had never travelled to these areas. The four books – although of different subjects – were often bound in a single volume. At the turn of the seventeenth century, it was usual practise for customers to purchase a bundle of loose printed leaves, having them bound to her own wishes by a separate craftsman.

With the work becoming a truly monumental undertaking, Claesz recognised the importance of including fine engravings. To this end, he tasked master engravers Joannes and Baptista van Doetecum to supply Van Linschoten's account with illustrations and maps. This resulted in thirty prints and six topographic images. Only one image directly portrays religion and philosophy. This engraving assembles the 'horrible image of the Indian idols' and 'Mesquita, or the temple of the Machometic Indians', depicting a Hindu temple and a mosque on the west coast of India.

*Itinerario's* first remarks on China appear in chapter 23 of the first book, entitled 'On the great prosperity, richness, and power of the country of China'.<sup>21</sup> After a lengthy description of the country's geography, he continues with an overview of various Chinese commodities such as silver, gold, and porcelain: 'This porcelain is made inland of a certain earth that is very hard'.<sup>22</sup> The narrative on Chinese religion and philosophy starts with the remark that 'their religion and ceremonies are pagan, without any influence of the law of Mohammed, nor any other sects'.<sup>23</sup> Van Linschoten proceeds further with a description of the Chinese worship of idols:

In many places they pray to the devil, to avoid him hurting them. When any man lies on his death bed, they set a picture of a devil before him,

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21 'Vande groote vruchtbaerheydt, rijcdommen ende sterckte van 't land van China, ende andere notabele dinghen van dien', in Van Linshoten, *Itinerario*, p. 29.

22 'Dese porseleynen worden ghemaect te landewaerts binnen van een seker aerde die seer hert is', in Van Linshoten, *Itinerario*, p. 29.

23 'Haer religie en cerimonien zijn heydens sonder eenighe menginghe vande Wet van Machomet noch eenighe andere secten', in Van Linschoten, *Itinerario*, p. 30. Note how, in the early modern period, the term 'sect' did not have the strong negative connotation found in Western languages today, see: Nicolas Standaert, 'The Jesuits did NOT invent "Confucianism"', *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine*, 16 (1999), pp. 120–121.

with the sun in his left hand, and a poniard in the right hand, and here this devil is painted, with a very fierce look, and therefore they desire the patient to look upon him well, that he may be his friend in the world to come, and that there he may do him no harm.<sup>24</sup>

In concurrence with this passage, it seems to be the general conclusion that the Chinese actually worshipped the devil: the text also seems to imply that they recognised the existence of a supreme being who had created all things. According to Donald Lach and Edwin van Kley, the understanding of Dutch travellers was that the Chinese believed that this God-creator was 'a benign spirit who would not harm anyone'.<sup>25</sup> This Dutch image of a Chinese 'devil', described by Van Linschoten, is probably an amalgamation of several popular Chinese deities, such as the Buddhist Lord of Hell, the Taoist Stove God, or perhaps the Lord of the Soil and the Ground, as their visual representations may have reminded the travellers of their own familiar images of Christian devils. Indeed, the devil makes an appearance in many premodern European descriptions of overseas lands. After all, it was Satan that had purportedly created paganism, which made him crucial in the interpretation of foreign religious practices.<sup>26</sup> According to travellers, the devil was venerated almost everywhere in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, assuming a wide variety of names and shapes.<sup>27</sup>

In their travelogues, the Dutch often described the Chinese religious system as misguided but not necessarily immoral: the most benighted kind of idolatry. The Dutch were eager to slot the newly encountered worldviews into a recognisable frame of reference, in which idolatry figured as the antithesis of Christianity. However, to justify direct trading relations with local populations, this contentious imagery had to be mitigated. The result of this rather uneasy

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24 'Zy aenbidden den duyvel op veel plaetsen, alleenlicken om dat hyse gheen quaet en soude doen. Wanneer yemant leyt op zijn sterven so settense hem voor eenen geschilderden duyvel, met die son in de linckerhandt ende een poengiaert inde rechter handt, ende desen duyvel is afghemaelt, dat hy staet al dreyghende, waerom ghebieden den patient, dat hy hem scherp wil aen sien, om hem vrient te hebben in d'ander werelt, om hy hem aldaer geen quaet en soude doen', in Van Linschoten, *Itinerario*, p. 30.

25 Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe* III, vol. 3–4, p. 1648.

26 Michael Harbsmeier, 'Towards a prehistory of ethnography. Early modern German travel writings as traditions of knowledge', in Han F. Vermeulen and Arturo Alvarez Roldán (eds.), *Fieldwork and footnotes. Studies in the history of European anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 19–38.

27 Jan Platvoet, 'Dutch merchants, missionaries, & academics on African religion, 1594–2000', in Ulrich Berner and Christoph Bochsinger (eds.), *European traditions in the study of religion in Africa* (Wiesbaden: Horrossowitz Verlag, 2004), pp. 75–96.

alliance was an alloy of pragmatism and appreciation, in which both the similarities and the differences between China and the Dutch were represented.

By the turn of the seventeenth century, a fairly standard representation of foreign religion as devil-worship was found in both word and image. This trope is not based on many historical or cultural particularities of the countries described, but rather on stock terms and conventional images taken from European traditions. Especially the descriptions and illustrations of the devil-dragon and its beasts found in the Apocalypse of John were an important source of reference: 'Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads.'<sup>28</sup> This approach had the effect of presenting foreign peoples and their religion as a social and cultural reality that, on the one hand, is very different; yet, on the other, recognisable.<sup>29</sup> Thus, Dutch travellers translated the religions and philosophies they encountered abroad according to familiar biblical apocalyptic terms of monstrosity, ensuring an image of *familiar otherness*.

This image of the Chinese as devil-worshippers is echoed in *Verhael vande Reyse by de Hollandtsche schepen gedaen naer Oost Indien* ('Description of a Voyage made by Certain Ships of Holland into the East Indies'), published in Middelburg by Barent Langenes in 1598.<sup>30</sup> This short account of the *Eerste schipvaart* ('the First [Dutch] Expedition') to the East Indies was based on the private journals of an anonymous crew member. Under the command of Cornelis de Houtman, this fleet had followed Van Linschoten's route via the Cape of Good Hope to Asia. The expedition never reached China, yet the author may have taken note of Chinese religion and philosophy through his contacts with the Chinese population of Bantam. At any rate, he followed the already familiar image of the Chinese as devil-worshippers, demonstrating the influence of processes of transtextual transmission:

They singularly have no religion, they worship the devil, that he may not hurt them, because they have heard that the devil is evil of itself and that God is good and hurts no man, and that is why they believe they do not have to worship God.<sup>31</sup>

28 Revelation 12:3, *The Holy Bible – new international version*; Timothy Kandler Beal, *Religion and its monsters* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 75.

29 Homi K. Bhabha, *The location of culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 70–71.

30 *Verhael vande Reyse by de Hollandtsche Schepen gedaen naer Oost Indien* (Middelburg: Barent Langenes, 1597) (USTC 429765).

31 'Sy en hebben sonderlinghe gheen Religie, dan bidden den Duyvel aen, dat hy haer geen quaet en doe: want zy weten te segghen, dat den Duyvel quaet van hem selven is, ende dat

A similar passage is found in Willem Lodewijcksz's *Historie van Indien* ('History of East India') of 1598, who was also a merchant on the First Expedition:

The Chinese, even though they believe that there is a God who created everything and all out of nothing, they nevertheless worship the devil, which they have painted and depicted in their temples or houses of prayer, sitting upright in darkness, wearing three crowns on its head, with a terrifying face, claws as hands and feet, and with a horrendous face on its stomach.<sup>32</sup>

Early Dutch travellers did not completely condemn this 'benighted' idolatry, in part because they would have been familiar with certain aspects of this type of worship that paralleled their own, such as the burning of incense and candles and the practice of bowing before an image. Yet, in religiously divided Europe, these were the most harshly criticised elements of worship. In this period, idolatry was a loosely defined but, nevertheless, loaded term that could cover anything from Catholic liturgy to the ritual beliefs of the Americas. Such diversity in the meaning of 'idolatry' made it a term that could be applied to a diverse range of peoples and beliefs.<sup>33</sup>

The apparent practice of devil-worship touches upon a recurring theme in the early Dutch descriptions of Chinese religion and philosophy: the adoration and ritual glorification of idols by the Chinese. The existence of such an early trope indicates that the narrative on Chinese religion and philosophy was as much the result of processes of transtextuality as it was the result of any original observation of Chinese rituals. Arguably, transtextuality is the dominant process here: many of these authors had never been to China. Moreover, it cannot be a coincidence that the First Expedition carried a copy of Van Linschoten's *Rysgheschrift* ('Travel Discourse') in manuscript, or that Lodewijcksz's *Historie van Indien* was published by Van Linschoten's publisher Cornelis Claesz.

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Got goet is, die gheen menschen quaet en doet, daer om vehooren zy (so zy meenen) God niet aen te bidden', in *Verhael vande Reyse*, collation B3.

32 'De Chinesen, alhoewel zy ghelooven datter eenen God is die 't al gheschapen, ende uyt niet ghemaekt heeft, soo aenbidden zy nochtans den Duyvel, die zy gheschildert ende afgecontseyt hebben en haren Tempel of bid-huijs sittend om hooghe int Doncker, hebbende drie croonen boven thoof, met een vervaerlijcke tronie clauen aende handen ende voeten met een afgryselijck backhuijs op den buijck', in Willem Lodewijcksz, *D'Eerste boeck. Historie van Indien, waer inne verhaelt is de avontueren die de Hollandsche schepen bejehent zijn* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1598), fl. 43v (USTC 424071).

33 Matthew Dimmock, 'Hakluyt's multiple faiths', in Claire Jowitt and Daniel Carey (eds.), *Richard Hakluyt and travel writing in early modern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 224–226.

In subsequent textual and visual accounts, the same images of idolatry and devil-worship came not only to represent the 'foreign' religion and philosophy of China, but also the manner in which the Dutch related to this notion. Idolatry was both familiar and foreign and, by mitigating this dual perspective, the Dutch found a way to make contact with the Chinese from a mercantile perspective while simultaneously keeping their distance through repeatedly presenting them in the light of unenlightened idolatry. In this period of first contact, works by merchant-travellers like Van Linschoten symbolised and solidified the ambivalence of 'familiar otherness' that often accompanied these encounters

## 2 The Devil in Calicut

Early modern concepts of Chinese religion and philosophy in print came about not only through textual content, but also by way of visual materials. Book illustrations form a frame to the main text that is able to change the reception or interpretation of a text. They consequently function as 'a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also a transaction'.<sup>34</sup> These illustrations are part of the book's paratext; in fact, they may be considered the most conspicuous form of it, rightly called an 'immense continent' of paratextual relevance.<sup>35</sup> Visual materials adorning a book therefore go beyond a purely supplementary function.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, early modern concepts of Chinese religion and philosophy in print came about not only through textual content, but also by way of visual materials. Even the earliest Dutch books on China were adorned with woodcuts or copper engravings that regularly depict deities or religious customs.

34 Gérard Genette, *Paratext. Thresholds of interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1–2.

35 Genette, p. 2; Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique* (Paris, Seuil, 1975), p. 45; Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1939), pp. 366–405.

36 Hester Lees-Jeffries, 'Pictures, places, and spaces. Sidney, Wroth, Wilton House, and the "Songe de Poliphile"', in Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, *Renaissance paratexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 185–203; Edward Hodnett, *Image and text. Studies in the illustration of English literature* (London: Scolar Press, 1986); Rachel Schmidt, *Critical images. The canonisation of Don Quixote through illustrated editions of the eighteenth century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

The 'Devil in Calicut' is among the most persistent illustrations of Chinese religion and philosophy of the early seventeenth century.<sup>37</sup> Its enduring iconography was first visualised in 1510 by the Italian traveller Ludovico di Varthema.<sup>38</sup> In his *Itinerario*, Varthema presented the figure as 'the devil they call *deumo* (dêvan, godling or local deity), ... with a very large mouth, nose, and most terrible eyes.'<sup>39</sup> The figure was associated with Calicut, or modern-day Kozhikode in the Indian state of Kerala. This city was especially important during the early years of the First Global Era, but was superseded at the end of the sixteenth century by ports such as Goa.<sup>40</sup> The iconography of this devil was conceived after the earliest contacts with the hitherto unknown religion of Asia. Because it is at least partly an invention, the 'Devil' provides insight into how both visual and textual representations of Chinese religion and philosophy later evolved within a Dutch context.

The creation of many early modern book illustrations generally follows the same intertextual trajectory as the text they accompany. Considering the Devil in Calicut, its illustrations primarily represent an interpretation and representation of other textual and visual narratives. The iconographic elements can be linked to textual and visual narratives from its earliest inception, and over the course of the seventeenth century, various producers of print would 'reinvent' the Devil to suit their own publishing strategies. As such, the image of the devil stands in juxtaposition to other texts and images, in which each text or image influences the interpretation of the other. The relationship between images and 'the modi of their transformation from one into another' is generally known among scholars as 'intervisuality', 'interpictorality', 'intericonicity' or simply as 'intertextuality of images', whereby an illustration represents an interpretation and representation of other textual or visual narratives.<sup>41</sup>

37 Jennifer Spinks, 'The southern Indian "Devil in Calicut" in early modern northern Europe. Images, texts and objects in motion', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 8 (2014), p. 16.

38 Sam Miller, *A strange kind of paradise. India through foreign eyes* (London: Vintage Books, 2014), p. 153.

39 Ludovico di Varthema, *The travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, trans. John Winter Jones and George Percy Badger (London: Hakluyt Society, 1863), pp. 136–138.

40 Spinks, 'The southern Indian "Devil in Calicut"', p. 16.

41 E.Ch. Gamer, 'Configurations of emptiness. Intericonic blanks in Louis Lawler's "A movie without the picture" and Hiroshi Sugimoto's "Theaters"', in C. Taban (ed.), *Meta- and inter-images in contemporary visual art and culture* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), pp. 114–131; V. von Rosen, 'Interpikturalität', in *Metzler Lexikon Kunstwissenschaft. Ideen, Methoden, Begriffe* (Stuttgart and Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 2011), pp. 208b–211-a; W. Werner, "'What does the picture say?' Reading the intertextuality of visual images', *International Journal of Social Education*, 19,1 (2004), pp. 64–77.



FIGURE 4 Woodcut of the 'Devil in Calicut' by Jörg Breu, in Lodovico di Varthema, *Die Ritterlich und lobwirdig Rays* (Augsburg: Hans Miller 1515) Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München (Rar. 894)



FIGURE 5 Woodcut of a statue of a temple deity near Calicut by Jörg Breu, in Lodovico di Varthema, *Die Ritterlich und lobwirdig Rays* (Augsburg: Hans Miller 1515) Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München (Rar. 894)

Processes of production were essential in this process of intervisuality and transtextuality, as elements of context and reference were generally provided by the producers of text and image in print. Regarding the narrative on religion and philosophy, the illustrators, engravers, printers, and publishers involved in the decoration of books on China were the ones who made interpretative and allusive decisions.<sup>42</sup> These decisions had an impact (either intentional or accidental) on the reception of both text and image. In this process, the intentions of the publisher were often decisive.

We have seen how Cornelis Claesz influenced the overall content and form of Van Linschoten's *Itinerario*. The same goes for the illustrations. The *Itinerario* is adorned with a great number of engravings, illustrating everything from landscapes and cities, to animals, plants, and cultural practices of the peoples of Asia. Interestingly, Claesz chose not to include any illustration of the religious practices of the Chinese, yet he does include a textual description. A visualisation of a supposed Chinese deity *is* found in Willem Lodewijcksz's *Historie van Indien*, which was also published by Claesz. This illustration is relatively simple and depicts two figures kneeling before a devilish god wearing a crown and with a face on its stomach. This iconography of the deity depicted in Lodewijcksz is almost exactly the same, triple-crown and face on stomach, as the sixteenth-century Devil in Calicut.

A similar illustration is found in *Itinerario*, although the idol is not Chinese but forms part of an illustration of the 'fearsome image of *Indian* idols found on every corner in the road to which they sacrifice'.<sup>43</sup> A complex outdoor scene shows a Hindu temple and a mosque. A devilish idol is depicted on the left. In *Much maligned monsters* (1977), Partha Mitter connects the image of this devil with Van Linschoten's visit to the island of Salsette on the west coast of India. There in a village, he came upon:

A big church of stone, wherein we entered, and found nothing in it but a great table that hung in the middle of the church, with the image [of a pagoda], painted therein so misshaped and deformed, that more monstrous could not have been fashioned, for it had many horns, and long teeth that hung out of his mouth down to his chin, and beneath his navel and belly, it had another such like face, with many horns and intestines.

42 Sonja Drimmer, *The art of allusion. Illuminators and the making of English literature, 1403–1476* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), pp. 1–20.

43 'Scrickelicke beldenise der Indiaensche affgoden gestelt of alle hoecken van de weegen welcke sij haer offerhande doen en seer de voetelicken aenbidden van haer papen "Bramenes"', in Van Linschoten, *Itinerario*, p. 66a.

Upon the head thereof stood a triple-crowned mitre, not much unlike the Pope's triple crown, so that in effect it seemed to be a monster, such as are described in the apocalypse.<sup>44</sup>

Printmakers Johannes van Doetecum and his sons Baptista and Joannes were responsible for *Itinerario's* engravings, which were supposedly based on Van Linschoten's own drawings.<sup>45</sup> The Van Doetecums were also asked by Claesz to produce the illustrations for *Historie van Indien*, which may explain the similar depictions of idols as mentioned above. The Devil in Calicut is in this text present as 'the devil', who was worshipped in 'the Temple or Chapel of the Chinese'.<sup>46</sup> The image of a supposed *Asian* idol was consequently shown as an *Indian* as well as a *Chinese* God. While Claesz's intervisual decision may seem innocuous enough, the meaning of the illustration changes when we consider the decades-long trajectory of the iconography. Until the 1640s, other printers and publishers also used the illustration of 'the Devil in Calicut' to depict a Chinese deity; significantly, this intervention had the effect of changing the meaning of the former and distorting the written descriptions of the latter.

In Europe this devil had by the end of the sixteenth century already enjoyed a long history. Considering the persistent history in the iconography of Indian religion and idolatry, it is surprising that the same figure is found in *Historie van Indien* to depict a god worshipped in a Chinese (and not Indian) temple. In fact, Lodewijcksz dedicated two chapters to the Chinese way of living, which included their religion and domestic life.<sup>47</sup> In particular, the description of Chinese religion explicitly addresses 'the devil' and how the Chinese venerated this figure in a temple 'or house of prayer':

The devil, which they have painted and depicted in their temple or praying-house, sitting upright in darkness, wearing three crowns on its

44 'In't eynde quamen in een dorp, daer stont een groote steene kerck, al waer wy in gingen, daer wy anders niet en saghen dan een geschildert tafereel, 't welc hinck in't midden vande kercke, van soo leelijcken figure, datment niet leelijcker noch mismacteer en konst versieren, want hadde veel hoornen ende langhe tanden, die hem uyt de mont over de kin heen quamen, ende onder den navel aenden buijc een dierglijcke aensicht met veel hoornen ende darmen, ende hadde eenen myter op't hoofd, die niet seer ongelijck en was eenen drie ghecroonden pausen hoedt; in somma scheen een monster uyt den Apoclipse te wesen', in Van Linschoten, *Itinerario*, vol. 2, p. 194.

45 Van den Boogaart, *Civil and corrupt Asia*, p. 25.

46 'Den Duyvel in den Tempel oft Capelle der Chineser', in Lodewijcksz, *Historie van Indien*, fl. 40v.

47 'Vande Chinesen, hare handelinghe ende leven' and 'Van de Religie der Chinesen ende hare huijshoudinghe', in Lodewijcksz, *Historie van Indien*, fl. 43–46 (wrongly numbered).



head, with a terrifying face, claws for hands and feet and with an horrendous face on its stomach.<sup>48</sup>

Both image and description can be compared to the image of the devil in Van Linschoten's *Itinerario*. Here, the main elements of iconography, the three-tiered crown and the monstrous face at the devil's groin, are (again) easily recognisable.

The incorporation of two identical illustrations and descriptions in two different contexts, *Itinerario* and *Historie van Indien*, demonstrates that the inclusion of the Devil in Calicut was a deliberate decision made by the publisher.<sup>49</sup> Cornelis Claesz's mitigation of the image of the Devil in Calicut probably happened in cooperation with the engravers Van Doetecum, since they worked on both publications. The devil even makes an additional appearance on the final plate of the book, on one of the 'non-European coins', together with a coin portraying an elephant and carriage.

Cornelis Claesz and the Van Doetecums may have been introduced to the Devil in Calicut in a translation of Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses* (1560). This work was published in a Dutch translation under the title *Het wonderlijke Schadt-Boeck* in Dordrecht in 1592.<sup>50</sup> Claesz must have known this text, as he published an unillustrated edition in 1596.<sup>51</sup> The French humanist Boaistuau had brought the Devil to new audiences in the second half of the sixteenth century. A woodcut illustrating the first chapter of his *Histoires* shows a dramatic image of an enthroned Devil in Calicut, along with a lament about the 'tyrannous reign' of the devil.<sup>52</sup> Boaistuau was responsible for adding certain iconographic elements, such as the monstrous face at the devil's groin. According to Jennifer Spinks, this addition can be traced to the rise in humanist debates about pagan oracles around the middle of the sixteenth century, 'and their (contested) demonic qualities, which included a capacity to speak

48 'Den Duyvel, die zy gheschildert ende afgeconterfeyt hebben in haren Tempel oft bidhuijs, sittende om hooghe int doncker, hebbende drie croonen boven thooft, met een vervaerlijcke tronie, clauwen aende handen ende voeten, met een afgryselijck backhuijs op den buijck', in Lodewijcksz, *Historie van Indien*, fl. 43a.

49 A real identification of the 'Devil of Calicut' cannot be made, but it is likely based in some respects upon Narasimha, the 'man-lion avatar of Vishnu', or perhaps Kali 'the exacter of justice and punishment, with protruding teeth and flaming hair' or even other Indian deities.

50 Pierre Boaistuau, *Het wonderlijke Schadt-Boeck der historien* (Dordrecht: Jasper Troyen and Peeter Verhaghen, 1592) (USTC 423094).

51 Pierre Boaistuau, *Het wonderlijke schadt-boeck der historien* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1596) (USTC 423616).

52 Spinks, 'The southern Indian "Devil in Calicut"', p. 27–28.



FIGURE 8 'The Devil in Calicut' in Pierre Boaistuau, *Het wonderlijcke schadt-boeck der historien* (Dordrecht, 1592) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (970 E 8)

from the lower half of the body'.<sup>53</sup> The now fully-formed image of the Devil in Calicut was subsequently used by Cornelis Claesz to illustrate an Indian deity, after which the same iconography was duplicated to depict a god venerated by the Chinese.

Cornelis Claesz was not the only publisher to employ the Devil in Calicut to illustrate a Chinese God. The image also appears in Theodor De Bry's iconic *India Orientalis*. This engraving depicts idolatry as supposedly practised by the Chinese, whereby the accompanying text echoes the earliest descriptions found in Van Linschoten and Lodewijcksz.<sup>54</sup> The devil appears on various plates of *India Orientalis*. He takes part in a religious procession: 'In the kingdom of Narsingha there is a great pagoda or idol, which is held in very great honour and on all holy days is paraded around on a large carriage pulled by three or four elephants.'<sup>55</sup> The devil is also found in De Bry's reproduction of

53 Spinks, 'The southern Indian "Devil in Calicut"', p. 29.

54 Johann Theodor De Bry and Johann Israel de Bry, *India Orientalis* (12 vols, Frankfurt: De Bry, 1597–1630), vol. 2, pl. 18 (USTC 2039128).

55 'In regno Narsingae ad littus Choromandel Pagodes longe preciosissimus diuitisque auctissimus est, quem populi deuotissime venerantur susceptis peregrinationibus pene infinitis, siunt ibi annuatim processiones, dedicationes & festa innumera. Habent curram tantae molis, ut à quatuor Elephantis vix trahatur', in De Bry, *India Orientalis*, vol. 2, pl. 22.



FIGURE 9 *A juggernaut and 'the Devil in Calicut', in Johann Theodor de Bry, India Orientalis (Frankfurt: Theodor de Bry and Johann Israel de Bry, 1599) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (OF 63-745(2))*

Van Linschoten's Hindu temple/mosque scene. Here, it offers a more detailed narrative, describing many of the visual elements long present in the devil's iconography.<sup>56</sup>

This image of the devil also made an appearance in other art forms. According to Barbara Uppenkamp, it was, among others, this engraving from *India Orientalis* that inspired Peter Paul Rubens when he painted his *The Miracles of Saint Francis Xavier* of 1617/1618.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, a horned bust in the niche on the

56 De Bry, *India Orientalis*, p. 132.

57 Barbara Uppenkamp, "Indian" motifs in Peter Paul Rubens's *The martyrdom of saint Thomas* and *The miracles of saint Francis Xavier*, in Thijs Weststeijn, Eric Jorkink and Frits Scholten (eds.), *Netherlands Yearbook of History of Art*, 66 (2016), pp. 111–139. Uppenkamp argues that the journals of the Officina Plantiniana in Antwerp contain a list of Rubens's

left side of the painting bears a striking resemblance to the Devil in Calicut with its three-tiered crown. In regards to iconography, Rubens employed the devil to emphasise 'true faith's' victory over foreign idolatry. Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier raises his left hand to the personification of *Fides Catholica*, who is seated on a bank of clouds. The position of Xavier's right hand guides the eye towards an effigy of the Devil in Calicut, which is in the process of being destroyed by God's intervention.

In 1665, Gillis Joosten Saeghman of Amsterdam issued a rearranged reprint of Van Linschoten's *Itinerario* entitled, *Journal van de derthien-jarighe reyse* ('Journal of the Thirteen-year Journey').<sup>58</sup> Among the revised illustrations, the familiar figure of the Devil in Calicut remained, proving the longevity of this representation of a Chinese deity from its first appearance in a Dutch publication at the end of the sixteenth century onwards. The creature is depicted in a woodcut, illustrating the religious practices of the Chinese; not surprisingly, the accompanying text closely resembles the original description of China by Van Linschoten: 'Their religion and ceremonies are heathen ... they worship the devil in this way in many places, so that he would do them no harm.'<sup>59</sup> It is interesting to note here that, in Saeghman's edition of Van Linschoten's travelogue, published 73 years after the first Dutch illustration of the Devil in Calicut, the iconography of the Devil remained essentially unchanged.<sup>60</sup>

The visual and textual trajectory of the Devil in Calicut from Indian deity to Chinese idol demonstrates that the producer developed and changed the interpretation of the image according to the presumed wishes of his intended audience. Subsequently, image and text are in dialogue with one another, while the publisher acts as intermediary. By visually *quoting* the Devil in Calicut,

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book purchases. Among others, he can be presumed to have owned many cartographic works, and he bought De Bry's *India Occidentalis* and *India Orientalis* in October 1613.

58 Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Journal van de derthien-jarighe reyse, te water en te lande, gedaen door Jan Huygen van Linschooten, na Oost-Indien* (Amsterdam: Gillis Joosten Saeghman, 1664).

59 'Hare religie en Ceremonien sijn Heydens ... Sy aenbidden op veel plaetsen aldus den Duyvel, omdat hyse geen quaet soude doen', in Van Linschoten, *Journal van de derthien-jarighe reyse*, p. 32.

60 Illustrations of the Devil in Calicut are also found in Simon de Vries, *d'Uytgelesende wonderen, en bysonderste seldsaemheden eeniger landen en volckeren in Amerika, Asia, en Africa* (Utrecht: Simon de Vries, 1670); João de Acosta, *Historie naturael en morael van de Westersche Indien* (Amsterdam: Jan Evertsz Cloppenburgh, 1624) (USTC 1019658); Lambert van den Bosch, *'t Oude nieuws der ontdeckte weereld* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Jansz Swoll, 1667); Godefridus Carolinus, *Het hedendaagsche heidendom, of beschrijving vanden godtsdienst der heidenen, so als die ... in ... Asia, Africa en enige gewesten van Europa bevonden is* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Ravesteyn, 1661).



FIGURE 10 *A Chinese temple in Bantam, in Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Journael van de derthien-jarighe reyse* (Amsterdam: Gillis Joosten Saeghman, 1665) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (O 60-557(3))*

publishers of the Dutch Republic incorporated borrowed themes, symbols, and compositional elements from other images and texts. For example, the face on the belly and the three-tiered crown were ‘paraphrased’ in a novel way: this produced a new visual meaning of the devil as a Chinese deity.

Such visual quoting could only be recognised by readers and viewers, and by those who produced later copies of the image, if they brought sufficient previous knowledge to the image or text. However, during the last decades of the sixteenth and the early decades of the seventeenth century, very little knowledge about China had reached Europe. This meant that the available information could hardly be verified, thus explaining the prevalence of the (originally Indian) devil as a Chinese deity. As this section has revealed, tracing the images and texts to their origins illuminates how these trajectories and their outcomes were affected by the individual decisions of merchants and missionaries. Moreover, pervasive processes of intervisuality adopted by the publishers also affected representations of Chinese religion and philosophy, as we saw with the transformations of the Devil in Calicut.

### 3 Jesuits and Calvinists on Chinese Religion and Philosophy

In the closing decades of the sixteenth century many travellers to Asia had trading on their minds. However, Christian ambitions of conversion and evangelisation were of equal – if not more – importance in opening up China to Europe. Early travellers to China made little distinction between the country’s different religions and schools of philosophy. While the religious and philosophical landscape of the Middle Kingdom was made up of various beliefs and

denominations, early modern descriptions tended to throw everything they presumed 'religious' together under one umbrella term. This created a relatively positive, but nevertheless simplistic and distorted, image. This changed during the first decades of the seventeenth century, when missionaries of the Society of Jesus began to supply Europe with more detailed accounts of China.

From its founding in 1540, the Society of Jesus emphasised the need for global missions. One of the first truly global organizations, the Jesuits collected and disseminated knowledge from the Americas and Asia, fitting this information in an acceptable European framework. In post-Reformation Europe, the Jesuit mission sought to construct an overarching Catholic identity. In his missionary manual of 1588 *De Procuranda Indorum Salute*, José de Acosta connects the Peruvian society in which he served to the Society's 'sucesos del Japón' and the possible expansion of the mission into the 'región inmensa de la China'. While divided by oceans, these regions were all part of an increasingly growing Jesuit mission. Indeed, by the 1580s Jesuit missionaries were to be found – among other places – in India, China, Japan, Angola, Mozambique, Florida, Peru, and Mexico.

Jesuit interpretations of Chinese religion and philosophy would go on to all but dominate the European image of the same. Their first-hand accounts of the Middle Kingdom were published in Europe and almost completely superseded the travelogues that had come before: it is no coincidence that Jan Huygen van Linschoten was hardly reprinted after 1644 or that Willem Lodewijcksz's *Historie van Indien* saw its last print run in 1617. Due to their broad public circulation and popularity, the Jesuit accounts, and those by non-Jesuit authors that appeared in their wake, are essential for our understanding of early modern perceptions of China as these reports (re)constructed the image of Chinese religion and philosophy during the seventeenth century.<sup>61</sup> During this period, the groundwork was laid for a radically different attitude towards China as a foreign country and towards Christian interaction with different religions.

Founding member of the Society, St. Francis Xavier was the first to try to reach China in 1552.<sup>62</sup> This Navarrese priest led an extensive mission in the Portuguese holdings in Asia and greatly influenced the missionary works in India. He was also the first Christian missionary to travel to Japan, Borneo, and the Moluccas.<sup>63</sup> Xavier developed some of the most influential principles

61 Standaert, 'Early Sino-European contacts', pp. 3–27.

62 Henry Venn (ed.), *The missionary life and labours of Francis Xavier. Taken from his own correspondence* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1862).

63 Anthony E. Clark, *China's saints. Catholic martyrdom during the Qing (1644–1911)* (Bethlehem and Langham: Lehigh University Press, 2011), pp. 27–58.

of Jesuit missionary activity. After being confronted with Buddhist monks in Japan, he realised that in order to spread the word of Christ the locals had to be approached on their own terms. He put on an aristocratic appearance in his dealings with the Japanese *daimyo*, propagating the Christian faith in terms of native customs and rites. Furthermore, based on his debates with Buddhist monks, Xavier advanced the idea that missionaries should be both scholars and scientists.

This accommodation had been a main feature of the Order since its founding: Ignatius of Loyola recommended that in their actions and preaching the missionaries should 'accommodate to the wits and affects' of those they wished to convert. At its most basic level, accommodation, or inculturation, is a missionary policy adapted to local customs, which attempts to integrate social policy and rites in order to aim at making Christianity accessible and appealing to societies that were culturally strong and unlikely to be conquered by force. Although much of Xavier's objectives were expanded upon and transformed, this basic premise of Jesuit missionary policy in China remained the same for almost a century.<sup>64</sup> Xavier's long-held desire to extend his mission into China was never realised: he died from a fever in December 1552 on the islet of Sancian (Shangchuan) just before reaching the mainland. With his death, he left behind a complex legacy and his efforts significantly impressed upon the First Jesuit mission (1552–1773).

Reports on foreign countries, their culture, politics, and religion came to Europe primarily through the circulation of the Jesuit *Litterae Annuae* or 'Annual Letters'.<sup>65</sup> These documents related the progress, trials, and state of the Jesuit mission from 1581 onwards. In China, reports from different residences were collected by the Superior of the mission, after which they were rearranged and sent to the Society's General in Rome. In Europe, these letters were distributed officially and unofficially through translation and publication. The *Litterae Annuae* gave an overview of the political situation in China, and a general review of the progress of the mission followed by the reports from the different residences. The Letters primarily relate religious matters such as the number of converts, pious deeds, persecutions, and the establishment of new residences; serving as reports on the mission's state of affairs.<sup>66</sup>

64 Vermander, *Jesuits and China*.

65 J. Dehergne, 'Les Lettres annuelles des missions jésuites de Chine au temps de Ming (1581–1644)', in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 49 (1980), pp. 379–392; J. Dehergne, 'Lettres annuelles et sources complémentaires des missions jésuites de Chine (suite)', in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 51 (1982), pp. 247–284.

66 Nicolas Standaert, *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in late Ming China. His life and thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp. 74–76.

From the outset, Dutch readers showed interest in the missionary developments abroad. Maarten Donk's *Die vruchten der Ecclesie Christi* ('The Fruits of the Church of Christ') of 1567 included a Letter from Xavier, in which he expressed his wish to travel to China: 'Within six days, six of us wish to travel from Goa to the royal city of Sinardes in China'.<sup>67</sup> According to this letter, the inhabitants of China were 'mighty and sensible people, well-educated and diligent in search of knowledge. Their nobility they consider to come from erudition: he who is wiser and more erudite is all the more noble'.<sup>68</sup> Xavier hoped 'that this nation will receive the Christian faith well' and that God would make his journey successful.<sup>69</sup>

The visitor (or regional manager) of the order, Alessandro Valignano, realised that access to the imperial court would have little chance without a sound grounding in both the language and culture of China. In 1579, Michele Ruggieri (the assistant to the regional manager) was appointed the task of learning Chinese: he was accompanied in this endeavour by Matteo Ricci in 1582.<sup>70</sup> This Italian-born Jesuit proved to be an especially worthy successor of Francis Xavier. Ricci was among the initiators of the second attempt to establish missionary work in China, three decades after Xavier's thwarted first effort. He was the first known European to gain access to the Forbidden City in Beijing, where he introduced European sciences and arts to the imperial court. Ricci engaged in intercultural conversation with Chinese scholars, and at the peak of their influence the Jesuits would become some of the emperor's most trusted and valued advisors.<sup>71</sup> Ricci and Ruggieri build upon Xavier's missionary method of accommodation. They learned to speak, read and write classical Chinese,

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67 'Binnen ses dagen drie van ons luyden willen reysen van Goa nae die coninclijske stad Sindardes lants China', in Maarten Donk, *Die vruchten der Ecclesie Christi* (Leiden: Diederick Gerridts Horst, 1567).

68 'Cloecke en verstandige menschen, seer geleert en neerstich tot aller geleertheydt. Haer eedeldom achte sy van geleertheydt die alder wijste en geleertste is dieder edelste', in Donk, *Die Vruchten*, p. 12.

69 'Dat dit volck het Christen geloof wel ontfangen sal', in Donk, *Die Vruchten*, p. 12.

70 Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City. Matteo Ricci, 1552–1610* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Mary Laven, *Mission to China. Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit encounter with the East* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010); Fontana, *Matteo Ricci*; Spence, *The memory palace of Matteo Ricci*.

71 According to David E. Mungello, from 1552 to 1800, a total of 920 Jesuits participated in the China mission, of whom 314 were Portuguese, and 130 came from France. This number probably only concerns European Jesuits, as the mission also included Italians, Spaniards, Poles, Belgians, and Germans, see David E. Mungello, *The great encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 37.

and were appreciative of the culture in general. The missionaries were also determined to adapt to the religious characteristics of the Chinese. Ruggieri summed it up succinctly: 'In short, we have become Chinese in order to win China for Christ'.<sup>72</sup>

Unlike the earliest European travellers, the Jesuit missionaries in China probed deeper into Chinese religion and soon identified three 'sects': the Confucians, the Buddhists, and the Taoists.<sup>73</sup> Despite Ruggieri's initial efforts at adapting Christianity to the common people by focusing on elements of Buddhism and Taoism, the Jesuits quickly preferred the teachings of Confucius or, as they called its followers, 'the sect of the Literati'.<sup>74</sup> Since the values contained in the teachings of Confucius were strongly intertwined with Chinese imperial culture, Ricci chose to use existing Confucian concepts to explain Christianity. He started to wear the silk garments of the literati, as he was convinced that to convert top-down the preaching of Christianity should be fitted into a broader spectrum of Confucian and imperial practises. Great effort was made to study Confucian literature and other aspects of Chinese culture: a year after arriving in China, Ricci had finished his annotation of the Four Books of Confucius

72 Letter of 7 February 1587, in P. Tacchi Venturi, *Opere Storiche de P. Matteo Ricci S.J.* (2 vols., Rome: Macerata, 1913), p. 416.

73 Timothy Brook, 'Rethinking syncretism. The unity of the Three Teachings and their joint worship in late imperial China', *Journal of Chinese Religion*, 21.1 (1993), pp. 13–44; Chen Hong, 'On Matteo Ricci's interpretations of Chinese culture', *Coolabah*, 16 (2015), pp. 87–100; John Young, *Confucianism and Christianity. The first encounter* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1983), pp. 41–58.

74 Today, scholars have not come to a consensus on the meaning and the extent of the terms 'Confucianism' and 'Confucian'. Strictly speaking, no Chinese equivalent of these terms exists, which are sixteenth-century neologisms by the Jesuits to refer to the 'venerable, all-encompassing tradition of socio-ethical precepts and philosophical norms governing human conduct and social relations in Chinese antiquity', which are presumed to be first expressed by the historical 'Confucius' or Kong Fuzi 孔子. In canonising Confucius and his teachings, Ricci and his companions relied more on missionary requirements than on providing an accurate description of the Confucian *Ru* tradition in its own socio-historical setting. The Chinese never coined a single term to describe the broad spectrum of diversity within the Chinese tenets. They referred to *ruji* (literati family), *rujiao* (literati teachings), *ruixue* (literati learning), or simply to *ru* (literati). The tradition of *ru* existed before Confucius, but the ethical vision of Confucius and his followers have defined and enriched this earlier tradition. Therefore, Confucius is honoured within the Chinese tradition as 'master' (*zi*), 'ancestral teacher' (*zongshi*), 'first teacher' (*zongshi*), and 'great sage' (*zhisheng*). In the absence of more appropriate terms, this study will refer to 'Confucianism' and 'Confucian' as convenient appellations for the literati tradition of *ru* which encompasses a broad spectrum of socio-ethical doctrine which is conventionally traced to the teachings of Kongzi.

(Sishu 四書) into Latin.<sup>75</sup> He furthermore argued that the Chinese had always believed in the one true God and a (re)acquaintance with Christianity was simply completing their faith.

Ricci believed that Confucian sacraments and ceremonies such as honouring Confucius and family ancestors were only part of Chinese *culture* and, as such, did not carry any *religious* significance nor were they in conflict with Christian doctrine. Not everyone agreed. During this period, the foundations were laid for what would later become one of the major ideological problems of Europe: the Chinese Rites Controversy. Dominicans and Franciscans opposed the Jesuit accommodation of the Chinese rites, reporting the issue to church authorities. In 1645 the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) in Rome sided with the detractors based on a brief submitted by the Dominicans. After considering the Jesuits' reply, the *Propaganda Fide* lifted the ban in 1656. However, in November 1704 Clement XI banned the rites again with the decree *Cum Deus optimus*, reinforced by the Papal bull *Ex illa die* in 1715. In 1742, Benedict XIV furthermore emphasises the condemnation of the Chinese rites with his Papal bull *Ex quo singulari*, demanding that missionaries in China took an oath swearing to never raise the subject again. This back-and-forth also came to influence Chinese views of Christian missionaries. In 1721, the Kangxi Emperor 康熙帝 (1661–1722) contested Clement's mandate with a proclamation of his own, banning the Christian mission in China. During the reign of the Yongzheng Emperor 雍正 (1722–1735) persecution of Christians steadily increased, and anti-Christian policies were reinforced.

Ricci set out his accommodative notions in perhaps the single most important work of the early Jesuit mission in China: *Tianzhu Shiyi* 天主實義, or 'True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven' of 1603.<sup>76</sup> In this work, Ricci advanced a simple but radical argument: Confucius knew and worshipped the true god, but this

75 Ana C. Hosne, 'From catechisms to prayer books in the early Jesuit China mission. Tracing the images the Chinese "should and should not venerate" (16th–17th Centuries)', in Antje Flüchter and Rouven Wibster (eds.), *Translating catechisms, Translating cultures. The expansion of Catholicism in the early modern world* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), pp. 311–330.

76 The *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義 [True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven], first edition 1603, *Biblioteca Casanatense*, ms 2136. Second and more widely circulated edition 1607, Hangzhou, found in *Japonica-Sinica* 1, 44. Modern edition Taipei, Xuesheng shuju, 1965. For a modern French-Chinese bilingual edition see Thierry Meynard, *Le sens réel de "Seigneur du Ciel"* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2013). See also Nicolas Standaert, *The fascinating God. A challenge to modern Chinese theology presented by a text on the name of God written by a 17th century Chinese student of theology* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1995).

knowledge and its accompanying practices had been subverted in subsequent ages.<sup>77</sup> He then set out to demonstrate the existence of an omnipotent God, called the Lord of Heaven in Chinese, or *Tianzhu* 天主 in the rhetoric of the Jesuits.<sup>78</sup> The work was not written for a Western audience but for an intended readership of Confucian scholars in China.<sup>79</sup> The 'catechism' was published in 1603 by Ricci's friend and esteemed scholar Feng Yingjing 馮應京.<sup>80</sup>

However, during his lifetime, Ricci's work and policy would not reach Europe. In the last years of his residency in China, the general of the Society, Claudio Acquaviva, asked him to write a history of Christianity in China. Yet, in May 1611, Ricci died in Beijing before the document could be finished. Ricci's methods and motivation were taken up by the Southern Netherlandish Jesuit Nicolas Trigault.<sup>81</sup> In 1612, he was sent back to Europe to accomplish a number

77 Yu Liu, 'Adapting Catholicism to Confucianism. Matteo Ricci's Tianzhu Shiyi', *The European Legacy*, 19.1 (2014), pp. 43–59.

78 Roger Hart, 'Translating the untranslatable. From Cupola to incommensurable worlds', in Lydia H. Liu (ed.), *Tokens of exchange. The problem of translation in global circulations* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 45–73; Qiong Zhang, 'Demystifying Qi. The politics of cultural translation and interpretation in the early Jesuit mission to China', in Liu (ed.), *Tokens of exchange*, pp. 74–106.

79 Howard L. Goodman and Anthony Grafton, 'Ricci, the Chinese, and the toolkits of textualists', *Asia Major*, 3.2 (1991), pp. 95–148; Ana C. Hosne, 'Friendships among literati. Matteo Ricci in late Ming China', *Transcultural Studies*, 1 (2014), pp. 190–214.

80 Jingyi Ji, 'Encounters between Chinese culture and Christianity', PhD thesis, Protestant Theological University Kampen, 2007, pp. 85–108. See also: Matteo Ricci, *On friendship. One hundred maxims for a Chinese prince*, trans. Timothy Billings (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). Feng Yingjin wrote the preface to the Chinese edition of 1601, which was Ricci's first work in Chinese.

81 As delegate of the China Jesuits, Trigault's journey to Europe was also to secure financial backing for the mission, proving that the missionary perspective of the Jesuit also had a distinctly financial component. In recent years, more research has been devoted to the subject of Jesuit finances, yet scholars struggle to reconstruct this important aspect of the missionary efforts in Asia during the early modern period due to the lack of a 'paper trail'. However, the most important sources of income for the Jesuit mission as a whole were state patronage, private benefactors, trade, and land/properties. In the case of China, Portuguese royal and state patronage was one of the most important sources of financial support. Missionaries serving in Beijing received 72 taels, or 2.6856 kilograms of silver. Jesuits in the provinces received less: 50 taels, which was later raised to 60 taels. From 1685 onwards, Jesuits in China received 100 taels from the French state. Yet, Jesuit procurators complained that this stipend covered a mere one-fourth of their expenses. As such, those responsible for Jesuit finances did look for alternatives in the form of patronage from private benefactors. Incentives such as dedications in books, or the naming of a benefactor in the title of a Jesuit college were used to attract big donors. In China, no single private benefactor matched the support of Candida Xu. When in Europe, Philippe Couplet published *Histoire d'une dame chrétienne de la China* in Paris in 1688 to praise her continuous contributions to the mission. The Jesuits also entered

of tasks for the Jesuits in China. These included raising material support for the Jesuit China mission, recruiting missionaries, and procuring certain books that would assist the Jesuits in their intellectual mission among the Chinese literati. Trigault was very successful: he recruited twenty missionaries, gathered a rich library (part of which is still held in the National Library of China in Beijing), and publicised the Jesuit intellectual and missionary endeavour on China. His tour of various cities and his custom of wearing Chinese scholarly clothing was so effective that it attracted the attention of Peter Paul Rubens, who painted and drew Trigault a number of times.

Trigault's greatest achievement, however, was the publication of Ricci's history of Christianity in China. *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* ('On the Christian Mission among the Chinese by the Society of Jesus') was issued by Christopher Mangius of Augsburg in 1615.<sup>82</sup> The book was hugely popular and became a major source of information on China during the declining Ming dynasty. The number of reprints, editions, and translations confirm the importance of the book in shaping European conceptions of China during the seventeenth century. Within ten years of its initial publication, *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* was available in six languages and had enjoyed six print runs. Consequently, in terms of number of readers, the work was

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the silk trade between Macau and Japan to secure further monetary income. This type of trade was not completely forbidden by canon law, in part because the Jesuits argued that this trade was necessary to continue their pious undertakings. However, due to the unstable nature of these three categories of income, the Jesuits also looked at investments in land and properties as a more reliable and long-term strategy. The Jesuit mission in China was forced to use a wide range of tools to finance themselves, especially since Rome's initial provisions did not suffice. Therefore, the publication of books like *De Christiane expeditione apud Sinas* were a means of historical communication and a tool to garner (financial) support for the China mission. See Frederik Vermote, 'Financing Jesuit missions', in Ines G. Zupanov, *The Oxford handbook of the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *Noble patronage and Jesuit missions. Maria Theresia Von Fugger-Wellenburg (1690–1672) and Jesuit missionaries in China and Vietnam* (Rome: Institutum historicum Societatis Iesu, 2006); Michael Cooper, 'The mechanics of the Macao-Nagasaki silk trade', *Monumenta Nipponica*, 27.4 (1972), pp. 426–430; Kato Eiichi, 'The Japanese-Dutch trade in the formative period of the seclusion policy. Particularly on the raw silk trade by the Dutch factory at Hirado, 1620–1640', *Acta Asiatica*, 30 (1976), pp. 34–84; Noël Golvers, *François de Rougemont, S.J. missionary in Ch'ang Shu (Chiangan). A Study of the account book (1674–1676) and the eulogium* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999).

82 Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault, *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* (Augsburg: Christopher Mangius, 1615) (USTC 2029816). For the English translation see: Liam Gallagher, *China in the sixteenth century. The journals of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Random House, 1953).

probably the most influential book on China published in the early seventeenth century.<sup>83</sup>

Trigault was more than the editor of Ricci's book. Rather, he was critically involved, not just by bringing the work to the printer, but also by transforming Ricci's manuscript into a finished product. Trigault translated the original into Latin. He also chose to delete and alter the texts that might discredit the Jesuit mission in China and he made additions and changes to construct a clearer narrative. Given these important contributions, Trigault signed himself as 'author' on the title page: *auctore P. Nicolao Trigavtio Belga, ex eadem Societate* ('authored by Fr. Nicolas Trigault, Belgian, of the same society'). By emphasising his own role on the title page, Trigault brought further fame to the publication; certainly, by the time of later editions and translations, he had become a well-known figure in Europe.

*De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* presents an overview of China during the late Ming Dynasty: its geography, politics, culture, philosophy and religion. It describes the Christian – primarily Jesuit – mission and its inroads into China, and most importantly it articulates the Jesuits' accommodationist approach for planting Christianity on Chinese soil. Chapter 1 of book 1 is entitled 'Concerning the mission to China undertaken by the Society of Jesus'; chapter 2 'Concerning the name, location, and the extent of the Chinese empire'; chapter 3 'The fertility of the products of the Chinese empire'; chapter 4 'Concerning the mechanical arts among the Chinese'; chapter 5 'Concerning the liberal arts, the sciences, and the use of academic degrees among the Chinese'; chapter 6 'The administration of the Chinese commonwealth'; chapter 7 'Concerning certain Chinese customs'; chapter 8 'Concerning dress and other customs and peculiarities', recording life in Ming Dynasty China, describing its geography, products, languages, politics, customs, and laws.

Confucius is first encountered in chapter 5, on 'the liberal arts, the sciences and the use of academic degrees'. He is described in favourable terms as 'the most renowned of all Chinese philosophers.... This great and learned man ... spurred on his people to the people to the pursuit of virtue not less by his own example than by his writings and conferences'. Yet, from a Christian perspective, Confucius remained a pagan, even if he was a virtuous one. Ricci and Trigault chose their words handling this dichotomy carefully and tactically: 'Indeed, if we critically examine [his] actions and sayings as they are recorded

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83 Mungello, *Curious land*, pp. 47–48. For a discussion of the impact of *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* in Asia see Joseph P. McDermott and Peter Burke (eds.), *The books worlds of East Asia and Europe, 1450–1850. Connections and comparisons* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015), pp. 1–64, pp. 327–334.

in history, we shall be forced to admit that he was the equal of the pagan philosophers and superior to most of them'. Confucius was thus compared to esteemed classical thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle, *not* to Jesus Christ. This was further explained by the fact that the Chinese honour Confucius as a moral, and that they did not revere him as a god.<sup>84</sup>

Chapter 9 'Concerning certain rites, superstitious and otherwise' presents ways in which the Chinese, according to Ricci and Trigault, adhere to some rather unchristian observances, such as that they believe certain days and hours to be good or bad, lucky or unlucky, and that they often visit astrologers, diviners and fortune-tellers. However, yet again these statements are prefaced by the assertion that 'one should remember that they have been obscured in pagan darkness for some thousands of years.... Yet through the goodness of God and by their own innate genius, they did have sufficient natural enlightenment to recognize and to admit their unfortunate plight'.

Furthermore, in Chapter 10 'Religious sects among the Chinese', Ricci and Trigault note that 'Of all the pagan sects known to Europe, I know of no people who fell into fewer errors in the early ages of their antiquity than did the Chinese.' Indeed, *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* seems to imply the Chinese are just steps away from all converting to Christianity as 'it is recorded in their writings that they recognized and worshipped one supreme being whom they called the King of Heaven'. This chapter observes the coexistence of three 'sects', that of Confucius ('Literati'), Sciequia ('Buddha', from the Chinese rendering of 'Shakyamuni' 释迦牟尼), and Laucu ('Laozi' or Taoism). Ricci and Trigault elevated the Literati to a level that would make them acceptable to the Christian missionary goals, with Confucius as the enlightened emblem. The Literati should be respected for their belief in the True God, a fact demonstrated by the Jesuits' reading of Chinese texts.

Yet, the followers of Buddha and Laozi should only be despised and pitied, as these were 'the cults of the idols', calling upon all the old connotations of this evaluation. As discussed, in seventeenth century Europe idolatry served as a general condemnation of those who did not worship the biblical God. Ricci's experience with the Buddhism and Taoism had taught him that its followers substituted a created thing for God and this obviously constituted idolatry: 'Thus we have the two sects, each in its own way fashioning a trinity of gods, so that it would seem as if the original parent of falsehood, the father of lies, has not yet put aside his ambitious desire of divine similitude.'

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84 Whether or not the Chinese revered Confucius with *religious* rites became a hotly discussed subject during the Chinese Rites Controversy of the later seventeenth century.

Ricci notes that the Buddhism came from India, when the emperor of China was 'enlightened in a dream or so' in the year 65 CE. However, Ricci believed that the Chinese 'received false importation in place of the truth they were seeking', as 65 CE was also the identical period 'in which the Apostles [Bartholomew in upper India, and Thomas in lower India] were preaching the doctrine of Christ'. The Jesuit found some similarities between Buddhist concepts – such as their doctrine of the transmigration of souls was like that of Pythagoras –, yet condemns the sect and its monks as 'vile and abject'.

The description of Taoism is shorter, but again emphasises the idolatrous nature of their beliefs: 'among their many gods, the devotees of this faith claim that they worship the one lord of heaven, a corporeal being to whom, it would seem, many untoward things are continually happening'. After observing priest in Beijing, Ricci flat-out rejects Taoism as idolatry, wasting few words on the sect as: 'their books recount their ravings, which we would repeat here, were it not beside our purpose to do so'.

Considering its popularity, it is remarkable that no Dutch edition of *De Christiane expeditione apud Sinas* was ever made.<sup>85</sup> This may be related to the fact that China was not a subject with considerable presence in Dutch print during the first decades of the seventeenth century. If we recall, the last edition of Willem Lodewijcksz was printed in Amsterdam in 1617 and, although Van Linschoten was steadily reprinted until 1644, no other publications in Dutch would take China as a major subject until well into the fourth decade of the century.<sup>86</sup> However, this does not necessarily mean there was no Dutch interest in China during these years, perhaps just no interest in texts in the Dutch language.

85 A Dutch translation of one of Nicolas Trigault's reports on China was published in 's-Hertogenbosch in 1615: [Nicolas Trigault], *Waerachtich verhael van eenige merckelycke saecken des vermaerts coninckrijck van Syna* ('s-Hertogenbosch: Anthoni Scheffer, 1615). Its short notice on religion generally follows the Jesuit interpretation of Confucian literature versus Buddhist and Daoist idolatry.

86 Between 1615 and 1644, one book in Dutch on China was printed in Antwerp: *Het leven van den H. Franciscvs Xaverivs* by Orazio Torsellino in 1622. A few more books in Latin (printed both in the Southern and the Northern Netherlands) were also published in these years: *Rervm memorabilvm in regno Sinae gestarvm litteroe annuae societatis Iesv* by Nicolas Trigault (1625) (USTC 1003171), *Le grand cathayo, ov Royavmes de Tibet* by Antonio de Andrade (1627) (USTC 1004151), *Nova Zembla, sive descriptio contracta navigationvm trium admirandarum, à Belgis, per mare Hyperboreum in Chinam* by Daniel Schemeringius (1631) (USTC 1026823), and *R.P. Marcelli Mastrilli e societate Iesv et XXXII. sociorvm, ac XVI. aliorvm religiosorvm. Iter in Indiam S.P. Francisci Xaverii patrociniio feliciter peractvm* by Marcello Mastrilli (1637) (USTC 1436334).

In 1639, the famous printing house of Bonaventura and Abraham Elzevier used the first book of *De Christiana expeditione* for their successful *Respublica* series, in which small (24mo) books offered readers knowledge on foreign countries at relatively low cost.<sup>87</sup> Between 1625 and 1649, the Elzeviers published 66 editions of 33 titles, covering many countries of the world (the most notable exception was North America). They may be considered the predecessor to our modern day pocket-books, as they aimed to be both portable and affordable. *Regni Chinensis descriptio*, an account of the kingdom of China, was the first in the *Respublica* series on Asia.<sup>88</sup>

When comparing the actual text of *Regni Chinensis descriptio* to *De Christiana expeditione*, it immediately becomes clear that the two are in close intertextual relationship. Indeed, chapters 1 through 11 of Ricci and Trigault's account of the Jesuit mission are cited essentially verbatim in Elzevier's *Respublica*. The only real difference may be found in typographical choices or errors. Compare as example the first paragraph of chapter 1 'Scriptionis huius causae & modus':

Non raro euenit, vt ingentium expeditionum, rerumq; magnarum, quae labentibus seculis assurrexere, primordia posteri penitus ignorarint. Eius rei causam non semel mecum ipse inuestigans, vix aliam deprehendi, quam rerum omnium initia (etiam earū quae in immensam deinde magnitudinem excrescunt) in ortu suo, ita exigua esse & exilia, nihil vt minus quam secururam deinde molem promittere videantur.<sup>89</sup>

*De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas*

Non raro evenit, ut ingentium expeditionum, rerumq; magnarum, quae labentibus seculis assurrexere, primordia posteri penitus ignoratint. Ejus rei causam non semel mecum ipse investigans, vix aliam deprehendi, quam rerum omnium initia (etiam earum quae in immensam deinde

87 David William Davies, *The world of the Elseviers, 1580–1712* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1954), pp. 1–15.

88 J.A. Gruys, 'De reeks "Republieken" van de Elzeviers en Joannes de Laet', in Paul Hoftijzer (ed.), *Boekverkopers van Europa. Het zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlandse uitgevershuis Elzevier* (Zutpher: Walburg Pers, 2000), pp. 77–106.

89 'It not infrequently happens that the beginnings of vast expeditions and mighty undertakings which have matured in the course of ages are all but a closed book to those who live long after these events. After frequently pondering over the reasons for this fact, I came to the conclusion that the beginnings of all events, even of those which later took on vast proportions, were so very small and meagre at the outset that they seemed to give no promise whatever of developing later into anything of importance', in Ricci and Trigault, *China in the sixteenth century*, p. 3.

magnitudinem excrescunt) in ortu suo, ita exigua esse & exilia, nihil ut minus quam secuturam deinde molem promittere videantur.

*Regni Chinensis Descriptio*

The following chapters provide the same verbatim quotation, and in this context, the author (or editor) of *Regni Chinensis* became (in)voluntarily 'a multidimensional space through which the utterances of others speak'.<sup>90</sup> This rather poetic description of the role of the author in the process of textual transmission comes from Douglas Hartman, who, building on Julia Kristeva, has argued that the author may also be considered a reader who borrows, adapts, appropriates, and transforms textual resources. Here, this author performs a dual function for he works as (or in direct service of) the publisher as well.<sup>91</sup> The main purpose of the Elzevier publishers would be to sell as many of their 'republics' as possible, thereby considering the presumed wishes of their potential audiences in both text and form. Since *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* was still considered the most reliable account of China available in Europe, it is not surprising that the textual content would borrow heavily from the Jesuits' account.

However, while the editor of *Regni Chinensis* adopted the linguistic idiosyncrasies of *De Christiana expeditione*, the publishers did not use the same paratextual vocabulary. Materially, *Regni Chinensis descriptio* differs in many respects from Ricci and Trigault's *De Christiana expeditone*. These variations are in part explained by a difference in intended audience. Ricci and Trigault's writings were aimed at a general audience of readers interested in specifically the Jesuit missionary activities abroad, as well as the country of China in general. In contrast, readers of *Regni Chinensis descriptio* were most likely buying the book exclusively for its description of China. This difference in intention most certainly influenced the form of the book. More specifically, the divergent intentions determined how the religion and philosophy of China (as presented by Ricci) would be carried over from one book to another by way of processes of transtextuality. Here again, the publisher is at work to present a publication on China to an intended audience of *buyers*, whereby the actual content and form of the works concerned is greatly influenced by the economic rules of cultural production.

The differences in publication strategy are made directly visible when comparing the respective title pages. As scholars in the field of literary theory and

90 Douglas K. Hartman, 'Intertextuality and reading. The text, the reader, the author, and the context', *Linguistics and Education*, 4 (1992), pp. 295–311, p. 300.

91 Hartman, 'Intertextuality and reading', p. 300.



FIGURE 11  
 Nicolas Trigault and Matteo Ricci, *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* (Augsburg: Christopher Mangius, 1615)  
 Allard Pierson Amsterdam (O 80-771)

book history have clarified, title pages are integral in conveying messages to their potential readers.<sup>92</sup> During the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the title page emerged as an independent part of the printed book and this feature reached ‘the extremes of [its] complexity’ later in the seventeenth.<sup>93</sup> Perhaps more than any other part of the book, the title page remained the responsibility of the printer and publisher. The appearance and layout of the title were determined by the demands of knowledge and marketing. Linguistic

92 Genette, *Paratexts*, pp. 23–36, pp. 55–103; Nuria Yáñez-Bouza, ‘Paratext, title-pages and grammar books’, *Studia Neophilologica*, 89.1 (2017), pp. 41–66; Rod McConchie, ‘Some reflections on early modern printed title-pages’, *Studies in Variation. Contacts and Change in English*, 14 (2014); Jim McLaverty, ‘Questions of entitlement. Some eighteenth-century title pages’, in David C. Greetham, *The margins of the text* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 173–198; Margaret M. Smith, *The title-page. Its early development 1460–1510* (London and New Castle: Oak Knoll Press & The British Library, 2000).

93 Smith, *The title-page*, p. 11.



FIGURE 12 *Nicolas Trigault and Matteo Ricci, Regni Chinensis descriptio* (Leiden: Bonaventura and Abraham I Elzevier, 1639) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (OK 62-6320(2))

function, aesthetic consideration, and commercial appeal needed to work together for the title page to function optimally.<sup>94</sup>

A comparison between the title pages of editions by Ricci/Trigault and Elzevier demonstrates the complexities of combining text and image mentioned above. The engraved title of *De Christiane expeditione* communicates to the reader that this is a Jesuit publication.<sup>95</sup> The historiated engraving represents an overwhelming visual surfeit, where almost every element can be found to contain some reference to the Jesuits or their missionary activities in China. The text in the middle is surrounded by a substantial area of graphic representations, from the map of China on the bottom to the statues of Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci on either side of the cartouche. Many of the visual elements have a specific linguistic and graphic meaning, the interpretation of which has been left to the discretion of the reader.

The title page offers a plethora of visual elements that have to be navigated by the reader. The Society of Jesus is exemplified by variations on the IHS Christogram, which became the fixed emblem of the Jesuits after Ignatius of Loyola chose it as his personal seal. The emblem presenting the name of Jesus in this way is displayed by two cherubs on the upper part of the page. China is signified by the inclusion of a part of Ricci's map on the bottom of the page, emphasising the importance of cartography to conceptions of the Middle Kingdom. This map also hints at Ricci's efforts in describing a seemingly impenetrable empire.

This map of China is bestowed upon the viewer by the two founding fathers of the Jesuit mission to China; Xavier and Ricci stand on either side of it, framed by monumental classical columns and porticos. The type and layout of the text is almost overwhelming in its detail, especially the elaborate cartouche, which encompasses the title and authorship of the work as well as its contents: 'Customs, laws, and principles of the Chinese Kingdom and the most difficult first beginnings of the new Church there are accurately and with great

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94 Alastair Fowler, *The mind of the book. Pictorial title-pages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 1–10.

95 The title pages concerned are 'engraved title pages' rather than frontispieces. The difference lies primarily in the fact that the frontispiece consists solely of a prelim illustration that characterises the work as a whole and that at most contains a title or elements of the title. As soon as such an illustration contains more textual information such as the name of the author or information from the imprint it is considered an engraved title page. This title page is completely engraved, meaning that it contains no elements of typography or moveable type. The title page of *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* was made by Wolfgang Kilian of Augsburg.

fidelity described'.<sup>96</sup> It contains a great number of flourished letters, italics, descending point size, and small capitals. The text along the base of the pediment is taken from Acts of the Apostles, where God speaks of Saul as chosen to 'bear my name before the gentiles and kings'.<sup>97</sup> Everything in the title page of *De Christiana expeditione* states that the book is firmly embedded in the Jesuit narrative on China.

In contrast, the title page of *Regni Chinensis descriptio* immediately makes clear that this is a book about China. Again, this disparity is likely the result of considerations made by the publisher with regard to the intended readership. The first feature one notices is that much less space is available for visual communication, as this book only measures 109 by 58mm (24mo) compared to Trigault's more expansive 195 by 155mm (4mo). This is an important factor: the choice of format is perhaps the most all-embracing aspect of the production of a book, and thus 'of the materialisation of a text for public use'.<sup>98</sup> Paper was the most cost-prohibiting element in the production of print, and the format used would therefore communicate the value of the book to the potential buyer. In the classical period of print until ca. 1800, large formats (folio (2mo) or quarto (4mo)) were reserved for 'serious' works, that is to say, works on religion or philosophy. From this, it follows that smaller sizes (octavo (8mo), duodecimo (12mo), sextodecimo (16mo), up to a potential sexagesimo quarto (64mo)) were used for more 'frivolous' works of literature.<sup>99</sup> In this regard, the printing house of the Elzeviers was instrumental in the publication of works in smaller formats with narrow margins, focusing on portability and availability rather than elegance. As such, the long history of popular *livres de poche* goes back (at least) to the small 'Elzeviers' in 24mo.<sup>100</sup>

96 Full title *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas suscepta ab Societate Jesu. Ex P. Matthaei Riccii eiusdem Societatis commentariis Libri V: Ad S.D.N. Paulum V. In Quibus Sinensis Regni mores, leges, atque instituta, & novae illius Ecclesiae difficillima primordia accurate & summa fide describuntur* or 'The Christian expedition among the Chinese undertaken by the Society of Jesus from the commentaries of Fr. Matteo Ricci of the same Society ... in which the customs, laws, and principles of the Chinese kingdom and the most difficult first beginnings of the new church there are accurately and with great fidelity described / Authored by Fr. Nicolas Trigault, Flemish, of the same society'.

97 But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel'. Acts 9:15, *The Holy Bible – New international version*.

98 Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 17–22.

99 Gaskell, *A New introduction to bibliography*, p. 25.

100 Hans Schmoller, 'The paperback revolution', in Asa Briggs (ed.), *Essays in the history of publishing* (London: Longman, 1974), pp. 283–318.

The Elzeviers also produced series to appeal to a broader range of readers. Indeed, the use of series is a relatively modern development, employed by large publishers to ‘demonstrate and control the diversification of their activities’.<sup>101</sup> The appellation of a series amplifies the publisher’s emblem, indicating to the potential reader the type of work and genre he or she is dealing with. As part of the *Respublica* series, *Regni Chinensis descriptio* was first and foremost a work of history and geography. Elements of paratext, such as a recognisable title page, were also incorporated to serve the series as a whole.

On the Elsevier’s title page, the textual elements are concise, simply informing the viewer this is ‘a description of the kingdom of China’. Perhaps surprisingly, the book’s writers are mentioned only under the moniker, ‘various authors’, without the specification of either their names or Jesuit vocation.<sup>102</sup> Including the name of the author on the title page seems both necessary and obvious, yet the practice was only incorporated after the invention of print and even then this element of paratext was not as readily imposed as other elements.<sup>103</sup> In the early decades of the seventeenth century, the presentation of the author on the title page aimed to evoke a certain attitude towards the book in general.<sup>104</sup> Accordingly, the inclusion or exclusion of the names of Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault, and their occupation as Jesuit missionaries, illustrate the intentions and allegiances of the publisher.

Like all books in the Elsevier *Respublica* series, the title page of *Regni Chinensis descriptio* is illustrated in such a manner as to capture the essence of the country it describes. On the right of the vignette, Chinese characters are incorporated as element of decoration. They can be translated as ‘Wild geese descending on the sandbank’ *Pingsha luo yan* 平沙落雁, a musical arrangement for the guqin instrument. This piece appeared first in *Gu Yin Zheng Zhong* 古音正宗, a music book by Li Xiang Ting published in 1634, just ten years before the collapse of the Ming Dynasty. The score is famous for its relaxing melody, which is said to be immune to the unstable political climate

101 Genette, *Paratexts*, pp. 22–23.

102 The book was not solely based on the writings of Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault. Bovaventura and Abraham Elzevier also used some materials from the Jesuit Bento de Géois, the Englishman Samuel Purchas, and Marco Polo. However, most of the text (the first 287 of a total of 365 pages) was taken from Ricci and Trigault. See Paul Begheyn, ‘De Elzeviers en de jesuïten’, in Hoftijzer (ed.), *Boekverkopers van Europe*, pp. 59–76; Gruys, ‘De reeks “Republieken”’, p. 95.

103 Genette, *Paratexts*, pp. 37–39.

104 Anastasia Moreva, ‘Communicative potential of the title as a paratextual element (based on German travel literature of the 18th century)’, *Procedia. Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 154 (2014), pp. 417–419.

of the times.<sup>105</sup> How the musical piece and its illustration came to be known in Europe remains unclear, but an indication is given by the seal below the title of the music.<sup>106</sup> Such a seal usually refers to the name of the author or calligrapher. Here it probably states Wu Shi Shenzhong 吳氏申仲, or Shenzhong of the Wu family.<sup>107</sup>

On the left side of the title, an illustration of this musical piece is incorporated, in which a flock of birds (presumably geese) are flying through a landscape of water, dunes, and thatches of reed. The engraving follows the usual Chinese iconography, which could indicate that the example of Chinese script available to the Elzeviers may have been accompanied by an illustration. The subject of geese flying over low banks and water has a long history in Chinese art. It is one of the *Eight views of the Xiao Xiang* (Xiao Xiang ba jing 瀟湘八景) which was renowned as early as the Song dynasty (960–1279). Dawn Odell demonstrated that the title page of *Regni Chinensis descriptio* may be the earliest European representation of a Chinese landscape painting, which sheds light on the acceptance of Chinese art 'via the globalized language of print', in the sense that the cross-cultural dissemination of art and images may have been more nuanced than conventionally described.<sup>108</sup>

An additional element of illustration is found at the top of the page in the form of an old man engulfed in elaborate robes. We may be tempted to assume this to be Confucius, yet it may simply be a more general illustration of a sage.<sup>109</sup> The final element of visual communication is a map, albeit a rather stylised one. When comparing this small map to Ricci's more elaborate ones, it is unclear whether the engraver followed the example faithfully, especially since the shape of Korea is different. However, it does include the Great Wall: one of the most important and striking elements in any geographical description of China.<sup>110</sup> Interestingly, *Regni Chinensis descriptio* is the only volume in the *Respublica* series to include a foreign script or a map on the title page.<sup>111</sup>

The most important work on China of the early seventeenth century, Ricci and Trigault's *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas*, was neither translated into

105 Alan R. Thrasher, *Sizhu instrumental music of South China. Ethos, theory, and practice* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), p. 8.

106 Dawn Odell believes that painting manuals are the most likely source for the engraving, see Dawn Odell, 'Chinese painting and Dutch book arts. The challenges of cross-cultural interpretation', in Debra Cashion, Henry Luttikhuisen, and Ashley West, *The primacy of the image in Northern European art, 1400–1700* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), pp. 164–177.

107 With thanks to Lennert Gesterkamp for his translations.

108 Odell, 'Chinese painting and Dutch book arts', pp. 173–174.

109 See chapter 3 for a more elaborate explanation of images of Confucius in European print.

110 B. Szczésniak, 'Matteo Ricci's maps of China', *Imago mundi*, 11 (1954), pp. 127–136.

111 Gruys, 'De reeks "Republieken"', p. 101–106.

Dutch nor printed in the Dutch Republic. The needs of readers interested in China could be satisfied, however, by *Regni Chinensis descriptio*.<sup>112</sup> This Dutch approach towards knowledge from Jesuit sources would be common until the end of the century. While no obvious aversion nor hostility towards the Jesuits can be gleaned from the book, it was a rare occasion when the origin of information was advertised as coming from the Jesuits, especially on the title page.

Another example of this custom of removing Jesuit connotations is revealed when we trace Martino Martini's account of the fall of the Mindy dynasty, *De bello Tartarico*. Born in Trento in 1614, Martini contributed to the Jesuits' accommodative efforts with his work in history and geology which greatly helped to assimilate China in seventeenth-century Europe. Martini arrived in Macau in 1642 where he studied Chinese, crossing over into mainland China in 1643. A year after Martini's arrival, Beijing fell to a peasant uprising led by Li Zicheng 李自成: the beginning of the Ming-Qing transition. Soon afterwards, the capital went over to the Manchu's of north-eastern China, establishing the Qing dynasty which would rule the Middle Kingdom until 1912.

Martini's account of the Manchu conquest of 1644 would be the most famous and authoritative one available in Europe. In a little under 200 pages, he recounts the background of the conflict, tracing the growing power of the Manchu. He also shows that the late Ming dynasty was already dealing with various other problems such as corruption, heavy taxation, a weak emperor, with growing unrest at the borders and rebellion near Beijing as direct results. When Li Zicheng and his rebels took the capital in 1644, aided in his effort by traitors within the city, the Chongzhen 崇禎 Emperor stabs his young daughter to death, writes a letter accusing high officials of treason in his own blood, after which he hangs himself from a plumtree in the palace garden. His wife, several concubines, and loyal officials therein follow him. After crowning himself emperor, Li Zicheng demanded the submission of the remaining Ming military. Wu Sangui, the leader of a 40,000-man army at China's northern borders refused to submit. Wu subsequently made a pact with the Manchus, who could then march on Beijing. Li's newly established imperial dynasty ended within the year, after which the Manchus instated the Qing dynasty with Shunzhi 福臨 as its emperor.

In his account, Martini describes the conquest as the tragic fall of China to foreign conquerors. However, unlike some other European descriptions, he does not think it the fall of Chinese civilization itself: after becoming Qing, the Manchus had abandoned their previous barbarian ways. However, from a Christian perspective Martini does consider the conquest God's punishment.

112 Begheyn, 'De Elzeviers en de jezuiten', pp. 60–62.



FIGURE 13 Martino Martini, *De bello Tartarico historia* (Utrecht: Gerard Nieuwenhuysen, 1665) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (OK 63-862(1))

In 1618, the Ming emperor Wanli had begun to persecute Christian missionaries, which – not incidentally according to Martini – was also the year that the Manchu chieftain Nurhaci started to rebel against the domination of the Ming dynasty.

we may admire Divine Providence, who raised sharp war against China at the time when they were neglecting Christian peace; and in the same year permitted the Tartars to sink their roots in the Chinese empire, from which they later grew so great that they uprooted the Ming family and subjugated almost the entire Chinese empire, while otherwise the Chinese thought utterly to uproot Christian truth: but as it ordinarily does, the Christian cause has through such persecution grown to so great a state that the church rejoices in it; and the Chinese, unless God comes to aid their distressed condition, have lost possession of their empire.<sup>113</sup>

Martini's account was first published in Antwerp by Balthasar Moretus of the *Officina Plantiniana* in 1654.<sup>114</sup> Its short length and journalistic tone made the book an enormous success: before the end of the century the work had been reissued twenty times, and was translated into French, German, English, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Danish, and Dutch. The first edition boldly declares the Jesuit origin of the work. Martini's name and rank 'Societatis Iesu in Urbem missio Procuratore' were stated on the title page, which was decorated with a small woodcut of the IHS emblem.<sup>115</sup>

Antwerp in general, and the Plantin Office in particular, had long been the preferred location for the publication of Jesuit books. At least until the second half of the seventeenth century, the Catholic city remained the centre for the publication of the Society's most influential treatises. Here, Christopher Plantin was the first to produce an illustrated Jesuit text in 1566, and the firm would go on to publish many Jesuit works, motivated not only by commercial incentives but by personal considerations as well: the Plantin family (and later its successor Moretus) were personally acquainted with a number of Jesuits in China, and with the Jesuit community in Antwerp. This relationship went both ways: when several Flemish Jesuits, Philippe Couplet, François de Rougemont, and Ignatius Hartoghvelt, departed for China in 1654, they carried

113 Martino Martini, *De bello Tartarico historia. In qua, quo pacto Tartari hac nostra aetate Sincicum Imperium invaserint, ac fere totum occuparint, narratur; eorumque mores breviter describuntur* (Antwerp: Balthasar Moretus, 1654), p. 30.

114 Noël Golvers, 'The XVIIth-century Jesuit mission in China and its "Antwerp connections"', *De Gulden Passer*, 74 (1996), pp. 157–188.

115 Martini, *De bello Tartarico historia*.

with them a large number of books coming from the Plantin Office. Writing on 23 December 1658, De Rougemont mentions that they carried: 'Multis libris venimus onusti', noting that Martini 'will flood the Chinese market with ... Plantin prints' ('... ut et D. Balthasari Moreto [salutet], cujus elegantibus typis Chinam replebit P. Martinius').<sup>116</sup>

The many Jesuits books published in Southern Netherlands – among them Martini's *De bello Tartarico* – would have landed on fertile grounds. Catholicism had resurged in the late sixteenth century, turning the Southern Netherlands into a stronghold for the Counter-Reformation. Cities like Antwerp, Brussels, and Ghent harboured English exiles and Catholic insurgents, while they also developed a powerful Catholic publishing network.<sup>117</sup> In this climate, Christopher Plantin's successors Balthasar I, Jan I and II Moretus became the Counter-Reformation's foremost printers, and as such would indeed aim to advance the Society of Jesus through textual *and* paratextual emphasis on the Jesuit mission in China as presented in Martini's *De bello Tartarico*.

While Jesuit books were also produced in the Protestant Dutch Republic, their publication followed a different trajectory. When Martini's *De bello Tartarico* was translated into Dutch and published by Jacob Pool in Delft in 1654, all references to the Jesuits were removed, even though the main text remained faithful to the original.<sup>118</sup> Neither the title page nor the introduction makes any mention of the fact that the author is a Jesuit, instead focussing on other works on China by Martini, as well as the translation process. After stating that the author went to China, a list of works yet-to-come is given: a history of China containing a Chinese calendar, maps of China and of each Chinese province, a Chinese chronology spanning four thousand years, an 'oriental' atlas, and finally, another Chinese chronology in accordance with the Bible. The author of the preface then notes that the whole of Europe may thank the author for presenting these 'kostelikheden', made all the more precious because of his experience and erudition.

A year later, Gerard Nieuwenhuyzen of Utrecht reissued the Dutch translation – adding an engraved title page and eight illustrations. The title page uses an iconography focussing on China, displaying an archer and a writer above a somewhat generic and seemingly European cityscape. More telling is the fact that even though Martini's name is mentioned, his appellation has

116 This being Petrus Canisius's *Institutiones Christianae pietatis, seu parvus catechismus Catholicorum*, printed by Plantin and illustrated with woodcuts in 1566 and 1574.

117 Geert Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt and Catholic exile in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 130–135.

118 Martino Martini, *Historie van den Tartarschen oorloch* (Delft: Jacob Pool, 1654).

been secularised to 'sir' Martini, further emphasising the work's focus on China instead of the Jesuit mission.<sup>119</sup> The secular focus of the 1655 Dutch translation is also attested to by its dedicatory poem, written by Simon de Vries (who we will encounter again in the next chapter). De Vries praises Martini for his travels and his work: 'Dit doet Martinus ... hem wat vreemts t'ervaren, niet hem alleen ten nut en goed, Maar tot ons best ook. Want hy doet d'Een Weerelt tot in d'ander lopen, En China brought hy in Europe'. He thereby aims his attention towards China's struggles, refraining from referring to the Jesuit mission in any way.

This poem and eight engravings instead focus on the destruction of China, and the tragic overtaking of the Ming dynasty by the Manchus. According to David Mungello following art historian T. Kaori Kitao, the distinctly European form of the illustrations shows how China was adapted for European readers. One of the more striking and violent images shows a scene from within the imperial palace after Beijing was overtaken by Li Zicheng. Ming Emperor Chongzhen learned that all hope was lost, and before hanging himself, stabbed his daughter in the chest with a sword. The moment of this dramatic actions is depicted, both emperor and daughter having European features and European clothing, with the exception of an oriental looking hat. T. Kaori Kitao demonstrated that this image bears a striking resemblance to a fresco by Pietro da Cortona in Rome, which was painted between 1624 and 1626. This fresco depicts Bibiana in her martyrdom after refusing to worship idols. The baroque nature of this image thereby ideally suited the dramatic intentions of the illustrations *and* the accompanying paratext.<sup>120</sup>

In 1660, Gillis Jansz Valckenier of Amsterdam published another edition of *De bello Tartarico*, which kept the same focus on 'tragic' China rather than the Jesuit mission. This edition resembles the earlier Dutch translation – containing the main text, title page, and illustrations. The title page presents the same image as that of the 1655 Utrecht edition, yet drawn and newly engraved. This makes for a more intricate illustration, which enhances the book's first impression. The edition by Valckenier in general gives a more sophisticated impression, primarily because of its use of fine paper and clear typography. It further contains an epigraph – omitting the poem by Simon de Vries, lamenting the fall of China to the Manchu's. Again, any reference to the Jesuits was removed from the dedication to the reader. In its place, the author emphasises that the work is indeed meant for the general public: 'This work (dear reader)

119 Martino Martini, *Historie van den Tartarschen oorloch* (Utrecht: Gerard Nieuwenhuysen, 1655).

120 Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 110–116.

is presented to you as a herald of the excellences that the author has brought, not only for his *friends*, but also for the whole good.<sup>121</sup>

Any astute reader probably would have known Martini to be a Jesuit, even though the paratext of the Dutch translations removed most reference to the Society or its mission. Yet, by shifting the focus towards China – at the same time advertising future works on the country – Jacob Pool, Gerard Nieuwenhuyzen, and Gillis Valckenier appealed to a broader public of potential readers, who may not be that interested in the Jesuit mission. The publishers did so through paratext: the book's title page, preface, epigraph, dedicatory poem, and illustrations, reinforcing the image of China's carnage and destruction. China became increasingly familiar to Dutch readers through the translations of Martini's account of the Manchu conquest. Considering its numerous translations and reprints, the book was popular and probably widely read. Indeed, the transtextual trajectory of *Historie van de Tartarschen oorloch* include poems, novels, and plays: one of them by Holland's 'prince of poets' Joost van den Vondel.

When Vondel's tragedy on the fall of the Ming dynasty *Zungchin of ondergang der Sineesche heerschappije* ('Zungchin, or the demise of China') was published in 1666 by the widow of Abraham de Wees, he was already well into his seventies and has long been Holland's most famous poets. Vondel had converted to Catholicism in 1641, and from that background turned the fall of the Ming dynasty into a lesson concerning true faith: meaning the word of God as given by the Jesuits.<sup>122</sup> He thereby builds upon the historical plot of the Manchu conquest to support his main theme of the Christian mission in China.

The historical part of *Zungchin* describes the last night of the Chongzhen [Zungchin] emperor's life. Li Zicheng's [Lykungzus] army is fast approaching the imperial city, and in a last and desperate measure Zungchin summoned the German Jesuit Adam Schall von Bell to pray for the deliverance of the empire. Rumours of revolt and treachery abound, while the Jesuits consider the possible ramifications of this political coup for the Christian mission. Soon, the emperor realises that all hope is lost, yet before he commits suicide, Zungchin

121 'Dit werck (goede leser) sy u een voorbode vande kostelijckheydt die den Autheur niet alleen voor zijn vrienden, maer oock voor de geheele goede Werelt heeft mee gebracht,' in Martini, *Historie*, voorreden.

122 Paize Keulemans, 'Tales of an open world. The fall of the Ming dynasty as Dutch tragedy, Chinese rumor, and global news', in Benjamin A. Elman and Chao-Hui Jenny Liu, *The 'global' and the 'local' in early modern and modern East Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 192–220. On whether *Zungchin* may be consider a 'missie-spel', see: J.F.M. Sterk, *Oud en nieuw over Joost van den Vondel. Verspreide opstellen* (Amsterdam: De Spieghel, 1932), p. 191; and P. Minderaa, 'Het treurspel Zungchin belicht vanuit zijn vermoedelijke groei', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandse taal en letterkunde*, 79 (1963), pp. 115–124.

ensures the flight of his three sons, hoping to preserve the Ming dynasty. In the final act, Lynkungzus assumes the imperial throne, after which the spirit of Francis Xavier emerges to warn that more tragedy is yet to come (the play's future, in fact was already in the past by the time of Vondel's writing): he prophesies the death of the emperor's three sons, Li Zicheng's demise, and the rise of the great Khan, Emperor of the Tartars, under whose rule the Christian religion will at first spread wider throughout the whole of China, but then before long be oppressed by his descendants.

Let the successor, furious and angry without reason,  
Gravely threaten and persecute the faith,  
To the benefit of the Buddhist and their cursed altar.<sup>123</sup>

Vondel took the historical facts from Martini, yet goes beyond them by invoking the Garden of Eden, the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, the life of Jesus Christ, and the Christian mission of Francis Xavier. Building upon Martini's reasoning concerning the conquest as a punishment from God, Vondel blames the emperor's lack of communication with the outside world. Tragically isolated, the emperor was surrounded by traitors and sycophants who failed to protect him when Li Zicheng infiltrated his palace. In the final act, when Zungchin [Chonzhen] realises all is lost and he is betrayed by his servants, he hangs himself from a plum tree in the palace gardens. Written in his own blood, the emperor (in Vondel's word) hammers home the point: 'punish my eunuchs, military, and civil officials severely, for they reported impiously the treason at court too late.'

The betrayal of the emperor – and his ability to see it coming – is not just political: according to Vondel this was the only outcome possible since the Chinese empire had been doomed by becoming lost in superstitious beliefs: 'the hate and envy of the soothsaying, idolatrous, superstitious Buddhist priests and deceivers'. The truth may only be known through the Catholic faith, in *Zungchin* personified by the Jesuit priest Adam Schall von Bell, the ghost of St. Francis Xavier, and a chorus of Jesuit priests who fulfil the function of the chorus in Greek tragedies.<sup>124</sup> When Empress Jasmyn summons Schall von Bell for advice and consolation, the Jesuit explains that in Europe, Christians do not believe in such superstitions as astrology, dreams, and palm-reading.

123 'De nazaet opgeroit, en zonder reên verbolgen, Besta den godsdiert straf te dreigen en vervolgen, Den Bonsien ter gunste, en hun vervloekt altaer', in Vondel, *Zungchin*, p. 52.

124 Adrian Hsia, *Chinensia. The European construction of China in the literature of the 17th and 18th centuries* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), pp. 30–35.

Furthermore, and here we may glean Martini's influence, he reminds her that Confucius did not adhere to such omens either: 'And your Confucius ... mocked this vanity'.<sup>125</sup> Vondel's China, like that of the Jesuits, may be still a heathen nation in need of Christianisation, Confucianism was not disproved of.

Vondel's *Zungchin* demonstrates how Jesuit knowledge and interpretations of China found their way to different media types in the second half of the seventeenth century. In this process, authors and playwrights could build upon (historical) facts in propagating their own objectives: Vondel recruits Martini's description of the Manchu conquest for an emphasis on the doctrine of divine government. As such, the Chinese emperor, and to a degree the Jesuit mission as well, are subordinate to the *Christian* character and consequences of the tragedy.<sup>126</sup>

Joost van den Vondel was not the only Dutch playwright to be inspired by Martini's account of the fall of the Ming dynasty. Johannes Antonides vander Goes' *Trazil, of Overrompelt Sina* [Trazil, or China taken by surprise] was published by Jan Rieuwertsz, Pieter Arentsz and Albert Magnus in Amsterdam in 1685 (the play was already written in 1667).<sup>127</sup> Like Vondel, Vander Goes describes how Beijing fell to a predatory conqueror by treachery, betrayal and deceit. However, in *Trazil* the plot is limited to Li Zicheng's [Trazil] short reign, and the ensuing Manchu conquest of Beijing. It is also far less historically accurate than Vondel, and by intertextual inference Martini's, account: Vander Goes squeezes the events in a very short twenty-four-hour period, while he furthermore combines the separate invasions of Li and the Manchu's.

Overall, Vander Goes gives a very different impression of the conquest than either Vondel or Martini does. Containing much on-stage violence, the play nevertheless never considers the fall of the Ming dynasty as an historical, cultural, or religious tragedy.<sup>128</sup> While the list of 'persoonaedjen' mentions two 'Kristenen' (Christians) by the names of Ignatius and Urbaen, these fulfil only very limited roles. They function as mere ammunition in the battle for dominion between Li Zicheng and an unnamed Chinese 'archpriest': 'De

125 Vondel, *Zungchin*, p. 21.

126 Manjusha Kuruppath, 'When Vondel looked eastwards. A study of representation and information transfer in Joost van den Vondel's *Zungchin*', in Jeroen Dewulf, Olf Praamstra, and Michiel van Kempen, *Shifting the compass. Pluricontinental connections in Dutch colonial and postcolonial literature* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 91–111.

127 Joannes Antonides vander Goes, *Trazil, of overrompelt Sina* (Amsterdam: Jan Rieuwertsz, Pieter Arentsz, and Albert Magnus, 1685).

128 J.C. Brandt Corstius, 'Zungchin en Trazil', in *De Nieuwe Taalgids*, 39 (1946), pp. 65–70.

vreemdelingen zijn buiten hunne schult een doelwit van de nijt'.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, the only time they have any dialogue at all, the Christians either plead for their lives or offer defence for the mission in China. As such, they do not come to any substantial preaching. Regardless, before long both missionaries lose their lives, which puts an end to any role religion played.

In *Trazil*, the tragedy is more personal and focusses on Li Zicheng's rise and fall: 'Zoo blijft geen Heerschappij ter werrelt onverandert'.<sup>130</sup> Vander Goes makes no essential difference between the Ming Chinese or the Manchu conquerors as both are presented as violent and ruthless. According to J.C. Brandt Corstius, Vander Goes's tragedy would especially appeal to Holland's merchants and regents for 'they would never feel safer in their civil life – that imaginary idyll of simplicity and modesty – than when watching a play about kings and emperors.' Indeed, the last lines of act four and five clearly adhere to this notion of worldly instability: 'Zoo toont de tegenspoet/Hoe lost de Vorsten staen, in staetveranderingen'; 'T geluk bespot wel elk; maar vorsten boven allen'; 'Geen grootvorst noeme zich gelukkig voor zijn ende'.<sup>131</sup>

Vondel and Vander Goes moved Martini's account of the Manchu conquest from one genre to another, imposing a change in the architext. Based on Martini's historical narrative, *Zungchin* and *Trazil* dramatized China's political turmoil into historical tragedies: Vondel thereby aimed at the religious lessons to be learned, while Vander Goes focussed more on state power and the domestic relevance thereof. Through its intertextual trajectory, the Italian Jesuit's account of China is changed into a decidedly Dutch play, in which the poets make full use of the opportunity to present their public with topical lessons. Yet in the process, the Jesuits' explanation of the accommodation of China's religion and philosophy got lost, as Vondel aimed at Christianity in general and Vander Goes avoids the subject almost completely. However, the two Dutch dramatizations of the Manchu conquest demonstrate how an historical and religious narrative on China could be taken up by authors with different aims, and in different genres. However, unlike Martini's account, *Zungchin* nor *Trazil* proved a success. The plays were probably never staged, and after the first edition neither was reprinted outside of the poets' collected works.

*De bello Tartarico* was not the only work by Martino Martini published in the Dutch Republic. During his long journey from China to Rome in 1651, Martini

129 'The strangers are without any fault of their own a target of conflict', in Vander Goes, *Trazil*, p. 54.

130 'No reign on earth remains unchanged', in Vander Goes, *Trazil*, p. 78.

131 'Adversity shows how unstable rulers stand in changes of state'; 'Fortune mocks all, but rulers above all'; 'No grand ruler may call himself happy before his end', in Vander Goes, *Trazil*, p. fol. \*3r.

prepared a variety of historical and cartographic data, which were published in Antwerp, Vienna, Amsterdam, and Munich.<sup>132</sup> An example of early modern marketing of print, the dedication to *De bello Tartarico* already hinted at 'dear works' to come, among them 'for the first time the very ancient history of China, and calendars from the times of Noë up until now, [and] maps of the whole empire and from every province'. Martini also brought with him 'Chinese year-books of approximately four thousand consecutive years', 'a new atlas of the Orient, with a legend of all countries and cities', and 'the Chinese chronology or time-measurement brought in accordance with Holy Scripture'.<sup>133</sup>

Martini's works saw their publication in the Dutch Republic, where they were published by Joan Blaeu of the famous Blaeu publishing house. Willem Jansz Blaeu, forefather of the printing house, had printed a number of Jesuit books, and his son Joan continued the practice. Perhaps prudently, because of their involvement with Jesuits and other Catholics, they often hid their identities behind the names of editors in Cologne.<sup>134</sup> Joan Blaeu and Martini met in Amsterdam in 1654 and Blaeu used Martini's cartographical data to produce, as the sixth part of his *Theatrum orbis terrarum sive novus atlas* (better known as the *Atlas Maior*), a general map of China, a set of 15 maps of individual Chinese provinces, and a general map of Japan; accompanied by 171 pages of text by Martini, a 19-page catalogue of longitude and latitude markings of cities, and an appendix by Jacob Golius, *De Regno Catayo Additamentum* ('An addition on the Chinese reign', as well as a reprint of Martini's own *De bello Tartarico*).<sup>135</sup> The atlas was first published in Latin in 1655, soon followed by reprints and translations into Spanish, German, and Dutch.

It was the first atlas and geography of China published in Europe, and it sparked considerable interest. Specifically, it catered to 'proto-Sinology', in

132 Noël Golvers, 'De recruteringsstocht van M. Martini, S.J. door de Lage Landen in 1654. Over geomantische kompassen, Chinese verzamelingen, lichtbeelden en R.P. Wilhelm van Aelst, S.J.', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 10.1 (1994), pp. 331–344.

133 'Voor eerst de alder outste Historien van Sina, ende Kalendrieren van den tijd van Noë af tot desen toe', 'de kaerten soo van het gehele Rijck, als van yeder Provinci; de Sineesche laer-tijd-boecken van omtrent vier-duysendt achter-een-volghende jaren; een nieuwen Atlas van Orienten, met een by-gevoeghde verklaringh van alle Landen ende Steden; de Sineesche Chronologi ofte tijd-rekenigh veraccordeert met die van de heylige Schrift', in Martini, *Historie*, pp. 2–3.

134 Paul Begheyn, 'Jesuit book production in the Netherlands, 1601–1650', in Thomas M. Lucas (ed.), *Spirit, style, story. Essays honoring John W. Padberg, S.J.* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 2002), pp. 303–326.

135 Martino Martini, *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (Amsterdam: Joan Blaeu, 1655). The atlas was also published in French, Dutch (1656), and Spanish (1659). Y. Marijke Donkersloot-De Vrij, *Blaeu's Atlas* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1973), p. 87.

which scholars assimilated information about China and Europe.<sup>136</sup> Through its maps and text, it introduced readers to a thorough examination and analysis of the Middle Kingdom, based on knowledge compiled by someone with a comprehensive and first-hand knowledge of the country. Geography was a relatively new discipline in Europe, only becoming partially independent from cosmology and theology at the end of the sixteenth century under the impetus of the voyages of discovery. The Jesuits had long held an accommodative interest in the cartography of China, starting with Matteo Ricci's maps of the early seventeenth century. This preoccupation with geography aided the Jesuit mission and accommodation through its consolidation of European and Chinese geography and cartographic knowledge.

Martini began gathering (geographical) information when he was traveling through seven of the country's provinces, in which he relied on Chinese written sources. As one of the few in Europe to have seen China's interior, he truly opened up the country to western scrutiny. This unique Jesuit position is visually explained in the atlas's frontispiece. In the upper left corner, a ray of sunlight shines bright on the IHS Christogram. Another beam of light strikes a mirror bearing a cross which reads 'speculum sine macula' ('mirror without blemish'). The church, personified by a woman bearing the papal triple crown, is holding the mirror, declaring – in a text running above the sunlight – 'ite angeli veloces ad gentem convulsam et dilaceratam isaiae xviii' ('Go, you swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, Isaiah 18'). Following the sunlight, the eye is drawn to the lower left corner, where a little angel holds a burning torch. More angels stand on a cloud below the sun, either holding crosses and books, or presenting the church personified with a beaker of blood or a cup of flesh. In the lower right corner, the figure of a man is opening a door to another country, declaring 'clausa recludo' ('I open the closed places'). Several angels are watching this new land, pointing to China on a globe and using a compass and a sighting rod. The title of the atlas, the author's name, and a dedication to Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I are inscribed in the door.

For the main text, Martini's general description of China discusses the extent of the empire, its names, natural resources, climate, trade, inhabitants, government, religions, learning, and customs. Much of this information is taken from Ricci and Trigault's *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas* and Alvero Semedo's *Imperio de la China* of 1642. The Jesuit division of Chinese religions into three sects is given: 'the first and oldest philosophical, the second idolatrous, and the

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136 Mungello, *Curious lands*, p. 116.



FIGURE 14 *Martino Martini, Novus Atlas Sinensis* (Amsterdam: Joan Blaeu, 1655)  
Allard Pierson Amsterdam (HB-KZL 1806 A 6)

third wholly Epicurean and lecherous'.<sup>137</sup> The sects of the Philosophers [meaning the Confucian literati] rises above the others in truthfulness and respectability, and it is therefore that they are in charge of government. Martini waxes on about these Philosophers for almost a full page. In his concluding remark, he – like Ricci and Trigault before him – compares them to the classical thinkers, further emphasising the similarities between China and Europe: 'one finds these and other wonderful things in the books of the philosophers, to the extent that our ancient philosopher had never thought or dreamed of the same, or better'.<sup>138</sup>

The second and third sects only merit a paragraph each, probably for the simple fact that they fall outside of the Jesuit accommodation policy. Martini shortly introduces the followers of 'Xekiao', those being the idolaters or Buddhists. He describes how this 'plague' invaded China after the birth of Christ, and that they believe in the 'ridiculous law' of reincarnation, or the move of the soul from one body to the next after death. The third sect of the Taoist is referred to as 'Epicurean' for their supposed attempts at prolonging life. Surprisingly, Confucius is never mentioned in Martini's discussion of religion. He is however encountered a few pages later, when discussing 'the school [*gymnasium*] of Cungfutius', which outlook is 'admirable and wonderful, and worthy of its esteemed founder, while no statue of an idol may be found there'.<sup>139</sup>

The main text accompanies a map of China; of Japan; and fifteen maps of Chinese provinces, which together are the atlas's main attraction. These maps are remarkable not only for their accuracy, but also for the highly decorative cartouches which present regional Chinese dress, activities, and animals. By masterly combining text and illustration, the atlas produced by Martini and Blaeu met a growing European demand for travel accounts and mercantile information. By reconciling Chinese with European geographical knowledge, *Novus Atlas Sinensis* helped along the Jesuit policy of accommodation by expanding Europe's horizon.

Martini and Blaeu's *Atlas* contained the most complete description of China available in Europe, and the public acted accordingly: in a letter dated 8 November 1656, the famed English poet John Milton expressed an eagerness

137 Martino Martini, *Seste deel van de Nieuwe atlas, oft Toonneel des aerdrijcx* (Amsterdam: Joan Blaeu, 1655), p. 9.

138 'Men vind noch veel andere heerlijkce dingen in de boecken deser Philosophen, soo dat onse oude Philosophen noyt gelijkce, oft beter dingen, dan dese sijn, bedacht oft gedroomt hebben', in Martini, *Nieuwe atlas*, p. 10.

139 'Dese school is heel treffelijck en heerlijk, en voor soo groot een stichter waerdigh, sonder dat men echter eenigh beeldt oft afgodt daer in vindt', in Martini, *Nieuwe atlas*, p. 17.

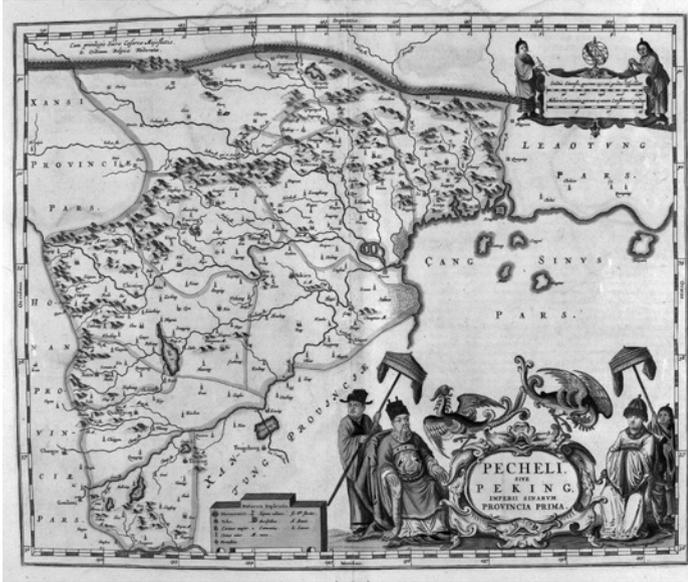


FIGURE 15 *Map of Beijing in Martino Martini, Novus Atlas Sinensis* (Amsterdam: Joan Blaeu, 1655) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (HB-KZL 18o6 A 6)

to see the work for himself. After instructing his correspondent 'to find out the lowest price of the book', he requested: 'I beg you to do me the further favour to find out ... how many volumes there are in the whole work'. Milton proved to be just one of the many who were interested in China, actively seeking out books, maps, journals, and other types of printed material on the subject.<sup>140</sup> The Jesuit books produced over the course of the seventeenth century, Ricci and Trigault, and Martini, were fundamental in supplying this much sought-after knowledge on China. And yet, despite their importance as sources of this information, their Jesuit origins were entirely removed, thus making them suitable for a more general Dutch audience. Over the course of the seventeenth century, people looking for knowledge on China would increasingly find themselves buying books produced in the Dutch Republic.

The 1660s saw the publication of a wealth of Dutch books on China. Jesuit reports opened the country to Western scrutiny, not only with their own Jesuit publications, but also through the various non-Jesuits offshoots that were

<sup>140</sup> Mingjun Lu, *The Chinese impact upon English Renaissance literature. A globalisation and liberal cosmopolitan approach to Donne and Milton* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

published in the wake of Ricci, Trigault, and Martini. Such was the interest in China that Amsterdam publisher Abraham Wolfgang even though it profitable to issue a reprint of Marco Polo's travels in 1664, the first Dutch edition in almost 200 years.<sup>141</sup> Usually, Dutch publishers relied on Jesuit sources; alternately, they issued reprints or compilations of earlier works. This approach made for a strangely equivocal attitude towards the religion and philosophy of China. On the one hand, Dutch authors and publishers were not eager to adhere to the Catholic perspective of the Jesuits; on the other hand, they had also moved away from the (by then) out-dated views of Van Linschoten and his contemporaries.<sup>142</sup>

Franciscus Ridderus's *Historisch A,B,C* or 'Historical A,B,C' (1664) contained 'five hundred objects, each with its own history from holy, ecclesiastical, and worldly authors, old and new'.<sup>143</sup> The collection of curiosities by this Rotterdam minister also included a short entry on China, entitled: 'On Monasteries'.<sup>144</sup> It describes how the early Christians lived together in 'forests and lonely places'.<sup>145</sup> However, 'superstition can spoil everything', and monasteries established by the papacy bore no resemblance to the earnest seclusion of early Christians. In this anti-Catholic context, Ridderus mentioned the religious customs of China:

141 The first (and only) edition of Marco Polo printed in the Netherlands appeared somewhere around 1485 in Gouda, courtesy of Gheraert Leeu. As attested by an extant copy in the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville, which contains extensive notations in the margins to the text, this edition was taken by Christopher Columbus on his journey to what he supposed was China, see: Lotte Hellinga, *Texts in transit. Manuscript to proof and print in the fifteenth century* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 278.

142 Much has been written on anti-Jesuit sentiment, which originated primarily in Western Europe during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Contemporary opponents have linked the Jesuits to the Gunpowder Plot, the French Catholic League, the assassinations of William of Orange and Henry IV, and the plot against Elizabeth I of England. In the context of this study, it is noteworthy to mention that it was said that in their efforts to advance the (missionary) cause of Catholicism, the Jesuits became exceedingly involved in political affairs. Some Protestant pamphleteers asserted that the Jesuits took their inspiration from the Machiavellian maxim that 'in the actions of men ... the end justifies the means', which allegedly also applied to the Jesuit policy of accommodation. For more information see A. Lynn Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit politicians* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1973), pp. 13–27; K. Winston and Mary Jo Bane, 'Reflections on the Jesuit mission to China', *HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, 10.4 (2010); Bernhard Duhr, *Jesuiten-Fabeln. Ein Beitrag zur Culturgeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1892); A. Brou, *Les Jésuites de la légende* (Paris: Victor Retaux, 1906–1907).

143 Franciscus Ridderus, *Historisch A,B,C* (Rotterdam: Henricus and Johannes Borstius, 1664).

144 On other writings by Ridderus on China see: Kley, 'Qing dynasty China in seventeenth-century Dutch literature', pp. 217–234.

145 Ridderus, *Historische A,B,C*, p. 82.

There are many heathen monasteries in China, but the monks are not held in much esteem by the politicians, since they do not live as decently as the general population. The politicians travel to the monasteries for their enjoyment and will return drunk. This is why esteemed people among the Chinese do not believe in heaven or hell. How much offence and contempt bad life by clerics inflicts on religion is well known. As everybody can note for themselves!!<sup>146</sup>

According to the notes in the margins, Ridderus obtained this information from José de Acosta's *Historie naturael en morael van de Westersche Indien* of 1624.<sup>147</sup> There, on folio 110, De Acosta criticised the followers of Buddha, while being rather positive about the 'mandarins or magistrates'.<sup>148</sup> Ridderus upheld De Acosta's distinction (although less explicitly) by separating the Chinese monks or Buddhists from the 'esteemed people' or mandarins who adhered to the teachings of Confucius. He remained decidedly negative about the practices of Buddhist monks, yet generally appreciative of the followers of Confucius, who were dissuaded from having contact with the 'heathen' monks and were, as such, not necessarily heathens themselves. However, how these 'esteemed people' should be characterised remains unclear, since they did not believe in either 'heaven or hell'; hence, they certainly were not Christian.

By attacking the Buddhist monks, while praising those adhering to the teachings of Confucius, Ridderus may have been alluding to the similarly contentious situation in the Dutch Republic, in which enlightened Protestants (such as himself) were able to see through the idolatrous practices of the Catholics. Indeed, this debate on idolatry had been one of the defining differences between Catholicism and Protestantism, where the latter often accused the former not only of idolatry, but worse, iconolatry: the worship or adoration of icons. Even paganism was suspected of the Catholics, thus accused for their failing to 'cleanse' the faith of the use of images.<sup>149</sup> Like

146 'In China zijn veel Heidensche cloosteren, doch de Monnicken zijn by de politike niet veel geacht, om datze erger leven dan de gemeine lieden: De politike gaen om haer vermaek na die Cloosteren toe, en komen dan dronken daer uit, hier door geloovent de groote lieden onder de Chinesen niet, datter Hemel en Helle is. Hoeveel aenstoots en verachttinge der religie het quaed leven der geestelijke in alle religie geeft, is genoeg bekend. Yder zie voor zig zelve toe!' in Ridderus, *Historisch A,B,C*, p. 82.

147 João de Acosta, *Historie naturael en morael van de Westersche Indien* (Amsterdam: Broer Jansz and Jan Evertsz Cloppenburgh, 1624).

148 Acosta, *Historie*, fl. 110a.

149 Carlos Eire, *War against idols. The Reformation of worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 1–6; Anthony Milton, *Catholic and reformed. The Roman and Protestant churches in English Protestant thought* (Cambridge:

much of his writings, Ridderus's *A,B,C* was first and foremost intended to argue against Catholicism, and China provided convenient ammunition for this purpose. The same approach is found in various other Dutch works, like *Het hedendaagsche heidendom* ('Contemporary heathendom') by Barneveldt minister Carolinus Godefruius of 1661.<sup>150</sup> According to the minister, the peoples of Asia and America may have been released from their heathen beliefs by the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries; however, they nonetheless belonged to the 'Roman superstitions and idolatries'.<sup>151</sup>

That the religious background of the author could influence the transmission of knowledge can also be gleaned from a comparison between Ridderus's work with that of French historian Pierre d'Avity. D'Avity's geographical account was translated from French into Dutch under the title, *De beschrijvinge der Rijcken staten, ende vorstendommen des gantsen aerd bodems* ('Les etats, empires et principautes du monde'), in 1621.<sup>152</sup> In sharp contrast to Ridderus, the Catholic author displays no grievance against the Jesuits and therefore has no need to attack them via a critique on the religion and philosophy of China; he even credits the society with converting some of the 'idolaters'.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, although D'Avity's description of China's religion and philosophy was still very much based on those early descriptions of idolatry and devil-worship, it was without the negative comparison with Catholic monks.

Clearly, there were elements in the Dutch Republic that used China to argue against Catholicism. In reality, however, the Reformed modus of conversion did not differ all that much from the approach employed by the Society of Jesus.<sup>154</sup> Scholars such as Willem Frijhoff, Benjamin Kaplan, and Judith Pollmann have argued that, alongside the various denominational subcultures, there existed a social reality in which 'confessional borders were easily crossed to facilitate

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Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 186–195; James Noyes, *The politics of iconoclasm. Religion, violence and the culture of image-breaking in Christianity and Islam* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), pp. 23–58.

150 Carolinus Godefruius, *Het hedendaagsche heidendom, of beschrijving vanden godtsdienst der heidenen, so als die ... in ... Asia, Africa en enige gewesten van Europa bevonden is* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Ravesteyn, 1661).

151 Godefruius, *Het hedendaagsche heidendom*, p. 93.

152 D.T.V.Y. [=Pierre d'Avity], *Wereld spiegel waar in vertoont word de beschrijvinge der rijcken staten, ende vorstendommen des gantsen aerdbodems* (Amsterdam and Leiden: Jan Evertsz Cloppenburgh and Jan Claesz van Dorp, 1621).

153 *Wereld spiegel*, p. 493.

154 Charles H. Parker, 'Converting souls across cultural borders. Dutch Calvinism and early modern missionary enterprises', *Journal of Global History*, 8 (2013), pp. 50–71.

collaboration in work and private'.<sup>155</sup> Focusing on the division between private and public displays of faith, both Frijhoff and Kaplan have concluded that these cooperative approaches are best described as 'toleration' *omgangsoecumene* or 'interconfessional conviviality'.<sup>156</sup> It is well known that the multi-confessional nature of the Dutch Republic was beneficial to its production of culture.<sup>157</sup> Indeed, Dutch book production on China (as we have seen) was little hindered by deterring notions of interconfessional consumption and collaboration.<sup>158</sup>

Even though many Dutch authors and publishers took up China as a topic, only few Calvinists made the Middle Kingdom part of their missionary doctrine. Like the Jesuits, Orthodox Calvinists (in Dutch: *Contra-remonstrantse*) scholars were aware that, to successfully convert the peoples in Asia, knowledge of the local language, culture, history, and religious ceremonies was required.<sup>159</sup> In 1620, it was decided to establish a 'deputatio ad Res Indicas', which would be responsible for providing clerical attendance in the overseas possessions of the Dutch Republic.<sup>160</sup> In 1622, the 'deputatio' led to the formation of the

155 Femke Dietz, *Litteraire levensaders. Internationale uitwisseling van woord, beeld en religie in de Republiek* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2012), pp. 14–15.

156 Willem Frijhoff, 'Katholieke toekomstverwachting ten tijde van de Republiek. Structuur, en grondlijnen tot een interpretatie', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 98.3 (1983), pp. 430–459; Judith Pollmann, 'From coexistence to confessional segregation? Religious choice and toleration in the Dutch Republic', in Richard Bonney and D.J.B. Trim (eds.), *Persecution and pluralism. Calvinists and religious minorities in early modern Europe, 1500–1700* (Oxford and Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 123–148; Willem Frijhoff, *Embodied belief. Ten essays on religious culture in Dutch History* (Hilversum, Uitgeverij Verloren, 2010); Benjamin Kaplan, *Divided by faith. Religious conflict and the practice of toleration in early modern Europe* (Oxford: Belknap Press, 2010).

157 See for instance Dietz, *Litteraire levensaders*, pp. 15–18; Volker Manuth, 'Denomination and iconography. The choice of subject matter in the biblical painting of the Rembrandt circle', *Simiolus. Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*, 22.4 (1993–1994), pp. 235–252; Reindert Falkenburg, 'Calvinism and the emergence of a Dutch seventeenth-century landscape art. A critical evaluation', in Paul Corbey Finney (ed.), *Seeing beyond the world. Visual arts and the Calvinist tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 343–368; Ute Lotz-Heumann and Matthias Pohl, 'Confessionalization and literature in the empire, 1555–1700', *Central European History*, 40.1 (2007), pp. 35–61.

158 Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse literatuur, 1560–1700* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008), p. 307, pp. 466–479; Els Stronks, *Negotiating differences. Word, image and religion in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 3–32.

159 Robert Maryks, 'Protestantism and early Jesuits', in Robert Maryks and Festo Mkenda (eds.), *Encounters between Jesuits and Protestants in Africa* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018), pp. 1–10.

160 Olaf Schuhmann, 'Christianity and colonialism in the Malay world', in Susanne Schröter, *Christianity in Indonesia. Perspectives of power* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012), pp. 31–82.

'Seminarium Indicum' at Leiden University. In its ten years of operation, this seminary would produce some of the best-trained Dutch missionaries.

The establishment of such institutions geared towards missionary policy was propelled forward by the *Nadere Reformatie* or 'Further Reformation'.<sup>161</sup> The Further Reformation proposed that the thorough reformation in the Dutch Republic should be accompanied by active progress in the rest of the world. One of its most notable representatives was Gijsbrecht Voetius, who was professor of theology and Semitic languages at the University of Utrecht from 1634 onwards.<sup>162</sup> During the synod of Dordrecht (1618–1619), Voetius was already occupied with missionary issues, such as whether baptism could be administered to children from non-Christian backgrounds living with Dutch families in the East Indies. In his treatises on religious freedom such as *Selectae disputationes theologicae* (1648–1669) and *Politica ecclesiastica* (1663–1676), Voetius expounded the idea that the objective of the Calvinist mission was the conversion of non-believers, heretics, and schismatics, as well as the planting, gathering, and establishing of churches, and the glorification and manifestation of divine grace.<sup>163</sup>

Regarding China, Voetius advocated for the adoption of the Jesuit policy of accommodation, suggesting cultural association with leading elements in Chinese society. In 1669, his disciple Johannes Hoornbeeck published a systematic treatise on mission theology entitled *De conversione Indorum et Gentilium* ('About the conversion of the Indians and Heathens'), describing as well as reflecting on heathendom, paganism, and idolatry.<sup>164</sup> Perhaps guided by his mentor's own notions of accommodation, Hoornbeeck carefully distinguished between different types of non-believers in which the educated and cultured peoples like the Japanese, Indians, Brahmans and Chinese were elevated above other uncivilised 'uneducated peoples'.<sup>165</sup> Consequently, his discussion of

161 Fred van Lieburg, 'Dynamics of Dutch Calvinism. Early modern programs for Further Reformation', in Gijsbert van den Brink and Harro Höpfl, *Calvinism and the making of the European mind* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), pp. 43–66.

162 Jos Gommans and Ineke Loots, 'Arguing with the heathens. The Further Reformation and the ethnohistory of Johannes Hoornbeeck', *Itinerario*, 39.1 (2015), pp. 45–68.

163 Jan Jongeneel, 'The missiology of Gisbertus Voetius, the first comprehensive Protestant theology of missions', *Calvin Theological Journal*, 26 (1991), pp. 47–79.

164 Johannes Hoornbeeck, *De conversione Indorum et Gentilium* (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge and the widow Elizaëus Weyerstraten, 1669). Hoornbeeck's *De conversione* has recently been translated with annotations in English: Ineke Loots and Jo Spaans, *Johannes Hoornbeeck (1617–1666) 'On the Conversion of Indians and Heathens'. An annotated translation of De Conversione Indorum et Gentilium (1669)* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

165 Willem J. van Asselt, 'Scholasticism revisited, methodological reflections on the study of seventeenth-century Reformed thought', in Alister Chapman, John Coffey, and Brad S.

Chinese beliefs was embedded in a rather appreciative exposition on Chinese culture and politics. One striking example has Hoornbeeck referring to Martini in his assertion that everyone in China over the age of 15 could write: 'I ask the Europeans, Christians, and Protestant urgently to remember this and indeed to try to catch up with them'.<sup>166</sup>

The work was published in Amsterdam by Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, with the Latin text printed in quarto, and a two-toned title page in red and black. Van Waesberge moved the type, even from word to word and from line to line, to emphasise the most important lexical terms of the authorial name and the main subject of the books: the CONVERSION of the Indians and heathens. Colour too, was an important symbolic feature in this title page. Rubrications, or the use of the colour red, derives from the traditional rubrics of manuscript and was established to indicate importance: a custom that persisted well into the early modern period. The use of smaller red type also hints at a decorative use of rubrication, which often coexisted alongside a more lexical function. This form (together with the specialised content) signified that the work was meant for a select audience of international scholars who formed part of a 'discourse community'. This community shared an understanding of this particular kind of communication by way of the linguistic and aesthetic conventions employed by the publisher, which made clear that this was a scholarly work for an informed audience.

While Latin restricted the distribution of *De conversione Indorum et Gentilium's* content to an intellectual elite, it also allowed for more freedom in expressing controversial ideas than a book published in Dutch. In the preface, Hoornbeeck set out his motivations for writing a book on foreign heresies, noting how his interest in this topic originated from the many discussions and conflicts in the Dutch Republic on this subject.<sup>167</sup> He then appealed to his readers not only to consider the salvation of their fellow Europeans, but also of foreign people: 'I have noticed that many people think it sufficient for a theologian to be able to hold discussions with Roman Catholics, with Socinians, Anabaptists, Remonstrants and the kind of people, safe from most people except those mentioned here and safe from the parts of their task with respect

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Gregory (eds.), *Seeing things their way. Intellectual history and the return of religion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), pp. 154–174.

166 Loots and Spaans, *Johannes Hoornbeeck*, pp. 97–98.

167 In their translation of Hoornbeeck's work, Ineke Loots and Jo Spaans argue that this remark may refer to 'the problematic theological discussions with Hoornbeeck's colleague, Coccejus, on the merits of predestination versus covenant', which took up a great deal of Hoornbeeck's time and energy while professor at Leiden University. See Loots and Spaans, *Johannes Hoornbeeck*, p. 5.

to others, which is to teach, convert and save, as much as we can, *panta ta ethna* (all the nations).<sup>168</sup>

When it came to discussing the best way to convert the peoples of Asia and the Americas, Hoornbeeck realised that a working definition of 'heathen' was necessary. As such, the notion of idolatry occupies an important place in Hoornbeeck's discussion of heathendom or *gentilismus*. Heathendom, he wrote, is 'the total defection from God and his true worship towards idolatry and every kind of irreverence and injustice'. Hoornbeeck refers here to the total defection from God to the devil and to any type of idolatry.<sup>169</sup> This attitude towards idolatry bears a close resemblance to the Jesuit narrative on Chinese religion and philosophy, in that he urged to emulate the Jesuit conversion methods of among other things learning the local language.<sup>170</sup>

Hoornbeeck supplied a decent amount of information about China and the Chinese. Much of this content comes from Jesuit sources; the disputations on which *De conversione* was based were primarily held between in 1662 and 1663; at that time most of the Dutch sources on China had yet to be published. Hoornbeeck not only borrowed content from Jesuit publications but some of their interpretations as well, which are especially noticeable in his discussion of China.<sup>171</sup> When describing the beliefs of China, Hoornbeeck not only followed the familiar trope of 'among them are three sects', he also directly repeated the Jesuit admiration for the teachings of Confucius while rejecting 'another sect [that is] devoted to idol-worship', and 'the third sect ... of the Epicureans'.<sup>172</sup>

As Hoornbeeck reiterated what the Society of Jesus had related about China and the Chinese, it is natural that his conclusions on how to convert the people of the Middle Kingdom resemble those of the Jesuits as well. Contrary to Voetius, he does not emphasise the establishment of churches but 'seems more interested in giving people some knowledge of the true God'.<sup>173</sup> This knowledge is best conveyed by a specific way of teaching, since instructions should be given in the local language. In general, Hoornbeeck's discussion of China and the missionary opportunities is very favourable: the country presented excellent opportunities for conversion, since the Chinese were a civilised, and well-educated people with high moral standing and moral codes. Furthermore,

168 Loots and Spaans, p. 36.

169 Loots and Spaans, p. 16.

170 Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Theology, ethnography, and the historicization of idolatry', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 67.4 (2006), pp. 571–596.

171 Loots and Spaans, *Johannes Hoornbeeck*, p. 17.

172 Loots and Spaans, pp. 100–103.

173 Loots and Spaans, p. 29.

Hoornbeeck emphasised that they do not have a religion, although it seems that, in times past, they worshipped a single god.

Even before Voetius and Hoornbeeck, other participants of the Further Reformation were already concerned with the missionary effort, most notable among them Justus Heurnius, Willem Teellinck, and Godefridus Udemans. Heurnius and his effort at compiling a Dutch-Latin-Chinese dictionary are discussed in the following chapter; here, I briefly examine Teellinck and Udemans to understand how Protestant ideas about the mission in China were not uniform. Furthermore, calls for conversion remained but isolated occurrences.<sup>174</sup> Both Willem Teellinck and Godefridus Udemans were ministers (*predikant*) in Zeeland (the Dutch province most active in the dispatching of ships to the East and West Indies), and the readership they aimed at probably consisted of like-minded merchants from that province.

In his *Ecce homo, ofte oogen-salve* ('Behold the man, or eye salve') of 1646 and *Davids danckbaerheyt voor Gods weldadicheyt* ('David's gratitude for God's kindness') Teellinck argued that profuse sermonising was the most effective instrument for converting the peoples of Asia and America.<sup>175</sup> He dedicated his works to the representatives of the East India Company and the West India Company and urged the latter to donate the first year's profits to the propagation of the Gospel.<sup>176</sup> Teellinck gave little to no ethnographical information in his book and, unlike Hoornbeeck and Voetius, he saw little to praise in the heathen peoples of Asia and the Americas. Nevertheless, he made use of them: cautioning his readers to look upon the heathens as a mirror to reflect their own defects as Christians: 'They are in the habit of staring at their own face in a mirror every morning in order to see how it is doing'.<sup>177</sup>

In 1638, Godefridus Udemans published *'t Geestelijck roer van het coopmans schip* ('The spiritual helm of the merchant vessel').<sup>178</sup> The work was meant

174 James Tanis, 'Reformed pietism and Protestant missions', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 67.1 (1974), pp. 65–73.

175 Willem Teellinck, *Ecce homo, ofte oogen-salve: voor die noch sitten in blintheit des ghemoedts* (Dordrecht: Abraham Andriessz, 1622[=1646]); Willem Teellinck, *Davids danckbaerheyt voor Gods weldadicheyt* (Dordrecht, 1624[=ca. 1646]); see also W.J. op 't Hof, *Willem Teellinck (1579–1629). Leven, geschriften en invloed* (De Groot: Goudriaan, 2008), pp. 252–255; Els Stronks, *Negotiating differences, Word, image, and religion in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 41–49.

176 Loots and Spaans, *Johannes Hoornbeeck*, p. 14; Tanis, 'Reformed pietism and Protestant missions', p. 72.

177 'Dese hebben die gewoonte dat sy alle mogen haer aengesicht plegen, t'aenschouwen in een spiegel om te sien hoe het daer mede staet', in Teellinck, *Ecce homo*, p. 74.

178 Godefridus Udemans, *'t Geestelyck roer van't coopmans schip* (Dordrecht: François Boels, 1638).

for Dutchmen in the maritime trade, including those sailing to the East and West Indies. To interact effectively with the heathens, Udemans provided some information about Chinese culture, politics, and religion, which was most likely taken from earlier Dutch publications. He was not entirely negative in his descriptions: he recognised that especially the Chinese may be very skilled in cultural and governmental matters.<sup>179</sup> Even so, the people of Asia and America remain 'stupid and unknowing ... in godly matters'.<sup>180</sup> Like Teellinck, Udemans also used the heathens as a mirror to motivate his readers 'to critical inspection of their own moral behaviour and their own love of God'.<sup>181</sup> For instance, Udemans compared the politically accomplished 'Indians' with freethinkers or *Libertijnen* 'and other lukewarm Christians' in the Dutch Republic to encourage his readers.<sup>182</sup>

That both Teellinck and Udemans urged their readers to self-reflection by comparing them with the heathens of Asia and America may have led to publication in the Dutch language. As their books aimed at a readership of merchants (primarily from Zeeland), this would be a logical move, extending their readership beyond those who could read Latin. In addition to their religious concerns as members of the wider Protestant community, these readers, like those of Van Linschoten and Nieuhof, had commercial ambitions. After all, Zeeland was the Dutch province most active in the dispatch of VOC ships. The paratext of Teellinck's and Udemans's books reflect this dual missionary and mercantile aim. Publication in Dutch, without illustrations and in smaller sizes made these books broadly accessible, relatively cheap, and convenient: perfectly aimed at merchants on their way to the heathen regions of Asia or America. In their books, religious conviction and calls to conversion are thus joined in content and form with the mercantile considerations of both author and reader.

By the third quarter of the seventeenth century, readers in the Dutch Republic could access a number of Calvinist works on China. However, compared to publications by Catholic and less explicit Protestant authors, this number was still small.<sup>183</sup> Those most active in arguing for a Protestant mission in China

179 Loots and Spaans, *Johannes Hoornbeeck*, p. 15.

180 Udemans, *'t Geestelyck roer*, f. 53v.

181 Loots and Spaans, *Johannes Hoornbeeck*, p. 15.

182 Udemans, *'t Geestelyck roer*, p. 114.

183 Parker, 'Missionary enterprises in Dutch Calvinism', pp. 50–52; Boxer, *The Dutch seaborne empire*, pp. 149–150; Jean Gelman Taylor, *The social world of Batavia. European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), pp. 21–23; Holden Furber, *Rival empires of trade in the Orient, 1600–1800* (Minneapolis: University

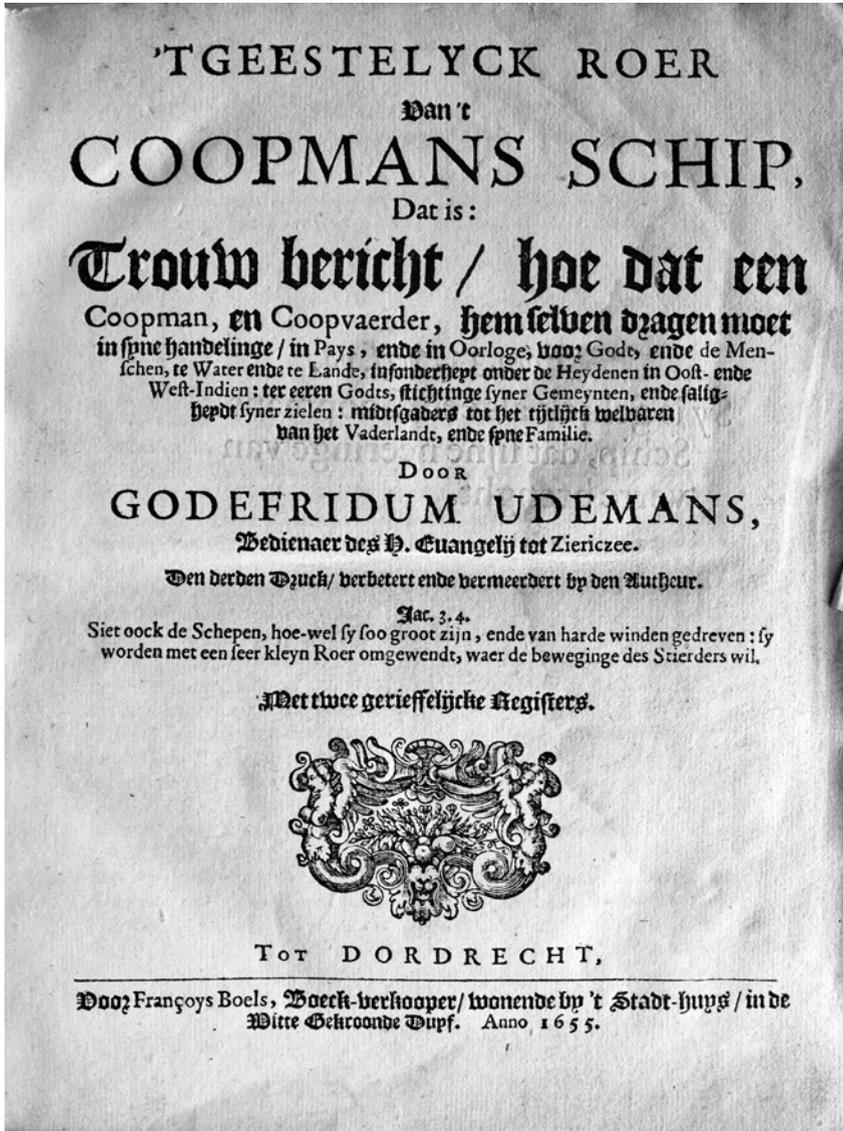


FIGURE 16 Godefridus Udemans, 't Geestelyck roer van't coopmans schip (Dordrecht: François Boels, 1655) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (O 77-21)

were representatives of the Dutch Further Reformation. Yet, authors like Voetius, Hoornbeeck, and Teellinck and Udemans differed in their approach to China and its religion and philosophy, which is reflected in the form and content of their publications. We have seen, for instance, that Voetius and Hoornbeeck argued for the adoption of the Jesuit policy of accommodation: Hoornbeeck's discussion of China is especially favourable in that regard. Moreover, both the form and content of their books aimed at a select group of international scholars, who shared an understanding that the work was intended for an informed audience. In contrast, Teellinck and Udemans's publications in Dutch transformed representations of Chinese religion and philosophy into instructional religious treatises: China had effectively become a mirror of self-reflection. This new direction was indicative of a more diverse readership that also had mercantile stakes in the mission in China.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, Dutch representations of Chinese religion and philosophy in print underwent considerable changes. Merchants employed by the Dutch East India Company and missionaries of the Society of Jesus brought back an increasing amount of knowledge about the Middle Kingdom, gradually opening up the country to Western scrutiny. Quickly recognising the commercial appeal of these first-hand accounts, Dutch printers and publishers used them to turn out an ever-growing number of books about China. How the Middle Kingdom and its religion and philosophy was represented in these books was often the result of carefully considered publishing strategies. To appeal to their potential readership, book producers presented Chinese systems of belief from a mercantile, missionary, or cultural entrepreneurial perspective, sometimes adding illustrations to boost economic and cultural value. These strategies not only influenced the form of the book, they also determined how knowledge about China was subtly altered through the book-making process.

The mercantile perspective was motivated by justifications of direct trade: an aim that was shared by early Dutch merchants-travellers, their publishers, and the envisaged buyers of their travelogues. Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinerario* (1596) and Willem Lodewijcksz's *Historie van Indien* (1598) generally gave positive accounts of China, in which the religion and philosophy of the Chinese was considered misguided yet not necessarily immoral. Dutch

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of Minnesota Press, 1976), pp. 325–327; L.J. Joosse, 'Scoone dingen sijn sware dingen'. *Een onderzoek naar de motieven en activiteiten in de Nederlanden tot verbreiding van de Gereformeerde religie gedurende de eerste helft van de zeventiende eeuw* (Leiden: Groen en Zoon, 1992), pp. 58–59; Gordon D. Laman, 'The origin of the Protestant missions', *Reformed Review*, 43.4 (1989), pp. 52–67.

travellers presented China in this way to justify their trade ambitions. In a similar fashion, their publishers, most notably Cornelis Claesz of Amsterdam, intended these books for readers with interests in trade with China. This conscious effort towards cultural and religious alignment resulted in a representation of familiar otherness: Dutch mercantile books mention the adoration and ritual glorification of idols; yet, this 'benighted idolatry' is not outright condemned. By describing Chinese religion and philosophy in terms of (tolerated) idol-worship, early Dutch travellers and their publishers presented an ambiguous image of the Chinese belief system. From the analysis of mercantile texts, such as *Itinerario* and *Historie van Indien*, it becomes remarkable clear that their ambiguous representations of Chinese religion and philosophy stemmed from the uncomfortable partnership of idolatry and trade that marked interactions between the two cultures. While the former was repellent and caused no end of spiritual dilemma, the lure of the latter was too tempting. On this evidence, we might conclude then, that those such as Van Linschoten and Lodewijksz were both merchants eager for profit and therefore willing to close an eye to local heresies and Christians searching for compatible frameworks to place newly encountered world views in. These economic considerations of cultural consumption and production often overlapped, and the image of familiar otherness that resulted met the wishes of author, producer, and potential reader.

Dutch mercantile books on China were often illustrated with woodcuts or copper engravings, which regularly depicted Chinese deities or religious customs. Illustrations may be considered the most persistent form of paratext and, as such, they are able to change the possible reception and interpretation of the text they surround. The so-called Devil in Calicut is one of the most enduring visualisations of Chinese religion and philosophy of the seventeenth century. While the Devil started out as an illustration of an Indian deity, it was soon transformed into a Chinese idol by paratextual decisions made by Cornelis Claesz and Theodor de Bry. By determining the visual and textual trajectory of the Devil in Calicut, these publishers changed the possible interpretation of the image according to the presumed wishes of their intended audience. Consequently, image and text are in dialogue with one another, with the publisher acting as intermediary, creating a new and enduring visual image of Chinese religion and philosophy in print.

The missionary perspective originated from Jesuit accounts propagating their accommodating missionary policy in China, and from Calvinist Dutchmen who reacted to it. To convert the Confucian elites, Jesuit missionaries accommodated Chinese rituals, arguing that adherence to the Christian faith was not incompatible with such rites as ancestor worship. In Europe, reports by Jesuit

missionaries Matteo Ricci, Nicolas Trigault, and Martino Martini were soon disseminated in print, especially in the Catholic Southern Netherlands. Dutch publishers like the Elzeviers of Leiden and Amsterdam utilised the Jesuit's descriptions of China and its religion and philosophy; however, they took a different approach to their southerly colleagues. By removing most references to the mission from the paratext, books such as *Regni Chinensis descriptio* (1639) concentrated mostly on China itself. The Jesuit representation of China was maintained but, since a clear missionary view was lacking, these books appealed to broader group of general readers.

While the Protestant mission in mainland China only took off in the early nineteenth century, some members of the Dutch Further Reformation did engage with China and its religion and philosophy during the seventeenth century. Even though they belonged to the same denomination, Calvinist writers were not uniform in their representations and interpretations. Gijsbrecht Voetius and Johannes Hoornbeeck relied heavily on Jesuit sources, which made for a strangely equivocal representation of Chinese beliefs. And while they were not eager to adhere to the Catholic perspective, they nevertheless took the same accommodating approach to argue for evangelisation. The followers of Confucius were regarded as civilised, well-educated and with high moral standing: perfect candidates for evangelisation. However, by their form and content, these books were specifically aimed at an educated elite of wealthy European buyers. As such, this learned Calvinist representation of Chinese religion and philosophy had little impact on the Dutch representation of China among the popular classes.

Calvinists Willem Teellinck and Godefridus Udemans did publish their views on Chinese religion and philosophy in Dutch, and their approach is markedly different. By comparing the 'heathens' of Asia and America to their own Dutch readers, Teellinck and Udemans held up a mirror for self-reflection. Since their readership consisted of Dutch merchants from Zeeland, their readers also had commercial ambitions, in addition to missionary aims. Teellinck and Udemans's books reflect this missionary and mercantile perspective. They were published in Dutch, without illustrations, and in a small and cheaper size: perfectly suited for merchants on their way to Asia aboard a VOC ship. Thus, in these works, Calvinist conviction and calls to conversion were joined with mercantile considerations.

## The Dutch Commodification of Confucius

In the second half of the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic became the indisputable centre of European book production.<sup>1</sup> The remarkable political structure of the Dutch Republic, as well as the absence of an absolute state religion were fundamental for this economic potential. Religious and economic immigrants combined with native skill to provide the necessary manpower, professional skills, and (equally important) creativity to give the industry its defining boost.<sup>2</sup> The relatively stable economic situation presented printers and publishers with the opportunity to sell their books ‘wherever there was a demand for them.’<sup>3</sup>

Dutch cultural and economic growth was an important impetus for innovation on the book market, and a number of business-savvy publishers saw the commercial potential of books on China. In addition to the mercantile and missionary perspective in reproducing and reassembling information, these Dutch publishers displayed a new strategy towards Chinese religion and philosophy: that of ‘cultural entrepreneur’. This term has recently been identified especially in economics and the social sciences, yet it has also been employed in the study of culture in the Dutch Golden Age. A widely used definition is given by Thomas Aageson:

Cultural entrepreneurs are cultural change agents and resourceful visionaries who organise cultural, financial, social, and human capital, to generate revenue from a cultural activity. Their innovative solutions result in economically sustainable cultural enterprises that enhance livelihoods

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1 Paul Hoftijzer, *The Dutch Republic, centre of the European book trade in the 17th century*, [European History Online] <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/backgrounds/the-book-market/paul-g-hoftijzer-the-dutch-republic-centre-of-the-european-book-trade-in-the-17th-century>, accessed 3 February 2021.

2 Graham Gibbs, ‘The role of the Dutch Republic as the intellectual entrepôt of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries’, *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 86 (1971), pp. 155–168; Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world*, pp. 266–293.

3 Hoftijzer, *The Dutch Republic*.

and create cultural value and wealth for both creative producers and consumers of cultural services and products.<sup>4</sup>

Economic historian Joel Mokyr demonstrated that cultural entrepreneurs also played a crucial role in the development of innovative economies, such as the production of print, in the early modern period.<sup>5</sup> In this regard, Mokyr examined why Europe became increasingly open to new ideas, theories, and concepts between 1500 and 1800 and why such a ‘culture of growth’ did not develop elsewhere. How economies of culture functioned in the Dutch Republic is discussed by Claartje Rasterhoff in her work, *Painting and publishing as cultural industries* of 2017, which explains how technology and institutions such as publishing houses played a crucial role in the growth and formation of cultural industries.<sup>6</sup> Frans Blom does the same for Dutch theatre and its publishers in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.<sup>7</sup>

Notions of cultural industries and entrepreneurship are useful, not only for demonstrating how economically motivated individuals developed new arguments and theories, but also for explaining how these innovations were successfully advanced in the early modern market of ideas. Entrepreneurs like Jan Jansz Deutel, Jacob van Meurs, and Simon de Vries acted as focal points around which new ideas coalesced, and their activities as printers and publishers allowed for a rapid dissemination of these new ideas in print.<sup>8</sup> In the market of ideas, publishers tried to persuade their intended audience of the ‘correctness of their beliefs and the merit of their values and to provide information to others who do not have it.’<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that the impetus to influence the market of ideas did not solely depend on economic motives. Both supply and demand for cultural goods such as books are linked to complex interactions of economic growth and cultural capital.<sup>10</sup> The economic

4 Thomas H. Aageson, ‘Cultural entrepreneurs. Producing cultural value and wealth’, in Helmut K. Ankheier and Yudhishthir Raj Isar, *Cultures and globalization series. The cultural economy* (London: Sage Publications, 2008), pp. 92–107.

5 Joel Mokyr, *A culture of growth. The origins of the modern economy* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017).

6 Claartje Rasterhoff, *Painting and publishing as cultural industries. The fabric of creativity in the Dutch Republic, 1580–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2017.

7 Frans Blom and Olga van Marion, ‘Lope de Vega and the conquest of Spanish theatre in the Netherlands’, *Anuario Lope de Vega*, 23 (2017), pp. 155–177.

8 Mokyr, *A culture of growth*, pp. 59–69.

9 Mokyr, *A culture of growth*, p. 62.

10 David Throsby, ‘The production and consumption of the arts. A view of cultural economics’, *Journal of Economic Literature*, 32.1 (1994), pp. 1–29.

analysis of the production and consumption of culture is multidimensional and dependent on a variety of factors.<sup>11</sup>

In the formation of Dutch perceptions of Chinese religion and philosophy in print, many factors were of influence. Economic motives were part of larger considerations about religion, politics, and society. To explore these factors, three producers and their books on China are discussed: Jan Jansz Deutel's publication of Willem IJsbrantsz Bontekoe's *Journael* was one of the few true best-sellers of the seventeenth century. This account of shipwreck in Asia shows a 'functionally indifferent' approach towards the Chinese. Another strategy was taken by Jacob van Meurs, who applied considerable effort in making his monumental books on China a commercial success. Van Meurs relied on Jesuit accounts but cleverly adapted them to fit the wants of a newly emerging Dutch elite. This strategy made his books on China innovative as he hit upon a formula that gave an easily digestible and broadly appealing image of Chinese religion and philosophy. Finally, Simon de Vries compiled information available from older sources into something decidedly new, changing representations of Chinese religion and philosophy by placing them next to other descriptions of the foreign world.

## 1 Popular Works on China

In 1618, when the skipper Willem IJsbrantsz Bontekoe started his voyage from the Dutch island of Texel to Bantam on Java and, from there, on to the coast of China, he could hardly have guessed that his exploits in 'the East' would turn into a best-seller: *Journael ofte gedenckwaerdige beschrijvinghe vande Oost-Indische reyse* (in full: 'Journal or memorable description of the East Indian voyage of Willem Bontekoe from Hoorn, including many remarkable and dangerous things that happened to him there').<sup>12</sup> The work was published in 1646, no less than 21 years after Bontekoe had returned from Asia in 1625. Regardless, its success was enormous: in large part due to the combined efforts of the skipper and his publisher Jan Deutel. As a member of Hoorn's Chamber of Rhetorics, Deutel knew how to use language to its fullest rhetorical potential. He heavily edited the text of the journal and moulded it into a

11 William G. Bowen, *Performing arts. The economic dilemma* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1966).

12 Willem IJsbrantsz Bontekoe, *Journael ofte gedenckwaerdige beschrijvinge vande Oost-Indische reyse van Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe* (Hoorn: Jan Deutel, 1646) (USTC 1010883).

story of adventure, disaster and religion to produce a book that had a tremendous popular appeal, with over seventy editions published before 1800.<sup>13</sup>

Het *Journael* is not a book primarily about China. However, Bontekoe's descriptions can certainly provide further insight into representations of the Middle Kingdom in popular printed works. These books were relatively cheap and, consequently, within reach of a larger public. Those readers, the majority of which had little knowledge of China, were presented with a rather ambiguous representation of the Chinese. On the one hand, Bontekoe proved appreciative of individual encounters with local Chinese. On the other, he was quite disdainful of the Chinese people in general. Furthermore, even though he and his men encounter many Chinese, he pays little to no attention to their religion and philosophy. This perspective of *functionally indifference* indicates that the beliefs of China were of such little significance to Bontekoe that he simply had no ideological attitude towards them. He was primarily there to fulfil his duties as merchant employed by the VOC.

Bontekoe set sail for Asia in the service of the Dutch East India Company in 1618. On the Indian Ocean, his ship *De Nieuwe Hoorn* ran into trouble after a gunpowder magazine exploded. The ship sank, leaving only 72 out of a crew of 119 to service in two little boats. After a miserable journey of 13 days, assuaged by great hunger and thirst (to such a degree they even contemplated eating one of the shipping boys), they finally reached Sumatra and then Bantam: saved by a fleet under the command of fellow Dutchman Frederik Houtman. In Batavia, Jan Pietersz Coen, the Governor General of the Indies, commanded Bontekoe to harass the Chinese coast: 'Then they decided, that I should go with the same ship [that brought him from Bantam to Batavia] to China, together with seven other ships, under the command of Cornelis Reyertsz van der Gou, to occupy Macao if possible, or to go to the Pescadores and use every tool at our disposal to advance the trade with China.'<sup>14</sup>

This voyage is described in the second part of the journal. This narrative is considerably less exiting than the first part, yet it offers valuable insights into the Dutch perspective on China and its inhabitants. More interesting, however, is the editorial process of this second part of the journal, which is revealed when the printed edition is compared to a handwritten report of Bontekoe's journey

13 Karel Bostoën etc., (ed.), *Bontekoe. De schipper, het journaal, de scheepsjongens* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1996).

14 'Toen besloot men, dat ik met hetzelfde schip naar China zou gaan, samen met nog zeven schepen, onder bevel van commandeur Cornelis Reyertsz van der Gou, om zo mogelijk Macao te bezetten, of naar de Pescadores te gaan en met alle ten dienste staande mid-delen de handel met China te bevorderen', in Bontekoe, *Journael*, p. 65.



FIGURE 17 *Willem Ijsbrantsz Bontekoe, Journael ofte gedenkwaerdige beschrijvinghe (Hoorn: Jan Jansz Deutel, 1646) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (1804 D 20)*

that is kept at the National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague.<sup>15</sup> It is the only contemporary transcript of the journey, although it was not made by Bontekoe himself.

The manuscript contains a great deal of nautical information, such as wind directions and the location of anchor grounds. Deutel also made many additions; primarily anecdotes and descriptions (perhaps disclosed to him by Bontekoe) to make the story more dramatic. For instance, on 24 June 1622, Bontekoe and his men tried to take Macao from the Portuguese. The manuscript accounts for the loss of 130 men; yet, it is the printed book and not the transcript that explains how this came about: when the gunpowder of the Dutch accidentally ignited, some Japanese traitors notified the Portuguese enemy, who immediately attacked. These, and other rhetorical interventions indicate that Deutel had a heavy hand in shaping Bontekoe's *Journael* into the best-seller it would become. He removed much of the official and perhaps tedious nautical and geographical information and emphasised the spectacular nature of the journey through anecdotes. In that way, he appealed to readers interested rather in adventurous stories than in documentation of trade missions.

Deutel's edition of Bontekoe brings us to the field of popular literature. Since the 1960s, scholars have studied reading among the 'classes populaires'.<sup>16</sup> They have analysed the cultural habits of the 'lower classes' with an emphasis on the French *littérature populaire*, the English *popular literature*, and the German *Volkslektüre*. Popular and often cheap works of print are indicative of wide and continued acceptance, measured by sales, imitation, adaptation to other cultural forms, and general commercial success.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, it has

15 It is the only contemporary transcript of the journey, although it was not made by Bontekoe himself; Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC), nr. 1.04.02, inventory 5049; Vibeke Roeper and Diederick Wildeman, 'Schipper Bontekoe', in Bostoen etc., (ed.), *Bontekoe*, p. 35.

16 Robert Mandrou, *De culture populaire aux 17e et 18e siècles. La Bibliothèque bleue de Troyes* (Paris: Stock, 1964); Victor E. Neuburg, *Popular literature. A history and guide from the beginning of printing to the year 1897* (London: The Woburn Press, 1977); Joad Raymond (ed.), *The Oxford history of popular print culture. Cheap prints in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); E.P. Thompson, 'History from below', *Times Literary Supplement* (7 April 1966); Roelof Harms, Joad Raymond, and Jeroen Salman (eds.), *Not dead things. The dissemination of popular print in England and Wales, Italy, and the Low Countries, 1500–1820* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013); Jeroen Salman, *Peddlars and the popular press. Itinerant distribution networks in England and the Netherlands 1600–1850* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014).

17 The term 'popular print' specifically refers to printed images of generally low artistic quality that were sold cheaply from the 15th to the 18th centuries, often accompanied by small

become clear that ‘popular’ should be considered a synonym of ‘successful’, not as an antonym for ‘value’.

Various issues arise when examining ‘popular literature’. How to define these concepts that seem to focus on something that has often been described as ‘folk culture’? To begin, the concept presumes that there is such a thing as print solely aimed at the lower classes, who were often only marginally literate, and would not have been able to spend much money on books. In practice, this situation was complicated by a much more fluid reality of consumption, in which different types of audiences read and bought a variety of books.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, regarding the Dutch situation, it has been established that there never existed such a thing as a separate corpus of *volkslectuur* or popular literature with any specific or demarcated characteristics.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, there has been little consensus over which social classes should be counted among the readership of popular literature.<sup>20</sup> The most workable definition should not exclude any type of reader beforehand and popular literature must be viewed within its broad ‘literary and social context’.<sup>21</sup>

Despite all these precautions, studying early modern printed works through concepts such as ‘popular’ versus ‘elite’ remains an important heuristic tool in determining how readers could perceive the content and form of books like Bontekoe’s *Journael*, and how these perceptions differed from books aimed at more elitist buyers.<sup>22</sup> Compared to other books on China, Bontekoe was relatively cheap. In the inventory of bookseller David Ruaris, a bound copy of ‘Bontekoes rijsje’ (‘Bontekoe’s journey’) is listed for 0.80 fl., which indeed put it within reach of the lower middle classes.<sup>23</sup> The fact that it was reprinted

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amounts of text. See A. Hyatt Mayor, *Prints & people: Social history of printed pictures* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980).

18 Roelof Harms, Joad Raymond, and Jeroen Salman, ‘Introduction’, in Harms, Raymond, and Salman (eds.), *Not dead things*, pp. 1–32.

19 Bert van Selm, “Almanacken, lietjes, en somwijl wat wonder, wat nieuws”. *Volkscultuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden (1480–1800)*, *Leidschrift*, 5 (1989), pp. 33–68.

20 Roger Chartier, *Cultural history. Between practices and representations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982).

21 Salman, *Populair drukwerk in de Gouden Eeuw*, pp. 22–23.

22 James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (eds.), *The practice and representation of reading in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Kevin Sharpe, *Reading revolutions. The politics of reading in early modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Kevin Sharpe, *Reading, society, and politics in early modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

23 Van Selm, “... te bekomen voor een civielen prijs”, pp. 98–116.

at least 70 times before 1800 also indicates that the work found a new public time and again.<sup>24</sup>

As noted earlier, Bontekoe is often ambiguous in his descriptions of the Chinese: he demonstrates appreciation for individual encounters, while at the same time proving disdainful of the Chinese people as a whole. He described their food, ships, buildings, and appearance; yet, he rarely mentioned their religion. With this lack of interest and attention, Bontekoe demonstrates an absence of awareness and care for the inner life of the Chinese people he meets. Their religion and philosophy were of little to no significance to him, and as such he simply took no attitude towards them. Likewise, Bontekoe's more general attitude towards the Chinese is also obscure. In one encounter, dated July 1622, the Dutch skipper described the Chinese fishers as cowardly, since 'they fled from us', implying that the sight of a Dutch vessel alone was enough to instil considerable fear. This theme returns often in reports of 'villages from which the inhabitants had fled', or Chinese 'hiding' because they did not want to get caught by the Dutch.<sup>25</sup> Bontekoe often hinted at reasons why the Chinese might have been so afraid of the Dutch with descriptions like: 'After we shot some of them dead, they retreated and ran away', and '[we] encountered two villages and set fire to them'.<sup>26</sup> Even Bontekoe himself acknowledged the rather cruel methods of his men when, on 29 November 1622, a Chinese fisher defected to the Dutch; the fisher 'seemed to be half mad', implying that no sane man would have defected. Although the Chinese were often described as cowardly, Bontekoe also praises some of them for their bravery: 'They bravely attacked us, and we did not give way'.<sup>27</sup>

A remarkable turnaround of attitude eventuates when Bontekoe refers to the intellect of the Chinese encountered. The Dutch often emerged as victors from their skirmishes with the Chinese, emphasising their 'cowardly' nature: 'In total confusion [the Chinese] carried their weapons away from their

24 Margaret Spufford, *Small books and pleasant histories, Popular fiction and its readership in seventeenth century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Garrelt Verhoeven, 'Willem Bontekoe (1587–1657). Dutch sailor and explorer', in Jennifer Speake (ed.), *Literature of travel and exploration* (New York: Fitzroy Daerborn, 2003), pp. 114–115.

25 Hallvard Lillehammer, 'The nature and ethics of indifference', *The Journal of Ethics*, 21.1 (2016), pp. 17–35; Thomas M. Lennon, 'Descartes and the seven senses of indifference in early modern philosophy', *Studies in Modern Philosophy. Études de philosophie moderne*, 50.3 (2011), pp. 577–602; Tad Schmaltz, *Early modern Cartesianisms. Dutch and French constructions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 15–63.

26 'Kwamen twee dorpen tegen waarvan de bewoners gevlucht waren', in Bontekoe, *Journal*, p. 79.

27 'Ze vielen ons dapper aan en wij wilden niet wijken', in Bontekoe, *Journal*, p. 75.

village'.<sup>28</sup> However, when the locals act in accordance to Bontekoe's wishes, he is not unwilling to praise them for their insightfulness and good intentions. In November 1623, Bontekoe met a Chinese named Cipzuan or Quitsuan. On behalf of the Chinese merchants, Quitsuan negotiated trade with the Dutch. According to Bontekoe, Quitsuan told of a 'recluse or hermit' living in the mountains, who was 'of high birth and had been enormously rich and, if his sources were right, also a mandarin of that province'.<sup>29</sup> After the death of his wife, the hermit had dedicated himself to aiding the poor. He 'was highly regarded by all, and was even taken for a prophet and his words for prophecies'.<sup>30</sup> The reason why Bontekoe speaks in such a praising manner of the unknown hermit becomes clear soon enough when the latter came aboard to successfully negotiate the trading deal between the Dutch and the Chinese. The hermit and the negotiator Quitsuan 'promised after some talking back and forth to do their best to bring about a successful conclusion'.<sup>31</sup> Apparently, when the Chinese cooperated with the Dutch, they were praised for their intelligence and insightfulness; yet, when they acted contrary to Bontekoe's wishes, they were deemed stupid and obstinate.

A similar episode occurred in May 1623, when Bontekoe and his men had found themselves in an awkward situation, having captured 'several hundred Chinese' while their own ship was manned by only 50 healthy Dutchmen.<sup>32</sup> When two of the captured Chinese promised to return with provisions if they were set free, Bontekoe decided to take his chances. The following day, the former prisoners indeed returned with 'chickens, eggs, a pig, lemons, apples, sugar-cane, and tobacco'. Bontekoe was so surprised that he felt inclined to write: 'It testifies to an attitude which will shame many Christians, who often do not remember their promises after being out of trouble'.<sup>33</sup>

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28 'Ze droegen in totale verwarring hun geschut een eind weg van hun dorp', in Bontekoe, *Journal*, p. 75.

29 'Verder zei deze Cipzuan dat er in zijn woonplaats een kluisenaar of heremiet in de bergen woonde, die van hoge afkomst was en geweldig rijk was geweest en naar hij meende ook mandarijn van die provincie', in Bontekoe, *Journal*, p. 88.

30 'Nu deed hij niet anders dan van arme mensen, die onbemiddeld waren, de zaken bepleiten bij de groten. Stond daarom bij hoog en laag in aanzien; ja werd voor een profeet gehouden en zijn woorden voor profetieën', in Bontekoe, *Journal*, p. 88.

31 'Hij beloofde ons na enig heen en weer praten zijn uiterste best te zullen doen om de zaak tot een goed einde te brengen', in Bontekoe, *Journal*, p. 88.

32 'We hadden toen een paar honderd Chinezen aan boord; waren bang dat ze ons zouden overmeesteren, want zoals gezegd waren we maar met vijftig gezonde mannen sterk', in Bontekoe, *Journal*, p. 83.

33 'Hadden kippen meegebracht, eieren, een varken, citroenen, appels, suikerriet, en tabak.... Het getuigt van een houding die vele Christenen beschaamd doet staan, die immers vaak

Other contacts with the Chinese were described in the same ambiguous vein: both with appreciation for individual encounters while at the same time disdainful of the Chinese people as a whole. Interactions between the Dutch and the Chinese seemed difficult, yet Bontekoe also reported numerous occasions where contact was positive; for instance, the many times Chinese fishermen sold him dried fish. He even related an incident where he and his men were stranded with damaged weapons but were still generously helped by the locals: 'Along the way they [Bontekoe's men] encountered a small house in which a man and a woman were sitting and went inside. They re-lit their fuses and put their weapons ... in order. They also gave them food.'<sup>34</sup> A similar encounter is related on the next page when Bontekoe's men were invited into a Chinese village, where they were fed, given some tobacco and a place to stay for the night in 'their temple'.<sup>35</sup>

The temple mentioned in this episode is the only reference to Chinese religion or philosophy in the journal. This emphasises Bontekoe's attitude of 'functional indifference' as, during the 1640s, a variegated view towards China and its systems of belief had already begun to emerge. It is therefore interesting to note that, in preparing the *Journael*, Bontekoe and Deutel would have had recourse to many of these views in print, but did not use them. They could have followed Jan Huygen van Linschoten, as various references within the *Journael* testify that they used this work as a source on Asia. But in the end, the Chinese figure only as a background character to the description of Bontekoe's own exploits.

The enormous success of the journal was, in large part, due to its sensational qualities, and it is not surprising that Bontekoe and Deutel banked on the fact that their potential readers would be more interested in dramatic descriptions of the adventures of the Dutch in Asia than in a religious and moral exposition of the Middle Kingdom and its peoples. Their objective was to present readers with an attractive account of travel and disaster, not a documentary or persuasive report. It is exactly this preference for sensational descriptions that reveal

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niet meer aan hun beloften denken als ze eenmaal uit de knip zijn', in Bontekoe, *Journael*, p. 82. Also note the exchange of tobacco, which indicates that the Chinese had had contact with other Europeans.

34 'Onderweg kwamen ze een huisje tegen waarin een man en een vrouw zaten en gingen daar binnen; ze staken hun lonten weer aan en brachten hun wapens, die geheel onklaar waren geraakt doordat ze nat waren geworden tijdens het landen met de boot, weer in orde. Hier kregen ze ook te eten, want deze man gaf hun wat rijst', in Bontekoe, *Journael*, p. 73.

35 'Brachten onze mannen naar hun tempel, gaven hen daar te eten en te drinken en wat tabak', in Bontekoe, *Journael*, p. 74.

their attitude towards the Chinese; their inconsistent characterisations may be indicative of how less affluent and not particularly intellectual Dutch readers might have perceived China. Fiction, reality, and opinion about the Middle Kingdom were thereby amalgamated into a hazy, yet attractive, image.<sup>36</sup>

## 2 Jacob van Meurs

Publisher Jacob van Meurs was responsible for some of the most enduring images of China during the second half of the seventeenth century. He was not a missionary or merchant, author or artist, but a publisher *pur sang*: he adapted information from earlier travelogues and Jesuit reports in such a way that his relatively neutral representation of Chinese religion and philosophy would appeal to a broad selection of wealthy buyers. According to early modern historian Benjamin Schmidt, Van Meurs's books 'mark the debut, in an important sense, of a new form of European engagement with the non-European world'.<sup>37</sup> Between 1650 and 1680, Van Meurs produced dozens of works of geography, forging a new genre that was largely dependent on a grand folio size combined with an exceptionally high quality of paratext.<sup>38</sup> *Het gezantschap* contains 149 eye-catching copper engravings and *Gedenkwaardig bedryf* holds 102. These engravings were exceptional in the genre of early modern travelogues. The publisher presented the images as being made 'after life', giving the impression that they were eyewitness observations. In reality, they were actually manipulated and amended by the publisher. In presenting Asia in such a luxurious manner, Van Meurs hit upon a formula for presenting the foreign world in print 'that would prove phenomenally successful and vastly influential for years to come'.<sup>39</sup>

Van Meurs published two monumental books on China: Johan Nieuhof's *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham* ('An embassy from the East India Company of the United

36 Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *The key concepts of post-colonial studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 150–160; Xavier Guillaume, 'Travelogues of difference. International relations theory and travel literature', *Alternatives. Global, Local, and Political*, 36.2 (2011), pp. 136–154; Alan Moss, 'Comparing ruins. National trauma in Dutch travel accounts of the seventeenth century', Lotte Jensen (ed.), *The roots of nationalism. National identity formation in early modern Europe, 1600–1815* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016), pp. 217–232.

37 Schmidt, *Inventing exoticism*, p. 25.

38 Schmidt, *Inventing exoticism*.

39 Sun, 'The illusion of verisimilitude', p. 80.

Provinces to the Grand Tartar Cham, emperor of China') of 1665, and Olfert Dapper's *Gedenkwaerdig bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Maetschappye, op de kuste en in het keizerrijk van Taising of Sina* of 1670. An analysis of the publication history of both books, as well as an examination of their content will show that Van Meurs indeed ushered in a novel perspective on the Middle Kingdom.<sup>40</sup> He cleverly adapted earlier writings to fit the wants and needs of a newly emerging elite that could afford expensive books on foreign countries. Van Meurs's grand books on China were not necessarily always economically successful, yet his publishing strategy made his books indeed innovative by focusing on an easily digestible and broadly appealing image of the Middle Kingdom.

To ensure the success of *Het gezantschap* and *Gedenkwaerdig bedryf*, Van Meurs focused on two points: the illustrations had to appeal to potential buyers and the text had to be engaging enough to justify the hefty price tag of both books. By gathering, manipulating, and appropriating a variety of materials, Van Meurs amalgamated an image of China that could appeal to a broad range of people. He then conferred authorship upon a single name, Johan Nieuhof and Olfert Dapper, ensuring a trustworthy 'authority' for the content. Nieuhof was indeed one of the few Europeans who had actually been to China. Dapper, meanwhile, had never left Amsterdam but wrote various authoritative accounts of geography.<sup>41</sup> However, much of the final content was decidedly influenced by Van Meurs himself. Nieuhof had entrusted his journals to his brother, who (together with Van Meurs) edited and amended the texts for publication. Likewise, Dapper, as a professional writer, would have probably deferred to Van Meurs's insights into the book market.

Van Meurs inadvertently relied on Jesuit sources in his representation of Chinese religion and philosophy for a more general audience. And since the mercantile interest of his readers (as we will discover) often coincided with the missionary perspective of the Jesuits, Van Meurs needed to change very little in his descriptions of Chinese religion and philosophy. In this process, he essentially adopted the Jesuit's justification of their accommodation strategy, which focused on the benignity and compatibility of the teachings of Confucius with Christianity, while Buddhism and Taoism were rejected as idolatrous.

40 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world*, pp. 115–120.

41 Dobranski, 'Authorship in the seventeenth century'; Charles Jones, *Shapely bodies, the image of porcelain in eighteenth-century France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2013), pp. 38–48; Lothar Ledderose, 'Chinese influence on European art, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries', in Thomas H. Lee (ed.), *China and Europe. Images and influences in sixteenth to eighteenth centuries* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1991), pp. 221–250.



FIGURE 18 *Johan Nieuhof, Gezantschap der Neerlandische Oost-Indische compagnie* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (OG 74-34 (1))

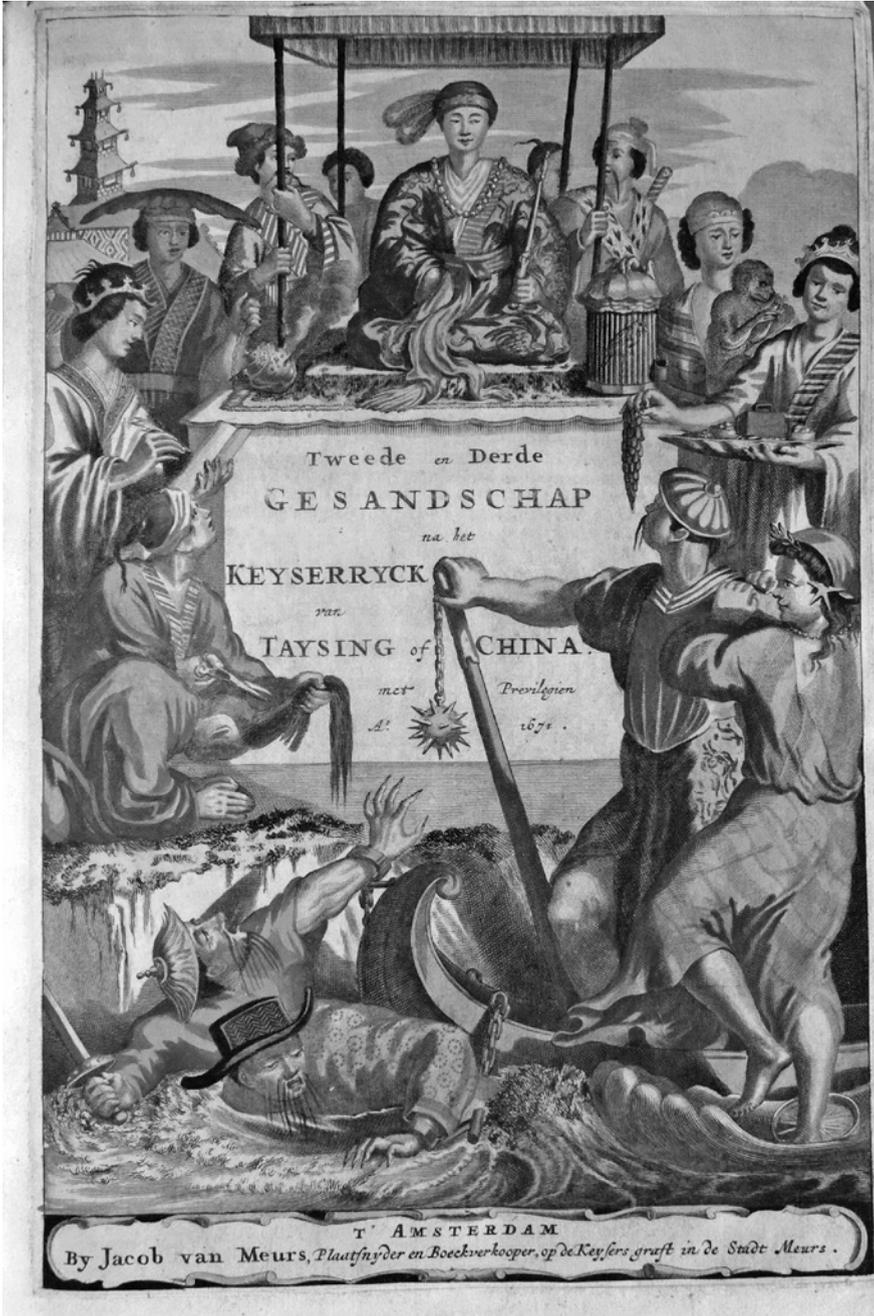


FIGURE 19 *Olfert Dapper, Gedenkwaardig bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische maetschappye, op de kust en in het keizerrijk van Taising of Sina (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1670) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (OM 63-124)*

Johan Nieuhof's *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham* resulted from the first Dutch embassy to the emperor of China.<sup>42</sup> After repeatedly failing to break the Portuguese monopoly on trade to Macau, the VOC sent six embassies to Beijing between 1655 and 1685.<sup>43</sup> Johan Nieuhof was appointed steward to the first Dutch delegation.<sup>44</sup> The most important of his many tasks was to illustrate and describe all noteworthy sights, such as cities, palaces, temples, rivers, and mountains. Nieuhof remained in China until 1657: a year after his homecoming, he entrusted his notes and annotations to his brother Hendrik who, together with Van Meurs, published the manuscript in 1665.<sup>45</sup>

Van Meurs went to great lengths to ensure the book's commercial success, with rapid results. A reprint was issued within the year and it was quickly translated into French, German, and Latin.<sup>46</sup> The first part is primarily based on Johan Nieuhof's meticulous notes from his stay in China.<sup>47</sup> In contrast, the second part of the work was much more the invention of Van Meurs and Hendrik Nieuhof, who drew heavily on Jesuit sources. For example, in the observation of the monks and priest of Nanjing, the book related that they have a 'belief of superstition'; yet, if they would adhere to the true faith of the Christian missionaries, they could surpass them in dedication:

42 Johan Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665).

43 Leonard Blussé and Reindert Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhof's beelden van een Chinareis, 1655-1657* (Middelburg: Stichting VOC publicaties, 1987); Leonard Blussé and Zhuang Guotu (eds.), *A study of the first Dutch embassy visit to China* (Xiamen: Xiamen University Publishing House, 1989); Henriette Rahusen-de Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an "unpromising beginning": The first Dutch trade embassy to China, 1655-1657', *Modern Asian Studies*, 36.3 (2002), pp. 535-578; Dawn Odell, 'The soul of transaction. Illustration and Johan Nieuhof's travel in China', in Karel Bostoën and Elmer Kolfin (eds.), *"Tweelinge eener drag". Woord en beeld in de Nederlanden (1500-1750)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001), pp. 225-242; Ying Sun, *Wandlungen des europäischen Chinabildes in illustrierten Reiseberichten des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1996).

44 Leonard Blussé, 'No boats to China. The Dutch East India Company and the changing pattern of the China Sea trade, 1635-1690', *Modern Asian Studies*, 30.1 (1996), pp. 51-76; Leonard Blussé and Reindert Falkenburg, *Tribuut aan China, 1601-1989* (Amsterdam: Cramwinckel, 1989).

45 Blussé, 'No boats to China', pp. 51-79.

46 Francesco Ammannanti and Angela Nuova, 'Investigating book prices in early modern Europe: Questions and sources', *JLIS.it*, 8.3 (2017), pp. 1-25.

47 A contemporary manuscript of Nieuhof's account is held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. A digitised copy may be consulted via gallica.fr: [Johan Nieuhof], *Journal van zommige voorvallen, inde voyagie vande E. Heeren Pieter de Goyer en Jacob Keyser, ambassadeurs, aande grootmachtige keizer van Chyna en Tartaryen, inde jaaren 1655, 56, & 1657*, MssSGE1.

In the region surrounding this chief city lay several stately and beautiful temples; the biggest and most important are built upon the mountains *Quangliu* and *Iuenxiu*. The nearby inhabitants worship these mountains out of great superstition, upon which dwell a great company of hermits and friars. Each priest and hermit has chosen a little hutch, where he flagellates and afflicts himself by scourging and disciplining his body, such that one wonders about this practice. They claim that they will enter another life after this one, and there will get a sacred status, because they believe that their souls will move to another body. If these blind and lost people did as much for the true religion and if they were this fanatic for the true God, they would not only equal the European hermits, who voluntarily endured many tortures, but also surpass them.<sup>48</sup>

This statement echoes the rhetoric of the Jesuits, who argued that the Chinese did possess knowledge of the true God, but that they had lost this wisdom through contact with Buddhism and Taoism. The same statement also hints at the editorial influence of Van Meurs and Hendrik Nieuhof. When compared to the manuscript of Nieuhof's account, we find that he had only made some brief remarks on his stay in Nanjing during April of 1656:

On the 26th of the same month we sailed past the city Nankin, on the right side of Kiam in a hilly field, 180 *li* [Chinese miles] from the Liansi. She used to be very distinguished, but has been weakened by war. Its walls are high, on the bottom carved out, on the top made from brick, and reasonably well made, with strongholds, going over several hills, about five hours around by foot. To the west stand two arcs, below which one goes into the city over a stone bridge. The first street on the right stands

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48 'Men vind evenwel in de landstreek van deze hoofstad, vele kunstigh geboude en prachtige kerken; waar van de grootste en voornaamste op de bergen Quangliu en Iuenxiu gelegen zijn. De rondom-leggende inwoonders aanbidden, uit een grooten waangeloof, deze bergen, daar op ontallijke Kluizenaars en Priesters zich onthouden. Ieder Priester en Kluizenaar heeft hier een hutje verkooren, daar in hy zich met zoodanige quellingen des lighaams plaaght en afmat, dat men zich ten hoogste daar over te verwonderen heeft. Zy drijven, datze na dit aardsche leven in een ander leven zullen komen, en een zaligen staat verkrijgen: want zy geloven dat de zielen van deze in een ander lighamen verhuizen zullen. Deden deze verdoolde en blinde menschen zoo veel voor den waren Godtsdienst, en warenze zoo yverig in het aanbidden van den waren God, zy zouden niet alleen den ouden Europese Kluizenaars, die vrywillig uiterlijk veel hebben uitgestaan, gelijk zijn, maar hen ook verre overtreffen', in Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap*, p. 92.

full of wonderful triumphal arches, but the houses are very decrepit, and mostly empty and uninhabited.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast to the manuscript's 109 words, the printed book dedicates 296 words to this specific passage, nearly tripling Nieuhof's original account by inserting notes on religion, the cultivation of hemp, and even a description of a mystical spring called Kien. These were significant additions, especially where *Het gezantschap* stated that the Chinese could 'surpass the European hermits', because we, in fact, hear the voices of the publishers, Jacob van Meurs and Hendrik Nieuhof, and not necessarily that of Johan Nieuhof.<sup>50</sup>

49 'Den 26 ditto voeren wij voorbij de stad Nankin, aende rechte kant van Kiam in een heuvelachtig veld, 180 lij vande Liansi. Zij is eentijds zeer naamhaftig geweest, maar is door 't oorlog verminderd. Hare muren zijn hoog, onder van gehouwen, en boven van baksteen opgetoogen, en redelik, met bolwerken verzien, lopen over verscheide heuvels, omtrent 5 uur gaans om. Na de westkant staan 2 bogen, daarmen over een steenebrug, inde stad gaat. D'eerste straat anderrechte hand, staat voll schone Triomfbogens, maar de Huizen zijn zeer vervallen, en staan meest ledig, en onbewoond', in Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap*, p. 67. A lee or li 里 is the Chinese mile, a traditional Chinese unit of distance. While its length has varied considerably over time, it was usually half a kilometre and has now indeed been standardised at 500 meters or 1.690 feet.

50 Since the manuscript of the BnF is probably a transcript made by Johan Nieuhof during his brief stay in Amsterdam, it is also possible that the original manuscript was handed over to Van Meurs and Hendrik Nieuhof, which could have included the information missing from the BnF manuscript. However, neither the English nor French edition of Nieuhof mentions this information. Relevant to this discussion, these translations gave very divergent accounts of the same text, emphasising the fundamental role of the publisher and editor. Compare: 'Yet in prospect of this city lye several stately temples, whereof the biggest and most important are built upon the mountains *Quangliu, Junxiu*: the inhabitants round about worship these mountains, upon which dwell a great company of priests and friars; each priest and friar has a little hutch, where he daily flagellates and afflicts himself by scourging and disciplining his body; enduring which castigation makes him a miracle to those people of implicit faith, who fancy these their sufferings merit after death the highest felicities in another world; for they believe that their souls are translated after their deaths into their bodies' with: 'L'on trouve pourtant encore sous la jurisdiction de cette place, plusieurs temples, échappés de la furie des Tartares, qui semblent avoir eu ou de la veneration pour leur architecture, ou du respect pour la sainteté des sacrificateurs qui y demeurent. Les principaux, et les plus magnifiques de ces temples se voient sur les montagnes d'Juenxin, et de Quangliu, lesquelles sont adorées avec beaucoup de superstition des habitants. C'est en ces lieux quo l'on void le grand monastère d'Juenxin et le convent des plus austères Anachorètes de toute la China, voire même de tout l'Universe, puis qu'ils traitent incessamment leurs propres corps avec plus de rigueur, et de supplices, que les cruels d'entre les tyrans en ont sceau forger pour assouvir leur vengeance. Si nous voulons nous arrester aux particularités de ces solitaires, pour en trouverons aucuns qui se sont aveuglés, comme Democrite, pour fermer deux porter à l'amour, et en ouvrir mille à la Sagesse.' [There are, however, still under the jurisdiction

The second part of the work is even more the invention of the publisher and editor. Entitled the ‘general description of the empire of China’, it relies heavily on secondary sources. Pertinent to our discussion are chapters 8 and 9, which are devoted to ‘various sects in China, concerning the philosophy and the false religion’, and ‘the pagodas or churches of the idols’ respectively. The chapters start out with the now-familiar Jesuit maxim that ‘of all the heathen sects, which came to the knowledge of Europeans, never has one been known, which has been in error so little as the Chinese sects in the first centuries after the beginning of the world.’<sup>51</sup> The chapter continues with a description of the three sects of China, and of Confucius and his teachings. In this extensive description, Van Meurs invoked the writings of Álvaro Semedo, Nicolas Trigault, and Martino Martini.<sup>52</sup> In particular, Van Meurs referred to Martini’s characterisation of Confucian devotees as not being idolatrous: ‘They make in his honour no statues, but only write his name with golden letters on the façade of the schools’. Thereafter, Van Meurs continued to follow the Jesuit narrative of praising Confucius and his teachings.

The other Chinese sects are also described extensively; yet here, the concept of idolatry or the worship of images is deployed, again in Jesuit fashion, to explain that ‘the shadow and flickering light of the evangelical truth has been suffocated and extinguished by the foulest of lies.’<sup>53</sup> These descriptions of Taoism and Buddhism are supported by engravings, showing, for instance, ‘the

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of this place, several temples, escaped from the fury of the Tartars, who seem to have had a veneration for their architecture, or respect for the sanctity of the priests who remain there. The principal and most magnificent of these temples can be seen on the mountains of *Juenxin*, and *Quangliu*, which are adorned with much superstition of the inhabitants. It is in these places that one sees the great monastery of *Juenxin* and the convent of the most austere Anachorettes of all China, or even of the whole Universe, then they treat incessantly their own bodies with more rigour and tortures, which the cruelties of the tyrants have forged their siege to satisfy their vengeance. If we wish to stop at the peculiarities of these solitaires, we will find some who have blinded themselves, like Democritus, to close two to love, and to open a thousand to Wisdom.] Johan Nieuhof, *L’ambassade de la Compagnie orientale des Provinces Unies* (Leiden: Jacob van Meurs, 1665), pp. 117–118; Johan Nieuhof, *An embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces* (London: John Macock, 1669), p. 87. The German edition by Van Meurs does contain the comparison with ‘European hermits’, Johan Nieuhof, *Die gesantschaft der Ost-Indische Gesellschaft* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1666), p. 97.

51 ‘Van alle heidensche Zekten, die tot kennis der Europers zijn gekomen, heeft men tot noch toe geene gelezen, die tot weiniger dwalingen is vervallen, als de Sineesche Zekten, in d’eerste eeuwen of in den beginne des wereldts’, in Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap*, p. 67.

52 Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap*, p. 68.

53 ‘Maar deze schaduw en ’t flikkerlicht der Euangelische Waarheit hebbenze met de vuilste dampen van leugenen verstikt en uitgebluscht’, in Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap*, p. 80.

idol of immorality', 'the idol of lechery' and 'the female idol of Lincin', whose statue was apparently witnessed by Johan Nieuhof himself. By including illustrations of the condemned sects, Van Meurs emphasised in image what was already described in text: any religion or philosophy that worships idols in the form of statues or images lost access to the true faith.

However, those adhering to the teachings of Confucius might be much more receptive to Christendom for two reasons: firstly, because they had already denounced the worship of idols; and secondly, because Christianity would not have to replace a *religion*, as the teachings of Confucius were considered to consist mainly of cultural and societal customs and traditions, which could very well exist alongside a pious observance of Christianity. This view is also highlighted in Van Meurs's description, where he referred to Confucianism as 'philosophy', while Buddhism and Taoism were described as 'false religion'. These terms make an important point concerning the interpretation of Chinese religion and philosophy. Van Meurs followed the Jesuit line of reasoning, yet for a different purpose. While the perspective of the Jesuits is mostly 'missionary' (and therefore accommodating), Van Meurs's attitude towards the religion and philosophy of China was first and foremost determined by economic considerations of cultural consumption, which allowed him to sell books.<sup>54</sup>

And who better to appeal to than those who invested in the Dutch East India Company, such as the *Gentlemen XVII* or wealthy shareholders. Van Meurs dedicated his book to 'the noble, greatly honourable, strict, providential, and wise gentlemen, the gentlemen Hendrik Dirksz Spiegel ... and Cornelis Witsen', both doctors in law and (respectively) mayor and former mayor of the city of Amsterdam. Spiegel was also the governor of the VOC and Witsen held the same position in the West India Company. These were the people concerned with China from (at least) an economic perspective as their monetary interests were tied with the success of the VOC in Asia. Consequently, just like the travellers of the late sixteenth century, these men held mercantile stakes in China, which influenced their perspective on the country; again, this made for an

54 There is also the possibility that Van Meurs sold the illustrations separately to further boost sales. Van Meurs was in the business of publishing engravings, which is done on a different press than the one used to produce books made from leaden type, since the first is intaglio printing, while the second requires the relief printing technique. Van Meurs himself did not operate a press for relief printing, which meant that he had to outsource much of the work necessary to produce a book. However, in his successive shops on the Singel, Nieuwstraat, Keizersgracht, and Nieuwe Keizersgracht, he did advertise that he sold both books and engravings, the latter probably produced by himself. See Jasper Hillegers and Elmer Kolfin etc., (eds.), *Gedrukt tot Amsterdam. Amsterdamse prentmakers en uitgevers in de Gouden Eeuw* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2011); Jan Bos, *Adresboek. Nederlandse drukkers en boekverkopers tot 1700* (The Hague: Royal Library, 1999).

ambiguous approach. Van Meurs presumed correctly that the elite buyers of *Het gezantschap* would be much more interested in a relatively forward-looking approach towards the Chinese system, especially when it concerned the literati who would be able to facilitate Chinese trade the Dutch Republic.

Early modern book auction catalogues indeed show that various members of the VOC board of directors possessed Nieuhof's *Het gezantschap*. The book was offered for sale as part of the estates of Diederik Dix of Haarlem in 1724; Balthasar Boreel of the Amsterdam chamber in 1745; Albert Nicolaas Beyeren van Schagen, governor of the VOC chamber of Hoorn in 1752; and Jan Albert Sichterman from Groningen in 1764.<sup>55</sup> These people evidently had both the means and the inclination to buy such a grand work on China as Johan Nieuhof's *Het gezantschap*, now that it had been given a nudge in the right direction by Jacob van Meurs's extensive editorial interference.

The decisive role played by Jacob van Meurs in the creation of Dutch representations of China is further underlined when comparing the publishing strategy of the Amsterdam edition of 1665 with that of the Antwerp edition of 1666.<sup>56</sup> In his article on the publishing strategy of Van Meurs, Guido van Meersbergen has demonstrated that, while the title page of the Antwerp edition stated that it was printed in Antwerp by Michiel Knobbaert, in reality, the work was published by Van Meurs in Amsterdam.<sup>57</sup> He adapted the work to the presumed wishes of his intended audience by rephrasing the text to appeal to Catholic readers in the Southern Netherlands. Subsequently, the Jesuit origin of information is accentuated and the work was supposedly printed at 'the declaration house of the Society of Jesus'.<sup>58</sup> The title page further mentioned that the book contained 'the accurate story, all that the Jesuits in China in propagation of the religion of Rome, since their first arrival in China, achieved,

55 *Catalogus Bibliothecae, Beate Defuncti Nobilissimi, Et Generosissimi Domini Alberti Nicolai Baronis Bavariae A Schagen*, auction held on 10 and 11 April 1752 (The Hague: Johannes Swart and Mattheus Gaillard, 1752); *Catalogus Exquisitissimorum Librorum. Juridicorum, Historicorum, & Miscellaneorum*, auction held on 12 April 1745 (Amsterdam: Salomon Schouten, 1745); *Catalogus Praestantissimae Bibliothecae In vario genere & Lingua praecipuè vero Latina, Gallica & Hollandica*, auction held on 18 September 1724 (The Hague: Johannes Swart, 1724); *Catalogus Van een schoone Party keurlyke Nederduitsche, Fransche en Latynsche Boeken*, auction held on 1 May 1764 (Groningen: Hajo Spandaw, 1764).

56 Johan Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham, den tegenwoordigen keizer van China* (Antwerp: Michiel Knobbaert [Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs], 1666).

57 Guido van Meersbergen, 'De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht. De Amsterdamse en "Antwerpse" edities van Johan Nieuhofs Gezantschap (1665–1666)', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 26.1 (2010), pp. 73–90.

58 Het profsïe huys der Societeyt Jesu, in Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap*, title page.



FIGURE 20 *De Jonge onder-kooning (Viceroy) in Johan Nieuhof, Gezantschap der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische compagnie (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (OG 74-34 (1))*

and all the bitter and cruel persecutions they have endured there because of their faith'.<sup>59</sup>

Van Meurs did not simply alter the paratext to appeal to this new Catholic audience; in many places, the main text was completely rewritten.<sup>60</sup> In the Southern Netherlands, fewer people invested in Dutch trade with China, and Van Meurs adapted the text accordingly by removing these details from his 'Antwerp' edition.<sup>61</sup> Yet, even when the references to Dutch trade were toned down considerably, the chapter 'About the Chinese religion or sects' remains (albeit abbreviated) more or less intact. However, the title of this chapter no longer specifically mentions 'philosophies' and focuses solely on 'religion' and 'sects'. Even though the term 'sects' may have been relatively neutral in early

59 'Een nauwkeurigh verhaal, van al 't geen de Jesuiten in China, verrecht, en wat al ijzelijke en wrede vervolgingen zy aldaar om 't geloof uit gestaan en geleden hebben', in Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap*, title page.

60 Van Meersbergen, 'De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht', p. 85.

61 For more examples on the extent to which the 'Antwerp' edition differs from the 'Amsterdam' edition see Van Meersbergen, 'De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht'.

modern Europe, 'religion' was decidedly not. The content of the chapter nevertheless follows the same approach towards Chinese religion and philosophy as the Amsterdam edition of 1665: the Jesuit argumentation is adopted almost verbatim. Clearly, these different perspectives adopted by Van Meurs in the publication of the Amsterdam and Antwerp editions of *Het gezantschap* demonstrates the power of the publisher in influencing the possible interpretation of the texts.

In 1670, five years after *Het gezantschap*, Jacob van Meurs tried his hand at another lavishly illustrated folio: Olfert Dapper's *Gedenkwaardig bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Maetschappye, op de kust en in het keizerrijk van Taising of Sina*.<sup>62</sup> As Dapper never travelled beyond the borders of the Dutch Republic, his book relied on descriptions of others; for instance, Baltasar Bort's expedition to China in the early 1660s and Pieter van Hoorn's official second Dutch embassy to the Forbidden City of 1666. As a result, *Gedenkwaardig bedryf* offers one of the most comprehensive descriptions of the Middle Kingdom of its time.

The work consists of two parts. Volume one relates how the Dutch lost Formosa in 1661 and their attempts to regain the island by negotiating with Chinese officials in Fujian. It also includes an account of Pieter van Hoorn's embassy to the Chinese emperor and an extensive general description of China, mainly taken from Trigault, Semedo, Martini, and Kircher. The second volume *Beschryving des keizerryks van Taising of Sina* ('Description of the empire of China or Taising'), contains material from almost every major seventeenth century source on China.<sup>63</sup> Again, the Jesuit accounts were the most important source, yet Dapper also included Mendoza's work, as well as that of various Dutch writers: most notably, Johan Nieuhof's *Het gezantschap*. Dapper's

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62 Olfert Dapper, *Gedenkwaardig bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Maetschappye, op de kust en in het keizerrijk van Taising of Sina* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1670). Jacob van Meurs did not remain idle after *Het gezantschap*: within five years he published the French, German, and Latin translations of Nieuhof as well as the second edition in Dutch. Between 1665 and 1670, Van Meurs issued an additional 11 books, all travelogues or descriptions of foreign countries: *Fransche Mercurius, of Bondige beschrijving van geheel Vrankrijk* (1666), Athanasius's Kircher's *China illustrata* (1667), Olfert Dapper's *Naukeurige beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche eylanden* (1668) and *Naukeurige beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche gewesten* (1668) and their translations in German, Arnoldus Montanus's *Gedenkwaardige gesantschappen der Oost-Indische Maetschappye aan de kaisaren van Japan* (1669) in two editions and a German translation, Christian Wilhelm Hagdorn's *Æyquan, oder der grosse Mongol* (1670), and, of course, Olfert Dapper's *Gedenkwaardig bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Maetschappye, op de kust en in het keizerrijk van Taising of Sina* (1670).

63 Dapper, *Gedenkwaardig bedryf*, title page.

book was also lavishly illustrated with copper plates, among them four large engravings of Buddhist iconography, obviously based on Chinese examples.<sup>64</sup> The descriptions of religion and philosophy closely follow Nieuhof, which is not surprising as they both used similar sources.

Dapper's chapter on religion starts out with the now-familiar remark that three sects existed in China: that of the learned men, of the idolaters, and of the immortals.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, when discussing the philosophy of Confucius, the assertion is made that this sect did not worship idols. The followers of Confucius are praised for their main commandments, which centred around peace, prosperity, and education. Then follows a long exposition on the life of Confucius and the struggles and tribulations he had to endure during his early years. Before introducing the Four Books of Confucius and their contents, Dapper asserted that 'Confucius does *not* take the place of a god, but is honoured by observances, which attest to an appreciative heart for the doctrine expounded by him'.<sup>66</sup> He also stressed the similarities between China and Europe by comparing Confucius with Plato, Pythagoras, and other classical thinkers and, again, he made the statement that 'it is very likely that Confucius has known the true God'.<sup>67</sup>

The general description of China and specifically that of Chinese religion and philosophy is much more elaborate in Dapper's *Gedenkwaardig bedryf* than in Nieuhof's *Het gezantschap*. However, the general gist in terms of content and interpretation is the same. Both books targeted an audience of Dutch readers with interests in trade and the situation of the VOC in Asia. Indeed, the same book sales catalogues (as discussed above) reveal that many of the people who owned Nieuhof's work also had a copy of *Gedenkwaardig bedryf*.<sup>68</sup>

However, Van Meurs may have overplayed his hand. The potential market for such books was relatively small, owing both to the high cost of the product and the specific interests of the readers. According to the notarial archive of Amsterdam, Van Meurs did not sell all his copies of Dapper and Nieuhof. In 1678, Van Meurs was summoned to the Amsterdam court by the notary of fellow bookseller, Otto Koper.<sup>69</sup> In 1674, Van Meurs's daughter Sara had

64 Dapper, *Gedenkwaardig bedryf*, title page.

65 Dapper, *Gedenkwaardig bedryf*, p. 81.

66 Dapper, *Gedenkwaardig bedryf*, p. 93 (my emphasis).

67 Dapper, *Gedenkwaardig bedryf*, p. 97.

68 For an overview of the auction sale catalogue consulted, see note 55.

69 Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief: 5075 Archief van de notarissen ter standplaats Amsterdam. Notarieel archief Jacob van Loosdrecht, 1998–2018, minuutacten van compromissen en inventarissen. See also Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*: p. 423.

married Koper, yet the bride price of 12,000 ‘Carolus guilders’ was still due four years later. As compensation, Koper would receive several books published by Van Meurs. Among the 3,000 rebate books, with a combined value of 9,000 guilders, were ‘five hundred copies of the description of Asia’, and ‘three hundred copies of the description of America’. Two books were mentioned specifically: ‘a hundred and fifty copies of the first part of the description of China, Nieuhof’s embassy’, and ‘four hundred and fifty copies of the second and third part of the embassy or description of China’. Besides works in Dutch, Coper was also allotted various works in German, including ‘three hundred and fifty copies of the ... first part of Nieuhof’s embassy’, and ‘one hundred and fifty copies of the second and third part of China’. Koper received those books without the engravings, which still had to be printed. In total, Koper received almost a million pages of printed paper from the bargain, yet he lacked the 150,000 engravings that would make the books sellable.<sup>70</sup>

By the time the case of Otto Koper versus Jacob van Meurs was presented before the Amsterdam court in 1678, *Het gezantschap* (1665) and *Gedenkwaardig bedryf* (1670) were at least eight years old. The German edition of Nieuhof was older still, having been published twelve years prior in 1666. This court case tells us that Van Meurs had not been able to clear his stock of these books within a decade after publication. How many books remained unsold? We know that, in the second half of the seventeenth century, an edition generally averaged 750 to 1,250 copies. This number is confirmed by another appearance Van Meurs made before the court in Amsterdam when he secured a contract with printer Jean Gerard to produce 1,000 copies of the Latin translation of Nieuhof.<sup>71</sup> If we follow this number, it appears that 15 to 45 percent of Van Meurs’s editions of Nieuhof and Dapper were not sold within eight years. Van Meurs seemingly overestimated the number of people willing and able to buy such a monumental work, with the consequence that the market for large and expensively illustrated folios was soon saturated. In fact, 15 years later, we find on the stock-list for publisher Andriaen Moetjes from The Hague that he still

70 Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world*, pp. 116–117.

71 For information on the general output of printers see Van Selm, “... te bekomen voor een civielen prijs”, pp. 98–116; Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchieef: 5075 Archief van de notarissen ter standplaats Amsterdam. Notarieel archief Johanne Hellerus, 2049–2082, minuutacten in ‘Protocol’; Kleerkooper and van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam*, pp. 419–420.

had some copies of Nieuhof for sale, probably referring to the Latin edition of 1668.<sup>72</sup>

While the publication of Johan Nieuhof's *Het gezantschap* and Olfert Dapper's *Gedenkwaardig bedryf* was less of an economic success than expected, Van Meurs nevertheless influenced representations of China by way of his innovative publishing strategy.<sup>73</sup> Besides creating a greater impact through his copper engravings of the Middle Kingdom, Van Meurs's biggest contribution was that he made Jesuit sources widely available in books on foreign countries that were not necessarily aimed at a Catholic readership. By combining sources that were once only available in Latin (or in a severely abbreviated form), Van Meurs had adapted knowledge on China with a distinctively Jesuit viewpoint for a broader public of readers.

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, an increasing number of books on China were published in the Dutch Republic. Thanks to Jacob van Meurs's publications, authors and writers now had easier access to knowledge about the Middle Kingdom. These authors and writers broadened the transtextual reach of knowledge and used China in a variety of ways: from supplementing descriptions of the non-European world or a general exposition on religion, to illustrating seemingly barely relevant writings with 'fun facts' *avant la lettre*.

### 3 Compilations of All Things China

The object of the study of literary discourse is 'not the text but its textual transcendence, its textual link with other texts'.<sup>74</sup> In the case of the works discussed in this chapter, these transtextual links became more distinct in the last decades of the century. China was no longer the sole subject of large monographs and the Middle Kingdom was invoked whenever required, often alongside descriptions of other foreign regions and peoples. Regarding China,

72 Stock catalogue of Adriaen Moetjens of The Hague, found in Antoine de Varillas, *Histoire de Charles VII* (The Hague: Adriaen Moetjens, 1691). With thanks to Rindert Jagersma.

73 After the relative success of *Gedenkwaardig bedryf*, Van Meurs continued to publish various lavish works on foreign countries. In 1671, Van Meurs published Arnoldus Montanus's *De Nieuwe en onbekende weereld, of Beschryving van America en't Zuid-land*, which is devoted to Asia and the Americas. China is mentioned, but much more concise than in either Dapper or Nieuhof. This book described Chinese religion and philosophy in the now familiar terms of 'benighted idolatry'. Arnoldus Montanus, *De Nieuwe en onbekende weereld, of Beschryving van America en't Zuid-land* (Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1671), pp. 33–34.

74 Genette, *Palimpsests*, p. IX.

it was not simply intertextuality at its most basic level that influenced the manner in which the country could be interpreted by readers. As will become clear, almost the entire corpus of Dutch texts about the divergent foreign world became involved in shaping images of the religion and philosophy of the Middle Kingdom. The Dutch professional writer Simon de Vries is a good example of this phenomenon. He collected much that could be known about China from printed sources and assembled them in his *Curieuse aenmerckingen der bysonderste Oost en West-Indische verwonderens-waerdige dingen* of 1682. However, the information was arranged in such a manner that his descriptions of Chinese religion and philosophy could only be understood and explained in relation to the texts he had sourced his information from.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, publishing strategies concerning the Middle Kingdom became increasingly focused on introducing Chinese curiosities into texts. A genre of 'catalogues of wonder', resembling the *livres des merveilles* of the late Middle Ages, emerged during the second half of the seventeenth century. These books focused on curiosities of the natural world, and the recently discovered territories of Asia, Africa, and America provided ample inspiration.<sup>75</sup> Not surprisingly, this genre appealed to the ambitions of the 'cultural entrepreneur'. Many Dutch producers, among them Lambertus van den Bosch, Petrus de Lange, and Simon de Vries, employed (and perhaps exploited) China and its religious and philosophical customs according to the decidedly economic laws of cultural consumption. The supposed tastes and wishes of the intended audience were the decisive factor in the representation of the Middle Kingdom. This is, of course, not to say that individual sentiments, be they religious, cultural, or political, played no part, but a common perspective can be discerned.

These prevalent and somewhat collective characteristics of China are composed of various elements. One element is the role of the Jesuits: clearly visible, as they had provided the bulk of information. In this regard, the Jesuits are invoked either directly or indirectly through references to intermediaries such as Nieuhof and Dapper. However, as the following paragraphs demonstrate, the relationship between Jesuit information and Dutch authorship proved somewhat strenuous. Another element contained in these descriptions is the fact that they are coloured by Dutch mercantile interests in the Asian world; more so because the second tier of information from merchants consisted of travelogues, writings on trade and (to a lesser extent) conquest. Yet, the decisive element in how descriptions of China could and would be interpreted by

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75 Eric Jorink, *Het 'boeck der natuere'. Nederlandse geleerden en de wonderen van Gods schepping, 1575-1715* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2006), pp. 361-395.

the more general public was not so much determined by *what* was written, but more by *how* this information was arranged on the pages of the respective books. Since China was rarely the sole topic or theme but usually part of expositions on the foreign world, the arrangement of information heavily influenced its representation to the early modern Dutch public.<sup>76</sup>

Arguably, this new genre led to the increasing ‘fragmentation’ of books on China. One example of this phenomenon is Lambertus van den Bosch’s *t Oude nieuws der ontdeckte weereeld* of 1667.<sup>77</sup> This rambling collection of famous cities, palaces, temples, towers, churches, mountains, bridges, ships, trees, and plants devoted much space to China; in fact, the country occupies more lines than any other area outside Europe.<sup>78</sup> Petrus de Lange’s *Wonderen des werelds* of 1671 is a similar collection of curiosities.<sup>79</sup> In only two pages, this little-known writer from Amsterdam discusses diverse subjects ranging from ‘how women are punished by their spouses’, ‘the horrible practice of eating humans’, ‘sheep grazing on the roof of houses’, to ‘a Jew was murdered in secret, and why’.<sup>80</sup> None of these events referred to the same country, time, or place; nevertheless, they were grouped together to illustrate ‘excellent rarities and things of wonderment’.<sup>81</sup> De Lange, of course, mentioned China, that country on the other side of the world with its strange customs of ‘nobody may rule in his city of birth’, ‘the wonderful wall of China’, and the more curious ‘sea that changes iron into copper’.<sup>82</sup> There seems little rhyme or reason in the subjects chosen by De Lange, even though his references mention Athanasius Kircher and Van Linschoten. This seemingly random attitude towards collation of information is perhaps best expressed in De Lange’s preface: the book was simply meant as ‘a sweetmeat’ or ‘appetiser’ for curious readers. In the last decades of the seventeenth century, China provided enough fodder for anyone ready to engage in theological, political, and economic discourse. Yet the country also began to provide more than enough material for entertainment and wonder.

76 Georg Lehner, *China in European encyclopaedias, 1700–1850* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 1–7.

77 Lambert van den Bosch, *t Oude nieuws der ontdeckte weereeld* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Jansz Zwol, 1667).

78 Van Kley, ‘Qing dynasty China in seventeenth-century Dutch literature’, pp. 217–234.

79 Petrus de Lange, *Wonderen des werelds* (Amsterdam: Marcus Willemsz Doornick, 1671); E.O.G. Oste Gaspard and Anton van der Lem, *Repertorium van geschiedschrijvers in Nederland, 1500–1800* (The Hague: Nederlands Historisch Genootschap, 2000), lemma 287.

80 De Lange, *Wonderen des werelds*, pp. 150–151.

81 ‘De uytstekenste vreemdigheden en verwonderenswaardige saken’, De Lange, *Wonderen des werelds*, title page.

82 ‘In China mach niemandt in sijn geboorte stadt regeeren’, ‘Wonderlijcke muur in China’, ‘Zee die ’t Yser in Koper verandert’, in De Lange, *Wonderen des werelds*, p. 6, p. 73, p. 82.

Simon de Vries's *Curieuse aenmerckingen der bysonderste Oost en West-Indische verwonderens-waerdige dingen* ('Curious remarks of the most special East and West Indian things') of 1682 collected as much as could be known about China from published sources.<sup>83</sup> According to the title page, De Vries aimed to present his readers with 'everything important, that has ever meticulously been recorded by a great number of credible eyewitnesses from all over Europe, about rarities of these countries: the shape of the earth, mountains, crops, seas and rivers, morals and religions of the people, &c.'<sup>84</sup> The title further pointed out that this wealth of information was based on eyewitness reports, and had been 'put in order and enhanced with investigative as well as comparing discussions' by De Vries himself.<sup>85</sup> This resulted in 'a superb example of what could be known about China in 1682 from published sources'.<sup>86</sup>

*Curieuse aenmerckingen der bysonderste Oost en West-Indische dingen* was published by Johannes Ribbius of Utrecht in 1682. The work appeared in two volumes in four parts, illustrated with 65 engravings made by Romeyn de Hooghe. A dedication by Ribbius to the 'Gentlemen ... great authorities of the

83 Simon de Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen der bysonderste Oost en West-Indische verwonderens-waerdige dingen* (Utrecht: Johannes Ribbius, 1682).

84 "t Voornaemste van alles, wat oyt nauwkeurighs en seldsaems van deese landen, ten opsight van der selver gelegenheyd is ondervonden en opgeteekend van een seer groote meenigte der geloofwaerdighste ooghetuygen onder meest al de natien in Europa: gestalte der aerd, bergh-wercken, gewassen, zeeën, rivieren, seeden en godsdiensten der menschen, &c.," in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, title page.

85 'Is ondervonden en opgeteekend van een seer groote meenigteder geloofwaerdighste ooghetuygen onder meest al de natien in Europa. En uyt deselve in een bequaeme orde gebracht; oock soo met ondersoekende als vergelijkende redenvoering verhandeldt,' in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, title page.

86 Van Kley, 'Qing dynasty China in seventeenth-century Dutch literature', p. 229; Arianne Baggerman, *Een drukkend gewicht. Leven en werk van de zeventiende eeuwse veelschrijver Simon de Vries* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 269–302; Trude Dijkstra, "'Tot eeuwige memorie de druckerye-konste". Simon de Vries's discourse on the Chinese art of print (1682); *Quaerendo*, 48.4 (2018), pp. 206–232. Indeed, De Vries could easily access a substantial number of books on China; according to the book sales catalogue made after his death in 1708, he held the following in his collection: Nieuwhof's *Het gezantschap* in three copies (1665) and *Zee en lantreise door Oostindien* (1682), Dapper's *Gedenckwaerdig bedryf* in three copies (1670), *Naukeurige beschryving van Asia* (1672) and (1680), and *Naukeurige beschryving van Asie waarin Arabie, Mesopotamie, Babylon* (1678), Kircher's *Tooneel van China* (1667), Van Linschoten's *Voyasie, ofte schip-vaert* [1624], and *Itinerarium* [1596], Louis Le Comte's *Beschryvinge van het machtige keyserryk China* (1698), Charles le Gobien's *Histoire de l'édit de l'empereur de la Chine* (1698), Martini's *Historie van den Tartarschen oorloch* [1654], and Cornelis de Bruyn's *Reizen* (1698). See *Catalogues van veele schoone Neder-en eenige Hoog-Duitsche boeken, nagelaten by Simon de Vries* (Utrecht: Willem van de Water, 1708).



FIGURE 21 *Frontispiece by Romeyn de Hooghe in Simon de Vries, Curieuse aenmerckingen der bysonderste Oost en West-Indische dingen (Utrecht: Johannes Ribbius, 1682) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (OG 63-1453-1456)*

Dutch East India Company' is found in the first part.<sup>87</sup> Each of the work's four parts holds numerous references to China. Since the first volume is devoted to the natural and cultural world broadly defined, the Middle Kingdom is used to illustrate such varied subjects as 'tree wool [cotton] is very much prevalent', to 'Chisung, a marvellous wind-predicting herb'.<sup>88</sup> The second volume dealt with the geography of various Asian and American countries, in which China's curious 'yellow earth', 'special caves', and 'mountains, famous for some remarkable examples' provide enough interesting reading material.<sup>89</sup> Here, De Vries also referenced the religion and philosophy of China: he noted that the Chinese 'Pussa and the Japanese Amida', were the same gods as the Greek Cybele and Isis. He guessed that perhaps this Ancient European idolatry was shipped to Asia, where the Chinese apparently were also familiar with the 'two-and four headed Janus the old, and the hundred-handed Briareus'.<sup>90</sup>

The third part is specifically devoted to religion, philosophy, idolatry, devil-worship and everything in between. The chapters bear titles such as 'the heathen processions', 'the chastisement of the flesh', 'the beautiful houses of idolatry', and 'the false religion and horrible devil-service'.<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, the reader is not told which countries, regions, or even continents these chapter titles refer to. However, the table of contents to this volume proves to be more enlightening when it comes to denoting the peoples related to these various subjects. However, this table also immediately points to a fundamental characteristic of *Curieuse aenmerckingen*: since De Vries aimed to inform his readers about 'wondrous East and West Indian things', the resulting amalgamation of the whole world (with the exception of Europe) into one narrative could

87 'Heeren ... Groot-Gesaghebbere der Oost-Indische Maatschappye', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, dedication.

88 'Boom-wol is in China seer meenigvuldigh', and 'Chisung, een wonderlijk wind-voorsegend kruid in China', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, register I.

89 'Geele aerde in China', 'In China, van een bysondere grotte', 'Bergen in China, beroemd door eenige aenmercklijcke gevallen', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, register II.

90 'De Chineesche Pussa en de iapansche Amida', 'Den twee en vier-hoofdigen Janus der Oude, en van den honderdhandigen Briareus', in De Vries, p. 596. The Chinese Pussa may well refer to Guanyin 觀世音, and the Japanese Amida to Amitabha 阿弥陀仏 and 阿弥陀如来. This correlation comes from Athanasius Kircher, who equates the Chinese 'Pussa', a Buddhist Bodhisattva, with 'Cybele or Isis of the Chinese', an idol that was probably worshipped by the Brahmins. See also: Thijs Weststeijn, 'The Chinese Isis, or the Sino-Egyptian hypnotises', in Miguel John Versluys (ed.), *Temple – monument – lieu de mémoire. The Iseum Campense from the Roman empire to the modern age* (Rome: Edizioni Quasar: 2019), pp. 301–313.

91 'De heydensche processien', 'De kastijdingh des vleesch', 'De praghtige afgods-huysen', 'De valsche Gods-dienst, en grouwlijcke Duyvels-dienst', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, register III.

perhaps be described, at best, as ‘informed confusion’. This approach may constitute a form of transtextuality which is concerned not so much with *other* texts that are juxtaposed against the focus text, but those that sets the text in relationship with *itself*. In other words, how is De Vries’s description of China related to other descriptions of foreign countries and their systems of belief?

This phenomenon may be referred to as ‘interparatextuality’, whereby intertextuality’s interconnection between similar or related works can be understood within the context of the paratext’s clarifying designation of the relation between one text and its surroundings.<sup>92</sup> Take for instance, the general subject of ‘idols’. The index lists all subjects to be discussed under this header:

Idols of the Indian heathens, horned devil statues, ten thousand statues in a building, foolish piety and ridiculous compassion of a Chinese emperor for an idol, horrible idols in the Indian temples of the Benjans [merchants from Eastern Mughal empire], whether the Chinese literati worship idols or not, large crowd of Chinese idols. Materials of which these idols are made, the statue of Miniso, the god of lechery in China. About the god of immortality, and how he is pictured. The idol of Ticam, which is the Chinese Pluto, other Plutonians [kings of the Underworld] which stand with him. The bellies of Chinese idols are full of gold, silver and precious stones; the appearance of the statue of the Chinese idol Kingangh; the statue of a false goddess – thirty feet high – thickly gilded and silver plated. A stone idol which moved itself to its position; twelve-hundred large statues of men for the temple of the idol Tanhinarels, all made of copper; a sinisterly large copper snake, which holds with his tail a horrible man-sized statue a hundred feet high. A female statue with a horrible countenance, which represents the goddess of fire; the god of the stormy winds and how it is designed. Japanese idols; idols of the creator of all things; many headed idols of the Indian heathens; other idols and the wonders which the heathens attribute to them. The length of the idols after Adam’s size are fifty feet tall. Idols and idolatry in Pegu [Myanmar], in the temple of the idol Tinagogo; expensive idols in Peru; statues of bears, that are house gods in Jucatan.<sup>93</sup>

92 Not to be confused with ‘paraintertextuality’, where paratexts exploit their paratextual forebears.

93 ‘Afgods-beelden der Indiaensche heydenen, gehoornde duyvels-beelden, thien-duyssen beelden in een gebouw, dwaese godvruchtigheyt en belagchlyck meedelijden eener keyseren van China tegens een afgods-beeld, afgrijslijcke afgods-beelden in d’Indiaensche tempelen der Benjanen, andere afgrijslijck afgods-beeld, of de geleerde in China d’afgodsbeelden eeren of niet, groote meenigte der Chineesche afgods beelden.

In this recital, China certainly takes pride of place, just as it does on the title page and in the preface, yet the country and its customs nevertheless get lost in the seemingly endless summaries of topics discussed by De Vries. As a result, the readers are introduced to the intricacies of Chinese religion and philosophy and are challenged to interpret and digest this information alongside knowledge about many other (completely different) foreign belief systems. Can a subject as complex as ‘whether the Chinese literati worship idols or not’ truly be introduced as unbiased, as this statement tries to indicate, when it is preceded by titles such as ‘horrible idols in the temple of the Benjans’ and followed by ‘statue of Miniso, god of lechery’ (hardly a commendable quality for a deity)?

The index also points to two chapters in the main body of the text in which Chinese religion and philosophy are discussed in more detail. Chapter VI on ‘the idols’ begins with an exposition on Indian religion and idolatry, or ‘the fables of the Indian Braminen’.<sup>94</sup> After several pages that recited the names of all these Indian idols, the ‘sect of the literati in China’ is introduced. While De Vries, according to the reference, obtained his information from Trigault, it seems that he does not entirely adhere to the Jesuit perspective. Like many writers before him, De Vries condemned the sects of Buddhism and Taoism outright. Yet, counter to the Jesuit perspective (adopted in large part by Nieuhof and Dapper), he also showed some reserve towards the teachings of Confucius:

Trigault expressly states, that this sect of the literati in China honour no idols, but believe in one god, who rules everything under the heavens. *However*, they also do honour some spirits, yet with small honours....

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Stoffen van welcke deselve zijn gemaect, 't beeld van Miniso, of den God der wellust in China. Vanden God der onsterflijckheyd, hoedaenigh voor gesteld. 't Afgodenbeeld Ticam, sijnde den Chineeschen Pluto, Anderen by hem staende Plutonen. De buycken der Chineesche afgods-beelden steecken vol goud, silver en eedele gesteenten, 't beeld van den Chineeschen afgod Kingangh, hoedaenigh toegericht, van een afgodin, dertigh voeten hoogh, dick verguld en versilverd. Steenen afgods-beeld, 't welck van sich selven nae sijne plaets gingh, twaelf-honderd groote rensen-beelden voor den tempel des afgods Tanhinarels, al t'saemen van koper, onguer-groote kopere slangh, omfattende met sijnen staert een verschricklijck mans-beeld van honderd voeten hooghte. Vrouwen-beeld van een vreeslijcke gestalte, beteeckenende de godin des vyers, god der storm-winden, hoedaenigh af-gebeeld. Japansche afgodsbeelden, afgods-beeld van den schepper aller dingen, veelkoppige afgods-beelden der Indiaensche heydenen, andere afgods-beelden, wonder-wercken, van de heydenen aen deselve toegeschreven. Lenghte der afgods-beelden nae Adams grootte, hoedaenigh, van vijftigh voeten hooghte. Afgods-beelden en afgodendienste in Pegu, In den tempel des afgods Tinagogo, kostlijcke afgods-beelden in Peru. Beere-beelden, sijnde huys-goden in Jucatan', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, index.

94 De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, p. 149.

*Nevertheless*, the best among the literati do not recognise this highest and true God for the creator of the world. [They] also do not believe in the beginning of this world, but an eternity of the same.<sup>95</sup>

De Vries did indeed provide information about the Confucian absence of idol veneration, which was essential to the argumentation of the Jesuits; however, he immediately retracts from this position by the qualifying terms of 'however' and 'nevertheless'.

The next chapter on 'the false religion, and horrible devil-service' follows a similar pattern. Again, the text begins with India, where (according to De Vries) three distinct 'main-religions' (notice the use of the term religion) are customary: that of the Christians, Mohammedans, and the heathens.<sup>96</sup> De Vries had more than enough ammunition to attack both the Mohammedans and the heathens; Christianity is, of course, praised. However, like some Dutch authors before him, he revealed his dislike for the Society of Jesus by remarking that the progress of Christianity in India was not helped by the Jesuit presence there: 'In passing, we have to mention that the progress of the Christian religion in the empire of the Mughals by the Jesuits is not very large'.<sup>97</sup> Yet, he may have exaggerated somewhat when recounting how, 'through the diligence of the *reformed* teachers [Calvinist missionaries] 62,558 Christians men and women are found in the small region of Jasnapatan in Ceylon'.<sup>98</sup>

After an earlier-announced exposition on the numerous religions and philosophies of Asia, from Hindustan and Calcutta and the coast of Coromandel to Siam, the chapter arrives at China on page 235. This section essentially consists of a summary of *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas*. The familiar three sects are discussed and, again, the sect of Confucius takes pride of place,

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95 'Trigautius seghd uytdrucklijck, dat deese secte der geleerde in China geen afgods-beelden eerd, maer een eenigh God geloofd, door wien alles, wat onder den hemel is, geregeerd en onderhouden word. *Evenwel* dienense daer benevens eenige geesten, doch met geringer eerbewijsingh.... *Echter* erkennen de beste onder de geleerde dien hooghsten en waeren God niet voor den schepper der wereld. Gelooven oock niet een begin deeses werelds, maer een eeuwighyde der selve', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, p. 153 (my emphasis).

96 De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, p. 194.

97 'In 't voorby gaen moeten wy hier aenmercken, dat den voortganch der Christelijcke religie door de Jesuiten in 't Rijck des Mogols soo seer groot niet is', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, pp. 194–195.

98 'Waer tegens, door de vlijt der *gereformeerde* leerraers, alleen in dat kleyne streeckje lands, Jasnapatan in Ceylon, wierden gevonden twee-en-tsestigh duysend vijfhonderd aght-en-vijftigh Christenen, soo mannen als vrouwen', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, p. 195 (my emphasis).

because ‘those belonging to this sect do not worship statues but a single god’.<sup>99</sup> However, unlike Ricci and Trigault, De Vries paid scant attention to Confucius, providing neither a biography nor a description of his teachings. The sect of the literati is examined in detail, but the connection with Confucius is not explicitly made. De Vries did mention the conflict between Confucianism and neo-Confucianism, in which the Jesuits had been involved since their first foray into China.<sup>100</sup> In the context of De Vries’s general description, this short mention of the conflict makes little sense, yet in the following decades authors would return again and again to the question of Chinese orthodoxy represented by the discord between the ancient and modern Chinese interpretations of the teachings of Confucius. This debate becomes most visible in the learned journals which were published during the second half of the seventeenth century. How China and Confucius are discussed in these journals will be the subject of chapter 4.

In his accounts on ‘the false religion’ of China, De Vries relied heavily on Ricci and Trigault. With a few minor exceptions, he seems to follow the Jesuits when it concerns the interpretation of Chinese religion and philosophy, even though the emphasis on Confucius is reduced. While the content may very well be comparable, the presumed interpretation by both author and reader is not. De Vries deliberately chose to keep his description of China to a limited length ‘to make our treatise not too big’, which would allow him to ‘recount in short something about the false gods and devil-worships of some other people’.<sup>101</sup> This is probably also the reason why his exposition on Confucius is rather brief; aside from the issue of length, it would only distract from the general summary of religious and philosophical ideas. Regardless of minor changes in the content, the image of the various Chinese systems of belief are first and foremost shaped by the surrounding text through interparatextuality. Both the paratextual elements, the titles of the chapters, the use of comments in the margins, and the construction of the index, together with the content of preceding and successive sections primed readers to view China in a certain light, which was aimed at defining notions of foreign religion and philosophy as idolatrous. That De Vries may have demonstrated his skills in effectively summarising a wealth of sources by exhibiting a relatively nuanced understanding of Ricci and Trigault is therefore of secondary importance, as

99 ‘Degeene, die ‘t met deese secte houden, zyn aen geenen beelden-dienst verknoght, maer eeren een eenige God’, in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, p. 236.

100 Rule, *K’ung-tzu or Confucius*, pp. 76–173.

101 ‘We moeten de Chineesen verlaeten, om onse voorverhandeligh niet al te groot te doen worden; en sullen kortlijck noch yets verhaelen van de valsche Gods jae oock Duyvels-diensten eeniger anderer Volckeren’, in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, p. 248.

the consumers of the book must have been highly skilled in the act of reading to separate the Chinese wheat from the more general foreign chaff.

By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Dutch demand for information about the non-European world had outstripped the supply of travelogues of writers who had actually been overseas. To cater to the growing public wanting to buy printed materials on the subject of Asia, Dutch printers and publishers started to churn out a variety of compilations penned down by professional writers. Besides satisfying the need for additional publications, these works also met the needs of readers who (for whatever reason) were not in the position to buy or read the wealth of books already available. In his preface, De Vries identified five groups of potential readers. The first were those for whom the purchase of books would soon prove too costly ('sou 't te kostlijck vallen').<sup>102</sup> The second group comprised of readers who had the money but not the time to read 'so many writers'.<sup>103</sup> The third category lacked the necessary knowledge of foreign languages; the fourth group might have had the money, time and skill of language, but not the desire to read such a great number of books. And rightly so, according to De Vries. Many travelogues were needlessly long-winded, and much content overlapped between books anyway. The last group consisted of those who lacked the necessary knowledge to independently read and analyse travelogues: they were not really in a position to judge 'who has best recorded the subject [and] captured it the neatest'.<sup>104</sup>

While De Vries also worked as a bookseller and publisher in Utrecht, he at least partially depended on income gained from his writings, with the consequence that these publications needed to appeal to as large an audience as possible.<sup>105</sup> Here, the difference between *liefhebber*, the amateur with a love for the art, and 'professional' is of importance. The benevolent and appreciative amateur writes for his or her own pleasure (and perhaps that of like-minded

102 'Zou 't te kostlijck vallen', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, fl. recto \*\*\*3.

103 'So veelerley schrijvers', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, fl. recto \*\*\*3.

104 'Wie de saeck best heeft aengeteeckend en aldermetst getroffen', in De Vries, *Curieuse aenmerckingen*, fl.\*\*\*4.

105 Paul Dijkstra and Elise van Schaik calculated the possible income of De Vries. They conclude that his activities as publisher, and later as writer, would not have been enough to make ends meet and that his income was possibly supplemented by an inheritance and the support of his (bachelor) son. Between 1671 and 1708, De Vries earned 194 guilders a year on average from his writings alone. See Elise van Schaik, "Van lees-aert tot schrijf-aert". Over de werkwijze van de zeventiende-eeuwse veelschrijver Simon de Vries, MA thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2017, pp. 13–15; Paul Dijkstra, 'Een zegen voor de mensheid – en voor de schrijver natuurlijk. Simon de Vries (1624–1708) en de wereld van het boek', *De Boekenwereld*, 25.1 (2008), pp. 31–40; Baggerman, *Een drukkend gewicht*, pp. 129–133.

readers). In contrast, it is no coincidence that both the Dutch word for a professional writer, *broodschrijver* (literally ‘bread-writer’) and the English equivalent of ‘potboiler’, announce how the main purpose of the literary creator was to pay for daily expenses.<sup>106</sup> Both expressions (along with the related ‘hack-writer’) also include in their definition that notion that the writings, which resulted from such labours, cater to popular taste. This is also indicative in Simon de Vries’s books, which attempted to appeal to a more general readership of people interested in Asia. While he did not exactly write for the ‘masses’, his preface alludes to how a more general Dutch readership could perceive the Middle Kingdom during the later Golden Age.

De Vries never travelled beyond the borders of the Dutch Republic, yet his *Curieuse aenmerkingen* offered an excellent summary of European knowledge about the East and West Indies during the final decades of the seventeenth century. Such compilations were highly valued in their time as they offered the essence of writings in an easily digestible form. While much of De Vries’s writings are unapologetically derivative and contain little new information, it would be a mistake to regard his books as ‘mere compilations’.<sup>107</sup> In his analysis of Dapper, Adam Jones has rightly asked the question whether ‘we can really afford to relegate [compilations] to the status of a secondary source and concentrate our attention on more important works?’.<sup>108</sup> Primary sources might always remain ‘those pieces of information which stand in the most intimate relationship to an event or process in the present state of our knowledge’; however, an examination of De Vries offers perspectives on Chinese religion and philosophy and its culture of print that go beyond the mercantile and missionary view of the primary sources and focuses on that of the cultural entrepreneur.<sup>109</sup>

The large majority of books on China published in the Dutch Republic during the second half of the seventeenth century were the result of carefully construed cultural entrepreneurial strategies. Motivated by economic and cultural considerations, producers developed new and different ways to present China to as large an audience as possible. Cultural entrepreneurs like Jacob van Meurs, Jan Jansz Deutel, and Simon de Vries were focal points around which new ideas coalesced, and their publications rapidly disseminated new ideas

106 *Merriam Webster Online*, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/potboiler](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/potboiler), last accessed 23 August 2021.

107 Adam Jones, ‘Decompiling Dapper. A preliminary search for evidence’, *History in Africa*, 17 (1990), p. 171–209.

108 Jones, ‘Decompiling Dapper’, p. 180.

109 David Henige, ‘The race is not always to the swift. Thoughts on the use of written sources for the study of early African history’, *Paideuma*, 33 (1987), pp. 53–79, p. 54.

about Chinese religion and philosophy in print. Their publications engaged in varying degrees with the Middle Kingdom, moving from distant by way of functionally indifferent to digestible.

One of the most popular Dutch books of the seventeenth century was Willem Ijsbrantsz Bontekoe's *Journael* of 1646. As this chapter revealed, China played an important supporting role in this book, particularly, as the foreign 'foil' to Bontekoe's swashbuckling exploits. As this was clearly the publishing strategy of Jan Jansz Deutel, the religion and philosophy of China are hardly mentioned. Nonetheless, this type of representation is helpful as this 'functionally indifferent' attitude may indicate a more generally held attitude towards China. These inconsistent and rather indifferent characterisations of Chinese religion and philosophy may reflect the perceptions of a less affluent and not particularly intellectual Dutch readership.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, publisher Jacob van Meurs adapted earlier travelogues and Jesuit accounts in such a manner that the resulting representation of Chinese religion and philosophy became broadly appealing and easily 'digestible'. Johan Nieuhof and Olfert Dapper's heavily illustrated books on China were not always economically successful; yet, Van Meurs's publishing strategy was certainly innovative. He relied largely on Jesuit sources in his representation of Chinese religion and philosophy and, since the mercantile interest of his readers often coincided with the missionary perspective of the Jesuits, Van Meurs modified his descriptions only slightly. His detailed and lavish copper engravings would have an impact on visual imagery of China; however, his greatest contribution was to make Jesuit sources widely accessible in books on foreign countries to a larger, non-Catholic demographic. By combining sources that were previously only available in Latin or in severely abbreviated form, Van Meurs adapted knowledge on China with a definite Jesuit viewpoint for a broader public of readers.

By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, an increasing number of books on China were published in the Dutch Republic. Authors, writers, and publishers had easier access to knowledge about the Middle Kingdom. They broadened the transtextual reach of China, utilising the country in a variety of ways. The Middle Kingdom was no longer primarily the subject of large monographs. Instead, information about the country was fragmented, invoked alongside descriptions of other foreign regions and peoples. Therefore, it was not just intertextuality that influenced the manner in which China was represented. The entirety of Dutch works on Asia, Africa, and the Americas came to be involved in the formation of images of Chinese religion and philosophy, as we saw with Simon de Vries's *Curieuse aenmerckingen*. This process may be considered interparatextuality, where representations of Chinese

religion and philosophy were understood in relation to its surrounding texts on other countries.

The growth and diversity of representations of Chinese religion and philosophy would provide fertile ground for the future. In the 1700s, readers became increasingly occupied with the Middle Kingdom and knowledge about Chinese religion and philosophy reached its early modern apogee in 1687 with the publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* by Daniel Horthemels in Paris. This, like many other texts we have encountered, was a Jesuit project. It was the first annotated Latin translation of three of the Four Books that traditionally made up the Confucian canon, and the knowledge it contained would go on to greatly influence the European debate on Chinese religion and philosophy. Even though it was a Jesuit undertaking, many non-Jesuit actors were involved in the production process of translating, editing, publishing, explaining, and criticising the translation of Confucius. The involvement of Dutch interlocutors makes clear that the dissemination of Confucius in Europe was a variegated process, in which the transmission of text and image through print played a fundamental role.

## The Vernacular and Latin Translations of Confucius

By the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the Society of Jesus directly or indirectly dominated the Dutch debate on China in print. Jesuits like Nicolas Trigault and Martino Martini provided many of the eyewitness accounts that were adopted by Dutch authors, translators, and publishers. They, in turn, constructed narratives on the Middle Kingdom that shaped and disseminated images of Chinese religion and philosophy. The Dutch did this by producing printed works of exceptional quality and by utilising their extensive networks of distribution; significantly in this respect, their content was largely free from censure by Church and State.

This proliferation of Jesuit accounts had profound implications for the religious and cultural representation of China. In fact, Jesuit publications were instrumental in making Confucius the main protagonist of Europe's interactions with Asian philosophy: simply consider the fact that 'Confucius' is the Jesuit Latinisation of the Chinese title of Kong Fuzi 孔夫子, literally 'Master Kong'.<sup>1</sup> Thus, other potential representations of China, such as Buddhism and Taoism, were generally rejected as the Jesuits were of the opinion that only the ethical and social doctrine of Confucius should be complemented with the metaphysical ideas of Christianity.<sup>2</sup>

Confucius had become the focal point of the Jesuit missionary policy since they believed that China could only be converted to Christianity from within. After earlier attempts at posing as simple monks from the West, catering only to the lower classes, they began to accommodate the ruling classes who embraced Confucianism as their cultural and intellectual standard. The Jesuits also incorporated local cultural and philosophical traditions into their preaching of Christianity to justify the supposed compatibilities between Chinese and Christian concepts.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, they tried to identify the essential

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- 1 To quote Björn Löwendahl: 'By one of the strange ironies of history, Europe first learned of Confucius from Jesuits who had been sent out to convert the "heathen" Chinese', in Björn Löwendahl, *China illustrata nova. Sino-Western relations, conceptions of China, cultural influences and the development of Sinology disclosed in Western printed Books 1477–1877* (Hua Hin: Elephant Press, 2008), p. 18.
  - 2 Thierry Meynard, 'Beyond religious exclusivism. The Jesuit attacks against Buddhism and Xu Dashou's refutation of 1623', *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 4.3 (2017), pp. 415–430.
  - 3 Nicolas Dew, *Orientalism in Louis XIV's France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 211.



tenets that Chinese philosophy shared with Christianity, which could later serve as a base for a project of mass conversion.

To defend this unconventional approach to their European audience, the Jesuits decided to produce a publication of the main works of Confucius in Latin. This edition, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* containing three of the Four Books that traditionally made up the Confucian canon, was published in Paris in 1687. Through this Jesuit translation, Confucius was (according to one scholar) the world's 'first philosopher to become famous outside his country, in other continents and civilisations'.<sup>4</sup> Confucius's original fifth century BCE writings have not survived, only the records of his disciples have; these were compiled much later during the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 BCE). Many historical details about his life remain unclear and it is uncertain when, and whether, there was ever a coherent philosophical school that could be called 'Confucianism'. Modern scholarship even debates whether or not the Jesuits had 'invented' or 'manufactured' Confucianism.<sup>5</sup>

Even though *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* was a Jesuit venture, the involvement of various Dutch and Southern Netherlandish interlocutors makes clear that 'manufacturing Confucius' was a widespread European project. Various non-Jesuit actors participated in translating, editing, publishing, printing, explaining, and criticising the Jesuit representation of Confucius. This surrounding context had the effect of enmeshing Latin scholarship with vernacular writings, as well as integrating expertise from both Europe and Asia. The resulting 'cosmopolitan' dimension that Confucius attained was partly due to the seminal role of the Jesuits, who drew members from all over the globe. The Dutch Republic, too, featured prominently in this network, as the Jesuits needed support from Dutch intermediaries (merchants, authors, translators, illustrators, engravers, publishers, and printers) for such an unprecedented publication. By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Confucius had become the central figure in Europe's interactions with China. Jesuit missionaries were the catalyst for the dissemination of Confucius's works, with the Southern Netherlandish Philippe Couplet (known in China as Bai Yingli 柏應理) at the helm. Their Latin translation of Confucius's works became the primary intermediary for interactions with China.

4 Kristofer Schipper, *Confucius. De gesprekken* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Augustus, 2015), pp. 13–20.

5 Rule, 'K'ung-tzu or Confucius?'; Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism. Chinese traditions and universal civilization* (London: Duke University Press, 1997); Standaert, 'The Jesuits did NOT manufacture "Confucianism"', pp. 129–169.

This chapter examines Latin and vernacular translations of Confucius's works to shed light on Europe's engagement with the Middle Kingdom at the end of the seventeenth century. In this examination, two questions are proposed: how was Confucius represented in print between 1675 and 1700, and to what extent did the involvement of Dutch authors and translators, printers and publishers shape the representation and dissemination of Confucianism as moral teachings that were compatible with, rather than contradictory to, the Christian beliefs?

To answer these questions, the Dutch encounter with Confucius will be explored to demonstrate that the Jesuit 'invention' of Confucius was a varied and global project. When addressing the European public, Jesuit missionaries required the support of Dutch intermediaries in presenting their accommodation of Confucianism in a favourable light. In turn, the Dutch Republic's prominent role suggests that the manner in which the Jesuits aimed to bridge the gap between China and Europe fitted the cultural and economic needs of Dutch book producers. Publishing strategies focused increasingly on Jesuit sources and representations of China, and publishers effectively functioned as intermediaries between China-based Jesuits and European readers.

This chapter also considers the cultural interactions between the Northern and Southern Netherlands to gain a better understanding of their productive collaboration concerning China. Cooperation between the two Netherlands was extensive both before and after the country split. Numerous Jesuits had originated from the Netherlands; Philippe Couplet was born in Echlin and Nicolas Trigault came from Douai (both in the Southern Netherlands). Godfried Henske and François de Rougemont hailed from Limburg, while François Noël was a Fleming from Hestrud in Hainault; meanwhile, Ferdinand Verbiest was born in Pittem in the County of Flanders. These Jesuits served as a metaphorical bridge between North and South, which the commercial-minded entrepreneurs of the Dutch Republic were more than willing to cross.<sup>6</sup> Of course, Northern entrepreneurs themselves often had extensive ties with their colleagues in the south and vice versa. Daniel Horthemels, publisher of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, kept in contact with family and colleagues in Zeeland when he departed for Paris, while the Blaeu firm in Amsterdam maintained a large network of business associates in the Southern Netherlands. Furthermore, the VOC and its international membership gave an additional impulse; when Jesuits travelled from Europe to Asia and back, they often did so on VOC ships.<sup>7</sup> Both language and a shared cultural heritage contributed

6 Weststeijn, 'The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries', pp. 209–242.

7 Hertroijs, 'Hoe kennis van China naar Europa kwam', pp. 65–70.

to this fruitful exchange of information. Interactions between missionaries, printers and publishers, and merchants transcended religious differences, and numerous individuals benefitted from their mediating position between north and south.

An examination of Kircher's *China illustrata* of 1667 sheds light on his assertion that Confucianism was a historical continuation of the ancient Egyptian religion. According to Kircher, Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese script expressed a Hermetic philosophy of Neoplatonic *prisca theologia* of pre-Mosaic origins, in which 'ancient gentilism [was] buried under a perverse system of idolatry'.<sup>8</sup> The spread of idolatry throughout the world was related to the division of tongues, whereby ancient Egypt became the centre of religious diffusionism through the influence of Noah's son, Ham, and his descendants. As such, proto-Christian elements reached all the way to China. However, in the process of transmission, Christianity was corrupted into idolatry, and it was the missionaries' task to re-discover the Christian core of Chinese beliefs. Unfortunately, by declaring Confucianism to be almost identical to the religious system of ancient Egypt, Kircher had undermined the Jesuit strategy of accommodation by presenting Confucius as a nearly god-like figure, comparable to Hermes Trismegistus and Thoth, even though he was careful to note that Confucius was considered a philosopher and not a god.

Kircher's text is further examined to explore how the strategies conceived by his Amsterdam publisher Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge influenced form and content for the purpose of arguing that the monotheistic Confucian literati corresponded to the priestly sages of Egypt, who opposed the cult of idols. However, as we shall learn, subsequent translators and publishers (ab) used text and paratext to argue contradictory points; the French translation of *China illustrata* by François-Savinien d'Alquié (Amsterdam, 1670) deliberately transformed Kircher's careful description of Confucius as a *philosopher* into a description of the sage as a God: 'Ce Dieu Confutius'.

To address the questions posed of how Confucius was represented in print, the first Latin manuscript translations of Confucius (ca. 1593–1673) are discussed, and how these came into being through Dutch mediation. The Four Books of Confucius were first translated by Jesuit missionaries in China for the practical purpose of teaching the Chinese language to priests newly arrived in the country. As the education of the Chinese elite began with the

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8 Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Comparing cultures in the early modern world. Hierarchies, genealogies and the idea of European modernity', in Renaud Gagné, Simon Goldhill, and Geoffrey E.R. Lloyd, *Frameworks of comparison in history, religion and anthropology* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), pp. 116–176.

Confucian canon, without mastery of (at least) some of these texts, the Jesuits would certainly fail in their conversion of the Chinese literati. Subsequently, when a publication of this Jesuit translation of Confucius was envisaged, it became impossible to avoid Europe's main centre of book production: the Dutch Republic.

The analysis then moves from the Latin texts to the first printed vernacular translation of Confucius, written by Pieter van Hoorn and published by Johannes van den Eede in Batavia [Jakarta] in 1675. Van Hoorn turned to Confucius for instructions on how to live a virtuous life, even going so far as to argue that 'the Chinese Confucius has expressed and depicted better in words than any European author I know of'.<sup>9</sup> While his small booklet may have had little clout beyond Batavia, it nevertheless provides valuable first impressions on how Dutch contacts in Asia changed the way in which people like Van Hoorn related to Chinese religion and philosophy.

Furthermore, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* will be examined, focusing on how elements of paratext shaped the representation and possible interpretation of the Jesuits' translation of three of the Four Books. Both form and content reveal that the Jesuits' aim was to Christianise Chinese civilisation and Confucius to make it more palatable for a learned European audience. Indeed, Confucius was fitted into 'a scholarly framework that linked the philological principle of the oldest source to the quest for the most ancient wisdom'.<sup>10</sup> The Jesuits' most original addition to the standard humanistic practices in Europe was thus their emphasis on the *Chineseness* of their account.

This chapter subsequently discusses two partial French translations of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, published in Amsterdam and Paris in 1688. Sectional translations of Confucius's *Great Learning* had been made before, most notably by Nathanael Vincent in England and Antonio Possevino in Rome, yet their influence did not extend beyond a small circle of intellectuals.<sup>11</sup> Through their publisher's networks of distribution and through multiple editions, the French translations facilitated a more general dissemination of

9 'Nochtans schynt my toe dat den Chineschen Confucius de selve meerder, en klaerder met woorden heeft uyt-gedrukt en afgemaelt als my van eenige Europische Scribenten is te voor gekomen', in Pieter van Hoorn, *Eenige Voorname eygenschappen Van de ware DEUGDT, Voorsichtigheid, Wysghyd en Volmaecktheydt* (Batavia: Johannes van den Eede, 1675), p. 1.

10 Weststeijn, 'The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries', pp. 22–222.

11 M. Jenkinson, 'Nathanael Vincent and Confucius's "Great learning" in Restoration England', *Notes and records of the Royal Society of London*, 60.1 (2006), pp. 35–47; Knud Lundbaek, 'The first translation from a Confucian classic in Europe', *China Mission Studies (1550–1800)*, 1 (1979), pp. 2–11.

Confucius's teachings. At the same time, they show how transtextual processes of translation may shape the meaning of a text, especially when the quoted text is not well-known in the target culture, as was the case with Confucius in seventeenth-century Europe.<sup>12</sup>

Combined, the texts analysed in the following pages will reveal that the French translations of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* demonstrate how Confucius became a subject to be used and misused by publishers, printers, and editors in furthering their own cultural and economic causes. By looking at how Confucius was represented and to what extent he was manipulated, we will learn how involvement of Dutch authors and translators, printers and published shaped representations and disseminations of Confucianism.

## 1 Athanasius Kircher

Called 'the last man who knew everything', 'master of a hundred arts', and 'the last Renaissance man', the German Jesuit, Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680), may very well have been the final 'uomo universale'.<sup>13</sup> His many interests, ranging from geography, astronomy, and mathematics to language, medicine, and music, led to the publication of some 33 books. One of them was an extensive Latin description of China: *China monumentis, qua sacris qua profanis, nec non variis Naturae et artis spectaculis aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata* (hereafter *China illustrata*).<sup>14</sup> The work was published in Amsterdam by Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge in 1667. Kircher had never travelled to China; he based his descriptions on earlier European sources and personal correspondence with an extensive network of Jesuit missionaries in Asia.

While it relied upon accommodative Jesuit sources, Kircher's work was dominated by the hermetic doctrine of *prisca theologia* (the existence of a single, proto-Christian doctrine, which threads through all religions). He argued that the Chinese were the 'true followers of the Egyptians and the faithful

12 Genevive Roux-Fauchard, 'Intertextualité et traduction', *Meta. Journal des Traducteurs*, 51 (2006), pp. 98–118.

13 Edward W. Schmidt, 'The last Renaissance man. Athanasius Kircher, S.J.', *Company Magazine* (2001–2002); P. Conor Reilly, *Athanasius Kircher S.J. Master of a hundred arts, 1602–1680* (Wiesbaden: Edizioni del Mondo, 1974); Paula Findlen, *Athanasius Kircher. The last man who knew everything* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

14 Athanasius Kircher, *China monumentis, qua sacris qua profanis, nec non variis Naturae et artis spectaculis* (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, 1667). For an overview of Kircher's works, see the bibliography in John Fletcher, *A study of the life and works of Athanasius Kircher, 'Germanus incredibilis'* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 565–567.



FIGURE 23 Portrait of Athanasius Kircher in *Athanasius Kircher, China illustrata* (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, 1667) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (Band 4 B 5)

imitators of their superstitions'. According to him, the religion and philosophy of China resembled that of Egypt to such an extent that the first must be rooted in the second.<sup>15</sup> The wide range of subjects and the many illustrations in *China illustrata* made it an important source on Asia in the late 1660s and 1670s, and many subsequent Dutch publications demonstrated a partial intertextual or paratextual relation with Kircher's description of the Middle Kingdom. This transtextual reach was facilitated by publishing strategies conceived by Kircher and his Amsterdam publisher.

Born in Fulda in Hessen, Kircher entered the Jesuit Order in 1618. He resided in Rome for most of his life, where he functioned as 'a kind of one-man intellectual clearinghouse' of humanistic and scientific knowledge.<sup>16</sup> At the Collegium Romanum, he curated the 'Museum Kircherianum', a cabinet of curiosities containing various objects from China.<sup>17</sup> In Rome, Kircher met many missionaries departing for or returning from China. These personal contacts and access to the Jesuit archives and libraries made it easy for Kircher to gather vast amounts of knowledge about the Middle Kingdom. His study of Asia and the Middle East first found expression in works on Egyptian hieroglyphs and missionary discoveries in the Far East. From there followed a work solely devoted to China.<sup>18</sup>

Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge of Amsterdam published *China Illustrata* in Latin in 1667, which was printed by the widow Elizaëus Weyerstraten.<sup>19</sup>

15 Kircher, *China monumentis*, p. 133.

16 'Athanasius Kircher', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2017 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Athanasius-Kircher>, last accessed 22 August 2021; Daniel Stolzenberg, *The great art of knowing. The Baroque encyclopedia of Athanasius Kircher* (Stanford: Stanford University Libraries, 2001).

17 A catalogue was issued in 1709: Filippo Buonanni, *Musæum Kircherianum sive musæum ap. Athanasio Kichero in Collegio Romano Societatis Jesu jam pridem inceptum nuper restitutum, auctum, descriptum, & iconibus illustratum* (Rome: George Plancius, 1709). The museum held (among others things) a rubbing of the Nestorian Stele, made by a Chinese companion of Michael Boym.

18 Jocelyn Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher. A Renaissance man and the quest for lost knowledge* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1979), pp. 50–52.

19 A curious story concerning the printing of *China illustrata* is related by Isabella van Eeghen. In 1667, Jacob van Meurs brought out a reprint of Kircher's book on China. However, the privilege from the States of Holland of that book lay with Van Waesberge and the widow Weyerstraten, who were Kircher's regular publishers. Of course, Van Waesberge objected to the reprint, and the case was brought before a notary and, by mediation by another bookseller, a settlement was reached on 27 June. Van Meurs handed over everything related to the publication, printed copies, copperplates, woodblocks, for which he would be compensated by Van Waesberge to the sum of fl. 3450, to be paid in instalments of fl. 500. The total sum would (more or less) cover the costs Van Meurs had incurred. Both the amicability of the settlements and the close resemblance of the

A Dutch edition, translated by Jan Hendrik Glazemaker, was issued in 1668, and partial translations in English and French appeared in 1669 and 1670.<sup>20</sup> Van Waesberge had obtained the publishing rights to Kircher's works in the Holy Roman Empire, England, and the Low Countries for 2,200 scudi 'for a contract for all his books'.<sup>21</sup> This was a generous amount, and it confirms the commercial viability of Kircher's writings. Before this contract, Kircher's works were primarily printed in Rome, often by Vitalis Mascardi.<sup>22</sup> Mascardi and Kircher maintained a personal relationship and, after Mascardi's death in April 1666, Kircher may have been looking for another regular publisher. He probably chose Van Waesberge for the quality of his printed works and large distribution

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engravings may indicate that Van Meurs had not so much produced a pirated edition, but that his rivals had borrowed some of his 1665 plates for their own work of 1667. Van Eeghen, 'Arnoldus Montanus's book on Japan', pp. 150–272; Fletcher, 'Athanasius Kircher and the distribution of his books', pp. 108–117; Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world*, pp. 115–120.

- 20 Athanasius Kircher, *Tooneel van China: door veel, zo geestelijke als werreltjke, geheugteekenen, verscheide vertoningen van de natuur en kunst, en bliken van veel andere gedenckwaardige dingen, geopent en verheerlykt*, trans. Jan Hendrik Glazemaker (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, 1668); Athanasius Kircher, *La Chine d'Athanas Kircher De la Compagnie de Jesus, illustrée de plusieurs monuments tant sacrés que profanes, et de quantité de recherchés de la nature & de l'art*, trans. François Savinien d'Alquié (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, 1670); Johan Nieuhof, *An embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, emperor of China: delivered by their excellencies Peter de Goyer and Jacob de Keyzer, at his imperial city of Peking wherein the cities, towns, villages, ports, rivers, &c. in their passages from Canton to Peking are ingeniously described by John Nieuhoff; also an epistle of Father John Adams, their antagonist, concerning the whole negotiation; with an appendix of several remarks taken out of Father Athanasius Kircher; Englished and set forth with their several sculptures by John Ogilby*, trans. John Ogilby (London: for the author, 1673); Paul Begheyn, 'Athanasius Kircher sj (1602–1680) en zijn contacten in Nederland', in J. van Gennip and M.A. Antoinette Th. Willemsen, *Het geloof dat inzicht zoekt. Religieuzen en de wetenschap* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2010), pp. 84–93.
- 21 'In vigore del nostro contratto per tutti i suoi libri', in Archive Pontifica Università Gregoriana, Rome, Misc. Epist. Kircher, 560, fol. 79r; see: Noël Golvers, 'The development of the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* reconsidered in the light of new material' in Roman Malek, *Western learning and Christianity in China. The contribution and impact of Johann Adam Schall von Bell, S.J. (1592–1666)* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1999), pp. 1141–1164, p. 1149. On the publishing rights, see: Stolzenberg, *The great art of knowing*, p. 10.
- 22 Mascardi was in charge of technical matters for the Propaganda Fide press in Rome, and was said to be able to set type in five languages, Rudi Paul Lindner, 'Icons among iconoclasts in the Renaissance', in George Bornstein and Theresa Tinkle, (eds.), *The iconic page in manuscript, print, and digital culture* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 98–109.

network.<sup>23</sup> According to historian Martha Baldwin, by accepting a lump sum, Kircher freed himself from worries over publication expenses by entering into this unusual business arrangement with Van Waesberge. Such long-term publishing arrangements were, indeed, still a rarity in the seventeenth century. From 1665 onwards, almost all of Kircher's new books were published by Van Waesberge. He also reissued several of Kircher's earlier works, and published a number of vernacular translations. In the words of historian Daniel Stolzenberg: 'The team of Jesuit author and Protestant printer symbolized the cosmopolitan appeal of Kircher's books.'<sup>24</sup>

When *China illustrata* was published 1667, Dutch book production had reached an exceptional level of quality. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Jacob van Meurs had initiated a publishing strategy in which travelogues and descriptions of foreign countries were published in folia, lavishly illustrated with dozens of engravings. Van Waesberge decided on the same strategy for his edition of Kircher's *China illustrata*. The book appeared in large folio, illustrated by 56 engravings, a portrait of Kircher, a map of China, and a transcription of the text on the Nestorian Stele. Thanks to the combined international networks of Van Waesberge in Amsterdam and Kircher in Rome, the work was distributed throughout Europe. Even today, the number of copies held by libraries, from Scandinavia to Spain and beyond, is striking and attest to the efforts of both author and publisher. One of the copies held by the Allard Pierson Amsterdam was even intended for the papacy. It is bound (perhaps at the request of Kircher or Van Waesberge) in red Moroccan leather by Amsterdam master binder, Albert Magnus.<sup>25</sup> This binding bears the coat of arms of the Rospigliosi family of Pope Clement IX (1667–1669). This crest was made out of a separate piece of leather and pasted over the coat of arms of

23 A.M. Ledeboer, *Het geslacht Van Waesberge. Eene bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der boekdrukkunst en van den boekhandel in Nederland* (Rotterdam: Widow P. van Waesberge en zoon, 1859).

24 Stolzenberg, *The great art of knowing*, p. 9.

25 Held at the University of Amsterdam: OTM: Band 4 B 5. Mirjam Foot argues that many of the bindings attributed to Magnus were not made by the master himself. An additional four luxury bindings of Kircher's works are held at the Royal Library in The Hague as part of the collection of Sir Herbert Thomas. These also must have been presentation copies; their copy of *China illustrata* also bears the coat of arms of Pope Clemens XI. Furthermore, a beautifully bound copy in the Röhsska Konstslöjd Museet in Göttenborg was also seemingly intended for the Pope. It was not unusual for several copies of the same book in luxury bindings to be presented simultaneously, Mirjam M. Foot, *Studies in the history of bookbinding* (London: Scholar Press, 1979), p. 246; Herman de la Fontaine Verwey, 'The binder Albert Magnus and the collectors of his age', *Quaerendo*, 1 (1971), pp. 158–178.

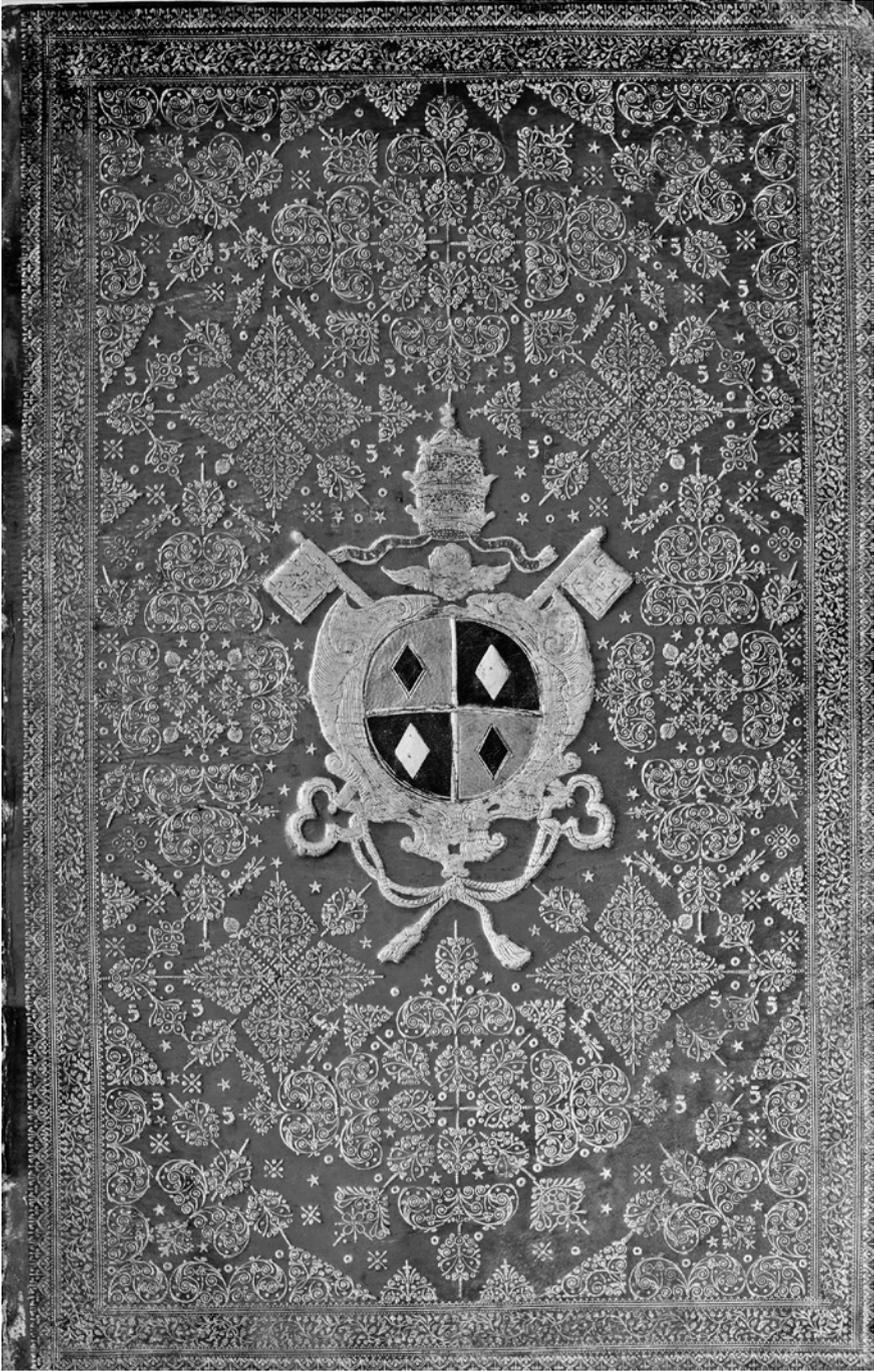


FIGURE 24 *Red moroccan binding made by Albertus Magnus for Pope Clement IX. Allard Pierson Amsterdam (Band 4 B 5)*

the Chigi family of Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667), who died in 1667 and was succeeded by Clement.

Kircher's *China illustrata* is not only a compilation of knowledge gathered by European merchants and missionaries, it also includes a collection of previously unpublished materials on geography, botany, zoology, languages, religion, and antiquities.<sup>26</sup> As such, it is considered one of the earliest examples of European Sinology.<sup>27</sup> The first part of the book is intended to demonstrate the authenticity of the Nestorian Stele, or Jingjiao bei 景教碑, that was unearthed beside the Chongren Temple 崇仁寺 at Xi'an, Shaanxi Province in 1625. This limestone monument was erected in 781, and its inscriptions in Chinese and Syriac relates the early presence of Christians in Northern China.<sup>28</sup> *China illustrata* is the first book in Europe to include a transcription of the original Sino-Syriac on the Stele, together with an engraved reproduction of its original Chinese characters, a Romanisation of the text, and a Latin translation.<sup>29</sup>

Kircher's chapter on religion and philosophy is provocatively entitled 'On the idolatry of the Chinese'.<sup>30</sup> His contention that China was idolatrous stood in service of the hermetic notion of *prisca theologia*, which holds that there exists a single theology, given by God to man, that spreads through all religions. According to Kircher, Christianity was rooted in ancient Egypt. Idolatry arose when this Egyptian proto-Christianity spread, but was misinterpreted outside of Egypt.<sup>31</sup> Persia, India, Tartary, Japan, and China were influenced by this distorted form of Christianity coming from Egypt.

Kircher stated that there were three sects in China: that of the 'scholars' (Confucius), the sect of 'Sciequia' (Sakyamuni) Buddha, and the sect of 'Lancu' (老子 Laozi), the Taoists. He might have derived this division from Nicolas

26 Charles D. Van Tuyl, *China illustrata by Athanasius Kircher, S.J.* (Muskogee: Indian University Press, 1987).

27 Mungello, *Curious land*, pp. 134–173.

28 Keevak, *The story of a stele*, pp. 61–89; Wang Ding, 'Remnants of Christianity from Chinese central Asia in Medieval ages', in Roman Malek, *Jingjiao. The Church of the East in China and central Asia* (Sankt Augustin: Insitut Monumenta Serica, 2006), pp. 149–162.

29 Mungello, *Curious land*, pp. 164–173; Kircher, *China illustrata*, pp. 13–28. This translation was made by Michael Boym and two Chinese converts – Andreas Zheng 郑安德勒 and the anonymous 'Matthaeus Sina', who visited Rome in the middle of the century. Monika Miazek-Meczynska, 'The Roman troubles of Michael Boym S.J. Described by Szpot Dunin in *Historiae Sinarum Imperii* and *Collectanea Historiae Sinensis*', in Barbara Hoster, Dirk Kuhlmann and Zbigniew. Wesolowski, *Rooted in hope. Festschrift in honor of Roman Malek S.V.D.* (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute, 2017), pp. 173–185.

30 'Van d'Afgodendienst', in Kircher, *Tooneel van China*, p. 158.

31 Daniel Stolzenberg, *Egyptian Oedipus. Athanasius Kircher and the secrets of Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 151–180; Weststeijn, 'The Chinese Isis', pp. 301–313.

Trigault and Matteo Ricci's *De Christiane expeditione apud Sinas*, discussed in a previous chapter. This categorisation was widely agreed upon and not necessarily inaccurate. However, in contrast to Trigault and Ricci, Kircher argued that these three sects were directly related to ancient Egyptian society and its division into priests, scribes, and common people. The followers of Confucius thus correlated to the priests, and common people followed Laozi. The equation of Buddhism with the scribe class of Egypt is not explicitly made.<sup>32</sup>

Kircher noted how the sect of the *geleerden* ('scholars'), those following the teachings of Confucius, had the greatest esteem in China.<sup>33</sup> However, while he echoed Trigault and Ricci in his description of the Chinese literati and their veneration of Confucius, he ignored those Chinese rites that the Jesuits defended as permissible. Instead, Kircher selected only those examples that supported his own claims of the Egyptian origins of Chinese idolatry.<sup>34</sup> Kircher provided an excerpt from Trigault to argue that there were similarities between Chinese animal sacrifices to the 'Lord of Heaven' and those made by the ancient Egyptians to the god Osiris. He also used Trigault to claim similarities between the rites carried out in Confucian temples and the rituals celebrated in Egypt to Thoth (known to the Greek as Hermes Trismegistus):

They sacrifice a great number of oxen and sheep to the Heaven and Earth (no different than the Egyptians to Osiris and Isis) and dedicate many other ceremonies to them. Furthermore, there is a certain temple of the literati, dedicated to Confucius himself, the prince of Chinese philosophy: these are built, according to law, in every city, in a place that protrudes above the school.<sup>35</sup>

While Kircher's idiosyncratic interpretation of the Chinese rites does not fully follow that of the Jesuits, he is careful to note that Confucius is considered a

32 Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 135.

33 Kircher, *Toonneel van China*, p. 160.

34 Florence Hsia, 'Athanasius Kircher's *China illustrata* (1667)', in Findlen, *The last man who knew everything*, pp. 383–404, p. 388; Mungello, *Curious land*, pp. 159–160; Rubiés, 'Ethnography, commensurability and the use of comparison', pp. 138–141.

35 'Zy offeren ossen en schapen in groot getal aan de Hemel en Aarde (niet anders dan d'Egiptenaars aan Osiris en Isis) en bewijzen veel andere plechtelikheden aan hen. Wijders, daar is een eige tempel der Geleerde, aan Konfucius zelf, de vorst der Sinesche Wijsbegerigen, gewijd: deze word, volgens de Wetten, in yder stat voor hem gebout, namelijk in een plaats, die boven het School uitsteekt.' in Kircher, *Toonneel van China*, p. 161; Kircher, *China illustrata*, p. 132. Notably, the reference to Isis is only found in the Latin (1667) and Dutch (1668) edition by Van Waesberge, but is omitted from the Latin edition (1667) of Van Meurs and the French edition (1670) of Van Waesberge.

'philosopher' and not a god. Notably, the French translation of *China illustrata* by François-Savinien d'Alquié (Amsterdam, 1670) departs from this wording. Although he quotes the same passage from Trigault, he alters it substantially (and probably not innocently), making Confucius into a god: compare 'Confutii philosophorum Sinensium' to 'ce Dieu Confutius'.<sup>36</sup>

Kircher's account of Chinese religion and philosophy continues with a condemnation of both Buddhism and Taoism, focusing on their worship of idols: 'As the almost impossible to believe number of idols sufficiently demonstrates, which number in the thousands and which are not only shown in temples to be worshipped, but also in almost every house or place that may be suitable'.<sup>37</sup> Kircher ends the chapter by recapitulating his claim that the Chinese are the 'true followers of the Egyptians and the faithful imitators of their superstitions'.<sup>38</sup> Not only did the Chinese worship the same gods as the ancient Egyptians with the same customs and ceremonies, but Chinese characters and script also resembled the hieroglyphs of the Egyptians. Thus, according to Kircher, the Egyptian hieroglyphs were symbolic references to Christian truths, which were retained in Chinese characters. As such, the missionaries only needed to explain this to the Chinese, who (they believed) had forgotten the Christian essence of their own civilisation over time. According to Joan-Pau Rubiés, Kircher's attempts to argue for the Hermetic-Egyptian-Chinese narrative may have often run counter to the efforts of his fellow Jesuit missionaries.<sup>39</sup>

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the dispute was well under way concerning the question whether Chinese ritual practices of honouring family ancestors and other formal Confucian and imperial rites qualified as religious and thus incompatible with Christianity. This dispute led to clashes with members of the Dominican and Franciscan orders, who disagreed with the Jesuits and reported the issues to Rome. By presenting Confucianism as a system of religion that was identical to that of ancient Egypt and by comparing Confucius to the seemingly deified figures of Thoth and Hermes Trismegistus, Kircher undermined the Jesuits' delicate strategy of accommodation.

Furthermore, much of the Chinese Rites Controversy centred around the debate whether the Jesuits accurately understood Chinese beliefs and

36 Kircher, *China illustrata*, p. 132; Kircher, *La Chine d'Athanase Kirchere*, p. 176.

37 'Gelijk de byna ongelooftelijke menigte der beelden genoeg te kennen geeft, dewelken dikwijls tot een getal van enige duizenden niet alleenlijk in de tempelen worden vertoont, om aangebeden te worden, maar ook byna in alle bijzondere huizen, ter plaats, die daar toe geschikt is', in Kircher, *Toonneel van China*, pp. 163–164.

38 'Daar in zy d'Egiptenaars, om de menigvuldige verscheidenheit van hun afgoden bericht, na te volgen', in Kircher, *Toonneel van China*, p. 164.

39 Rubiés, 'Ethnography, commensurability and the use of comparison', pp. 141–143.

practices; according to a contemporary, ‘the whole question boils down to a point of fact: to know what the Chinese think about their Confucius and their ancestors, and what they intend by the ceremonies with which they honour them’.<sup>40</sup> Kircher’s reply was that his fellow Jesuits certainly understood Chinese civilisation as they possessed the requisite linguistic facilities. Indeed, he often praised their skills in Chinese, Japanese, Tartar and Indian languages. Over the course of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits had put these skills to good use by translating three of the Four Books of Confucius from Chinese into Latin, ostensibly to justify their missionary policy in China to a European audience. However, as subsequent sections will show, the results of these efforts may have been less successful than they perhaps expected. Eventually, the publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* only exacerbated the problem by highlighting the most contentious issues.

## 2 The First Latin Translations of Confucius

The texts compiled in *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* were written over the course of almost a century by at least 17 missionaries from Austria, Italy, the Low Countries, and Portugal, who were assisted by many Chinese interlocutors.<sup>41</sup> The first attempts at publication involved printers in China and India. Subsequently, when a European audience was envisaged, the importance of the Dutch Republic as a nucleus of printing and publishing made itself felt.

According to Thierry Meynard, ‘the Jesuits accumulated one hundred years of expertise in reading the Four Books and their commentaries’ that formed the basis of their translation of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*.<sup>42</sup> As the core of the Confucian canon, three volumes of the Four Books (Sishu 四書) were translated into Latin: the *Great learning* (Daxue 大學), the *Doctrine of the mean* (Zhongyong 中庸), and the *Analects* (Lunyu 論語).<sup>43</sup> The missionaries’ involvement with Confucius had initially been a practical one. The Jesuits recognised that the success of converting a nation from the ‘top down’ depended upon obtaining followers among powerful and influential individuals so that they

40 *Préjugez légitimes en faveur du décret de N.S. Père Alexandre VII et de la pratique des Jésuites au sujet des honneurs que les Chinois rendent à Confucius et à leurs ancêtres*, [s.l.s.n.], 1700, p. 2, as cited in Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius?*, p. 70.

41 Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* (1687), pp. 12–18.

42 Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 18.

43 The Jesuits did not include the fourth book, *Mencius* 孟子, which is a collection of moral and political philosophy by the Confucian thinker and philosopher Mencius, written somewhere around 300 BCE.

could influence lower-class individuals to follow their example.<sup>44</sup> In order to do so, the Jesuits had to appeal to the Confucian literati by way of mastery of the Chinese language combined with a knowledge of at least some of the Confucian texts: without these two basic prerequisites, any attempts at conversion would certainly fail.<sup>45</sup>

Owing to such practical purposes as language acquisition, only few of the early Jesuit translations of the Confucian classics have survived. The oldest, held at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Rome, is by Michele Ruggieri, who arrived in China in 1579.<sup>46</sup> Only a fragment was printed in 1593 in a book on Jesuit education.<sup>47</sup> A Spanish manuscript entitled *Disciplina de los Varones. Libro primero de los que comunemente se dizen en la China los quatro libros* of the late 1580s also contained partial translations of Confucius. This translation was sent to Philip II of Spain and was signed by Ruggieri, even though the real author may have been Matteo Ricci.<sup>48</sup>

Between 1659 and 1667, the Portuguese missionary Inácio da Costa and the Italian Prospero Intorcetta translated the *Great learning* and the first half of the *Analects*, published in 1662, entitled, *Sapientia Sinica*, by a Chinese printer in Jianchang in Jianxi province. This book interspersed Chinese characters with Romanised phonetic transcriptions, as well as their Latin equivalents, and Jesuit commentaries.<sup>49</sup> Intorcetta proceeded to translate the *Doctrine of the mean*, with an expanded biography of Confucius, which was finished under the title of *Sinarum scientia politico-moralis* in 1667. The complete book, a bilingual Chinese-Latin edition, was published two years later. The first half was printed in Guangzhou in 1667 and the second half in Goa, India in 1669. Intorcetta was on his way back to Europe then, to prepare a publication of

44 Mungello, *The great encounter of China and the West*, pp. 23–25.

45 Brockey, *The journey to the East*, pp. 243–286.

46 Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. 8; Michele Ruggiere, 'China, seu humana institutio', Biblioteca Nazionale, Rome, Fondo Gesuitico (FG) 1185 (3314).

47 This was a fragment of *The Great Learning*, in Antonii Possevino, *Bibliotheca selecta quae agitur de Ratione Studiorum t. I*, Rome: s.n., 1593, lib. IX, p. 583. See Lundbaek, 'The first Translation from a Confucian Classic in Europe', pp. 2–11.

48 *Disciplina de los varones. Libro primero de los que comunemente se dizen en la China los quatro libros*, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio di San Lorenzo el Escorial, MS III C 27, 1590; a translation in Italian was published in 2016, *Confucio: La morale della Cina. Ovvero il Grande Studio, l'invariabile Mezzo e parte dei Dialoghi tradotti nel 1590 dal gesuita Michele Ruggieri per sua Maetà Filippo II* (Rome: De Luca Editori d'Arte, 2016); see also Diego Sola García, *Cronista del China. Juan González de Mendoza, entre la misión, el imperio y la historia* (Barcelona: Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2018), pp. 55–56.

49 Inácio da Costa and Prospero Intorcetta, *Sapientia Sinica* (Kien C'ham in urbe Sinaru Provinciae Kiam Si, 1662).

the Confucius translations for a European readership outside the context of linguistic education.

At this point, it became hard to avoid Europe's main centre of book production: the Dutch Republic. Da Costa's original collaborators in China had included François de Rougemont from Maastricht and Philippe Couplet from Mechelen, who suggested to involve Amsterdam publisher Joan Blaeu. They had become acquainted with Blaeu just before their departure for China from Amsterdam on a VOC ship.<sup>50</sup> In 1663, having safely arrived in the Middle Kingdom, De Rougemont and Couplet sent Blaeu their greetings via a VOC official: 'We wish to send from me and Mr. Franciscus Rougemont greetings ... to Mr. Blauw [sic]'.<sup>51</sup> Five years later, De Rougemont mentioned the Amsterdam publisher again as his preferred choice for the publication of the Confucian texts.<sup>52</sup> Even though they were Protestants (probably Mennonites), Joan Blaeu and his father Willem Jansz were an obvious choice: their renowned firm was responsible for many publications by Jesuit authors, including Martino Martini's *Atlas Sinensis*.<sup>53</sup> Blaeu had regularly acted as a dependable middleman, enabling the Jesuits to send letters to and from China via de VOC. In turn, he counted on the privilege of being the first in Europe to publish important Chinese sources and studies.<sup>54</sup>

Yet, when Intorcetta returned to Europe with the translations of Confucius in 1671, he came under the protection of Athanasius Kircher, who at the time was already based at the Jesuit college in Rome. Kircher 'did not want Blaeu to withhold' the manuscript and proposed that *his* Amsterdam publisher, Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge, take on the project.<sup>55</sup> When Intorcetta

50 In Amsterdam, they stayed at the covert, yet condoned Jesuit mission post, innocuously called 'The Sunflower'.

51 'Soo soude van mynent wegen ende van wegen van mynheer Franciscus Rougemont te groeten ..., mynheer Blauw'. AA.v.v., *Dagh-register, gehouden in 't kasteel Batavia, 1633* (The Hague: 1904), p. 304; John E. Wills, 'Some Dutch sources on the Jesuit China mission, 1662–1687', *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu*, 54 (1985), pp. 267–294, p. 271.

52 Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. 12; Golvers, 'The development of the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*', pp. 1141–1164, p. 1144.

53 Paul Begheyn, *Jesuit books in the Dutch Republic and its generality lands, 1567–1772. A bibliography* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 44–45.

54 Intorcetta had already wanted to print the *Politico-moralis* in the Dutch Republic. See Noël Golvers, 'An unobserved letter of Prospero Intorcetta, S.J. to Godefridus Henschens, S.J. and the printing of the Jesuit translations of the Confucian Classics (Rome-Antwerp: 2 June 1672)', in Dirk Sacré and Jan Papy, *Syntagmatia. Essays on Neo-Latin literature in honour of Monique Mund-Dopchie and Gilbert Tournoy* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), pp. 679–698.

55 '[N]on vorria io che il Blaeu le trattenesse', Archive Pontifica Università Gregoriana, Rome, Misc. Epist. Kircher, 560, fol. 79r; see Golvers, 'The development of the *Confucius Sinarum*

left Rome in 1672, another Jesuit from the Netherlands, Godfried Henske, considered publishing the translations, but Kircher again intervened and had the texts transferred from Amsterdam to Rome. The reasons for this displacement remain unclear. Meynard has speculated that this decision may have been connected with the current Dutch wars with France and Britain, or that Kircher himself wanted to supervise the publication.<sup>56</sup> The first option seems plausible, were it not for the fact that Kircher continued sending his own manuscripts to Amsterdam during this period.<sup>57</sup> Regardless, owing to Kircher's old age and eventual death in 1680, the manuscript remained unpublished in Rome for over a decade.<sup>58</sup>

In the meantime, a copy of Intorcetta's translation had fallen into the hands of the Italian philosopher Lorenzo Magalotti, who had passed it on to Melchisédech Thévenot. This eminently connected scholar was working on a substantial book about the non-European world, *Relations de divers voyage curieux*. Its fourth volume (1672–1673) incorporated Intorcetta's Latin translation of the *Doctrine of the mean*, printed without the Chinese characters but including the biography of Confucius in both Latin and French.<sup>59</sup> *Relations*, counting 1,700 pages in total, also included French translations of Martini's *Atlas* and other Dutch sources, such as Willem Ijsbrantsz Bontekoe's previously discussed popular East India travelogue in Dutch and the Dutch report of the VOC embassy by Johan Nieuhof. Apparently, Christiaan Huygens had sent Thévenot clandestine excerpts from Nieuhof's account in 1662, three years before its publication in Dutch.<sup>60</sup> Thus without explicit consent, the Jesuit translation of Confucius was presented for the first time outside a missionary

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*philosophus*', pp. 1145–1146, p. 1149. On the publishing rights, see Stolzenberg, *The great art of knowing*, p. 10.

56 Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. 13, which refers to a letter from Kircher to Henskens, 2 July 1675; Golvers, 'An unobserved letter of Prospero Intorcetta'.

57 Van Waesberge published Kircher's *Principis christiani archetypon politicum sive sapientia regnatricis* (1672), *Arca Noë* (1675), and *Sphinx mystagoga* (1676).

58 Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. 15.

59 'La science des Chinois, ou le Livre de Cum-fu-çu, traduit mot pour de la langue chinoise par le R.P. Intorcetta jesuite. Chum yum constanter tenedum', in Melchisedec Thévenot, *Relations de divers voyage curieux* (4 vols., Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1663–1696), IV, pp. 1–24 (only the title is in French, the text itself is in Latin).

60 Huygens to Thévenot, July 1662, appendix 'Ex itinerario Chinensi Hollandorum Anno 1656.57', in Christiaan Huygens, *Oeuvres complètes* (The Hague: 1894), vol. 4, nos. 1038–1039. Huygens wrote to his brother Lodewijk on 13 July 1662 (vol. 4, p. 169): 'Je veux aussi luy envoyer un Extrait du Voiage en la Chine, que jén ay tirè lors que je léus entre mes mains, je dit cette Relations quil si fort desirè d'avoir.'

context to a much broader European readership in Thévenot's large and multifaceted publication.

It took the Jesuits nearly a century to translate Confucius, helped by at least 17 missionaries and various interlocutors in both Europe and Asia. What had started as an exercise in Chinese language acquisition at the end of the sixteenth century, soon turned into the foundation of the Jesuit missionary policy in the Middle Kingdom. When the Jesuits turned their attention towards a more general readership in Europe, in part to justify their accommodation of various Chinese rites, Protestant Dutch intermediaries often facilitated this early dissemination of the translations of Confucius.

### 3 The 1675 Dutch Edition of Confucius

The first printed vernacular translation of Confucius was made by Pieter van Hoorn in Batavia in 1675. Van Hoorn, a gunpowder manufacturer, had been appointed member of the VOC Council of the Indies and left Amsterdam for Batavia in 1662. In 1666, he led an embassy to the imperial court in Beijing to gain right of trade. While the journey proved a political and economic bust, Van Hoorn's reports did reap some reward as the basis of the aforementioned book by Olfert Dapper, *Gedenkwaardig bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische maetschappye, op de kuste en in het keizerrijk van Taising of Sina*.

After his return to Batavia, Van Hoorn composed a verse translation of parts of Confucius's *Analects* entitled, *Eenige voorname eygenschappen van de ware deugdt, voorsichtigheydt, wysheydt en volmaecktheydt* ('Some principle characteristics of true virtue, prudence, wisdom, and perfection').<sup>61</sup> He probably used a (manuscript) translation made by the Jesuits as his source-text, yet this Dutch version may also have dealt with original Chinese sources as Van Hoorn lived alongside a sizeable community of Chinese people in Batavia. The small booklet in quarto contains only three quires on inexpensive paper without illustrations, which is probably why historians have all but ignored it; in the words of Wilt Idema: 'It is highly questionable whether Van Hoorn's faint echo of the nation's enthusiasm for China was ever heard in patria'.<sup>62</sup>

61 Pieter van Hoorn, *Eenige voorname eygenschappen van de ware deugdt, voorsichtigheydt, wysheydt en volmaecktheydt. Getrocken uyt den Chineschen Confucius* (Batavia [Jakarta]: Johannes van den Eede, 1675).

62 Wilt Idema, 'Confucius Batavus. Het eerste Nederlandse dichtstuk naar het Chinees', *Literatuur*, 16 (1999), pp. 85–89, p. 86.

Nevertheless, this forgotten booklet raises many questions. Notably, Van Hoorn's translation was printed in Batavia, not necessarily a centre of book production, although the Dutch had operated a small printing press there for some time.<sup>63</sup> Supplies of printer's ink, the lye bath, plates, and paper all had to be ordered from Europe. The output of the Batavian press consisted mainly of treaties, regulations, and notices as well as some dictionaries, wedding poems, and catechisms.<sup>64</sup> In 1674–1675 Johannes van den Eede, formerly of Middelburg, was printing and publishing for the VOC in the Prinsentraat under the imprint 'De Batavische mercurius'.<sup>65</sup> He printed only two other works besides the Confucius translation during that time, which is in line with the general output of the Batavian press in this period.<sup>66</sup> Because the publication of Confucius does not fit within the usual Batavian corpus of publications, it is possible that Van Hoorn paid for it out of his own pocket. This would also explain why he dedicated the work to his family instead of, as was the usual practice, the VOC and its board of directors.

Van Hoorn believed that Confucius's instructions on how to lead a virtuous life were more adequate than any Western work could provide: 'Much has been written about virtue.... But it seems to me that the Chinese Confucius has expressed and depicted it with words better and clearer than any European author'.<sup>67</sup> According to Peter Rietbergen, his open-mindedness towards Confucius was an attempt 'to bridge the gap between ethical, social and societal principles propounded by the Chinese thinker and his own Christian culture'.<sup>68</sup> What is more, Van Hoorn's engagement with Chinese thought was markedly different from that of his contemporaries. Nowhere does he make

63 Landwehr, *A bibliography of publications relating to the Dutch East India Company*; Katharine Smith Diehl, *Printers and printing in the East Indies to 1850*, vol. 1, *Batavia 1600–1850* (New Rochelle: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1990).

64 *Short Title Catalogue Netherlands*; place of publication = Batavia.

65 J. Landwehr, 'De VOC in de wereld van het boek. Sponsor en uitgever', *De Boekenwereld*, 6 (1989–1990), pp. 134–135.

66 Between 1668 and 1708, 40 books were printed and published in Batavia according to the *Short Title Catalogue Netherlands*. This number should be taken with some caution. Much of the printed works never reached the Netherlands, and the climate in the Indies did not contribute to the durability of paper. Also, much of the Batavian print was meant for heavy duty usage: as a rule of thumb, such things are seldom preserved in large quantities.

67 'Over de deugdt is veel geschreven ... nochtans schynt my toe dat den Chineschen Confucius de selve meerder, en klaerder met woorden heeft uyt-gedruckt en afgemaelt als my van eenige Europese Scribenten is te voor gekomen.' in Van Hoorn, *Eenige voorname eygenschappen*, p. 1.

68 Peter Rietbergen, 'Before the Bible, beyond the Bible ...? VOC travelogues, world views and the paradigms of Christian Europe', in Susanne Friedrich, *Transformation of knowledge in Dutch expansion* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), pp. 231–249, p. 237.

the explicit comparison between Confucius and Christ or the biblical prophets, a rhetoric often employed by the Jesuits. In fact, even Europeans who were sceptical of the Society of Jesus did not hesitate to portray the Chinese philosopher as a kind of Christian saint.<sup>69</sup> By contrast, Van Hoorn only indicated that the original author lived before Christ, thereby allowing readers to draw their own conclusions.

Earlier historians have suggested that Van Hoorn used a translation made by the Jesuits as his source-text. This cannot have been the printed *Sapientia Sinica*, which provides only the first half of the *Analects*; Van Hoorn included passages from the whole text in his work.<sup>70</sup> He may, however, have had access to a manuscript version of Couplet's complete translation.<sup>71</sup> Relations between VOC officials and Jesuits have been amply documented: missionaries often travelled on Dutch ships, which also carried their mail. Martino Martini for instance, stayed for six months in Batavia in 1653 and so did Couplet for 13 months in 1682–1683. Governor-General Johannes Maetsuyker (a Catholic) was even suspected of actively supporting the Jesuits.<sup>72</sup> Van Hoorn likewise befriended Philippe Couplet, even though he nurtured no evident sympathies towards Catholicism.<sup>73</sup> He may therefore have been interested in Confucius for different reasons.

What indications do the different texts provide? A complicating factor is that, in the seventeenth century, Confucius's statements were available in several editions with elaborate commentaries.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps Van Hoorn and the Jesuits used different editions? In James Legge's modern translation, the opening lines of the *Analects* read:

69 In his *Vertu des païens* (1641), the libertine philosopher François La Mothe le Vayer exclaimed (echoing Erasmus's statement on Socrates): 'Sancte Confucius, ora pro nobis.' Pierre Hazard, *La crise de la conscience européenne, 1680–1715* (Paris: Librairie générale Française, 1961), p. 21.

70 *Sapientia Sinica* also includes the complete *Great learning*, but Van Hoorn did not refer to it.

71 Idema, 'Confucius Batavus', p. 86.

72 Marion Peters, *De wijze koopman. Het wereldwijde onderzoek van Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1717), burgemeester en VOC-bewindhebber van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2010), pp. 226–227. Hertroijs, 'Hoe kennis van China naar Europa kwam', p. 17.

73 Van Hoorn met with Couplet and De Rougemont during his sojourn at Fuzhou, according to Leonard Blussé, 'Doctor at sea. Chou Mei-Yeh's voyage to the West (1710–1711)', in Erika de Poorter (ed.), *As the twig is bent ... Essays in honour of Frits Vos* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1990), pp. 7–30, p. 14.

74 When the Jesuits translated the Four Books, it is very likely that they used an edition comprising both the *Sishu jizhu* [by Zhu Xi] and the *Sishu zhijie* [by Zhang Juzheng], see Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 40.

The Master said, 'Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application? Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?' ... Tsze-hsia said, 'If a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty, and applies it as sincerely to the love of the virtuous; if, in serving his parents, he can exert his utmost strength; if, in serving his prince, he can devote his life; if, in his intercourse with his friends, his words are sincere: although men say that he has not learned, I will certainly say that he has'.<sup>75</sup>

Van Hoorn's verse translation:

When you learn and follow the trail of the wise men  
 And remain constantly focused in this study  
 Overcoming all difficulties through practice,  
 This will be of benefit to you and make you beloved;  
 Yea if you want to obtain wisdom from hard work  
 Then you can expect friends and companions  
 Even chosen from faraway countries and honoured  
 To be taught by you in the education of wisdom.  
 ... When someone is so devoted to men  
 Of piety and virtue – just like the senses desire and love  
 Something that brings beauty and sweet delight –  
 And also devotes all his power, without diminishing it,  
 To obeying his parents with all due respect,  
 And does not spare his own life for his country or prince,  
 And has learnt faith and truth in his words,  
 Then I think he has studied enough.<sup>76</sup>

75 James Legge, *The Chinese Classics. With a translation, critical and exegetical notes, Prolegomena, and Copious indexes* (Taipei: SMC Publishing, 1991), p. 116.

76 'Indien ghy leert en volgd't het spoor der Wyse Mannen,  
 En in die study blyft volstandigh in gespannen,  
 En alle moelyckheydt door oeffeningh overwindt,  
 Dat sal u kost'lyck zyn, en maecken wel bewindt;  
 Ia als ghy Wysheydt door beneerstingh wilt betrachten,  
 Soo hebt ghy mede maets en vrienden te verwachten,  
 Van verre Landen zelfs gesocht en oock vereerd,  
 Om Wysheydts onderwys van u te zyn geleerd, ...  
 Soo ymandt sich bevindt tot vroom en wijse Menschen,  
 Soodanigh toegedaen, gelyck de sinnen wenschen,  
 En minnen't geen dat mooy, en soet vermaeck toe-brenght,  
 En voorts geheele kracht besteedt en geensints krenckt,

The original Latin now translated into Meynard's English follow:

Confucius asked: 'Will it not be a pleasure to strive to imitate the wise and to train constantly oneself in this effort of imitation? ... After you have successfully cultivated yourself with this kind of effort and perseverance, then followers and friends will come from afar in order to consult you and to transmit your teaching' ... The disciple, Zixia,<sup>77</sup> says: 'If someone is delighted by honest and wise people, changing and transferring into them his love for things which are beautiful and agreeable to see – *this means that a youth should desire virtue and wisdom with the same ardour and intensity of sensual love, since this period of life is usually controlled by the pleasure of the senses* [my emphasis]; similarly, if he is resolute in fulfilling his duty as an honest son toward his father and mother, exhausting all his energy; moreover, if he is resolute in fulfilling his duties as a subject toward his ruler or prince, not hesitating to risk his own person and life whenever needed; finally, if he makes promises to comrades and friends with whom he has good relationships, always keeping his promises with a shining trust and truthfulness; whoever is like this, even though some may say that he has not yet studied, I myself shall always say that he had studied.'<sup>78</sup>

It is not difficult to see that both the Dutch and Latin translations were (in some measure) faithful to the original Chinese, even though the Dutch verse text demonstrates more poetic license. Van Hoorn's translation also omits all proper names, which would have provided clues to the translator's knowledge of the Latin version. Yet the fragments quoted here contain an indication that the Dutch version may have been concerned with the original Chinese. For example, Van Hoorn's translation does not include the italicised sentence in the passage quoted above that, in fact, was not in the Chinese original. Meynard therefore concludes that this was a Jesuit addition on the basis of Western moral literature.<sup>79</sup>

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Om ouders volle plichts gehoorsaemheydt te geven,  
 Oock voor syn Landt of prins niet spaert syn eygen leven,  
 En in syn woorden trouw en waerheydt heeft geleert,  
 Die houd'ick dat genoeg en wel heeft gestudeert',  
 in Van Hoorn, *Eenige voorname eygenschappen van de ware deugd*, p. 16.

77 In the Latin edition this name is transliterated as çù hia, Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 104.

78 Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, pp. 97–105.

79 Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, pp. 97–105.

Pieter van Hoorn would not have translated the original Chinese text directly; among Europeans, only a handful of Jesuit missionaries had mastered that skill. Yet, by the time his text was printed, Van Hoorn had lived for over a decade among a Chinese community of traders, craftsmen, and labourers who were permitted to reside within the walled city of Batavia. ‘The whole upkeep of Batavia depends on the Chinese’ noted a Dutch minister in 1625, ‘because without them there would be no markets held here, and no houses, no works would be built.’<sup>80</sup> By the end of the century, the number of Chinese (almost 3,700) was more than twice that of Europeans.<sup>81</sup> Historians have thus portrayed Batavia as a de facto ‘Chinese town under Dutch protection ... a cornerstone of the Chinese trade network in Southeast Asia.’<sup>82</sup>

Although most of the Batavian Chinese would have been illiterate, those who could read and write would have learnt to do so on the basis of the Confucian texts. This seems to have inspired yet another Dutchman to make, with the help of a schoolmaster trained in Macao, a word-for-word translation of the first chapters of the *Analects* into Latin. A copy of this text by Calvinist minister Justus Heurnius, complete with the Chinese characters and phonetic transcriptions, was sent to his brother Otto in Leiden. Heurnius attached a number of Christian works translated into Mandarin, such as a narrative on the Ten Commandments and a Dutch-Latin-Chinese dictionary.<sup>83</sup> Although he adopted some of the religious terminology coined by the Jesuits, Heurnius’s texts were clearly intended for a Protestant context, in which trade

80 Justus Heurnius to the directors of the Amsterdam chamber of the VOC, 29 January 1625. See Jacob Grothe, *Archief voor de geschiedenis der oude Hollandsche zending* (Utrecht: Van Bentum, 1890–1891), vol. 5, pp. 226–227.

81 In 1699, the population inside the walls consisted of 3,679 Chinese, 2,407 freed slaves, 1,783 Europeans, 670 people of mixed race, and 867 classified as ‘other’, according to a population census, Blussé, *Strange company*, p. 84.

82 Blussé, *Strange company*, p. 74. For more demographic details, see Marie-Sybille de Vienne, *Les Chinois en Insulinde. Échanges et sociétés marchandes au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, d’après les sources de la V.O.C.* (Paris: Indes Savantes, 2008), pp. 219–227.

83 *Compendium Doctrinae Christianae* (Batavia: 1628), Leiden University Library, Special Collections, Acad. 225. It was probably sent by Justus Heurnius (Batavia) to Otto Heurnius (Leiden) in 1629. The bundle contains *Confucii doctrina moralis*, containing 5/6 of chapter 1 of the *Analects* (fol. 11v–14v) and ‘Colloquium Confucii cum puero’ (i.e., the text and translation of Xiao’er lun, a discussion with the seven-year-old Xiang Tuo, during which Confucius is outwitted), fol. 6r–11r. On the dictionary (Acad. 224) and compendium (with copies in London and Oxford that contain a longer excerpt from the *Analects*) see Koos Kuiper, ‘The earliest monument of Dutch Sinological studies. Justus Heurnius’s manuscript Dutch-Chinese dictionary and Chinese-Latin compendium *Doctrinae Christianae* (Batavia 1628)’, *Quaerendo*, 35 (2005), pp. 95–186.

was paramount.<sup>84</sup> For instance, the bundle of translations began with a set of 'expressions for buying and selling' Chinese goods such as silk and porcelain. Heurnius also wrote that his efforts would 'be of great usefulness to posterity, as soon as the Chinese trade is opened, as we hope'.<sup>85</sup>

Did Pieter van Hoorn's translation of Confucius, and Johan van Hoorn's translation and interpretation of the Five Virtues (outlined below) fit a similar pattern: were they assisted by the Chinese in Batavia? As member of the Council of the Indies, Van Hoorn must have had frequent contact with this Chinese majority, depending on Chinese interpreters for business transactions as well as for more culturally inclined translations. A number of materials from his family archive, now held at the National Archives in The Hague, indeed attests to such intercultural exchanges.<sup>86</sup> We find, for example, various papers relate to the Five Constants *Wuchang* 五常 of Confucian ethics, and their translation and explanation in Dutch. Dated 1694, these documents demonstrate the continuing interactions between the Van Hoorn family and the Chinese interlocutors of Batavia: interactions within which Chinese virtues remained of the greatest interest.

The first of these documents consists of two pages of Chinese paper describing the Five Constant Virtues of Confucius with a commentary and elaboration, written in a Chinese hand. The Five Constants of Confucius encompass the promotion of virtue through Ren (仁 benevolence, humaneness), Yi (義 righteousness or justice), Li (禮 proper rite), Zhi (智 knowledge), and Xin (信 integrity).

This Chinese manuscript, explaining the main virtues of Confucius, is directly related to a document, this time on European paper and in a European hand, concentrating on the same concepts of Ren, Yi, Li, Zhi, and Xin. Most likely, the European writer based this project directly on the available Chinese example. The 'calligraphed' virtues are surrounded by a translation in Latin, together with the rather awkwardly phrased 'Nosse: Ex: Propinqvo: Solidae: Virtutis: Est:', or 'It is to have been known from nearness of solid virtue'. Here,

84 Heurnius, as 'the first Protestant missionary to be confronted with this difficulty', adopted the Jesuits' usage of the Chinese term Tianzhu (Lord of Heaven) to denote the Christian God; the terminology must have been suggested by the schoolmaster who had been trained in Macao, a centre of Jesuit learning. Duyvendak, 'Early Chinese studies in Holland', p. 321, who also notes that the inclusion of the Ten Commandments signals Heurnius's Protestant focus.

85 Justus Heurnius to the directors of the Amsterdam chamber of the VOC, 29 January 1625. See Grothe, *Archief voor de geschiedenis*, pp. 226–227.

86 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Collectie Van Hoorn-Van Riebeeck access 1.10.45, inventories 2–14.

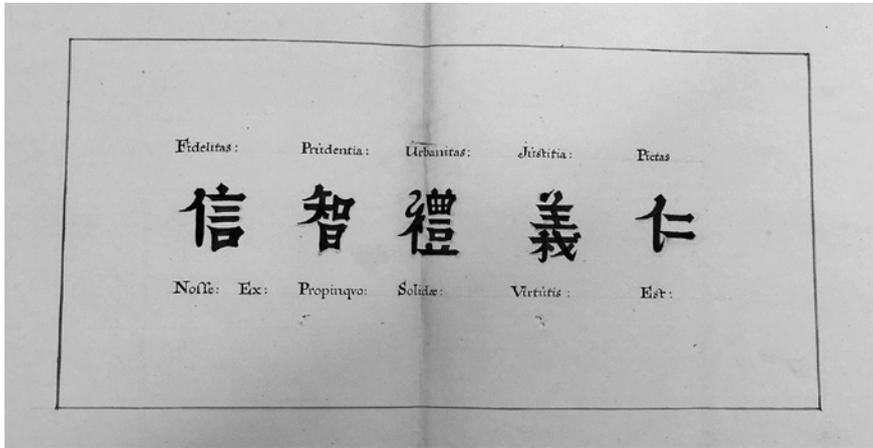


FIGURE 25 Chinese virtues, in the Van Hoorn Archives National Archives The Hague, Collection Van Hoorn Riebeeck 1.10.45, no. 3

Ren is translated as *pietas*, Yi as *justitia*, Li as *urbanitas*, Zhi as *prudentia*, and Xin as *fidelitas*.

This type of comparison between the virtues of China and Europe began with the Jesuits. When Matteo Ricci came to China, he soon identified the Five Constants, showing great admiration for Li and Zhi specifically: 'This ancient empire is worldly known and its people are polite and abide by codes of conduct. Li is one of the five most precious virtues in this land'.<sup>87</sup> For Ricci, the main purpose of Confucian ethics was to establish a stable and harmonious nation, economical safety for families, and morally cultivated individuals was 'compatible with the brightness of conscience and the truth of Christianity'. This Jesuit understanding of Chinese virtues was elaborated further by subsequent Jesuit translators. For instance, the Jesuits had long interpreted Ren as 'true virtue of the heart', 'the inner, real, and perfect virtue', or 'charity and piety': *charitas et pietas*.<sup>88</sup> In the first part of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, Ren is indeed translated as *pietas*, as it was in *Sapientia Sinica* and *Politico-moralis*.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, both Van Hoorn and the Jesuits understood Yi as *justitia*, Zhi as *prudentia*, and Xin as *fidelitas*. The only aberrant translation was that of Li. The Jesuits understood the concept as *civilitas*, while Van Hoorn translated it as *urbanitas*. However, both terms could be understood as 'civility' or the Dutch

87 Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault, *Matteo Ricci's reading notes about China* (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 2010), p. 63.

88 Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 101.

89 Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 64.

*heuscheydt*, meaning the just exercise of tolerance, respect, and consideration towards fellow social participants or fellow citizens.<sup>90</sup>

While the Jesuit interpretation of the Five Constants of Confucius certainly influenced the Van Hoorn translation of the same, another document does hint at a more direct Chinese reading. In an accompanying note, Johan van Hoorn requests Johannes Melman to translate the Chinese text into Dutch:

Gui ij: Li Thi Sin  
 Chinese sinspreuken  
 Beduijdinge off begrip der  
 Chinese sinspreucken  
 Gui Iji. Li Ti. Sin  
 In 5 printen mij toegebracht

Monsr. R. melman  
 Ik sal bij occagie van uE; beleeftheit  
 verwagten of uE: mij wilde tereghelpen  
 met de vertalinge uijt het Chinees  
 vande beduijdenis desen 5. Sinspreuken  
 Uedgnt  
 5 Julij 1694 JvH<sup>91</sup>

Johannes Melman had been the official translator of the second Dutch embassy. Indeed, he is regularly mentioned in Olfert Dapper's account of the embassy: 'Lieutenant Hendrik van Dalen [sent] the translator Johannes Melman to Tanganpek to find out the cause, reason and the why'.<sup>92</sup> Melman is also referenced by Nicolaas Witsen in the second edition of his *Noord en Oost Tartarye*, again emphasising the interpreter's skill in Chinese: 'Johannes Melman, who already has been in China as translator in service of the Dutch company since 1656, and afterwards travelled there many times as merchant, knew the

90 François A. Pomey, *Novum dictionarium Belgico-Latinum* (Maastricht: Lambert Bertus, 1729); Barbara Cassin (ed.), *Dictionary of untranslatables. A philosophical lexicon* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 139.

91 'Gui ij Li Sin, Chinese aphorisms, meaning or concept of the, Chinese aphorisms, Gui ij Li Thi Sin, handed to me in five prints. Mister Melman, I will anticipate when you have the opportunity, your discretion in helping me out with the translation from the Chinese of the meaning of these five aphorisms, Yours, 5 July 1694, JvH, in NA 1.10.45 (11).

92 'Luitenant Hendrik van Dalen [zond] den tolk Johannes Melman na Tonganpek, om d'oorzake, waerom en ten welken einde af te vragen?' in Dapper, *Gedenckwaerdig bedryf*, p. 130. See also p. 79, p. 118, pp. 372–373, p. 376.

language well, as he heard it many times in Beijing, and in other places in China, as spoken by the most erudite Tartars'.<sup>93</sup>

Indeed, Melman did produce the translation, which is also held in the archive, assisted by two Chinese people: *Vertaling van vijf Chinese boekjes, die de naam dragen van Singli (wijse redenen uijt het hert voortkomende) overgeset volgens de vertolking der Chineesen Sjaugoanko en Limphoanko* ('Translation of five Chinese booklets, that bear the name of Singli [sage reasons taken from the heart] transcribed according to a translation by the Chinese Sjaugoanko and Limphoanko').<sup>94</sup> The translation follows the Chinese example relatively conscientiously in that it renders the same parables, allegories, and semi-historical stories. Each virtue is accompanied by a short biography, serving as an example of one of the Five Constants. For example, Zhi or *prudence* is linked to Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮: a Chinese politician, military strategist, writer and engineer of the Shu Han 蜀漢 during the Three Kingdoms (Sanguo) 三國 period of the second century CE.<sup>95</sup>

Another document from the Van Hoorn family archives illuminates yet another layer of transtextual transmission. With the translation by Johannes Melman in hand, another Dutchman, probably not Johan van Hoorn as the handwriting does not match, wrote an *uitlegginge* or an 'interpretation and meaning of the five Chinese aphorisms or main virtues, as described by the Chinese philosopher Confutius, for his disciples, and explained with examples'.<sup>96</sup> The text explains how the Chinese virtues should be understood within a European context, with ample comparison with European virtues:

The first maxim Gin, which among other things stands for piety, love, respectfulness and compassion, means in the Chinese language to love

93 Johannes Melman, die al in den Jare 1656 zich in Sina, ten dienste der Nederlandsche Maetschappy, als Tolk opgehouden heeft, en namaels steeds als Koopman meermalen aldaer geweest is, en der Tael zeer kundig was, voor zoo veel als hy zulks in Peking, en elders in Sina, uit den mond der eigene meest verstandigste Tartaren', in Nicolaas Witsen, *Noord en Oost Tartarye, ofte bondig ontwerp van eenige dier landen en volken* (Amsterdam: François Halma, 1702), p. 20. Witsen subsequently cites a letter from Melman dated 4 December 1692.

94 'Translation of five Chinese booklets, that bear the name of Singli (sage matters from the heart) translated by the Chinese Sjaugoanko and Limphoanko', in NA 1.10.45 (11).

95 Ren or *pieta* was identified with Tangju Qing 唐聚慶, righteousness or Yi with Guan Zhong 管仲 and Bao Shuya 鮑叔牙, propriety or Li with Qiu Zhongni 丘仲尼, and fidelity or Xin with Zhang Shi 張式 en Fan Juqing 范巨卿.

96 'Beduydenisse van de vijff chinese zin-Spreucken off hooftdeugden, bij den chinese wijsgeerigen confutius, aen sijne leerlingen beschreven ende met exempelen voorgesteld', in NA 1.10.45 (11).

someone rightly, with respect to God's laws, to not place yourself above others, to be elegant and respectful in conversation, to comfort the downtrodden, to have a heart full of compassion and charity, to show affection to all people, to help your parents in their humility and in matters of health, to help them in sickness as long as they live, and to provide them with decent funeral processions after their death. This argument is confirmed by the example of a certain sage named Petoo [probably Tangju Qing], who lived an irreproachable and holy life, honouring God and fulfilling his pious tasks in their temple.<sup>97</sup>

Johan van Hoorn's engagement with Chinese writings did not end there. Around 1700, the Governor General received an image of an inscribed Chinese mirror from the Amsterdam *burgomaster* Nicolaas Witsen. The mayor's learned network, which included missionary scholars in Rome and Paris, had been unable to translate the mirror's ancient inscription; so, he asked Van Hoorn to consult his Chinese community. Van Hoorn asked an 'interpreter in Batavia', but nobody could fully decipher the mirror's ancient seal script.<sup>98</sup> He therefore had the request forwarded to more literate Chinese on the mainland, possibly in Guangzhou, a town that had relatively common trade dealings with Batavia.<sup>99</sup>

In 1705, Witsen recounted how he had 'sent [the image of] the mirror to Batavia where more than ten thousand Chinese live. No one understands it, but the Governor General had it brought to China to show to learned Chinese, asking them for an explanation, and so it happened'.<sup>100</sup> The 'learned Chinese'

97 'De eerste Zin-spreucke Gin; die onder andere genomen leert, voor godtvrucht, liefde, eerbiedigheijt ende mededogentheijt, betekene in de chinese spraake, ymand onder de vreesse gods wel te beminnen, zig zelven boven andere niet te verheffen; bespraacksam te zijn, bedruckten te troosten, een herte vol deernis ende barmhaertigheijt te hebben, genegentheijt aen eener ygelyken te betoonen; zijne ouders in verlegentheijt bijstant te doen, ende die te helpen in gesontheit, daerover toesigt te nemen in sieckte, die te helpen soo langs die leven, ende hun dere van lyckstatien aen te doen, na hunne doot. Dit argument wort met een exempel bevestigt; hoe dat seker wijsgeerige petoo genaemt, die aldaar een onberispelijk ende heijlig leven vaerde, ende onder got eren nemen van sijne godtvrucgtige plichten, in hare tempel', in NA 1.10.45 (11).

98 '[D]e uytlegger van dese mijne spiegel op Batavia', Nicolaas Witsen to Gijsbrecht Cuper, 20 October 1705, J. Gebhard, *Het leven van Mr. Nicolaes Cornelisz. Witsen* (vol. 2, Utrecht: Leeftang, 1881–1882), no. 21, p. 307.

99 The VOC did not establish a trading post until 1729, but earlier *vrijburgers* (free citizens) from Batavia were trading regularly with Guangzhou, a centre of arts and crafts production. See Hertroijs, 'Hoe kennis van China naar Europa kwam', p. 102.

100 '[I]k sont het dan na Batavia alwaer meer als tiendusent Sinesen sijn, nimant verstaet het, dog de generael dede het overbrengen na Sina om aen geleerde Sinesen te vertonen,

transcribed the ancient seal script into contemporary characters; the Dutch translation that followed was incorrect but certainly made an attempt at accuracy. Incidentally, a faulty transcription of a single character resulted in the poem being read as a monotheistic paean, which fitted Witsen's argument that the ancient Chinese had once been similar to Christians.<sup>101</sup> He concluded that his mirror dated to the time of Confucius: 'It is remarkable that these letters are more than a thousand years old and the common man cannot read them at all. This is a device or symbol from ... around the time of the very learned and pious Confucius of whom was said, with more reason than was said once about Plato and Seneca, "O Saint Confucius!"<sup>102</sup> Witsen's translation only survives in Dutch, but there may have been other languages involved in the process of translation, such as Malay or Portuguese.<sup>103</sup> In any event, this exchange proves again that Chinese-Dutch collaboration on translating sophisticated Chinese texts was possible.

Until late in his career, Johan van Hoorn maintained many connections to Chinese civilisation when fashioning his professional identity. At the tender age of 12, he had been appointed a junior VOC official to accompany his father on the 1665 embassy to Beijing. Due to his 'intimate as well as business-like' contacts with the Chinese in Batavia, he became the richest man in the Indies.<sup>104</sup> When, after spending 30 years in Asia, he returned to the Netherlands, he filled his Amsterdam mansion with staggering amounts of high-quality Asian, specifically Chinese, arts and crafts. His inventory included porcelain (570 sets of cups and saucers), furniture, and lacquerware. Some of these objects were customised for his children with the family's coat of arms: a material expression of the manner in which three generations managed to negotiate the melting pot of cultures that Batavia was.<sup>105</sup>

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en die explicatie te versoeken, so als geschiede', Nicolaas Witsen to Gijsbrecht Cuper, 20 November 1705, in Gebhard, *Het leven van Mr. Nicolaes Witsen*, no. 22, pp. 308–309.

101 Willemijn van Noord and Thijs Weststeijn, 'The global trajectory of Nicolaas Witsen's Chinese mirror', *Rijksmuseum Bulletin*, 4 (2015), pp. 325–361.

102 'Het is bijzonder dese letters syn al over de duysent jaer verout, en de gemene man kan se gants niet lesen, het is een devies (symbolium) van ... omtrent de tijd van de so geleerde en vrome Confutius, van wien men met meer reden als eertijds een ander van Plato en Seneca uytriep, O Heylige Confutius, Nicolaas Witsen to Gijsbrecht Cuper, 20 October 1705', in Gebhard, *Het leven van Mr. Nicolaes Witsen*, p. 307.

103 Kuiper, 'The earliest monument of Dutch sinological studies', p. 112.

104 Blussé, 'Doctor at sea', p. 16; Kees Zandvliet, *De 500 rijksten van de Republiek* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2018), pp. 144–145.

105 Jan van Campen, 'The hybrid world of Batavia', in Jan van Campen, Femke Diercks and Karina Corrigan (eds.), *Asia in Amsterdam. The culture of luxury in the Golden Age* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2015), p. 47; Johan van Hoorn inventory, notary Michiel

The Confucian translation and the interpretation of the Five Constants may have been similarly a 'customised' piece of Chinese civilisation to express the family's identity with Asia. Van Hoorn senior presented the text to his 'dear wife and children', calling it 'something beautiful that I have brought you from China and, if you use it well, this will be better than if I had carried large treasures from that country'.<sup>106</sup> The family's intimate relationship with the Chinese comes into even closer proximity in documents relating to the family's return to the Netherlands in 1709. Johan van Hoorn, now of ailing health, was accompanied by a Chinese medical doctor by the name of Zhou Meiye 周美翁. He seems to have been a personal friend, who could 'read and write everything in Chinese' while also being able to speak Dutch.<sup>107</sup> During the long journey, the doctor held forth about the three Chinese 'sects' of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism and explained to the Governor General the capital virtues outlined by 'the Chinese sage Confucius'.<sup>108</sup> Was it perhaps Dr. Zhou who helped interpret the Chinese virtues for Johan van Hoorn? In any case, the Chinese doctor did not stay long in the Netherlands: after only six weeks in Amsterdam, he took the first ship back to China.

#### 4 The 1687 Jesuit Edition of Confucius in Latin

After Van Hoorn's book, it would take 12 more years for the Latin translation to appear. In 1683, Philippe Couplet, travelling on a Dutch ship, arrived in Enkhuizen to advertise the Jesuit mission on a European tour. He brought with him 400 Chinese Christian books donated by a converted noblewoman. He was also accompanied by a young Chinese man, Michael Shen Fuzong: the son

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Servaas, Amsterdam City Archives, notarial archives, inv. no. 5006, no. 15, 20 October 1711. See also Bea Brommer, *To my dear Pietermelletje. Grandfather and granddaughter in VOC time, 1710–1720* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

106 'Ontfangt dit dan waerde Huys-Vrouw en Kinderen als wat mooyts dat ick uyt China Voor ue: heb mede gebracht, en soo ghij het U te nutte kunt maken, dat sal beter zyn als dat ick U groote Schatten van daer toe-gebracht hadde', in Van Hoorn, *Eenige voorname eygenschappen*, p. 4.

107 'Dien Sinesen Heer konde alles lesen, en schrijven, dat Sinees was', Nicolaas Witsen to Gijsbrecht Cuper, 5 December 1710', in Gebhard, *Het leven van Mr. Nicolaes Witsen*, pp. 332–335. François Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien* (vol. 2, Dordrecht and Amsterdam: Joannes van Braam and Gerard onder de Linden, 1724–1726), p. 254.

108 'Den Chineesen leermeester Confutius', in Archival documents 'Aantekeningen van de Chinese arts Thebitia' are kept in the KITLV library, Leiden, dh 269. Quoted from Blussé, 'Doctor at sea', p. 21.

of Christian converts from Nanjing.<sup>109</sup> Thoroughly educated in the Confucian texts, Shen Fuzong was able to assist with the publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, which was intended to include Chinese characters.<sup>110</sup> Copies of the Chinese editions of Confucius with Shen's Latin annotations remain in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.<sup>111</sup>

During their lengthy stay in the Dutch Republic, Couplet and Shen worked on an introduction to the book and, in the meantime, it seems, discussed the matter with local scholars.<sup>112</sup> However, this time Blaeu or another Dutch publisher would not be an option. Instead, they looked to Paris where Melchisédech Thévenot, by then royal librarian, managed to acquire printing permission and financial support from Louis XIV. In August 1686, Couplet began sending his manuscripts to Paris, where he himself arrived six months later. On 29 April 1687, the royal censor granted permission to publish. The honour fell to Daniel Horthemels of the Rue St. Jacques: a Dutchman who had only recently converted to Catholicism. Horthemels arrived in Paris in 1686 from Middelburg in Zeeland by way of Charenton in northern France. His brother, Gillis, remained in Zeeland. He maintained close contacts in the Northern Netherlands, among them, Kircher's publisher Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge.<sup>113</sup> Together with his father-in-law, Horthemels belonged to a group of select printers who aimed primarily at the foreign market.<sup>114</sup>

Printing, carried out by Andreas Cramoisy, was finished within a month. The book did not include the Chinese characters that Couplet had envisaged, even though the notation numbers for these had already been set in type in the first few chapters.<sup>115</sup> Initially, the Latin text was intended to be accompanied

109 The noblewoman was Candida Xu. See Phillipe Couplet, *Historie van eene groote, christene mevrouwe van China met naeme mevrouw Candida Hiu ... beschreven door ... Philippus Couplet ... ende in onse Nederlandsche taele door H.I.D.N.W.P. overgheset* (Antwerp: Franciscus Muller, 1694).

110 Theodore Foss, 'The European sojourn of Philippe Couplet and Michael Shen Fuzong, 1683–1692', in Jerome Heyndrickx (ed.), *Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623–1693). The man who brought China to Europe* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1990), pp. 121–142.

111 Oxford: Bodleian Library, Sinica 2.

112 Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. 10.

113 Van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. IV, p. 159, p. 186.

114 Van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse boekhandel*, vol. VI, p. 87.

115 'Lettergieterye, waer in gegooten werden alle soorten van Letter ... ook in 't Chinees, Japonees, en verdere Oosterse Talen', in 's Gravenhaegse courant, The Hague, 18 February 1729, p. 4. I am indebted to John A. Lane for providing this information. Also see Knud Lundbaek, *The traditional history of Chinese script* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1988), p. 45; According to Golvers, 'The development of the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*', p. 1160, the choice of Horthemels (who had abjured Calvinism only in 1686) was inspired by Couplet being 'attracted to his Flemish-Dutch countrymen'.

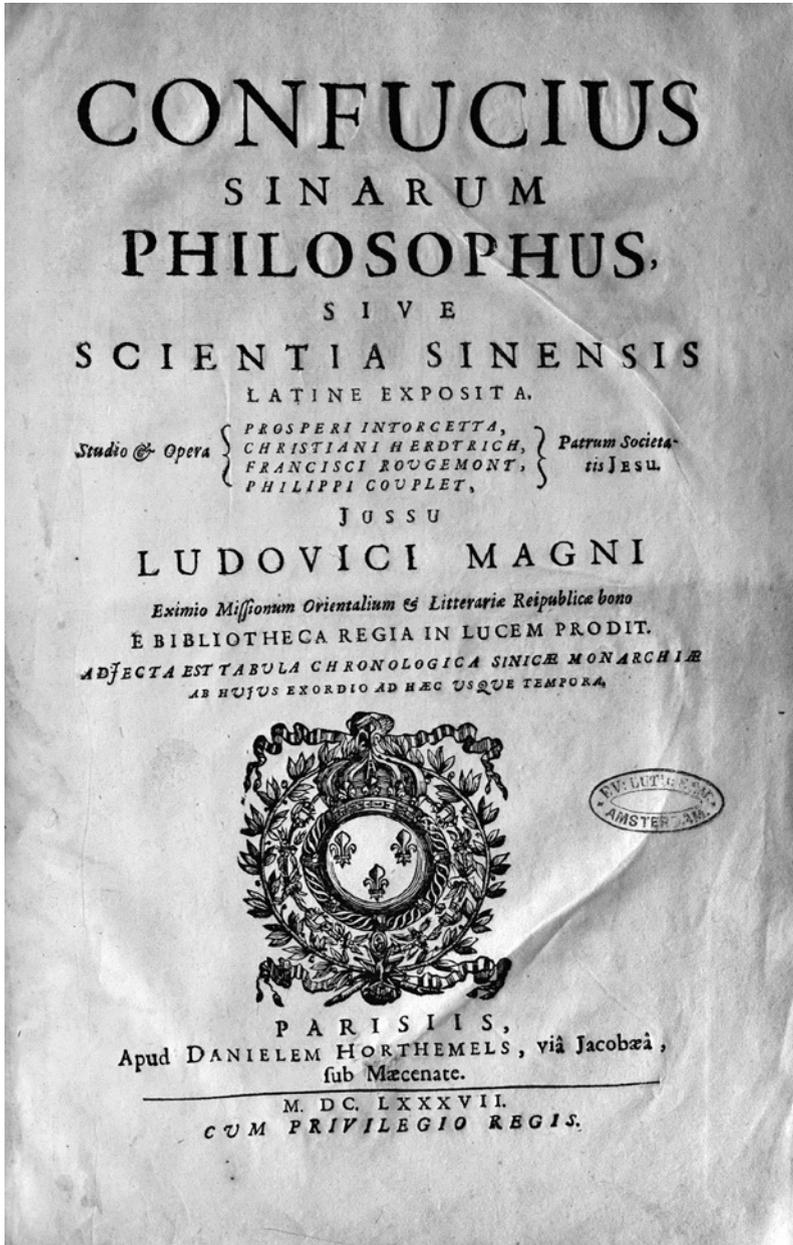


FIGURE 26 *Philippe Couplet et al., Confucius Sinarum Philosophus (Paris: Daniel Horthemels, 1687) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (K 61-272)*

by the main terms in Chinese. However, at this time it remained costly and impractical for printers to found Chinese type. All Chinese characters in seventeenth-century European publications were therefore made in either woodcut or engraving. It would be well into the eighteenth century before Chinese leaden type could be produced; although, in 1729, a printer from The Hague advertised his 'type-foundry, where every type of letter is cast ... also in Chinese, Japanese, and other Eastern languages', there is no evidence to show that he ever produced such type.

The publisher's paratext communicates from the outset that this was not a work intended for the masses. The material construction of the book (or its bibliography) - size, title page, use of paper, and typesetting - all indicate that its potential audience consisted of a rather small group of wealthy and presumably educated readers. There are various indicators for such a peritextual reading of the material qualities of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. The book was printed on paper of very high quality, in an expensive folio size that, in this period, was mainly reserved for serious works of religion or philosophy. This extensive use of the very precious commodity of paper, which made up the bulk of production costs, communicated to the public that this was a work worthy of their time and money.

The same sentiment is echoed throughout the book. The publisher took great care in the material construction of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, and his publishing strategies become clear when taking all the elements of bibliography into consideration. Until the invention of the printed cover, the title page was the first thing potential buyers would encounter; since publishers provided no cover at all, it would be made by a different artisan and only at the request of the buyer, who had to pay for it separately. Usually, the cover would bear no specific text. This means that the title page was intended as the first point of information, as well as an important opportunity for advertisement on part of the publisher. In the case of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, the title page is a veritable summary of everything the reader could expect inside. It communicates that this is a book about a *Chinese* philosopher named *Confucius*, and that the teachings of this sage are presented in *Latin*. The names of the translators are provided, indicating that they belonged to the *Society of Jesus*. The work is dedicated to *Louis XIV*, who in his infinite wisdom has now provided the world at large with this translation by lending his considerable support to the Jesuit missionaries. Visual elements on the title page underline these points; for example, the use of blank space and the inclusion of the Jesuit ornament IHS. The title page conveys the message that this book contains rare and specialised knowledge, with official royal support.

Even though they are perhaps most conspicuous, format and title page are not the only forms of publisher's peritext that influenced the material realisation of a book. In the context of a paratextual analysis of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, typography, the choices of typeface and the arrangement of this type on the page, and the quality of paper should also be considered. Choices related to typography may provide by their very existence an indirect commentary on the text, affecting its potential reading. In this case, the use of blank space or, in the words of poet Paul Éluard, 'grandes marges blanches de silence' was particularly telling.<sup>116</sup> No reader could be indifferent to its use (or lack thereof), especially since it communicated a certain luxury, as the high cost of paper would often prohibit non-essential use.

When we come to examine the typography of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* further, we find that it emphasises the luxurious and elitist character and intent of the book, evinced in the quality of paper used. Printing papers of the hand-press period were produced in various conditions, which were often offered in a choice of two or three different values: fine, second, and ordinary (*fin, moyen, and bull*).<sup>117</sup> The paper used in the printing of the Confucius translation was of the finest quality, which would lend an additional aesthetic and economic quality to the final product.

By their very existence, those elements of paratext that are part of the publisher's epitext (elements beyond the text) communicate certain values about the book to its potential audience. With *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, publisher Horthemels, printer Cramoisy, and editor Couplet (who was indeed very much involved with the production) gave shape to every one of those elements that declared that this translation was intended for a wealthy and educated elite, who wished to own a work of such high importance that even the king of France would lend his support to its creation. Whether the actual audience would indeed receive this message remains, of course, unclear. There are very few ego documents available from this period, and probably none that reflect on their first impressions after seeing *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* in its full printed glory.

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116 'Le poète est celui qui inspire bien plus que celui qui est inspiré. Les poèmes ont toujours de grandes marges blanches, de grandes marges blanches de silence où la mémoire ardente se consume pour recréer un délire sans passé. Leur principale qualité est non pas, je le répète, d'invoquer, mais d'inspirer. Tant de poèmes d'amour sans objet réuniront, un beau jour, des amants'. Paul Éluard, 'L'évidence poétique', in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), p. 515.

117 Gaskell, *New introduction into bibliography*, pp. 66–67.

While the paratext gives valuable indications as to how the producers wished the potential readership to perceive the work, an examination of the actual text offers additional clues. In the preface, Couplet uses the Confucian classics to argue in favour of the Jesuit mission, a message which was aimed at the ecclesiastic authorities and political powers of Europe, as well as the Republic of Letters in general. To do this, Couplet placed Confucius in his historical context, emphasising how difficult this process had been due to the paucity of written records. Couplet then compared the translation of Chinese records with philological projects concerning the Greek and Latin classics, a familiar strategy among European humanists.

To give his work further credence, Couplet explained in the next chapter that the Jesuit translation is based on 'evidence drawn, not from the modern interpreters (Neo-Confucianism), but as much as possible, from the original texts'. These texts included additional Chinese commentators, highlighting how their interpretive work was confirmed by Chinese authorities.<sup>118</sup> As such, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* would present pure Chinese thinking. By framing the work as a philological project, Couplet not only appealed to prospective missionaries and ecclesiastical authorities, but also to the Republic of Letters at large. Through lexical means, Couplet was able to unveil those Christian elements in Chinese philosophy that would provide Confucius with a position similar to that of the Greek and Roman authorities. European humanists would have recognised this approach as it was similar to how pagan antiquity was incorporated into Christian scholarship. Confucius could thus be compared to the Hebrew prophets or even the pagan Sibyls (the female oracles of ancient Greece who preceded Moses).<sup>119</sup>

By fitting Confucius into a familiar humanistic framework that concerned both the search for the oldest textual sources and the quest for ancient wisdom, Couplet appealed to the intellectual European Republic of Letters. His most original contribution, however, was not the focus on proto-Christian elements in the teachings of Confucius, but in the *Chineseness* of these writings. During his visit to Europe, this latter focus was also emphasised; in the presence of Chinese assistants, among them Michael Shen Fuzong, Couplet arrived in the Dutch Republic with a cargo of Chinese books, which were gladly received by scholars such as Amsterdam burgomaster Nicolaas Witsen.

118 Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. 101.

119 Van Noord and Weststeijn, 'Nicolaas Witsen's Chinese mirror', pp. 345–347.

## 5 Translating *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*

Philippe Couplet's *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* (1687) was never fully translated or reprinted, implying that the influence of the work primarily emerged more through the circulation of intellectual content, than by any physical distribution of the work itself. However, within a year of publication, the more general (and less affluent) public could discover Confucius for themselves through two partial translations in French.<sup>120</sup> The first was written by Frenchman Simon Foucher and was published in 1688 under the title, *Lettre sur la morale de Confucius, philosophe de la Chine* by Daniel Horthemels in Paris; the same publisher responsible for *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*.<sup>121</sup> In the same year, Pierre Savouret of Amsterdam issued *La morale de Confucius, philosophe de la Chine*.<sup>122</sup> According to the title page, the book was written by Jean de Labruno, yet definite authorship remains uncertain and I have been unable to find more information regarding the true author.<sup>123</sup> Although the books originally appeared separately, they were often bound together and, from 1783, were indeed published jointly.

Simon Foucher's translation was not a Dutch-made work, yet its existence and content are nevertheless related to *La morale de Confucius*. The *Short Title Catalogue of the Netherlands* considers Foucher's translation to be part of the Dutch canon by including it in its catalogue: publisher Pierre Savouret

120 The first translation of Confucius in a vernacular language had already appeared in 1685, from the pen of English non-conformist minister Nathaniel Vincent. However, the influence of this translation would have been negligible since it remained unnoticed until Matt Jenkinson rediscovered it as appendix to a court sermon in 2006. See Jenkinson, 'Nathanael Vincent and Confucius's "Great learning"', pp. 35–47.

121 Simon Foucher, *Lettre sur la morale de Confucius, philosophe de la Chine* (Paris: Daniel Horthemels, 1688).

122 [Anonymous], *La morale de Confucius, philosophe de la Chine* (Amsterdam: Pierre Savouret, 1688).

123 For the sake of convenience, I will refer to the Amsterdam edition by the name of Jean de Labruno. However, the authorship of the Amsterdam translation remains uncertain. People often assumed Simon Foucher to be the author, since the two translations were often bound together. However, a comparison shows the two books to be from different hands. Jacques Bernard (1658–1718), French theologian believed the author to be Protestant minister, Jean de Labruno. However, bibliographer Antoine Alexandre Barbier (1765–1825) noticed that the preface of *La morale de Confucius* was written from a Catholic viewpoint and not according to Protestant principles. Barbier then proposed Louis Cousin as the author, since he (as royal censor) had approved the publication of Foucher's *La lettre sur la morale de Confucius*. It was also Cousin who approved the publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. However, regardless of four centuries of speculation, the authorship of the Amsterdam translation remains uncertain.

provided *Lettre sur la morale* with a 'Dutch' title page bearing his own name and address, and both translations were often bound together.<sup>124</sup> It is likely that Savouret in Amsterdam and Horthemels in Paris were at least on a basic level in cooperation with regards to their respective publications. This collaboration would also explain why the works were often bound together: Savouret was presumably selling the Paris edition in his shop, while Horthemels would provide his Parisian clientele with the Amsterdam edition.

Simon Foucher and Jean de Labrunne were the first to provide the European readership with a translation of Confucius in French. This was a significant occasion, marking the further interaction of Chinese and European culture. To quote Brenda Hosington's apt comment: 'Throughout history ... translation has always been a means by which knowledge was transmitted and cultural and spiritual values were exchanged between communities'.<sup>125</sup> Translation is a complex and varied process of intertextuality, in which a text is often rewritten and manipulated 'to make [it] fit in with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their times'.<sup>126</sup> This statement is attested by *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* itself, which is, of course, a translation of various Chinese texts. We have already seen that the Jesuit translators indeed influenced the European reading of Confucius by conforming the text to the 'ideological currents' of their time and religion.<sup>127</sup> Subsequently, Foucher and Labrunne took Confucius and his teachings from its decidedly Jesuit and Latin context and introduced him into the French cultural field by way of translation.

Central to this development is how this act of transtextuality affected the form and content of these texts. This process was guided by the publishing strategies conceived by Horthemels in Paris and Savouret in Amsterdam. These strategies relate not only to a change in historical, geographical, and social context in which Confucius could now be read, but it also depends on

124 This was not an unusual practice, but occurred more often when the final product was the result of cooperation between a number of printers and publishers. *Short Title Catalogue Netherlands*, <http://picarta.pica.nl/xslt/DB=3.11/XMLPRS=Y/PPN?PPN=317883275>, last accessed 23 August 2021.

125 Brenda M. Hosington, 'Translation and print culture in early modern Europe', *Renaissance studies*, 29.1 (2015), pp. 5–18, p. 5.

126 André Lefevre, *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 6.

127 On the translation of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* see previous section. Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*; Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*; Peter Burke, 'Cultures of translation in early modern Europe', in Peter Burke and Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia (eds.), *Cultural translation in early modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 7–38, pp. 9–11.

the changing nature, location, and social status of the potential readership.<sup>128</sup> As will be further discussed below, the representation of Confucius in the French translations was less part of a religious debate on the Jesuit interpretation of Chinese religion and philosophy, and more concerned with emphasising how this Chinese sage may provide insights into morality and virtue in more general terms.<sup>129</sup> A further difference between *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* and its translations in French has to do with the form of publication and the way in which the peritext influenced audiences and their interpretations. As discussed earlier in this chapter, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* was an expensive work, of which its bibliography, or the book's material construction, indicated that its potential audience consisted of a rather small readership of wealthy and presumably educated buyers. In contrast, the materialisation of the translations by Foucher and Labrune imply a much broader dispersion. Publishing strategies made visible through processes of transtextuality greatly influenced both form and content of the French translations of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. To quote Umberto Eco: 'Translation is always a shift not between two languages but between two cultures'. In this process, Foucher and Labrune, helped by their publishers Horthemels and Savouret, turned the teachings of Confucius into something decidedly more secular than the Jesuits had ever intended.<sup>130</sup>

Born in Dijon, Simon Foucher was educated at the Sorbonne. Later in life, he became a canon of the Dijon Cathedral, even though he primarily spent his life in Paris. This may have been the reason why, with his translation of Confucius, Foucher had infused himself into a fundamental debate on how to reconcile Jesuit conclusions regarding Confucius's atheism with admiring accounts of the virtue of the Chinese sage.<sup>131</sup> This debate had begun in 1616, when Matteo Ricci and Nicolas Trigault described those following the teachings of Confucius as worshipping 'one sole God'. However, Trigault had already noted that, without the guidance of the true faith, 'there are a few of them who,

128 Hosington, 'Translation and print culture', p. 9.

129 A. Owen Aldridge, *The dragon and the eagle. The presence of China in the American Enlightenment* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), p. 25; Pinot, *La Chine et la formation de l'esprit philosophique en France*, p. 375; Alan Charles Kors, *Atheism in France, 1650–1729. The orthodox sources of disbelief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 76–77, p. 164.

130 In his article on translating in early modern Europe, Peter Burke draws the parallel between the work of a translator and that of a missionary by showing that missionaries such as Matteo Ricci may have translated religious texts as a means of conversion, but that they themselves often found themselves translating their own religion as well, 'in the sense of adapting it to the local culture'.

131 Kors, *Atheism in France*, p. 164.

from much greater descent, fell into atheism'. Since China was divided into so many sects, the Chinese were becoming more and more irreligious, with some embracing 'the very grave errors of atheism'. *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* was meant to settle the issues of Chinese atheism and, of course, defend the Jesuits' accommodating practice of intermingling Confucian and Christian terms and rituals. Couplet insisted that Ricci and Trigault were confused by the superstitious elements of a later form of Confucianism that had been 'infected by Buddhism'.<sup>132</sup>

To be sure, for Couplet, the teachings of Confucius only demonstrated the purest theism. He noted that atheism did exist in China, but only within Buddhism. Confucian tradition and Chinese scientific heritage made it evident that the Middle Kingdom had taught the true God two millennia years before Christ, and their virtue was no mere 'external appearance', but a sincere internal virtue, which showed itself in 'seriousness, modesty, continence, abstinence and decorum'.<sup>133</sup> As atheism could *never* be virtuous, it followed that those adhering to the teachings of Confucius could not be atheists. By stating that 'just as frequent and serious crimes and dissolution of morals finally leads down the road to the greatest of all crimes, atheism, so all virtue, concern with how one lives one's life, [and] pious administration of the people are clear indications of true religion'.<sup>134</sup> Here, he warned that to call the virtuous Chinese atheists would be tantamount to conceding that 'disbelief in God could arise from reasons other than moral depravity'.<sup>135</sup>

According to Alan Charles Kors, this was exactly what those opposed to the Jesuits insisted upon claiming, which clearly brought to light the problem of how to reconcile these findings on the atheism of Confucius with accounts of his virtue.<sup>136</sup> In his translation, Simon Foucher subsequently aimed to represent the *wisdom* of Confucius. He insisted that Confucian teachings and

132 Kors, *Atheism in France*, p. 163.

133 Couplet, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, 'Proëmialis Declaratio', pp. xxxiv-xxxviii, pp. lxix-lxxxviii.

134 Couplet, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. lxxxii.

135 Kors, *Atheism in France*, p. 164.

136 While Foucher insisted that Confucian and Christian morality conformed, other such as Simon de La Loubère conceded to the possibility of 'virtuous atheism'. His popular work reached the conclusion that 'several accounts of China assure us that their men of letters, who are the most important citizens in this country ... today have no sentiment of religion and do not believe in the existence of any God. The Chinese followers of Confucius, whose morality was admired by De La Loubère, did not revere the true God, but merely 'the material principle of the entire world, or of its most beautiful part, which is the Sky', in Simon de La Loubère, *Description du Royaume de Siam* (Amsterdam: Abraham Wolfgang, 1691).

Christian morality were in almost perfect harmony, going so far as to state that Confucius may be considered ‘a kind of prophet, who foretold the coming of the Messiah’.<sup>137</sup> Yet, in his translation, Foucher also removed much of the Jesuit and Chinese context. Consider, for example, the Jesuit rendition of the third chapter of the *Lunyu*, known as Ba Yi 八佾 or the incipit ‘eight row dance’.

Confucius said: ‘What is the use of rites, ceremonies, and external duties for someone who is dishonest, untaught in true and firm virtue? Or again, what is the use of musical harmony and tune for a dishonest man? Indeed, since all the duties and rites should flow from a virtuous soul, as from their root, if there is not such a soul, then all the rituals and duties will only be a vain pretence and fraud of humaneness. Again, a soul lacking virtue is necessarily harassed and constantly perturbed by diverse motions, and because of the disorder of the inner motions, the harmony of the musical instruments and voices will be useless.’ Here again, this paragraph blames and condemns the families usurping the imperial rites.<sup>138</sup>

Foucher summarised this rather elaborate passage, which included later commentaries taken by the Jesuits from the Cheng 顛 brothers Hao 程 and Yi 程, in just one sentence: ‘For malicious or ignorant people, all ceremonies are useless’.<sup>139</sup> Thierry Meynard argues that this rendition demonstrates that Foucher was more interested in presenting some purported universal core truth, by reversing centuries of Chinese tradition in collecting, interpreting, and contextualising the often very short and enigmatic statements from Confucius.<sup>140</sup> *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* is essentially a presentation of a historically contextualised version of the *Lunyu*, a process which paradoxically is reversed by Foucher in his *Lettre sur la morale*. As such, Foucher was not so much interested in presenting his readers with new information about China; instead, he used Chinese culture to prove the universal validity of moral laws, just as Pieter van Hoorn attempted a similar feat with universal virtue ethics.

Foucher’s concern with morality is further emphasised by his translation of the statesman and historian Wei Zheng 為政, duke of Wenzhen of Zheng of the Tang dynasty: ‘Reject everything uncertain and dubious when it is about

137 ‘Une espèce de Prophète, qui a prédit la venue du Messie’, in Foucher, *Lettre sur la morale*, pp. 43–44.

138 *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, secunda pars, liber tertius, 2, in Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 80.

139 ‘Toutes les cérémonies sont inutiles à gens malicieux ou ignorants’, in Foucher, *Lettre sur la morale*, p. 15.

140 Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 80.

science'.<sup>141</sup> Especially interesting is the printed note in the margins, part of the paratext, that clarifies how Foucher considered this 'the first law of the Academicians' or 'la première loi des Académiciens'. By Academicians, Foucher referred to members of the schools of Socrates and Plato, not the literati in China. Foucher proved to be a firm supporter of these academicians, writing his *Dissertation sur la recherche de la vérité ou sur la philosophie académique* on the very topic.<sup>142</sup>

In his earlier writings, Foucher demonstrated an opposition to the philosophy of Descartes, especially since the latter's disconnection between mind and body would (at least according to Foucher) lead to an intellectual crisis about what truth constitutes and about what the good is.<sup>143</sup> To remedy the predicaments of this radical pessimism, 'Foucher proposed returning to the mild scepticism of the Academy. Morality should start by questioning any knowledge and then, through reason, move to affirm some moral laws which are certain'.<sup>144</sup> It is for this reason that Foucher emphasised the practical applicability of Chinese wisdom and its compatibility with Christianity in his preface: 'We can see in Confucius like a sketch or touch of Christianity, and also an abridgement of all what the philosophers recognised as the most firm in matter of morality'.<sup>145</sup> He pursued this even further in his epilogue, writing that 'we could perhaps see Confucius as a kind of prophet who predicted the coming of Christ'.<sup>146</sup> This sentiment echoes the principle of *prisca theologia*, already applied to Confucius in the writings of Athanasius Kircher and discussed in a previous chapter. Even though Foucher's statement is taken from the Jesuit translation, his reading of the same is less focused on any religious or philosophical interpretation of the teachings of Confucius. By presenting his

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141 'Rejetez tout ce qui est incertain & douteux quand il s'agit de la science', in Foucher, *Lettre sur la morale*, p. 15.

142 Simon Foucher, *Dissertation sur la recherche de la vérité ou sur la philosophie académique* [1673]. This work was never published, but was distributed by Foucher himself. No copies exist, and we know only of the work through Foucher's own references. See also Simon Foucher, *Critique de la Recherche de la vérité, où l'on examine en même temps une partie des principes de Mr Descartes* (Paris: Martin Coustelier, 1675); Simon Foucher, *Nouvelle dissertation sur la Recherche de la vérité* (Paris: Robert de la Caille, 1679).

143 Walter R. Ott, *Descartes, Malebranche, and the crisis of perception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 75–77.

144 Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 81.

145 'On voit chez Confucius comme un crayon ou un ombré du Christianisme, et aussi un abrégé de tout ce que les philosophes avaient reconnu de plus solide en matière de morale', in Foucher, *Lettre sur la morale*, p. 2.

146 'On pourrait peut-être regarder Confucius comme une espèce de prophète qui a prédit la venue de Christ', in Foucher, *Lettre sur la morale*, p. 28.

readers with easy-to-follow maxims, he showed Confucius more as a guide to morality and ethics. In the process, Foucher removed any reference to either religion or even China in general.<sup>147</sup>

How the publisher's and author's epitext was perceived by early modern readers is often hard to gauge as few commentaries or reflections are available. However, the consequences of Foucher's interference on the presentation and interpretation of China and Confucius may be gleaned from a review of his translation in the *Journal des sçavans* of 26 July 1688.<sup>148</sup> This review shows how the elements beyond the text, such as authorial discourse, influenced the interpretation of the same. The review starts with a positive note on how Foucher's maxims 'cannot fail to be to the taste of those who judge things by themselves, and that the truth is always estimable from anywhere that it comes'.<sup>149</sup> Then, instead of focusing on the actual content of *Lettre sur la morale*, the review concentrates on the author Foucher himself, making the comparison with his previous work 'on the philosophy of the Academicians'.<sup>150</sup> The link with the *Académiciens* is explicitly made: 'The author ... in another work has shown that the manner of philosophising like the Academicians is the most advantageous to religion, and the most in accordance with common-sense'. After this point, the review arrives at the conclusion that the author 'shows in it that it accords perfectly with what Confucius taught in a time and in a country where men had no other light to behave than that of nature'.<sup>151</sup>

If the review of *Lettre sur la morale* in the *Journal des sçavans* is taken as summary of how early modern readers could have read Simon Foucher's translation, its focus shows that the translation is perceived to be neither about China nor the Jesuits, nor is it truly about Confucius. The author's epitext, here associated with Academic scepticism, would frame Confucius's teachings as more of a guide to morality than anything else, where little is left of either

147 Aldridge, *The dragon and the eagle*, pp. 23–46.

148 *Journal des sçavans* (July 1688), p. 144.

149 'Les maximes qui sont rapportées dans cette lettre ne sauraient manquer d'être au goût de ceux qui jugent des choses par elles-mêmes, & qui pensent que la vérité est toujours estimable de quelque part qu'elle vienne', in *Journal des sçavans* (July 1688), p. 144.

150 On Foucher's *Réponse à critique de la critique de la recherche de la vérité* and his position as opponent of Malebranche and Leibniz, see Richard Watson, *The downfall of Cartesianism, 1673–1712. A study of epistemological issues in late 17th century Cartesianism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), pp. 13–28.

151 'L'auteur qui dans un autre ouvrage a fait voir que la manière de philosopher des Académiciens est la plus avantageuse à la religion, & la plus conforme au bon sens fait voir dans celui-ci qu'elle s'accorde parfaitement avec ce que Confucius a enseigné dans un temps & dans un pays où les hommes n'avaient point d'autre lumière pour se conduire que celles de la nature', in *Journal des sçavans* (July 1688), p. 144.

the Chinese and Jesuit religious origins or interpretation; the *Journal* did not even think it necessary to mention China or the Jesuits, and Confucius is only referred to only once.

The reception and interpretation of the second translation of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* in French displayed a similar process of epitextual alteration. *La morale de Confucius* was published in 1688 by Pierre Savouret of Amsterdam. The work consisted of two parts, 'De l'antiquité de la philosophie des Chinois', and 'Recueil des ouvrages de Confucius', which, together with a preface and an epilogue, make up 130 pages. The anonymous author started by praising Confucius's morality 'which is infinitely sublime, yet still simple, reasonable, and drawn from the purest sources of natural reason'.<sup>152</sup>

In *La morale de Confucius*, Confucian morality was seen as the ultimate achievement of human reason, presenting a historical example of what European morality could look like if it had not been Christian. The moral teachings of Confucius 'harmonised family, social, and political life in a rational way, devoid of religious elements'.<sup>153</sup>

Surely, never had a mind devoid of the light of God's revelation appear so developed and with such force ... which is a very significant advantage

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152 'On peut dire que la morale de ce Philosophe est infiniment sublime, mais qu'elle est en même temps, simple, sensible, & puisée dans les plus pures sources de la raison naturelle. Assurément, jamais la raison destituée des lumières de la rélévation divine, ná paru si développée, ni avec tant de force', in Labruno, *La morale de Confucius*, p. 2. While it falls outside the scope of this study, it is interesting to note that Labruno's focus on 'natural reason' foreshadows one of the major discussions on Chinese atheism of the early eighteenth century. In 1721, the German philosopher Christian Wolff held a lecture at the University of Halle praising the rationality of Confucian ethics. He argued that China was a moral society with knowledge of a divine Creator or Scripture, thus proclaiming that reason was sufficient ground for ethics. This lecture led to a scandal, constituting the first German controversy about global relations. According to Jonathan Israel, 'the conflict, which began in 1723, developed into one of the most formative cultural encounters of the eighteenth century and was, arguably, the most important of the age of Enlightenment in Central Europe and the Baltic before the French Revolution'. See Donald F. Lach, 'The sinophilism of Christian Wolff (1679–1754)', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 14.4 (1953), pp. 561–574; Israel, *The radical Enlightenment*, p. 544; Norbert Hinske, 'Wolffs Stellung in der deutschen Aufklärung', in W. Schneiders (ed.), *Christian Wolff 1679–1753: Interpretationen zu seiner Philosophie und deren Wirkung* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1986), pp. 306–319; Daniel Purdy, 'Chinese ethics within the radical Enlightenment. Christian Wolff', in Carl Niekerk (ed.), *The radical Enlightenment in German. A cultural perspective* (Leiden and Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2018), pp. 112–130.

153 Dawid Rogacz, 'The birth of Enlightenment secularism from the spirit of Confucianism', *Asian philosophy* (2018), e-publication.

[of this philosophy] not only over many pagan writers, who dealt with similar material, but also over some Christian authors.<sup>154</sup>

Therefore, Christian morality presented only one of the many moralities available, amongst which the teachings of Confucius shone especially bright. The first part of the main text 'De l'antiquité de la philosophie des Chinois' focused on this natural reason, summarising the history of China and its people, followed by a short biography of Confucius. This information was taken from the preface and chronological tables of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. The second part of *La morale de Confucius*, 'Recueil des ouvrages de Confucius', consisted of an almost complete translation of the Latin text of many passages from *Daxue* and *Zhongyong*, including the classical text and its Chinese commentaries, as well as the notes made by the Jesuits.<sup>155</sup> The book ends with 80 maxims, providing a selection of short statements taken from *Lunyu*.<sup>156</sup> Like Foucher, the author of *La morale de Confucius* rejected abstract principles of morality and instead offered a moral practical guide to ethics through the teachings of Confucius.

That the publishing strategies of the French translations aimed at a more general dissemination is also mirrored in their material construction, made visible by the books' sizes, title pages, and typography. In the seventeenth century, large formats, such as *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*'s folio, were reserved for serious works of religion and philosophy, while smaller sizes such as Foucher's and Labrune's octavo (8vo) and duodecimo (12mo) were intended for wider distribution.<sup>157</sup> This manner of assigning the audience and genre of a work to paper size is by no means universal, yet the division was certainly predominant during the early modern period.

The material difference between the Latin and French translations is also echoed by their respective title pages. In the first centuries of the printed book, the title page was the preeminent place of the publisher's paratext. The printed cover only came along later, while the dust jacket, wrapper, slipcase, cover, or band were still the prerogative of the buyer, and thus seldom provided by the publisher. In other words: because books were sold without any covering, the title page both provided information and served as an advertisement. As such, much information was included, whereby the title page 'often constituted a

154 Labrune, *La morale de Confucius*, p. 4.

155 Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, pp. 82–85.

156 See Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 84 n207 for an identification of the translated sayings with their corresponding passages.

157 Paul Needham, 'The study of paper from an archival point of view', *IPH yearbook*, 8 (1988), pp. 124–132.

veritable description of the book', supplying not only the name of the author and name and address of the publisher and/or printer, but also many other things such as epigraph, mention of the dedications (with the name and title of the dedicatee), dedicatory epistles, summaries of the book's action, a definition of its subjects, a list of appendices, and often even containing an illustration or at least an ornament.

The title page of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* indeed included many of these elements, making it stand in stark contrast to the more austere title pages of the translations in French. Here, we only find the most basic of information: title, place, and date of publication, the publisher's name and address, and a generic printer's ornament. Perhaps more telling is what is *not* mentioned. Except for the actual title, nothing indicates that the potential buyer holds in his or her hand a book about China or Chinese philosophy. Furthermore, any reference to the Jesuit origin of this information is removed, as is the name of the Catholic author. The title page does not even mention that the book is a French translation of a Latin text. These omissions clearly indicate that the publisher wished to appeal to a more general, and perhaps secularly inclined readership, not wishing to alienate any potential buyer by referring to China, the Jesuits, or the Latin and Catholic origin of content.

In analysing the bibliology of the translations, the title page and format are perhaps the most eye-catching and determinative elements of the publisher's paratext. However, there are two further features worth considering, namely the typesetting and choice of white on the page. Especially typographical choices may provide indirect commentary on the text, affecting the potential reading of the text. Again, the use of blank space is telling. The text block of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* measures 14.3cm by 23.2cm, while the page on which it is printed is 21.5cm by 32.6cm (which means the blank margins are 33.4 and 28.8 per cent respectively). In contrast, the margins of *Lettre sur la Morale* measure only 2.3cm and 2.7cm (or , while those of Labruné's translation are 1.8cm by 3.3cm (or 20.2 and 21.3 per cent)).<sup>158</sup> As stated earlier, since paper was expensive, 'excessive' use of it would add to the perception of luxury and exclusivity, and the 'grandes marges blanches de silence' on the pages of the translation in Latin do, indeed, attest to a higher quality; likewise, the smaller margins would indicate to the buyer a more cost-efficient approach.

The size, title page, and typography of Foucher's and Labruné's translation of Confucius in French communicated that these were books aimed at general readers who were more interested in general morality than in any religious or

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<sup>158</sup> It is important to note that these measurements were consistent across copies, meaning that the book-block was not significantly trimmed.

Sinological exposition. By the end of the seventeenth century, the teachings of Confucius were available in translations in Latin and a number of vernacular languages. Especially the French translations proved popular as indicated by the number of times they were reprinted. Whether this demand came about through a need for the moral and practical interpretation of Foucher and Labrune, or whether it was related to the cultural-economic laws of availability and a lower price-point, is difficult to gauge. Nevertheless, by the end of the century, the increased dissemination of images of China had not only broadened intercultural transmission, it had also deepened it. Confucius and China became part of a Europe-wide debate on politics, history, and religion. The convergence of competing claims regarding Confucian virtue and Confucian atheism had consequently truly caught the eye of a growing public of readers 'before whom the trial was continuing'.<sup>159</sup> At the same time, the geographical and cultural dispersion of printed works on China had shifted considerably. The Dutch Republic remained the undisputed European capital of printing and publishing; yet, during the second half of the seventeenth century, book producers began to focus more and more on an international audience, with French as its *lingua franca*.<sup>160</sup> This changing perspective, in turn, influenced the presentation of China, now aimed towards an even more diversified *European* readership.

The early seventeenth-century European translations of Confucius involved printers and publishers from Amsterdam, Batavia, Goa, Jianchang, and Paris; missionaries from Austria, Italy, the Low Countries, and Portugal; and a variety of intermediaries from Godfried Henske's in Antwerp, Athanasius Kircher in Rome, and Simon Foucher in Paris. This varied group of people suggests that Confucius, and Chinese religion and philosophy in general, was of increasing interest to Western European readers, reaching far beyond the missionary boundaries of the Society of Jesus. The involvement of such a diverse group of translators, editors, publishers, and printers also tells us that Confucius became a point of multi-confessional concern, something that seems to be confirmed by the reception and distribution of the translations.

In 1711, Southern Netherlandish Jesuit, François Noël, made his own translation of the Four Books. Noël had joined the China mission in September 1687 after learning rudimentary Chinese in Macao. He travelled extensively

159 *Histoire des Ouvrages des Savants* (October 1692), pp. 94–99.

160 Simon Burrows, *The French book trade in Enlightenment Europe. Enlightenment best-sellers* (vol. 2, London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

throughout the country and reported hundreds of baptised converts.<sup>161</sup> In 1701, he was selected as procurator for the China mission in an embassy that aimed at halting the Chinese Rites Controversy. However, despite the Chinese and Jesuit testimony (the Kangxi Emperor even issued an official pronouncement) there is little evidence that Rome ever considered any of the evidence.<sup>162</sup> After a short return to Asia, Noël settled in Prague in 1709, where he published astronomical and mathematical observations made in China and India.<sup>163</sup> He also published Latin translations of classical Chinese texts under the title, *Sinensis imperii libri classici sex*, or 'The six books of the Chinese Empire'.<sup>164</sup> They contained the *Great learning* (Daxue), the *Doctrine of the mean* (Zhongyong), the *Analects*, as well as the collected works of Mencius (孟子), the *Classic of filial piety* (Xiaojing 孝經), and the *Lesser learning* (Xiaoxue 小學). It was the first time these last three works had been translated into a European language. Compared to *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, there was 'no or very little discourse interpolated in the text', even though Noël's translation was still part of the effort to further the mission in China. In the preface, Noël admonished the reader to focus on Christian life when reading his translation of Confucius's teachings, and he hoped that the work would help in making Jesus Christ the focus of everyday life.<sup>165</sup> As such, both works 'emerged from the same long-term Jesuit translation project' that can be traced back to Ruggieri and Ricci.<sup>166</sup>

However, even though Noël presents a more sophisticated version of Confucius, his work was not widely disseminated in Western Europe, and was even banned in the Papal States and Holy Roman Empire. In 1735, the French scholar Nicolas Fréret complained in a letter to Father Gaubil in Beijing of the unavailability of *Sinensis imperii libri* in Paris.<sup>167</sup> It seems that the Chinese Rites Controversy contributed at least partly to this obscurity. Compared to the availability of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* in early modern collections and as reviewed by journals, Noël's translation seems to have had little influence in Western Europe. However, as the work was published in Prague, its

161 Vladimír Liščák, 'François Noël and his Latin translations of Confucian classical books published in Prague in 1711', *Anthropologia Integra*, 6.2 (2015), pp. 45–52.

162 Paul A. Rule, 'François Noël, SJ, and the Chinese Rites Controversy', in Vande Walle and Golvers, *The history of the relations between the Low Countries and China*, pp. 137–165.

163 François Noël, *Observationes mathematicae et physicae in India et China factae* (Prague: Charles-Ferdinand University, 1710).

164 François Noël, *Sinensis imperii libri classici sex* (Prague: Charles-Ferdinand University Press, 1711); Liščák, 'François Noël (1651–1729)', pp. 45–52; Rule, 'François Noël, SJ', pp. 137–166.

165 'Utinam utrisque lapis angularis fiat christus', in Noël, *Sinensis imperii*, p. iv.

166 Mungello, 'Confucianism in the Enlightenment', pp. 99–128.

167 Danielle Elisseeff-Poisle, *Nicolas Fréret (1688–1749). Réflexions d'un humaniste du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle sur la Chine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1978), p. 53.

distribution throughout the German lands and Eastern Europe was more substantial. Here, Noël's writings on China inspired Johann Benedikt Carpzov, Wilhelm von Leibnitz, and Christian Wolff.<sup>168</sup> The latter even lost his position at the University of Halle due to his praise of Confucius and the assertion that the Chinese knew right from wrong, without being exposed to Christianity.<sup>169</sup>

The afterlife of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* was much more momentous. A number of Dutch-made journals in French, catering to a growing public of European readers, published reviews of the book. In fact, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* was the only work reviewed in every single European journal in 1687. These reviews compared Chinese and radical European doctrines, mainly in terms of their alleged monism. This soon raised the question of the extent to which praise of Confucius had become libertine and radical. In 1705, the aforementioned Gijsbrecht Cuper still waxed lyrical over the French translation by Labrune, seemingly unaware of any association with radical thinking.<sup>170</sup> Still, for most contemporaries, the link must have been so evident that it needed little explanation. By 1708, Hendrik Smeeks, a surgeon from Zwolle, referenced Confucius as the source of inspiration for a political experiment in the unchartered Australian territories in his fantastic novel, *The mighty kingdom of Krinke Kesmes*. This utopian state was apparently guided by Confucius' favourite student, Krakabas.<sup>171</sup> In *Krinke Kesmes*, a board of philosophers kept watch over the sovereign. In fact, the kingdom was so radical, it even housed a women's university!<sup>172</sup> Against this fantastical 'oriental' background, the central theme of the novel is a plea for religious, political, and societal freedom of citizens in the face of worldly and ecclesiastical authorities.

By the end of the seventeenth century, missionaries of the Society of Jesus had made Confucius the central figure in Europe's interactions with China.

168 Knud Lundbaek, 'The first European translations of Chinese historical and philosophical works', in Thomas Lee (ed.), *China and Europe. Images and influences in sixteenth to eighteenth centuries* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, 1991), pp. 29–44. On Christian Wolff, see note 152.

169 Shigenari Kanamori, 'Christian Wolff's speech on Confucianism. Confucius compared with Wolff', *European Journal of Law and Economics*, 4.2–3 (1997), pp. 299–304.

170 '[S]ijne morale gelesen, getrocken uit een grooter boeck, tot parijs ... gedrukt', Gijsbert Cuper to Nicolaas Witsen, 3 November 1705, Allard Pierson Amsterdam, UBA Be 36, fol. 90r–91v.

171 '[D]en goeden Philosophooph Krakabas, deesen was een lieveling en Discipel van den grooten Wijsgeer Confucius in China', in Hendrik Smeeks, *Beschryvinge van het magtig Koningryk Krinke Kesmes* (Amsterdam: Nicolaas ten Hoor, 1708), pp. 242–243.

172 A. Agnes Sneller, 'Utopia of een vrouwenuniversiteit omstreeks 1700', *Literatuur*, 5 (1988), pp. 141–148.

Through their policy of accommodation, the Chinese sage became a philosopher who used rational means to achieve a moral life, and a saint who had prepared the way for Jesus Christ. The Jesuits rejected Buddhism and Taoism as idolatrous, while Confucianism was regarded as a system of moral teaching compatible with Christianity. As such, Confucian rites, such as ancestor veneration, were regarded as civil and cultural functions, rather than religious rites. By accommodating the Confucian teachings, the Jesuits could centre their work on the contacts with the Chinese Confucian literati.

The Jesuits were firmly rooted on Chinese soil, and the eyewitness accounts they sent back to Europe were readily adopted by Dutch authors, editors, translators, printers, publishers, and printmakers. Guided by carefully considered publishing strategies and economic rules to cultural consumption, these Dutch intermediaries subsequently constructed their own Chinese narratives, which further shaped and disseminated images of Confucius and the Middle Kingdom throughout Europe. Furthermore, because of the exceptional quality of Dutch print and their excellent networks of distribution, this dissemination was wide and defining.

In this period, one of the most influential books on China was Athanasius Kircher's *China illustrata* of 1667. Together with his Dutch publisher, this German Jesuit presented a representation of China and its religion and philosophy that could be traced all the way back to ancient Egypt. Confucianism, as such, was a historical continuation of Egypt's *prisca theologia*, in which both Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese characters contained an occult Hermetic philosophy of pre-Mosaic origins. However, by comparing Confucius to Thoth-Hermes Trismegistus, Kircher undermined the Jesuit strategy of accommodation by presenting the Chinese sage as a kind of demi-god. Transtextual interventions by subsequent editors further exacerbated this problem.

The Jesuit policy of accommodation had long proved contentious and, to defend their approach to their superiors and the European public in general, they published a Latin translation and interpretation of the main works of Confucius in 1687. Their primary aim was to Christianise Confucius and Chinese civilisation for a learned European audience; this aim was helped along by the form and content of publication. Even though *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* was a Jesuit venture, Dutch involvement has demonstrated that the representation of Confucius had become a varied European project. The Jesuits' global intellectual network helped them explain their policy of accommodation; nonetheless, they needed Dutch logistical support to facilitate the effective circulation of their message. In turn, Dutch authors, printers, and publishers would benefit from this collaboration as Jesuit involvement helped

them expand and broaden their selection of books on China. Indeed, throughout the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic remained Europe's primary entrepôt for printed works on the Middle Kingdom.

While the Jesuits had been busy translating Confucius from the late sixteenth century onwards, the first vernacular translation of the Four Books was, in fact, written by Dutchman Pieter van Hoorn and printed in Batavia in 1675. He had turned to Confucius for instructions on how to live a virtuous life, even praising the Chinese sage as superior to European philosophers. Van Hoorn probably used a Jesuit translation in manuscript for his source, yet his edition may have been influenced by contact with the sizeable community of Chinese in Batavia. The Van Hoorn family archive (now held in The Hague) attested to extensive interactions between Pieter, his son Johan, their translator Johannes Melman, and various Chinese interlocutors.

The influence of both the Jesuit translation in Latin and the Van Hoorn translation in Dutch emerged more through the circulation of intellectual content, and less by any physical distribution of either work. However, the economic and intellectual potential of Confucius was soon realised and two partial French translations of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* were published within the year. These aimed at the general, and perhaps less affluent, public, who now could discover Confucius for themselves through the translations by Simon Foucher and Jean de Labruno. Both translations demonstrate various processes of transtextual alteration in form and content. By the time we come to these translations, however, little is left of either their Chinese origins or the Jesuit interpretations; in adapting the French translations to a general audience more interested in morality, both editors and publishers transformed the teachings of Confucius into something decidedly more secular.

The publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* in 1687 would prove to be only the prelude to decades of discussion and polarisation on topics such as Chinese religion and philosophy, the Jesuit origin of information, and their policy of accommodation. The controversy embroiled several popes (among them Clement XI and Clement XIV), the Qing Emperor Kangxi, the Sorbonne in Paris, and various leading European universities. The Chinese rites had long been debated behind the closed doors of offices of the Holy See, yet, by the end of the century, the controversy became a more public dispute. This shift was in part facilitated by Dutch printing presses, which turned out an increasing amount of printed works, including books, learned journals, pamphlets, and newspapers, on the subject.

## Confucius in Dutch-Made Learned Journals

In August 1687, the *Nouvelles de la République des lettres* was the first learned journal in Europe to announce the publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* (1687). The advertisement for the book informed the reader that Philippe Couplet's translation 'can be found in Amsterdam at Henry Desbordes', who, not coincidentally, also happened to be the publisher of the *Nouvelles*.<sup>1</sup> Many journals followed with announcements and reviews of the Confucius translation. A month later, the *Histoire des ouvrages & de la vie scavans* published the first full review and, in December, the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* discussed the work in depth.<sup>2</sup> Evidently, the subject interested other European countries as well; in October, the *Philosophical transactions* of London paid considerable attention to the book, followed by *Le journal des sçavans* of Paris in January 1688. Leipzig's *Acta eruditorum*, *Monatgespräche* from Halle, and Parma's *Giornale de'letterati* soon joined the ranks.<sup>3</sup>

In the panoply of books discussed by early modern erudite periodicals, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* held a special place.<sup>4</sup> The work was by no means an early modern 'best-seller', as it was never reprinted nor fully translated into even (for the time) the most obvious European languages such as French, German, or Dutch. However, the appearance of numerous reviews soon after publication suggests that the work nevertheless had a considerable impact on the learned European world. In fact, although erudite periodicals reviewed hundreds of publications each year, the Jesuit translation of Confucius was the only book published in 1687 that was discussed by every major journal. In this single act, the learned journals demonstrate clearly how Europe became increasingly preoccupied with China during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. These broadly available publications brought the Middle Kingdom to the fore as an intellectual phenomenon, in part because

1 'Qui se trouvent à Amsterdam, chez Henry Desbordes', in *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* (August 1687), p. 910.

2 *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (September 1687), pp. 65–79; *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (December 1687), pp. 332–390.

3 *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 16 (1686–1692), pp. 377–378; *Le journal des sçavans* (January 1688), pp. 167–180; *Acta eruditorum* (Leipzig: 1688), pp. 254–265; *Monatgespräche* (Halle: 1688); *Giornale de'letterati* (Parma: 1688).

4 Peter Burke, *Popular culture in early modern Europe* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 23–48.

they focused heavily on the religious and philosophical consequences of the interactions between Europe and China.

Periodicals are ephemeral media, available to a large group of potential readers. Their relative low cost, together with their accessible format, truly made the learned journal ‘an agent of change ... disseminating the intellectual effort of the Enlightenment’.<sup>5</sup> For the first time, knowledge that had long been the prerogative of a small circle of intellectual correspondences was made public, whereby the editor functioned as the mediator of information. Arguably, the periodical press played an essential role in the dissemination of images of China in Europe during the second half of the seventeenth century. These journals facilitated access beyond national borders, as well as across cultural, societal, and linguistic boundaries. This chapter seeks to address two main questions relating to the periodical press: how were China and Confucius represented in Dutch learned journals at the end of the seventeenth century, and to what extent did the involvement of Dutch editors and translators, printers and publishers shape the discussion of the Middle Kingdom and its religion and philosophy as an intellectual phenomenon? An analysis of this often-overlooked genre highlights how the perceptions of the Middle Kingdom in the West evolved into a complex and transnational phenomenon.

In answering these questions, I will argue that this recently established erudite press affected the early modern debate on China and its religion and philosophy from both internal and external directions. One development came from *within*, by way of the authorship, intended readership, and publication of the journals. From the last decades of the seventeenth century onwards, the Dutch-made learned journal was both cause and effect of the growing importance of French as the language of intellectual communication concerning the discussion of China in Western Europe. Most authors and publishers were French Huguenots, who had only just arrived in the Dutch Republic. Their input fundamentally shaped the content of the various learned periodicals.<sup>6</sup> As to readership: the journals appeared in French and were intended for those who, due to language and intellectual interests, could be considered part of the Republic of Letters.<sup>7</sup> As such, the increased importance of French as both

5 Ellen Krefting, Aina Nøding, and Mona Ringvej, ‘Introduction’, in Ellen Krefting, Aina Nøding, Mona Ringve (eds.), *Eighteenth-century periodicals as agents of change* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 1–16, p. 7.

6 J.J.V.M. de Vet, ‘Echoes of the French press in Dutch periodicals in the age of the ancien régime’, in Hans Bots (ed.), *La diffusion et la lecture des journaux de langue Française sous l’ancien régime* (Amsterdam and Maarssen: Holland University Press, 1988), pp. 249–262, p. 249.

7 Hans Bots, *Henri Basnage de Beauval en de Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (Amsterdam: Holland Universiteits Pers, 1976), pp. 38–41; Hans Bots, *De Republiek der Letteren. De Europese*

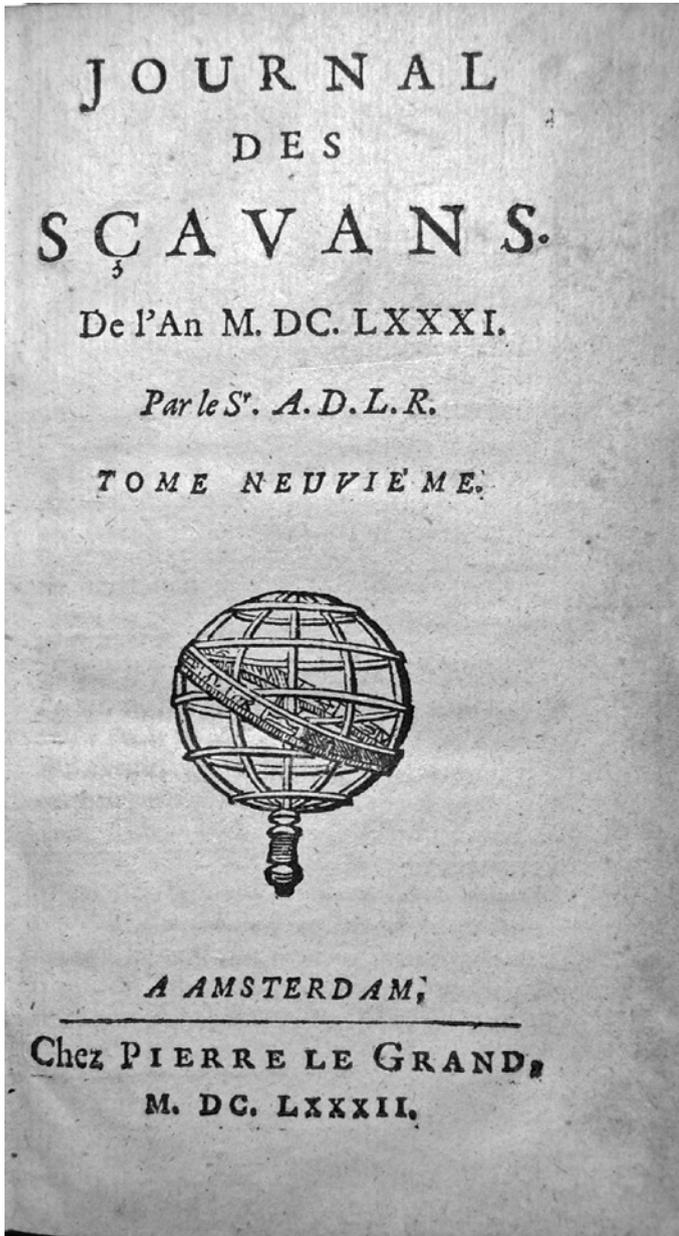


FIGURE 27 *Journal des sçavans* (Amsterdam: Pierre le Grand, 1682) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (xx 19 9)

*lingua franca* and cultural focus exerted a considerable influence on the physical distribution and contentual discussion of views on China.

The second influence on the formation of Dutch images of China came about through *external* circumstances. These circumstances include the increased public visibility of the Chinese Rites Controversy and the emerging comparison between Confucius and European radical thought. These intellectual and political conjunctures weighed heavily on the judgement of religion and philosophy of the Middle Kingdom during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. To understand how the reviews of China and Confucius came into being, it is also useful to consider that which sets them in relationship with other texts. I argue that the journals elucidate how reviewers employed quotation and allusion, genre, and the critical commentary of one text on another to explicitly or implicitly comment on the content, creation, and interpretation of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, as well as on Western European interactions with China in general.

This chapter discusses the Dutch learned journals within the Western European world of print in the last decades of the seventeenth century. Journals functioned as conveyers of intellectual debates in Europe, disseminating knowledge quicker and cheaper than books and more widely than personal correspondence. As such, they offer new insights into the circulation of images of China and Confucius through their reviews of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. Moreover, although the printed medium became increasingly oriented towards France and the international Republic of Letters, the essential role of the Dutch Republic should still be considered. The United Provinces, especially Holland, provided the locale where the intellectual community could converge in spirit and in print.

This chapter first examines how China and Confucius were considered in Dutch-made learned journals before 1687. Even before the publication of the Jesuit translation of Confucius, periodicals like the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* and the *Journal des sçavans* included discussions about the Middle Kingdom and Confucius. Information that had previously been accessible to only a small number of correspondents was now made public through these discussions. In this process, communication between the editor and contributors facilitated public discourse, and especially the editor functioned as

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*intellectuele wereld, 1500–1760* (Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Vantilt, 2018), pp. 13–32; Anthony Grafton, 'A sketch map of a lost continent. The Republic of Letters', *Republics of Letters*, 1.1 (2008), pp. 1–18; April Shelford, *Transforming the Republic of Letters. Pierre-Daniel Huet and European intellectual life, 1650–1720* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), pp. 1–13.

gatekeeper of the information and its interpretation. This analysis also concerns the actual discussion and review of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* in three journals: the *Histoire des ouvrages des savants*, the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, and the reprinted issue of the *Journal des sçavans*. By considering the relation between these reviews and the Jesuit translation, it becomes clear that, while the reviews seem rather favourable at first, they nevertheless prove critical in the end; in particular of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism.

This chapter then zooms in on one especially contentious element of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*: its *Tabula chronologica monarchiae Sinicae* ('Chronological table of Chinese monarchy'). Learned journals dedicated much attention to the antiquity of China and the notion that Chinese records were supposedly older than the biblical Great Deluge, yet the editors often remained quite circumspect in their descriptions. However, biblical chronology had long concerned European intellectuals, among them Protestant thinkers like Joseph Scaliger, Isaac La Peyrère, and Isaac Vossius. The issue of chronology led to a veritable war of pamphlets between Vossius and his detractor Georg Hornius. This public polemic was facilitated by Dutch printing presses, demonstrating how China and Confucius were deployed as intellectual ammunition, culminating in an often highly appreciative 'philosophical Sinophilia'. The publication of the Jesuit translation of Confucius, and its subsequent discussion in Dutch learned journals, thus marks a watershed moment after which a wealth of substantive and polemic information was made available.

Antoine Arnauld, French Jansenist and one of the first to formulate a clear critique of the Jesuit representation of Confucius is subsequently examined. His writings were discussed extensively in Dutch learned journals. Especially *Histoire des ouvrages* proved receptive, as the journal and its editor Henri Basnage de Beauval had long-held a contentious relationship with the Society of Jesus. Here, Basnage functioned as mediator between Arnauld and the Jesuits, shaping how the polemic concerning Confucius was presented to the reading public.

In reviewing the Latin translation of Confucius, the editors of the erudite press communicated their first reactions to Chinese philosophy as well as to the argumentation as presented by the Jesuits. When confronted with Confucius, these reviewers now had the tools in hand to juxtapose some of the religious and theological issues of their own times with the ideas of Confucius. This Chinese philosophy carried its own characteristics and meanings, which alone would have been enough to stir up controversy. However, an additional layer of dispute had been added by the very audible Jesuit voice in this debate. Editors, and other authors by way of transtextuality, not only reacted to Confucius's

texts in and of itself, they also had to navigate the multi-confessional implications of this new information from China.

## 1 The Learned Journal in the European World of Print

The erudite periodical originated in the 1680s, making new ideas and knowledge, such as the relay of intellectual debates and the announcement of recently published books, more easily accessible. Before their emergence, news about scholarship was primarily available through personal correspondence or through books. In comparison, the new journals made the intellectual debate ‘public’ by publishing letters that described research results or new observations, while also providing summaries of the latest scholarly publications. Perhaps just as important, the journals also functioned as intellectual equalizers, meaning that ‘they allowed readers to share in the labours of the scholarly community’ without personal referral or a letter of introduction.<sup>8</sup> As such, the periodical press extended the European network of scholarly correspondence. Soon, the journals became a powerful tool in the intellectual discourse against traditional structures of ‘authority, knowledge, and doctrine’ and, as such, amalgamated Europe ‘into a single intellectual arena.’<sup>9</sup> In 1710, Francesco Scipione, marquis of Maffei, even claimed that no cultural innovation exerted so immense an impact on Europe as these journals.<sup>10</sup>

As conveyers of intellectual debates in early modern Europe, these journals offered a wealth of information. Various historians have emphasised how the erudite press both reproduced and stimulated the social, institutional, and intellectual environment in which new scholarly discourses first appeared.<sup>11</sup> As such, learned periodicals may be considered the ‘print version’ of the Republic

8 Thomas Broman, ‘Criticism and circulation of news. The scholarly press in the late seventeenth century’, *History of Science*, 51 (2013), pp. 1–26.

9 Israel, *The radical Enlightenment 1650–1750*, p. 142.

10 In the same year, the marquis of Maffei was among the founders of the literary journal *Giornale dei letterati*. Between 1737 and 1740, he edited another periodical, entitled *Osservazioni letterarie*.

11 Hans Bots and Sophie Levie, *Periodieken en hun kringen. Een verkenning van tijdschriften en netwerken in de laatste drie eeuwen* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2006); Hans Bots and Lenie van Lieshout, *Henri Basnage de Beauval et l’Histoire des ouvrages des savants, 1687–1709* (3 vol., Amsterdam: APA Holland University Press, 1984); Hans Bots, *Pieter Rabus en de ‘Boekzaal van Europe’, 1692–1702. Verkenningen binnen de republiek der letteren in het laatste kwart van de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Holland Universiteits Pres, 1974); Hans Bots (ed.), *La diffusion et la lecture des journaux de langue française sous l’Ancien régime/Circulation and*

of Letters: something which is attested to by the journals' own proclamations concerning intended audiences and the social settings in which they should be read. In recent years, scholars have become increasingly attentive to the important role played by the periodical press in the dissemination of knowledge during the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>12</sup> Historian Hans Bots has published extensively on the subject of intellectual correspondence and the periodical press in early modern Europe. His work on Henri Basnage de Beauval and Pierre Bayle, and their position and influence within the learned world has been pioneering in an area of scholarship, which touches upon both intellectual history as well as the history of print.

The periodical press in general, and the erudite journal in particular, open up new insights into the dissemination and interpretation of the Middle Kingdom in early modern Western Europe. The genre distributed knowledge more rapidly and altogether more cheaply than books, and 'more widely than correspondence'.<sup>13</sup> The subjects discussed ranged from politics, natural philosophy, biology, and the invention of machinery to languages, costumes, and foreign countries. As the editor of *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* emphasised: 'We insert here all the circumstances regarding the scholars about whom we will have knowledge'.<sup>14</sup> Because of these broad objectives, there is no generally used term to unequivocally describe the early modern periodical. However, at its most fundamental level, the genre could be defined as 'a publication that was intended to appear more or less regularly for general sale, possessing a recognisable degree of continuity of external form, and containing a plurality

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*Reception of Periodicals in the French Language in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Amsterdam and Maarssen: APA Holland University Press, 1988).

- 12 Eric Palmer, 'Less radical Enlightenment. A Christian wing of the French Enlightenment', in Steffen Ducheyne, *Reassessing the radical Enlightenment* (New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 197–222; Ingemar Oscarsson, 'For the laity, as well as for the learned. Some themes and structures in the system of the early modern learned periodicals', in Krefting, Nøding, and Ringvej (eds.), *Eighteenth-century periodicals as agents of change*, pp. 46–61; Thomas Munck, 'Translating Enlightenment. European influences and Danish perceptions of identity in the press in the later eighteenth century', in Hendrik Horstbøll and Knud Haakonssen (eds.), *Northern antiquities and national identities. Perceptions of Denmark and the north in the eighteenth century* (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, 2008), pp. 227–250.
- 13 Neil Kenny, *The uses of curiosity in early modern France and Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 266.
- 14 'Nous insererons icy toutes les circonstances qui regarderont les Scavans dont nous aurons connoissance', Henri Basnage de Beauval, *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (September 1687), p. 3.

of items, as opposed to the single event to which one-off broadsheets and pamphlets had often been devoted.<sup>15</sup>

Early modern learned journals were issued by well-established publishers, who used them to inform readers about recently published books, and especially those books that were sold in their shops. While *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* was published by Daniel Horthemels in Paris, its review in the *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* explicitly mentioned that it could be procured 'at Reinier Leers in Rotterdam', who (of course) was the publisher of the journal. Publishers often worked in cooperation: the *Journal des sçavans* was issued by Pierre le Grand and Daniel Elzevier, and Abraham Wolfgang, Hendrick Boom, Abraham van Someren, Johannes II Janssonius van Waesberge, the widow of Joannes van Someren, the widow of Dirk I Boom, Gillis Janssonius van Waesberge, and Petrus van Someren were together responsible for the *Histoire des ouvrages*.

The content was mainly the responsibility of the editor, who performed a fundamental task in collecting, assembling, and editing news and reviews. The editorial process consisted of sorting the papers to accept and reject, which was not only a responsible task, but a difficult one. In 1772, Albrecht von Haller of the *Göttigsche Gelehrte Zeitung* wrote that the editor must be a master of many subjects, understanding many languages and many sciences. He added that, if the editor was not up to this task, it would be better if the job were assigned to a group of scholars.<sup>16</sup> Editors thus tended to make a selection, primarily owing to the fact that most journals were an individual enterprise. They also tried to improve the editorial process by introducing collective reviews.<sup>17</sup> The *Journal des sçavans* even sent editors abroad to report interesting events from the scholarly world that happened there.<sup>18</sup>

In the Dutch Republic, journals were generally printed in duodecimo, using a relatively fine quality of paper. Illustrations were often included, mainly to 'provide clarity to ... prose, providing access to useful information that was

15 Jean-Pierre Vittu, "Le peuple est fort curieux de nouvelles". Information périodique dans la France des années 1690', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 32 (1994), pp. 105–144; Wolfgang Martens, *Die Botschaft der Tugend. Die Aufklärung im Spiegel der deutschen Moralischen Wochenschriften* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1968), pp. 15–20.

16 Albrecht von Haller, *Sammlung kleines Hallischen Schriften* (Berg: E. Haller, 1772), p. 121.

17 David A. Kronick, 'Devant le deluge' and other essays on early modern scientific communication (Lanham and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2004), pp. 105–106.

18 Harcourt Brown, 'History and the learned journal', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 33 (1972), pp. 365–378.

otherwise invisible'.<sup>19</sup> Each issue also reviewed dozens of books. In 1687, the *Bibliothèque universelle* reviewed 177 books in 12 issues across four volumes. These were ordered in various categories such as politics, medicine, theology, and 'nouvelles éditions de quelques anciens auteurs'. Furthermore, books in a variety of languages were discussed: in 1687 alone, reviews were published for books originally in Latin, French, English, Dutch, German, Spanish, and Hebrew.

In the first week of January 1665, the French writer Denis de Sallo, Sieur de la Coudraye, published Europe's first learned journal, the *Journal des sçavans*, in Paris. Jean-Baptiste Colbert, *ministre de l'économie* and founder of the *Académie Royale des Sciences*, supported the publication. In general, the publication aimed to inform the reader about everything that happened in the scholarly community of Europe. The journal was mostly dedicated to the review and announcement of books in every field of knowledge, although the editors were careful when it came to religious or political publications.<sup>20</sup> Interest in the journal rose immediately and reprints soon appeared in Brussels, Cologne, Leipzig, and Amsterdam. The Amsterdam publisher, Pierre le Grand, even adapted the publication to appeal more to the wishes of his Dutch consumers by adding articles. In the Dutch Republic, the *Journal* was also smaller in size: duodecimo compared to the French quarto.<sup>21</sup>

The London-based the *Philosophical transactions*, first appeared three months later, 'giving some account of the present undertakings, studies, and labours of the ingenious in many considerable parts of the world'.<sup>22</sup> As the monthly publication of the Royal Society, the journal adhered to its ideals by advocating experiment and observation over a discussion of theory.<sup>23</sup> The journal therefore focused primarily on scientific discovery, which makes its review of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* remarkable. In 1682, the *Acta eruditorum* became the first scientific journal of the German-speaking lands. It was founded in Leipzig by Otto Mencke, in collaboration with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. *Acta* was published by Johann Friedrich Gleditsch and appeared monthly. Similar to the *Journal des sçavans*, the *Acta* contained excerpts of new writings, reviews, small essays, and general notes. Most of these were devoted

19 Meghan C. Doherty, 'Giving light to narrative. The use of images in early modern learned journals', *Nuncius*, 30.3 (2015), pp. 543–569, p. 543.

20 Kronick, 'Devant le deluge', pp. 120–129.

21 Jean-Pierre Vittu, 'La formation d'une institution scientifique. le Journal des sçavans de 1665 à 1714', *Journal des sçavans*, 1.1 (2002), pp. 349–377.

22 *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 1 (1665–1666), title page.

23 David A. Kronick, 'Notes on the printing history of the early "Philosophical Transactions"', *Libraries and Culture*, 25.2 (1990), pp. 243–268.

to the natural sciences and mathematics. Interestingly, the Jesuit translation of Confucius also merited a review in this journal.<sup>24</sup>

The last quarter of the seventeenth century saw the publication of many new journals, all of which would review *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*.<sup>25</sup> The Dutch Republic produced a greater number of these than any other European country. While the intellectual Republic of Letters may have transcended many boundaries, the United Provinces performed an invaluable service to European scholarship by 'fostering and habitually practising a *free* trade in the circulation of erudition'.<sup>26</sup> The trade in printed works benefitted from a lack of political and religious control, which was the result of the country's unusual governmental structure and its lack of a state religion.<sup>27</sup> These conditions became such a trademark that the editor of the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* even believed that he would surpass his rivals by the simple fact that he worked in Amsterdam, 'as one finds oneself in a country of freedom'.<sup>28</sup> The quality of Dutch news and printing was, moreover, highly esteemed and the whole of Europe purchased books in the shops of Amsterdam, Leiden, and The Hague. Subsequently, Dutch publishers and booksellers truly performed a 'pivotal function ... as intermediary in the international exchange of news and information'.<sup>29</sup>

The first learned journal of the Dutch Republic, the *Nouvelles de la République des lettres* was published in March 1684, edited by 'philosopher of

24 H. Laeven, *The 'Acta eruditorum' onder redactie van Otto Mencke. De geschiedenis van een internationaal geleerdenperiodiek tussen 1682 en 1707* (Amsterdam: APA Holland University Press, 1989).

25 See, for an overview of eighteenth-century learned journals: *Le gazetier universel*, <http://gazetier-universel.gazettes18e.fr/>, last accessed 23 August 2021; see also Henry Carrington Bolton, *A catalogue of scientific and technical periodicals, 1665–1895* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1897); Robert M. Gascoigne, *A historical catalogue of scientific periodicals, 1665–1900* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1985); David A. Kronick, *A history of scientific & technical periodicals* (New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1979).

26 Graham Gibb, 'The role of the Dutch Republic as the intellectual entrepôt of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review*, 83.3 (1971), pp. 323–349, p. 327 (my emphasis).

27 Paul Hoftijzer, 'The Dutch Republic. Center of the European book trade in the 17th century', *European History Online*, [www.IEG-EGO.eu](http://www.IEG-EGO.eu), last accessed 23 August 2021; M.E.H.N. Mout, 'Limits and debates. Comparative view of Dutch toleration in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries', in Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, Jonathan Israel and G.H.M. Postumus Meyies (eds.), *The emergence of tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), pp. 37–48.

28 'Comme on se trouve en un pais de liberté', *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (January 1686), p. 3.

29 Hoftijzer, 'The Dutch Republic'.

Rotterdam' Pierre Bayle.<sup>30</sup> It appeared monthly in French. The *Nouvelles* was singularly devoted to the discussion of books, and thus can be considered the first 'book review' journal. In 1686, the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* followed its example, edited by scholar and radical thinker Jean Leclerc.<sup>31</sup> Born in Geneva, Leclerc became famous for his radical ideas about promoting a critical interpretation of the Bible. He left his native Switzerland for London, finally moving to Amsterdam due to the political instability in England and his own radical Protestantism. In the Dutch Republic, his friendship with Philipp van Limborch brought him closer to the Remonstrant theology. Indeed, he also owed his long-term appointment as professor of philosophy and Hebrew at the Remonstrant seminary to Van Limborch.<sup>32</sup> The publication of Leclerc's journal was a joint effort between a number of printers and publishers, including Abraham Wolfgang and Johannes II Janssonius van Waesberge.<sup>33</sup> It appeared monthly, providing detailed reviews of recent books, paying special attention to theology, ecclesiastical and civil history, philosophy and science. Even though the *Bibliothèque* was published in French, almost 20 per cent of its reviews were devoted to English books, demonstrating the journal's international aim.<sup>34</sup>

1687 saw the publication of another Dutch learned journal: Henri Basnage de Beauval's the *Histoire des ouvrages des savants*. Beauval, a Huguenot historian and sometimes lexicographer, had left France for Rotterdam in 1687. After arriving in the United Provinces, he wasted little time and, in September of the same year, issued the first edition of his periodical in collaboration with Reinier Leers. In essence, the *Histoire des ouvrages* functioned as a sequel to Pierre Bayle's the *Nouvelles de la République des lettres*, with the change in title

30 *Nouvelles de la république des lettres* (March 1684).

31 Hans Bots (ed.), *De 'Bibliothèque universelle et historique' 1686–1693. Een periodiek als trefpunt van geletterd Europa* (Amsterdam and Maarsse: APA Holland University Press), 1981.

32 Martin Innis Klauber, 'The context and development of Jean LeClerc's views on the subject of religious authority', PhD thesis: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1982, pp. 47–53.

33 Abraham Wolfgang, widow of Dirk I Boom, Hendrick Boom, Abraham van Someren, Johannes II Janssonius van Waesberge, widow of Joannes van Someren, Gillis Janssonius van Waesberge, Petrus van Someren.

34 Jean Leclerc's contacts with the English philosopher John Locke facilitated the provision of English subjects in the *Bibliothèque*. From 1686 onwards, Locke regularly wrote for the journal, and his *Essay concerning human understanding* was published in the edition of 1687; Hendrika J. Reesink, *L'Angleterre et la littérature anglaise dans les trois plus anciens périodiques français de Hollande de 1684 à 1709* (Paris: H. Champion, 1931); Hans Bots, 'Jean Leclerc as journalist of the *Bibliothèques*. His contribution to the spread of English learning on the European continent', in G.A.M. Janssen and F.G.A.M. Aarts (eds.), *Studies in seventeenth-century English literature, history and bibliography* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1984), pp. 53–66.

being merely cosmetic to avoid trouble with its former publisher: 'One would undoubtedly like to know why I have not continued under the same title as Mr. Bayle',<sup>35</sup>

The intended audience for erudite journals consisted mainly of *savants* or *érudits*. In practice this referred to learned men and scholars: women only became active as editors from the eighteenth century onwards.<sup>36</sup> Hans Bots has reconstructed the potential readership for these journals by way of the correspondence of the editors, as well as by examining 179 contemporary book auction catalogues.<sup>37</sup> Bots's findings indicate that the readership of learned journals could be divided into two broad categories: academic scholars, and less specialised but nevertheless interested and educated general readers.<sup>38</sup> The erudite press was indeed the prerogative of the educated; professors, philosophers, ministers, magistrates, and liberal professionals, such as solicitors and medical practitioners, made up the majority of readers. Thirty per cent of auction catalogues examined by Bots revealed an ownership of the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, while 20 per cent indicated ownership of the *Nouvelles de la République des lettres*. Basnage's the *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* is recorded 26 times (15 per cent). In 17 instances, the catalogues indicate simultaneous possession of all three journals. This is not surprising, as their content would have differed considerably and readers perhaps would have wished to compare reviews.<sup>39</sup>

As to the cost of learned journals: while these publications would not have been affordable to large parts of the population, their prices were nevertheless relatively modest. The *particulierenboeken* of Leiden bookseller and publisher

35 'L'on voudra sçavoir aussi sans doute, pourquoy je n'ay pas continué sous le même titre de Mr. Bayle', *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (September 1687), preface; Lenie van Lieshout, 'De materiaalvoorziening voor de *Histoire des ouvrages des savants*', *Documentatieblad Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw* (1989), pp. 97–137.

36 Anne Good, 'The construction of an authoritative text. Peter Kolb's description of Khoikhod at Cape of Good Hope in the eighteenth century', in Peter Mancall (ed.), *Bringing the world to early modern Europe. Travel accounts and their audiences* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 61–94, p. 92; R. Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, 'Women's writing from the Low Countries 1575–1875', in Lia van Gemert etc. (eds.), *Women's writings from the Low Countries 1200–1875. A bilingual anthology* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), pp. 39–63; Suzan van Dijk, 'Vrouwen en hun Republiek der Letteren. Internationale contacten tussen schrijfsters vóór de feministische golven', *Tijdschrift voor vrouwenstudies*, 17 (1996), pp. 235–253; Lotte Jensen, *Bij uitsluiting voor de vrouwelijke sekse geschikt. Vrouwentijdschriften en journalisten in Nederland in de achttiende en negentiende eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2001), pp. 26–27.

37 Bots, *Henri Basnage de Beauval*, pp. 38–41.

38 Bots, *Henri Basnage de Beauval*, pp. 38–41.

39 Bots, *Henri Basnage de Beauval*, pp. 38–41.

Jordaan Luchtmans show that both the *Histoire des ouvrages* and the *Acta eruditorum* could be bought for five stuivers.<sup>40</sup> This relative affordability allowed savants to gather knowledge about books they either could not afford to buy, or which simply could not be acquired.<sup>41</sup> This last concern would most likely have applied to *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. The book was published in Paris in only a single edition and its availability in the Dutch Republic would have, therefore, been limited.

Those active in the production of learned journals had often only recently arrived in the Dutch Republic.<sup>42</sup> In the decades surrounding 1600, 'a veritable exodus of human capital' had left the Southern Netherlands to establish itself in the United Provinces, often as printer, publisher, or bookseller. After 1685, another wave of immigration occurred when Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes (1598), to be replaced with the Edict of Fontainebleau, which led to widespread persecution of Huguenots in France. In the second half of the seventeenth century, tens of thousands of French Protestants settled in the United Provinces, leading Pierre Bayle to proclaim the country as 'the great Ark for refugees'.<sup>43</sup> Again, among them were many printers, publishers, and booksellers, who brought with them a wealth of professional skills. These exiles also introduced new and innovative genres, such as the newspaper and the learned journal. Yet, it was the Dutch political, economic, and cultural climate that made all this possible, providing a relatively safe haven for anyone wishing to shine their light on the potential controversial issues about China and its diverse and often contentious religion and philosophy.

Latin was already losing ground as the language of European scholarly communication, and the Huguenot influence on the periodical press solidified the introduction of French as the means of intellectual discourse.<sup>44</sup> A direct consequence of the growing importance of French as the language of international erudite communication was that Dutch presses now produced for a much larger area. The period around 1700 is marked by France's political and

40 *Bibliotheek van de Vereniging ter Bevordering van de Belangen des Boekhandels te Amsterdam*, 'Boeck van Particulieren 1702–1712, Archief Luchtmans 32, f. 34r', in Bots, *Henri Basnage de Beauval*, p. 80.

41 Anne Goldgar, *Impolite learning. Conduct and community in the Republic of Letters, 1680–1750* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 55–56.

42 David van der Linden, *Experiencing exile. Huguenot refugees in the Dutch Republic, 1680–1700* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

43 'La grande arche des réfugiés', Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (vol. 3, Amsterdam: Pierre Brunel etc., 1740), p. 25; Peter Burke, *Exiles and expatriates in the history of knowledge, 1500–2000* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2017), pp. 39–82.

44 Peter Mancall, *Bringing the world to early modern Europe. Travel accounts and their audiences* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), p. 93.

cultural hegemony in Europe, which should be understood not just in national terms, but also very much in cultural terms. In early modern and pre-national Europe, 'French' was not a political or national entity, but the international and cross-boundary language of letters and culture. This language, both in the literal sense and as conveyer of culture, became predominant in much of Western Europe, a situation to which the printers and publishers of the Dutch Republic quickly adapted.<sup>45</sup>

While many Dutch-made books on China had previously been published in the Dutch language, in the second half of the century an exceeding number appeared in French.<sup>46</sup> Books such as those by Jesuit missionary Louis Le Comte, and the Formosan imposter George Psalmanazar, appeared simultaneously in Dutch and French; meanwhile, the aforementioned adaptations of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* by Jean de Labruno and Simon Foucher were solely published in French.<sup>47</sup> The learned journals published in Amsterdam and Rotterdam also appeared in French. In addition to being written in French, they also discussed many 'French' subjects, based on French sources and/or concerning French issues. And to no surprise, as Pierre Bayle and Henri Basnage were born and raised in France, printing and publishing were mostly carried out by fellow Huguenot refugees, and readership essentially consisted of those who could read French.<sup>48</sup>

Of course, the French Jesuit mission to China would also play an increasingly important role in the dissemination of knowledge about the Middle Kingdom in Europe from the middle of the 1680s onwards. As many as 50 French missionaries travelled to China during the reign of the Kangxi Emperor. They were sent by Louis XIV, and their work in astronomy, geometry, mathematics, and arithmetic soon found favour with the Chinese emperor. The reports they sent back had, therefore, a pronounced impact on the transmission of knowledge about

45 Bethany Wiggin, *Novel translations. The European novel and the German book, 1680–1730* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp. 1–14.

46 Pascale Casanova, *World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 57–60; Darnton, *The forbidden best-sellers of pre-revolutionary France*, p. 9.

47 George Psalmanazar, *Description de l'île Formosa en Asie ... Dressée sur les mémoires du sieur George Psalmanaazaar. Par le sieur N.F.D.B.R.* (Amsterdam: Roger Etienne, 1705); George Psalmanazar, *Beschryvinge van het eyland Formosa in Asia ... uit de gedenkschriften van den hr. Georgius Psalmanaazaar ... t'zamengesteld.... Door d'hr. N.F.D.B.R.* (Rotterdam: Pieter van der Veer, 1705); see also Michael Keevak, *The pretended Asian. George Psalmanazar's eighteenth-century Formosan hoax* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004).

48 Pierre Bayle left France in 1681 and Henri Basnage de Beauval did the same in 1687. Jean Leclerc was neither Huguenot nor French, but came from Geneva. However, his exile was religious, since he settled in Amsterdam due to the uncongenial nature of the theological atmosphere in Switzerland, see Van der Linden, *Experiencing exile*.

China to Western Europe during the late seventeenth century. Information about the Middle Kingdom was quickly disseminated through the newly established periodical press of the United Provinces, which made sure that the Dutch-made journals on China truly became, in the words of Margaret Jacobs, ‘strangers nowhere in the world’.<sup>49</sup>

## 2 The Erudite Press and China before 1687

As we have seen, China had become increasingly familiar to European readers in the decades preceding the publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. Most knowledge was made available through books, yet, from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, the importance of the periodical press grew. By reviewing books that contained information on China, the learned journal spread the word on the Middle Kingdom farther and wider than any book ever could. In the year before the publication, and review, of the Jesuit translation of Confucius, the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* mentioned China eight times, while the *Journal des sçavans* did so once. Interestingly, both journals mentioned China in discussions of books not solely about China: ‘The 5th chapter [of Urbain Chevreau’s *Histoire du monde*] contains a description of China, of its antiquity, of its extent, of its riches, and of its most beautiful towns’.<sup>50</sup>

Pierre Bayle’s the *Nouvelles de la République* does the same, presenting interesting content in the form of a transcription of a written letter: ‘Extract from a letter written at Versailles to the author of the *Nouvelles*, on 19 March last, touching upon a few Chinese manuscripts’.<sup>51</sup> This letter demonstrates the pivotal role of the newly established learned journals in disseminating information about China. Knowledge that before was only accessible to a small circle of correspondents was now published on the pages of erudite periodicals. The communication between the editor Bayle and the contributor facilitated this public conversation, in which the former functioned as gatekeeper

49 Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers nowhere in the world. The rise of cosmopolitanism in early modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp. 65–94; Diderot and d’Alembert, *Encyclopédie*, ‘cosmopolitan’, p. 404.

50 ‘Le ch. V. contient la description de la Chine, de son antiquité, de son étenduë, de ses richesses & de ses plus belles villes’, *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (February 1686), pp. 183–193, p. 192.

51 ‘Extrait d’une lettre écrite de Versailles à l’Auteur de ces Nouvelles le 19. Mars dernier, touchant quelques Manuscrits Chinois’, *Nouvelles de la République des lettres* (April 1686), pp. 428–429.

of information and interpretation by choosing which announcements and reviews to print.

This letter concerned the French residency of Philippe Couplet and his Chinese companion Michael Shen Fuzong. As discussed in the previous chapter, Couplet and Shen left China in 1681 for a propaganda tour of Europe. After arriving in Holland on 8 October 1683, Couplet and Shen travelled much of western Europe together.<sup>52</sup> In September 1684, they arrived in Versailles where they met with Louis XIV.<sup>53</sup> Flemish Jesuit Petrus-Thomas van Hamme narrated this royal visit, an account of which also appeared in the *Mercure galante* of October 1684. Its description demonstrated to the readers of both journals how both Couplet and his Chinese visitor were deserving of the highest honour, emphasising (among other things) the esteem in which Shen's native country was held:

The other day, they went to see the king eat, and as soon as they entered, His Majesty ordered the people near him to make room, and had Father Couplet and Sir Michael [Shen] come to his table. He was sitting at the table with the dauphin and dauphiness. He spoke with Father Couplet, asking him, among other things, whether he had seen the fountains turned on. Father Couplet replied that he had not and that he was not worthy of such honour. The king however, stated that he should see it, giving orders that when they would go into the gardens, all the fountains should be turned on. This surely has been a great, even the most important, honour which the king bestowed upon Father Couplet, since these fountains were only turned on in honour of ambassadors or princes of high rank. In the presence of all those assembled, the king had Sir Michael [Shen] recite loudly in Chinese the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, and the *Credo*. After that, Madame la Dauphiness – who the day before had seen the little ivory sticks that s/Sir Michael [Shen] used to eat with – advised the king to watch him eat in Chinese fashion. The king immediately ordered to give him a golden plate with food to be eaten with his little ivory sticks, and Sir Michael stood at the table of His Majesty and, together at one table with the king, demonstrated eating some food with his little sticks.<sup>54</sup>

52 Foss, 'The European sojourn of Philippe Couplet and Michael Shen Fuzong', pp. 121–142.

53 For a list of questions posed by Louis XIV and his Jesuit confessor Francois La Chaise to Philippe Couplet and Michael Shen Fuzong see: Virgile Pinot, *Documents inédits relatifs à la connaissance de la Chine en France de 1685 à 1740* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1932), pp. 7–9.

54 'Des anderen daghs sijn sy ghegaen om den Coninck te sien eten, ende soo haest sy inquaemen, dede den Coninck het volck verschuyven, pater Couplet ende heer Michael

Couplet and Shen left France for Rome in October 1684, yet Louis XIV proved so enamoured with the Jesuit and his Chinese companion that, two years later, he requested their return. The letter printed in the *Nouvelles de la République* was written just before this second meeting, yet the content related to the first visit: 'It was approximately 18 months ago that ambassadors of China were here'.<sup>55</sup>

Although recorded anonymously in the *Nouvelles*, the original correspondence points to French doctor and numismatic Pierre Raissant as the author.<sup>56</sup> Raissant often corresponded with Pierre Bayle about announcements and reviews, for instance, 'concerning the book *De l'utilité des voyages* by Mr. Baudelot. There are a few good things, and a lot of bad ones. Its style is detestable'.<sup>57</sup> Raissant's letter to Bayle contained a private (although not explicitly confidential) part as well as a segment intended to be made public: 'I have come to learn of some news that deserves to be known by all "amateurs of science" (*amateurs des sciences*)'.<sup>58</sup> How Raissant had learned of Couplet and Shen's return to France is unclear from the printed letter, but according to

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tot aende tafel commen. Den Coninck sat aen tafel met den Dolphijn ende de Dolphine; hy sprack met pater Couplet, hem, onder ander, vraeghende of hy de fonteynen hadde sien springhen; waerop pater Couplet antwoordende, dat neen en dat hy dierghelycke eere niet weerdigh en was, seyde den Coninck, dat hy dien soude sien, recommanderende, dat, als sy den hof souden gaen sien, men alle de fonteynen soude doen springhen. 'T welck voorwaer eene groote, jae de principaelste eere is gheweest die pater Couplet vanden Coninck heeft ontfanghen, mits dese fonteynen maer en springhen ter eeren van ambassadeurs ofte groote princen. Den Coninck dede heer Michael met luyder stemme, ten bywesen van alle de omstanders, lesen in 't Chinois den *Pater noster*, *Ave Maria*, ende *Credo*. Daernaer madame de Dolphine, die daghs te vooren hadde ghesien de ivoire stoekens van heer Michael om mede te eten, segghende aenden Coninck, dat hy hem eens moest sien eten op sijn chinois; de Coninck ordonneerde terstont aen hem te gheven eene goude tailloire met spyse om met syne ivore stoekens te eten, ende heer Michael staende aende tafel vanden Coninck, heeft saemen op eene tafel met den Coninck, eenighe spyse ghenut met syne stoekens', *Het leven van pater Petrus-Thomas van Hamme. Missionaris in Mexico en in China (1651-1727)* (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1871), pp. 14-15. See also *Mercure galant* (October 1684), pp. 127-128 and *Mercure Galant* (September 1684), pp. 211-224.

55 'Il y a environ 18 mois que des ambassadeurs de la Chine estant icy', Pierre Raissant à Pierre Bayle, lettre 540, via [www.Bayle-correspondance.univ-st-etienne.fr](http://www.Bayle-correspondance.univ-st-etienne.fr), last accessed 23 August 2021.

56 Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540.

57 'Du livre *De l'utilité des voyages*, de Mr. Baudelot. Il y a peu de bonnes choses, et beaucoup de mauvaises. Le style en est detestable': Pierre Raissant à Pierre Bayle, lettre 508 (5 February 1686), [www.Bayle-correspondance.univ-st-etienne.fr](http://www.Bayle-correspondance.univ-st-etienne.fr), last accessed 23 August 2021. C.-C. Baudelot de Dairval's *De l'utilité des voyages et de l'avantage que la recherche des antiquitez procure aux scavans* (Paris: Pierre Aboüin, 1686) was reviewed in April 1686.

58 'Je viens d'apprendre une nouvelle, qui mérite d'estre sceüe de tous les amateurs des sciences', Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540.

the private correspondence the numismatic had been working on Louis's cabinet of medallions, 'since, for more than a month, I see the prince [Louis XIV] on a daily basis'.<sup>59</sup> Allegedly, Raissant and the king were on speaking terms, since the former related how he talked to Louis about various subjects.<sup>60</sup>

The *Nouvelles de la République des lettres* reproduced the final third of Raissant's letter almost verbatim. It relates how Louis-August, Duke of Maine (and natural son of Louis XIV) had informed the king about the antiquity of China, and that 'that they [the Chinese] had known all the sciences and the arts first'.<sup>61</sup> Raissant goes on to explain that not much is known about China, and that 'it behoves none but a *prince*, like the king, to have books brought over from China', together with people to translate them.<sup>62</sup> Supposedly, three hundred Chinese books arrived in Paris, along with two translators in the shape of Philippe Couplet and Michael Shen Fuzong: 'And of this they assure me: that on this present day, almost 3000 Chinese books have arrived in Paris, both of the country's civil history, and of its natural history; of mathematics and other curious subjects, and on top of this, two translators have arrived'.<sup>63</sup> The letter thus implies that Couplet and Shen had come to France to serve solely as translators to Louis XIV, which is not only a simplification, but an underestimation, of their real intentions.<sup>64</sup> The aims of their European trips were obviously numerous, a priority of which was the publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. Thus, even though Raissant mentioned that 'that these

59 'Depuis plus d'un mois je vois tous les jours le Prince', Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540.

60 'Il y a environ huit jours que je luy parlay de l'ouvrage de Monsieur Rou, dont je luy montray mesme une planche luy faisant entendre le merite de cet ouvrage et le sujet qui en avoit causé la surpression, il m'ordonna d'en à Monseigneur le chancelier chez lequel je fus des le lendemain', Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540.

61 'Qu'ils avoient connu les sciences et les arts tous des premiers', Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540. On the Chinese interests of Louis-August de Bourbon, duc du Maine and legitimated natural son of Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan see Christopher M.S. Johns, *China and the church. Chinoiserie in global context* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), pp. 82–83. Philippe Couplet and Michael Shen Fuzong's visit to Versailles may even have inspired Maine's commission of the Beauvais tapestry set *The life of the emperor of China*, Edith A. Standen, 'The story of the emperor of China. A Beauvais tapestry series', *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 11 (1976), pp. 103–117.

62 'Qu'on n'estoit pas encore bien informé du detail de tout cela, et qu'il n'appartenoit qu'à un prince comme le Roy de faire venir de ces livres de la China, et des gens pour les traduire', Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540 (my emphasis).

63 'Et l'on m'assure qu'il est arrivé ces jours cy à Paris jusqu'à 300 volumes de livres Chinois, tant d'histoire civile du pays, que d'histoire naturelle; de mathématique, et d'autres traittez curieux: qu'outre cela il est arrivé aussi deux traducteurs', Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540. On Chinese books in the French Royal Collections: Noël Golvers, *Ferdinand Verbiest, S.J. (1623–1688) and the Chinese heaven* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), pp. 204–206.

64 Foss, 'The European sojourn', pp. 125–127.

people will dedicate themselves unceasingly to translating the most curious of these books, which one will print as soon as they will be in a condition to appear', this never came to pass.<sup>65</sup>

However, as related by Theodore Nicolas Foss, one direct result of Couplet's trip to Paris and his encounter with Louis XIV would be the 'spurring on of France to send qualified missionary-scientists directly to China'.<sup>66</sup> Ferdinand Verbiest had requested the king of France through a letter delivered by Philippe Couplet for help in the missionary efforts in China.<sup>67</sup> The aim of this mission was not solely religious, as Louis XIV saw it as a means to increase France's influence, with the added benefit that it would damage the Portuguese monopoly of 'ecclesiastical patronage'.<sup>68</sup> The most effective way to achieve this dual goal was to benefit from the scientific interests of the Chinese court.<sup>69</sup> The activities of the *Académie des sciences* would thus 'serve as a vehicle for science, God, and France' in the establishment of a French missionary presence in the Middle Kingdom.<sup>70</sup>

Raissant tells of the formation of a group of French missionaries at the close of his letter: 'And as one knows that the Jesuits are agreeable to the king of China, one has sent eight young people to whom the king pays a pension, [to] learn the Chinese language in [that] realm, and to instruct the Chinese literati in the French language and in Latin, so as to make them come to France, to continue their translations and also to teach us their mechanical arts'.<sup>71</sup> Jean

65 'Que ces gens vont s'appliquer incessamment à traduire les plus curieux de ces livres, qu'on fera imprimer, aussi tost qu'ils seront en estat de paroître', Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540.

66 Foss, 'The European sojourn', p. 130.

67 Mungello, *Curious land*, pp. 256–257.

68 Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 329.

69 Isabelle Landry-Deron, 'Les mathématiciens envoyés en Chine par Louis XIV en 1685', *Archive for History of Exact Sciences*, 55.5 (2001), pp. 423–463.

70 Cathérine Jami, *The emperor's new mathematics. Western learning and imperial authority during the Kangxi reign (1662–1722)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), chapter 5. After reforms instated in January 1699, the Academy began publishing a volume each year containing reports of the works done by its members, and obituaries for members who had died. Pirated editions of these *Histoire et mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Sciences* were published in Holland by Pieter Mortier 11 in 1741. Remarkably, the Dutch editors accused their French colleagues of being at fault, while the Parisian editors accused those of Amsterdam of being incomplete, Roger Hahn, *The anatomy of a scientific institution. The Paris Academy of Sciences, 1666–1803* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1971).

71 'Et comme on sçait que les Jesuites sont agreables au roy de la China, on en a envoyé huit jeunes à le Roy paye pension, en son royaume pour apprendre la langue duy pays, et instruire des Chinois spirituels dans la langue François et dans la Latine, afin de les faire venir en France, pour continüe ces traductions et d'autres pour nous apprendre leurs arts mechaniques', Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540.

de Fontaney was assigned the task to put together a group of suitable young Jesuits. He enlisted Joachim Bouvet, Jean-François Gerbillon, Louis-Daniel Le Comte, Guy Tachard, and Claude de Visdelou, who were all members of the *Collège Louis le Grand*. These *mathématiciens du roy* had indeed left France for China the year before. Of the six Jesuits that departed, five would reach Beijing on 7 February 1688 as Guy Tachard remained in Siam.<sup>72</sup>

In the decades following the arrival of the French Jesuits in China, the reports they sent to Europe often found their way to the pages of learned journals and newspapers. Soon, these 'French' accounts on the Middle Kingdom overshadowed information coming from other sources. This not only meant that the printed medium had become 'French', it also had the effect of giving the knowledge distributed about China an increased focus on French sources and subjects. This stance towards France apparently made the erudite journals of the Dutch Republic more suitable for European-wide distribution.

In this process of dissemination, the essential role of the Dutch Republic cannot be underestimated. Especially the province of Holland provided the location where the European Republic of Letters could converge, if not physically, at least in spirit and print. If their publications sold well, it was of lesser concern to Dutch printers, publishers, and booksellers whether this printing transpired in Dutch or French. As such, from the last decades of the seventeenth century onwards, the Dutch-made learned journal was both cause and effect of the growing importance of French as the language of intellectual communication concerning the discussion of China in western Europe.

The imminent publication of the Jesuit translation of Confucius was first announced in the closing paragraph of Pierre Raissant's letter to Pierre Bayle: 'Another letter [I received] imparts that Father Couplet has returned from Rome, where he has made his little Chinese [Michael Shen Fuzong] a Jesuit like himself, and that one hopes that they will translate all the works of Confucius'.<sup>73</sup> Raissant soon got his wish, for the *Nouvelles de la République des lettres* reported the publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* in August 1687: 'New in the month of August 1687'.<sup>74</sup> Three Dutch journals discussed the Jesuit translation

72 An account of his travels was published in Utrecht and Amsterdam in both Dutch and French, Guy Tachard, *Reis van Siam, waar in veele tot noch toe onbekende zaaken, zo omtrent de gelegenheid van dit land, als omtrent de religie, zeden, en andere dingen worden verhaald. Gedaan door de vaders Jesuïeten* (Utrecht: Johannes Ribbius, 1687); *Voyage de Siam des peres Jesuites* (Amsterdam: Pieter Mortier, 1687).

73 'Une autre lettre porte, que le P. Couplet est revenu de Rome où il a fait son petit Chinois Jesuite comme lui, & qu'on espère qu'ils traduiront toutes les ouvres de Confutius', Raissant à Bayle, lettre 540.

74 'Nouveaux du mois d'Août 1687', *Nouvelles de la République des lettres* (August 1687).

of Confucius: the *Histoire des ouvrages des savants*, the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, and the reprinted issue of the *Journal des sçavans*. At first glance these reviews appear implicitly favourable, if only due to the length of the discussion.<sup>75</sup> However, further analysis demonstrates that the editors of the erudite journals were rather critical, especially about the *Jesuit* presentation and interpretation of Confucianism.

First of all, however, the transtextual relationship between the reviews and *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* should be considered. A review is an example of metatextuality, whereby the original content is changed and expanded upon by a third-party discussion. An example of such an expansion is Jean Leclerc's remark in the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* that 'in case it [*Confucius Sinarum philosophus*] be well received in Europe, as there is no reason to doubt'.<sup>76</sup> Such commentaries guide the (potential) perception of the reader beyond the text towards a tendentious opinion (in Leclerc's case, a positive one) of the work discussed.

The reviews are further shaped by the economic rules of cultural consumption to which the editor is either deliberately or unconsciously bound.<sup>77</sup> In the creation of both form and content, the printer, publisher, and editor had considered the presumed wishes and demands of their customers to make the enterprise of printing a learned journal economically viable. By 1687, a number of journals were available on the European market of print. The commercial appeal of each individual title was thus paramount to any enduring success, which also influenced the creation of content to a certain degree. Notwithstanding the loftier intentions of the journals, they also certainly served as advertisements for their vendors. Books discussed in the *Histoire des ouvrages* could be 'found in Rotterdam at Reinier Leers', the *Nouvelles de la République des lettres* promoted Henri Desbordes's stock, and the *Bibliothèque universelle* and the *Journal des Sçavans* advertised the wares of a number of Amsterdam printers and publishers such as Abraham Wolfgang and Dirk Boom.

An examination of the *Histoire des ouvrages* of April 1688 illustrates how the review and sale of books worked in successful commercial tandem. In this issue, Henri Basnage announced the publication of Jean Reuchlin's *Dissertation critique sur la nouvelle bibliothèque des auteurs ecclesiastiques*. Yet, he only

75 Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 291.

76 'Au cas que ceux ci soient bien recus en Europe, comme il n'y a pas lieu d'en douter', *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (December 1687), p. 332.

77 Otto Lankhorst, 'Le rôle des libraire-imprimeurs néerlandais dans l'édition des journaux littéraires de langue française', in Hans Bots (ed.), *La diffusion et la lecture des journaux de langue Française sous l'ancien régime* (Amsterdam and Maarssen: APA Holland University Press, 1988), pp. 1–10.

reviewed the work in the following edition, as ‘we only have been able to read this work in passing, and because Reinier Leers expects copies of it, which he will soon receive, we will give an exact analysis of it next month.’<sup>78</sup> Such a delay between the announcement of the publication of a book and its review meant that the reader had to purchase the next issue if he were to keep up with the latest scholarly information and that the announcement simultaneously functioned as advertisement. This economic factor would have had a considerable impact on the review and discussion of Confucius because it further influenced the transtextual relationship between the reviews and *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*.

Another factor influencing the reviews and discussion of Confucius is related to the individual role and judgement of the editor, which is visible on two levels. First, these editors expressly spoke *to* the reader as opposed to merely supplying seemingly objective information. Books were not reviewed anonymously and the voice of the editor was often positioned in dialogue with the readers: ‘One leaves it to the reader to judge whether this silence derives from the inexactitude and malice of historians, or whether the zeal of Father Kircher has not made him mistake a supposition for a truth.’<sup>79</sup> Secondly, the opinions of the editors often shone through. While Henri Basnage announced that ‘we will strive to speak without any partiality that may shock, or even upset, the other parties’, in practice this advocated probity was often flouted in the face of conflicting viewpoints.<sup>80</sup>

It should also be noted that reviewers were simultaneously discussing both content *and* interpretation of the Jesuit translation of Confucius. Consider the statement that Confucius had known the true God. A reviewer had several options when it came to discussing such possible contentious content. The first would be to simply duplicate the information without commentary, as indeed *Journal des sçavans* did. This makes the reviewer’s statement of the Jesuit interpretation implicitly favourable by withholding explicit judgement.

78 ‘Mais comme nous n’avons pû lire cet ouvrage qu’en passant, & que Reinier Leers en attend des exemplaires qu’il recevra au plutôt, nous remettons à en donner une analyse exacte au mois prochain’, *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (April 1688), pp. 545–546.

79 ‘On laisse à juger au lecteur, si ce silence procede ou de l’inexactitude et de la malice de ces historiens, ou si le zele du P. Kircher ne lui a point fait prendre un monument supposé pour un veritable?’, *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (December 1687), p. 390.

80 ‘Nous tacherons de parler sans aucune partialité qui puisse choquer, ni même chagriner les autres partis’, *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (September 1687); G. van Gemert, ‘De Jezuiten in de “Histoire des ouvrages des savants”’, in Hans Bots (ed.), *Henri Basnage de Beauval en de Histoire des ouvrages des savants, 1687–1709. Verkenningen binnen de Republiek der Letteren aan de vooravond van de Verlichting* (Amsterdam: Holland Universiteits Pers, 1976), pp. 305–339.

The second option was to duplicate the statement together with added commentary. This allowed the reviewer to either positively or negatively influence the debate through printed polemic. Such was the approach of the *Histoire des ouvrages*, which inserted the reviewer's own opinion by referencing a different and somewhat conflicting publication. The third option was to leave out the contentious material altogether. Since most readers would not have had access to *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, the reviewer would thereby automatically bypass any possible controversy.

Further analysis of three such types of reviews, from the *Journal des sçavans*, the *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* and the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*, will reveal these distinctions. All three reviews begin with a platitude meant to emphasise the novelty of the information contained within *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. At the same time, these proclamations function as a promotional device to the journal in question: 'Even though the author of this philosophy lived more than 500 years before Jesus Christ, we still claim it as a novelty to tickle the curiosity of scholars.'<sup>81</sup> Each review continues with a general summary of variable lengths, as the foremost function of the learned journals was to inform readers about various subjects.<sup>82</sup> These summaries not only aided readers in their decision about which books to buy, they also made it possible to become informed about a broad range of subjects without too much effort: 'The journals have been invented for the solace of the readers. Our century dearly loves abbreviated texts, and a certain '*je ne sais quoi*' is reigning, which some would call laziness.'<sup>83</sup>

*Journal des sçavans* was generally favourable in its estimation of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. The review described Confucius as a teacher of moral principles that were comparable to Christianity: 'I fail to see how, in regard to the present theme, the charity of the Chinese be different from that of the Christians, so much is it true that God has even spread in the souls of the infidels lights that lead them to virtues which, seen from the outside, are not all that different from Christian virtues.'<sup>84</sup> The review also emphasised that 'the

81 'Quoy que l'auteur de cette philosophie ait vècu plus de 500. ans avant Jesus-Christ, nous prétendons pourtant bien en regaler la curiosité des sçavans comme d'une nouveauté', *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (September 1687), p. 65 (my emphasis).

82 Note that neither editor mentions that *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* was explicitly dedicated to Louis XIV 'regi Christianissimo'.

83 'Les journaux ont été inventez pour le soulagement des lecteurs: notre siecle aime extremement les abregez, et il regne un *je ne sai quoi* que quelques uns nommeroient paresse', *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (March 1692), pp. 327–328, in Bots, *Henri Basnage de Beauval*, p. 33.

84 'Je ne vois par qu'au motif près, la charité des Chinois soit différente de celle des chrétiens; tant il est vrai que Dieu a répandu dans l'esprit même des infidèles des lumières qui les

Chinese have such respect for his [Confucius's] memory, that for more than two thousand years' only his disciples had been accepted into public office.<sup>85</sup> The general impression of the review is that the Jesuit mission had indeed been successful in China; in the words of David Mungello: 'having a reader (the reviewer) accept their portrayal of the Chinese as very much like Europeans themselves'.<sup>86</sup> This review demonstrates how the Jesuits at least partially succeeded in presenting Confucius in a favourable light, thereby essentially legitimising their own policy of accommodation.

Henri Basnage de Beauval's review in the *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* carries a comparably favourable tone. The teachings of Confucius are equated with Christianity, affirming the Jesuit reading of the same: 'It would be rather long to include here all the evidence that the author [Couplet] presents to show that the Chinese have long worshipped the true God'.<sup>87</sup> Basnage further explained how it was necessary for the Jesuits 'to take off their [priestly] robes to take up those of the literati', thus strengthening the position of the Jesuits even more. He then confirmed their position with the claim that 'nonetheless, they [the Jesuits] might still live ... with all the austerity that their religious habits impose upon them'.<sup>88</sup> The review also reflected positively on the various Chinese customs of austerity and chastity: 'They lived without splendour and without pomp.... Chastity was honoured there'.<sup>89</sup>

However, Henri Basnage proved more critical than his colleague from *Journal des sçavans*. On the sixth page of the review, Basnage described how 'the Chinese worship the true God under the name Xam Ti'.<sup>90</sup> He then referred

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conduisent à des vertus qui, quant à l'extérieur de l'action, ne sont en rien différentes des vertus chrétiennes', *Journal des sçavans* (January 1688), p. 176.

85 'Les Chinois ont tant de respect pour sa mémoire, que depuis plus de deux mille ans', *Journal des sçavans* (January 1688), p. 171.

86 Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 290.

87 'Il serait un peu bien long d'insérer icy toutes les preuves que l'auteur rapporte pour montrer que les Chinois ont long-temps adoré le vrai Dieu', *Histoire des ouvrages* (September 1687), pp. 65–79.

88 'Il étoit nécessaire de quitter leur habit pour prendre celui des Lettrez ... il pourraient cependant vivre avec toute l'austérité que leur imposait leur habit de Religieux', *Histoire des ouvrages* (September 1687), p. 68.

89 'Ils vivaient sans fast et sans pompe ... La chasteté y étoit honorée', *Histoire des ouvrages* (September 1687), p. 70.

90 'Les Chinois adoraient le vrai Dieu sous le nom Xam Ti', *Histoire des ouvrages* (September 1687), p. 70. Matteo Ricci first applied the Chinese concept of *Shangdi* 上帝 (the sovereign on high) to the Christian conception of God. Ricci believed that several mentions of *Shangdi* in the *Five classics* and *Lunyu* proved that the Chinese had gained a true knowledge of God. According to Ricci, this knowledge had disappeared in China due to the introduction of Buddhism, Meynard, *The Jesuit reading of Confucius*, p. 8.

to a passage found in chapter ten of the first part of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, which related how the early Christians preached the word of God to the Romans and Greeks: 'It was the very name Deus, the friars say. But for the pagans of those ancient times, could this word have meant something else than a god similar to Saturn, Jupiter, or Mercury?'<sup>91</sup> Basnage offered his own contribution to the debate by suggesting that 'perhaps Father Couplet has not taken notice, that one will also have been able to preach the true God, and worship him, under the name of Jupiter, because according to the most skilled pagans, Jupiter the master of heaven and the ruler of Gods, was Neptune at sea, Mars in combat, Pluto in the underworld; and this was nothing other than a single God called by his different names, which served no other purpose than to express his different qualities'.<sup>92</sup>

This statement by Basnage stands in direct transtextual relationship with Gijsbrecht Cuper's 1676 book on the Egyptian deity Harpocrates. In this booklet, the Dutch historian and politician Cuper described an object from the collection of Johannes Smetius that depicted the Egyptian god, Harpocrates.<sup>93</sup> Cuper related how the object itself was of Roman origin but that the interpretation of Harpocrates harked back to ancient Egypt and Greece.<sup>94</sup> Consequently, different cultures had given different names to this deity, while still referring to the same god. Basnage may have been referencing Cuper in this context, as the latter's statements on Harpocrates echoed those of the Jesuits regarding Confucius. Furthermore, Basnage surely wished to make a friend of Cuper by referring to him as an authoritative source. As an influential member of the Republic of Letters, Cuper's endorsement of the *Histoire des ouvrages* could be beneficial to Henri Basnage's commercial enterprise.<sup>95</sup> To ensure that Cuper indeed saw the reference to his own book, Basnage sent him a copy: 'You will

91 Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. 214.

92 'Mais le P. Couplet n'a peut-être pas pris garde, que l'on aurait pu aussi prêcher le vrai Dieu et l'adorer sous le nom de Jupiter, car selon les plus habiles Payens, Jupiter le maître du ciel et le souverain des Dieux, était Neptune sur la mer, Mars dans les combats, Pluton dans les enfers; et ce n'était qu'un seul Dieu exprimé sous ces different noms, qui ne servaient qu'à exprimer ses différentes qualitez', *Histoire des ouvrages* (September 1687), pp. 70–71.

93 Gijsbrecht Cuper, *Harpocrates seu explicatio imaguncule argenteae antiquissimae, sub Harpocratis figura ex Aegyptiorum instituto solem representantis* (Amsterdam: Theodorus Pluymer, 1676); Harold Cook, *Assessing the truth. Correspondence and information at the end of the Golden Age* (Leiden: Primavera Press, 2013), pp. 25–26.

94 Michel Malaise, *À la découverte d'Harpocrate à travers son historiographie* (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 2011).

95 Bianca Chen, 'Digging for antiquities with diplomats. Gijsbrecht Cuper (1644–1716) and his social capital', *Republics of Letters. A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics and the Arts*, 1 (2008).

no doubt find that I take a little too much liberty in presenting you with the first attempt of my journal ... I would be delighted if you would find some time to let it occupy you for a few moments, but you are too knowledgeable and too skilled, sir, [for me to] flatter myself that my fault could escape all your [critical] light'.<sup>96</sup> Evidently, Basnage's flattery bore fruit. A letter signed on 22 November 1688 tells us that Cuper was nothing but complimentary of Basnage's journalistic efforts, 'which you [Basagne] work at with so much success, and to much praise ... and I am persuaded that the *savants* will be well at ease to be able to know its merits'.<sup>97</sup>

The longest and most comprehensive review of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* appeared in the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique*. Its 69 pages contained extensive translations in French of passages taken from each of the three Confucian books. The sheer length of this treatment seems to mark the review as favourable, which is further emphasised by statements such as 'there is no reason to doubt that these [will] be well received in Europe'.<sup>98</sup> However, David Mungello has argued that Jean Leclerc (the reviewer) was quite critical in his discussion.<sup>99</sup> Most of this criticism centred around the Jesuits' contention that the Chinese, both common and learned, revered Confucius as they did their deceased ancestors. This statement made a distinction between civil and religious honours, a concept which stood at the heart of the Jesuit policy of accommodation. The Jesuits felt that it was important to 'accommodate' Chinese ritual practices to facilitate Chinese conversion to Christianity. This was rooted in the Jesuit belief that Chinese ritual practises were not based on any notion that the souls of ancestors existed after death or that Confucius was a god. Yet, as already indicated by Leclerc's review, the debate concerning the religiosity of the teachings of Confucius would soon become one of the primary points of contention in the Chinese Rites Controversy. There were three

96 'Vous trouverez sans doute que ie prens un peu trop de liberté de presenter le premier essai de mon journal ... je serois ravi que vous y trouvassiez de quoi vous occuper quelques momens, mais vous estes trop scavant et trop habile, monsieur, pour me flatter que mes defaults puissent echaper à toutes vos lumieres', Basnage à Cuper, [September 1687], in Hans Bots and Lenie van Lieshout, *Henri Basnage de Beauval et sa correspondance à propos de l'Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (Amsterdam and Maarsse: APA Holland University Press, 1984), Lettre 1, p. 1.

97 'À qui vous travaillez avec tant de succes, et aec tant de louange ... et je suis persuadé que les scavans seront bien aises e'en pouvoir connoistre les merites', Cuper à Basnage, 22 November 1688, in Bots and Van Lieshout, *Henri Basnage de Beauval et sa correspondance*, Lettre 4, p. 4.

98 'Il n'ya a pas lieu d'en douter ... que ceux ci soient bien recus en Europe', *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* (December 1687 [1688]), p. 322.

99 Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 291.

main issues at the heart of this controversy. Catholic powers in Rome and Paris felt that the ceremonies held in honour of Confucius went against Christian doctrine; together with the special honours paid to ancestors, modes of tribute and filial piety; and the semantic search for the appropriate Chinese terms to refer to the Christian God.

In his review, Leclerc referred to this dispute by stating that ‘the revered Jesuit fathers will have a great deal of trouble persuading the Europeans that the excessive veneration of this philosopher by the Chinese be nothing else than purely [driven by] civil respect, and that one does not grant him divine honours’.<sup>100</sup> Here, the review is in direct metatextual dialogue with *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. Leclerc notes that Philippe Couplet spoke of the ‘excessive honour’ with which the ancient Chinese venerated their forefathers.<sup>101</sup> However, according to this review, this sort of reverence is difficult to justify, as Couplet himself admitted that ‘the respect that the ancient Chinese had for their ancestors has in recent times degenerated into *superstition* among the moderns’.<sup>102</sup>

Leclerc also discussed the Jesuit interpretation of the Chinese concept Xam Ti, or *Shangdi*, a subject which would have been familiar to readers of Basnage’s *Histoire des ouvrages*. Yet, while Basnage was still somewhat circumspect in his judgement, Leclerc was perfectly blunt in stating that Couplet ‘takes a long time to prove that [the Chinese] understand nothing else by T’ien than the true God’. However, he does not believe himself obliged to report his reasons, ‘since there is nothing more ordinary in all languages than giving the name of Heaven to the Divinity’.<sup>103</sup> Here, it seems that Leclerc is more critical of the manner which the information is presented, and by whom, than by its philosophical or religious consequences.

Leclerc finished his review by remarking upon Athanasius Kircher’s *China illustrata* in a less than flattering manner. He questioned whether Kircher’s report of the discovery of the Nestorian Stele in 1625 was truthful, noting how Chinese historians do not mention this discovery: ‘Is it not surprising that the

100 ‘Les R.R.P.P. Jésuites auront beaucoup de peine à persuader aux Européens que la veneration excessive des Chinois, pour ce philosophe, ne soit qu’en respect purement civil, et qu’on ne lui tende pas les honneurs divins’, *Bibliothèque universelle* (December 1687), p. 344 (my emphasis).

101 Couplet, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. 84, from Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 291.

102 ‘Le respect que les anciens Chinois avoient pour leurs ancêtres est dégénéré en *superstition* parmi les modernes’, *Bibliothèque universelle* (December 1687), p. 344 (my emphasis).

103 ‘S’arrête longtemps à prouver qu’ils n’entendaient autre chose par Tien que le vrai Dieu’, ‘puit qu’il n’est rien de plus ordinaire dans toutes les langues donner le nom de ciel à la divinité’, *Bibliothèque universelle* (December 1687), p. 389.

Chinese historians, who extensively report of that time, do not say a word of so great an event?<sup>104</sup> How Leclerc would have known what Chinese historians did or did not report remains unclear. Not content with this analytical blow, the review continued to rub salt in the wound of Couplet's translation by claiming that the *Tabula chronologica* only described a small selection of China's history. According to Mungello, 'coming on the heels of Leclerc's criticism of Kircher for fabrication, the implied criticism was that Couplet had distorted the picture of Chinese history through a calculated selection'.<sup>105</sup>

### 3 The Antiquity of China

*Confucius Sinarum philosophus* closed with a *Tabula chronologica monarchiae Sinicae* ('Chronological table of Chinese monarchy'). This compendium was produced by Philippe Couplet and ranged across Chinese history from 2952 BCE until Couplet's departure from China in 1683. As befitting its Jesuit inception, the table is divided into two sections: *ante Christum* and *post Christum*. A *Tabula genealogica trium familiarum imperialium monarchiae Sinicae* ('Genealogical table of three imperial households of the Chinese monarchy'), and a map of China with the inscription *Imperii Sinarum et rerum in eo notabilium sinopsis* ('Summary of the Chinese Empire and of notable things there'), are usually bound between the two sections of the *Tabula chronologica*.<sup>106</sup>

According to Mungello, this chronological table 'was one of the most significant works published on China in seventeenth-century Europe'.<sup>107</sup> Accurate chronologies were cause for great concern for early modern European historians, and the antiquity of China figured heavily in these discussions. After the Gregorian calendar reforms of 1582, European scholars used the Bible as the major reference in establishing a chronology of the world, recalculating the year of the Creation and the Deluge.<sup>108</sup> By the seventeenth century, two chronologies were leading; one, based on the Vulgate (the Latin translation

104 'N'est il pas étonnant que les historiens Chinois, qui rapportent jusqu'aux minucies de ce temps-là, ne disent pas un mot d'un si grand événement?', *Bibliothèque universelle* (December 1687), p. 389.

105 Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 292.

106 Marcia Reed and Paola Demattè (eds.), *China on paper. European and Chinese works from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth century* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011), pp. 172–173.

107 David E. Mungello, 'A study of the prefaces to Ph. Couplet's *Tabula chronologica monarchiae Sinicae*', in Malek (ed.), *Philippe Couplet*, pp. 183–199, p. 183.

108 Standaert, *The intercultural weaving*, p. 156.

of the Hebrew Bible made around 400 CE), was the most commonly accepted by the Catholic Church. This chronology placed the creation of the world at 23 October 4004 BCE, and the Flood in 2348 BCE. Calvinist and Dutchman Isaac Vossius, was responsible for another chronology based on the Septuagint. This was a much earlier Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, made in the third and second centuries CE. The Septuagint placed the creation of the world in 5622 BCE, and the Deluge 2256 years later in 3366 BCE.

The main problem with these chronologies was that Martino Martini had claimed in his *Sinicae historiae decas prima* (1658) that the records of Chinese history were older than those known in Europe.<sup>109</sup> He stated that Chinese records went back more than 600 years before the time of the Deluge, and that outer parts of Asia were certainly inhabited prior to this event.<sup>110</sup> From this premise followed the problem of how to reconcile China's history with biblical authority. It would be impossible to explain the existence of Chinese records predating the 'universal' Flood, if one held that the entire human race, with the exclusion of Noah and his family, had drowned.<sup>111</sup> Such a contradiction could have far-reaching consequences. If the world was to be declared much older on account of China's antiquity, the universal history of the Bible would no longer be valid. Additionally, this revised chronology would reduce biblical events such as the construction and fall of the Tower of Babel to mere local events, 'involving a minor people in a circumscribed region of the world'.<sup>112</sup>

Jean Leclerc's review identified the problem that 'according to this same calculation, the Chinese Empire will be older than the Deluge'.<sup>113</sup> His journal was not the only one to pay an inordinate amount of attention to the subject of China and the problem of biblical chronology. The *Histoire des ouvrages* also gave a thorough exposition: 'What bothers the author [Couplet] is that one

109 Han Qi, 'The Jesuits and their study of Chinese astronomy and chronology in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', in Luís Saraiva (ed.), *Europe and China. Science and the arts in the 17th and 18th centuries* (London and Hackensack: World Scientific Publishing, 2012), pp. 71–79, p. 72.

110 Anthony Grafton, 'Dating history. The Renaissance & the Reformation of chronology', *Daedalus*, 132.2 (2003), pp. 75–85, p. 84.

111 William Poole, 'The Genesis narrative in the circle of Robert Hooke and Francis Lodwick', in Ariel Hessayon and Nicholas Keene (eds.), *Scripture and scholarship in early modern England* (London: Routledge, 2017), chapter 2.

112 Paolo Rossi, *The dark abyss of time. The history of the earth and the history of nations* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 140.

113 'Mais selon ce calcul même, l'Empire des Chinois serait plus ancien que le Deluge', *Bibliothèque universelle* (December 1687), p. 368.

does not find any evidence of the Flood'.<sup>114</sup> This sentiment is echoed in *Journal des sçavans*, 'which seems to oblige [us] to order the antiquity of time after the computation of the Septuagint, rather than following the Hebrews, because these have so whittled down the age of the world since its creation that, if their chronology were true, the beginning of the Chinese monarchy would stretch back about 660 years beyond the Deluge, as it appears by this calculation'.<sup>115</sup>

The primary aim of most learned journals was to provide readers with 'unbiased' information, yet some opinions do peek through their respective discussions of the problems concerning China's antiquity. *Journal des sçavans* generally followed the lead of the Jesuits, yet the *Histoire des ouvrages* did not draw the same conclusion: 'There is no evidence of the Flood, but he [Couplet] claims that an imperfect solution could be found in their [the Chinese] opinion that the whole world was once covered by water'.<sup>116</sup> The review thereby refers to Couplet's preface to *Tabula chronologica*, in which he broached the subject of the Great Flood.

Surprisingly, Couplet never offered any real solution to the problem. He found nothing 'certain or firmly established in the books and monuments of the Chinese' on the subject of any *universale diluvium*. Yet, he noted that it may be possible to find evidence of a 'deluge' in the *Xingli dachuan*, or 'Great compendium of natural and moral philosophy': an official anthology of neo-Confucian thought, compiled by the Yongle Emperor 永樂 (1402–1424). This work was primarily assembled by neo-Confucian philosophers of the Song dynasty, such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200).<sup>117</sup> Couplet's notion that the riddle of the Flood could be solved through neo-Confucian works seems

114 'Ce qui embarrasse l'auteur est que l'on n'y trouve aucune preuve du Déluge', *Histoire des ouvrages* (September 1687), pp. 65–79.

115 'Ce qui semble obliger à régler l'antiquité des temps suivant la supputation des Septante, plutôt que suivant celle des Hébreux; parce que ceux-ci ont tellement resserré la durée du monde depuis sa création, que si leur chronologie était véritable, le commencement de la monarchie de la Chine se trouverait environ 660 ans au delà du Déluge, comme il paraît par ce calcul', *Journal des sçavans* (January 1688), pp. 167–180.

116 'Ce qui embarrasse l'Auteur est que l'on n'y trouve aucune preuve du Déluge: mais il prétend que l'on peut en trouver une idée imparfaite dans l'opinion qu'ils ont, que tout cet Univers n'étant d'abord composé que d'eau', *Histoire des ouvrages* (September 1687), pp. 65–79.

117 In general, neo-Confucianism was rejected by the Jesuits. They believed that this philosophy, which originated with Han Yu 韓愈 and Li Ao 李翱 (772–841) in the Tang Dynasty (618–907) and became prominent during the Song and Ming dynasties, had corrupted and distorted the teachings of the ancient philosophers Confucius and Mencius: Knud Lundbaek, 'The image of neo-Confucianism in *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44.1 (1983), pp. 19–30.

mere speculation.<sup>118</sup> Nonetheless, it led the Jesuit to declare that the Chinese believed that the world was once covered by water ‘and that is why one finds shells on top of the highest mountain’.<sup>119</sup>

The *Bibliothèque universelle* is even more circumspect in its description of the *Tabula chronologica*. In the first part of the review, the reader is provided with both options: ‘To follow the calculation of the Septuagint’, and ‘if we want to stick to the computations of the Hebrews’.<sup>120</sup> Yet, the author soon acknowledged how ‘according to this same calculation, the Chinese Empire will be older than the Deluge’, but without giving any explanation of this rather contentious piece of information.<sup>121</sup> Over the next 60 pages, the reviewer extensively used information taken from *Tabula* and its preface, yet without referring again to the problematic implications of this information. Finally, on one of the last pages, the author returned more explicitly to the *Tabula*, simply stating that ‘we shall not dwell a long time on the third part of this collection, which is a chronological table of the kings of China, because we have already taken several things from it, to make the summary we have given of the religion and antiquities of the Chinese Empire’.<sup>122</sup>

For a long time, Europeans had been concerned with the problems of biblical chronology, and the publication of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* added fuel to an already blazing fire.<sup>123</sup> During the late sixteenth century, Protestant Joseph Scaliger was Europe’s greatest expert on chronology and its connection to biblical authority. He expanded the notion of classical history from Greek and Roman antiquity to include Persian, Babylonian, Jewish, and ancient Egyptian history.<sup>124</sup> In the last 16 years of his life, from 1593 until 1609, Scaliger

118 Mungello, ‘A study of the prefaces’, p. 193.

119 ‘Et que c’est pourquoi l’on trouve des coquilles sur les plus haut montagnes’, *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (September 1687), p. 77; Couplet, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. vi.

120 ‘A suivre le calcul des Septante’, and ‘si l’on veut s’en tenir à la supputation des Hébreux’, *Bibliothèque universelle* (December 1687), p. 333.

121 ‘Mais selon ce calcul même, l’Empire des Chinois serait plus ancien que le Deluge’, *Bibliothèque universelle* (December 1687), p. 333.

122 ‘On ne s’arrêtera pas long-temps sur la troisième partie de ce recueil, qui est une table chronologique des rois de la Chine; parce qu’on en a déjà tiré plusieurs choses, pour faire l’abbregé qu’on a donné de la religion et des antiquitez de l’empire Chinois’, *Bibliothèque universelle* (December 1687), p. 388.

123 On the Jesuit discussion of China’s antiquity see Standaert, *The intercultural weaving*, pp. 94–115.

124 Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger. A study in the history of classical scholarship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

lived and worked in the Dutch Republic, and it was there that the subsequent discussion on the subject of chronology predominantly took place.

The half-century after Scaliger's death saw many contributors to the debate, many of whom were Protestants, indicating that polemics concerning China was not always motivated by a difference in religion. One curious example is that of French Huguenot theologian Isaac La Peyrère, who argued in 1655 that man had lived before Adam, thus conveniently solving many problems related to chronology.<sup>125</sup> When the Amsterdam printing firm Elzevier issued three different editions of La Peyrère's exposition in the same year, complaints soon started rolling in, and the book was banned on the grounds that it contained 'some horrible and blasphemous opinions contravening God's Holy Word'.<sup>126</sup>

The discussion did not end there and, from 1659 onwards, the Dutchman Isaac Vossius stood at the eye of 'the storm over chronology'.<sup>127</sup> Vossius, son of esteemed humanist Gerhard Vossius, was a Calvinist philologist, well known for his excellent library of books and manuscripts.<sup>128</sup> As a scholar, he had long been preoccupied with China, from which followed a fascination with the antiquity of the world.<sup>129</sup> His pamphlet *Dissertatio de vera aetate mundi* of 1659 argued that the universe was 1440 years older 'than is usually calculated'.<sup>130</sup> Using the chronology of the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) instead of the Hebrew Masoretic text, Vossius claimed that the date of creation should be placed at about 5400 BCE. In lengthening the history of the world by 1440 years, Vossius reconciled conflicting Chinese and biblical evidence.<sup>131</sup> From the

125 Isaac de La Peyrère, *Præ-adamitæ. Sive exercitatio super versibus duodecimo, decimotertio, & decimoquarto, capituli quinti epistolæ D. Pauli ad Romanos* (Amsterdam: Daniel and Lowijs Elzevier, 1655); Eric Jorink, "Horrible and blasphemous": Isaac La Peyrère, Isaac Vossius and the emergence of radical biblical criticism in the Dutch Republic', in Jitse van der Meer and Scott mandelbrote (eds.), *Nature and scripture in the Abrahamic religions: up to 1700* (vol. 1, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 439–460.

126 National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague, Missiven van het Hof van Holland, 10e register, nr. 390, fol. 206, via Eric Jorink, *Reading the book of nature, in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575–1715* (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2010). p. 64.

127 Anthony Grafton, 'Isaac Vossius, chronologer', in Jorink and Van Miert (eds.), *Isaac Vossius (1618–1689)*, pp. 43–84, p. 43.

128 After his death in 1689, his heirs sold the collection to Leiden University, where it is still kept as the *Codices Vossiani*, containing 4000 rare manuscripts and books, see *Codices Vossiani Latini Online*, <https://brill.com/view/db/cvlo>, last accessed 23 August 2021.

129 Weststeijn, 'Vossius' Chinese utopia', pp. 207–242.

130 'Dat men gemeenlijck reeckent'. Isaac Vossius, *Discours van de rechten ouderdom der wereldt. Waer in getoondt wordt dat de werelt ten minsten 1440 jaren ouder is, dan men gemeenlijck reeckent* (Amsterdam: Tymon Houthaeck and Jan Hendricksz Boom, 1660), title page.

131 Jorink, *Reading the book of nature*.

very first pages, Vossius raised the problem of the antiquity of other cultures such as ‘the Babylonians and Egyptians. Added to these are the Chinese’.<sup>132</sup> He further expounded on this reasoning in *De septuaginta interpretibus eorumque translatione* of 1661, arguing that the Greek version of the Bible was preferable in the process of calculating time. Conveniently, his new chronology gave a satisfactory explanation for the antiquity of many civilisations: among them, the Chinese.<sup>133</sup>

Adriaen Vlacq of The Hague first published Vossius’s *Dissertatio de vera aetate mundi*.<sup>134</sup> Tymon Houthaeck and Jan Hendricksz. Boom of Amsterdam translated the work into Dutch within the year. This Dutch edition begins with a letter from ‘the translator to his friend Mr. Leonard Pot’.<sup>135</sup> This preface is interesting because it testifies to the intentions of the rest of the book, while at the same time explaining why a translation into Dutch was deemed necessary. The writer first clarifies why he did not publish this translation earlier: ‘The cause for this is, that I first wanted to see what learned men thought of it, and how the writer would defend his feelings; this, I think, having been done well, the translation appears forthwith’.<sup>136</sup> This statement referred to the overwhelming amount of criticism that befell Vossius after the publication of his chronology. While some may have found in Vossius’s theory an answer to the long-standing question of Chinese chronology, his *De vera aetate* queried established views and he soon became involved in a heated polemic.

Vossius’s main opponent was German historian, Harderwijk professor and pious Calvinist, Georg Hornius. Hornius tried to refute Vossius’s chronology in several pamphlets as well as in his book, *Arca Noae*, published in 1666.<sup>137</sup> Hornius first responded to the notion that the Flood was not universal but limited to Palestine. In the preface, Hornius presents Vossius as a secret follower of the pre-Adamite doctrine of La Peyrère. According to Hornius, this belief

132 ‘De verdediginge van hun gevoelen zoeken sy in de outheydt van de Babyloniers en Egyptenaren. By deze voegen eenige de ... Sinesen’, in Vossius, *Discours van de rechten ouderom der wereldt*, p. 28.

133 Isaac Vossius, *De Septuaginta interpretibus, eorumque translatione & chronologia dissertationes* (The Hague: Adriaen Vlacq, 1661).

134 Isaac Vossius, *Dissertatio de vera aetate mundi* (The Hague: Adriaen Vlacq, 1659).

135 Vossius, *Discours van de rechten ouderom der wereldt*, fl. \*2.

136 ‘Daer van is dit de oorzaecke, dat ick eerst wilde zien wat geleerde luyden daer van oordeelden, en hoe den Schrijver sijn gevoelen verdedigen zoude; dit, mijns bedunckens, wel geschiedt zijnde, zo komt de overzettinge nu mede te voorschijn’, in Vossius, *Discours van de rechten ouderdom der wereldt*, p. 132.

137 Weststeijn, ‘“Vossius” Chinese utopia’, pp. 208–210.

would 'lead straight to atheism', and had already been refuted.<sup>138</sup> The only course of action Hornius saw as appropriate was 'that folly [be] struck by the strongest of arguments, so that, scarcely born, that unhealthy opinion, which was supported by no proof, was snuffed out. If any of its followers remain, may they be punished with scorn or with magistrates' sentences'.<sup>139</sup>

Both Vossius and Hornius believed that the world was created by God, yet Hornius drew a different conclusion from this premise than Vossius. Hornius reasoned that, if the world was created by God, the true beginning should be sought with Moses. And this book of Moses may exist in different languages, but Hebrew is the true and original language in which the Bible was written, all others are translations. Hornius then went on to undermine arguments made by Vossius, and several chapters are devoted to the antiquity of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Arabs and Chinese.<sup>140</sup> Hornius provided arguments to align the antiquity of these cultures in accordance with traditional chronology. According to him, every chronology that differed from the Mosaic tradition was 'fabulous', expressing merely the desire found in every people for 'prolonging its own history' and of 'declaring its own origins to be very distant and, hence, more noble'.<sup>141</sup>

Vossius swiftly responded to Hornius with a pamphlet entitled *Castigationes ad scriptum G. Hornii de aetate mundi* (1659). In this work, he not only discussed the Septuagint in relation to the Hebrew Bible, but also delved deeper into the questions of chronology. Concerning the Chinese, Vossius accused Hornius of confusing Cathay and China: an error which should have been laid to rest decades earlier.<sup>142</sup> Vossius also claimed that Hornius clearly understood nothing of Martino Martini's work, and had written only nonsense about it. In the same year of 1659, Hornius replied in yet another pamphlet that Vossius had no right to use Martini as an argument concerning Chinese chronology since the Jesuit had 'limited himself to repeating what the Chinese believed to be true, but he does not by any means approve of their opinions'.<sup>143</sup> Hornius's arguments

138 Georg Hornius, *Arca Noae: sive historia imperiorum et renorum a conditio orbe ad nostra tempora* (Leiden and Rotterdam: Petrus Hackius, Cornelius Hackius and Jacobus Hackius, 1666), praefatio ad lectorem.

139 Georg Hornius, *Dissertatio de vera aetate mundi qua sententia illorum refellitur qui statuunt natale mundi tempus annis minimum 1440 vulgarem aeram anticipare* (Leiden: Johannes Elzevier, 1659), fl. 2.

140 Weststeijn, 'Spinoza Sinicus', pp. 537–561.

141 Hornius, *Dissertatio de vera aetate mundi*, pp. 1–3.

142 Djoeko van Netten, 'The richest country in the world. Dutch knowledge of China and Cathay and how to get there in the 1590s', in Thijs Weststeijn (ed.), *Entangled cultural histories. Encounters between China and Europe, 1590–1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 24–56.

143 Hornius, *Defensio dissertationis*, p. 50, p. 54.

against Martini revolved around the idea that latter had never believed in Chinese history and chronology, and that 'he laughed at it'. Of course, Martini, still residing in China, could never have said so 'without most grave danger'.<sup>144</sup> In another swift reply, Vossius exclaimed that 'you say that Martini thought in one way and wrote in another. Marvellous among mortals, you know what Father Martini thought better than he did himself!' However, Martini's work was available to all so readers could see for themselves that Martini's history of China 'takes place over 4600 years: sure, constant and uninterrupted'.<sup>145</sup>

Concerning Martini's works and his own, Vossius was certainly right about their widespread availability. Martini's first work on the Manchu Conquest of 1644 was translated in Dutch, English, German, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, and Danish before the end of the century and it was reprinted 20 times before 1706.<sup>146</sup> Admittedly, Martini's work on Chinese history and chronology (from which Vossius took the argumentation) was less widely distributed, as editions were limited to two in Latin, printed in Munich and Amsterdam.<sup>147</sup> However, Isaac Vossius's work about the antiquity of China was translated into Dutch, unlike any of Hornius's books on the same subject. Scholars had a wider array of works to choose from if they wanted to inform themselves on the subject of biblical chronology. People who could not read Latin, still the greater part of the Dutch population, had to make do with Vossius's account.<sup>148</sup> Yet, those people versed in French were also enlightened by the learned journals.<sup>149</sup>

The debate surrounding the incompatibility of China's antiquity with the chronology of the Bible was not the only controversy surrounding Europe's introduction to *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. Soon, a group of radical thinkers would use the polemic possibilities of Confucius to their own advantage. The Protestant polemic between Vossius and Hornius demonstrates how the former deployed China's antiquity and the venerable character of Confucianism to argue that the Greek text of the Bible was more reliable than the Hebrew

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144 Hornius, *Defensio dissertationis*, p. 54.

145 Vossius, *auctarium castigationum*, pp. 40–41.

146 Martini, *De bello Tartarico historia*; Van Kley, 'Qing dynasty China in seventeenth-century Dutch literature', pp. 219–220.

147 Martino Martini, *Sinicæ historiae decas prima. Res a gentis origine ad Christum natum in extrema Asia, sive magno Sinarum imperio gestas complexa* (Munich: Johannes Wagner Civis, 1658; Amsterdam: Johan Blaeu, 1656).

148 On the culture of translating in early modern Europe, see Hosington, 'Translation and print culture in early modern Europe', pp. 5–18.

149 Brown, 'History and the learned journal', pp. 365–378.

one.<sup>150</sup> Chinese society could not be praised high enough, according to Vossius, and he claimed that the Middle Kingdom was not only the oldest but also the most praiseworthy of all civilisations.<sup>151</sup> Vossius was not the only proponent of this highly appreciative ‘philosophical Sinophilia’.<sup>152</sup> In his commendation of the Middle Kingdom, he was joined by the English statesman and essayist William Temple and the seigneur de Saint-Évremond, Charles de Marguetel. Incidentally, all three lived and worked in The Hague during the late 1660s.<sup>153</sup> According to Temple, Confucius was ‘the most learned, wise and virtuous of all the Chinese’, and his opinion that there would be no better model for men to emulate was shared by Vossius and Saint-Évremond.<sup>154</sup>

Even though this philosophical Sinophilia was only propagated by a relatively small number of thinkers, its explanation of Confucianism as a moral and political order that could potentially serve as a model for all mankind proved influential. Especially the French thinkers Henri de Boulainvilliers, Simon Tyssot de Patot, Jean-Jacques Dortous de Mairan, Antoine-Augustin Bruzen de La Martinière, Jean-Baptiste Boyer, Marquis d’Argens, and the Italian-born Alberto Radicati would take up the cause of Confucius in the eighteenth century.<sup>155</sup> While bearing many similarities, the Sinophilia of Vossius, Temple and Saint-Évremond on the one side and that of the French thinkers of the early eighteenth century on the other, is divided by the mountain of knowledge that is *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*. The publication of the Jesuit translation of Confucius truly marks the moment at which China became philosophically interesting to European thinkers, as so much more substantive and polemic information became available.<sup>156</sup> With the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, the Jesuits aimed to prove that the teachings of Confucius, and by implication those who adhered to them, were not in conflict with Christianity. However, Couplet’s explanation of Confucianism caused the greatest controversy, not

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150 Richard H. Popkin, ‘The crisis of polytheism and the answers of Vossius, Cudworth, and Newton’, in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds.), *Essays on the context, nature, and influence of Isaac Newton’s theology* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1990), pp. 9–25.

151 Scott Mandelbrote, ‘Isaac Vossius and the Septuagint’, in Jorink and Van Miert, *Isaac Vossius (1618–1689)*, pp. 56–57.

152 Israel, *Enlightenment contested*, p. 641.

153 David S. Katz, ‘Isaac Vossius and the English biblical critics’, in Richard H. Popkin and Arjo J. Vanderjagt (eds.), *Scepticism and irreligion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1993), pp. 142–184.

154 Samuel H. Monk (eds.), *Five miscellaneous essays by Sir William Temple* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 113; Israel, *Enlightenment contested*, p. 641.

155 Pinot, *La Chine et la formation*, pp. 151–152.

156 Yuen-Ting Lai, ‘The linking of Spinoza to Chinese thought by Bayle and Malebranche’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 23.2 (1985), pp. 151–178.

only within the Society of Jesus itself, but also within a broad group of European thinkers.

#### 4 Critiquing Confucius

French Jansenist Antoine Arnauld was one of the first in Europe to formulate a clear critique of Confucius as presented by the Jesuits.<sup>157</sup> Arnauld averred that the Confucian philosophy practised by the Chinese emperor sounded, even in its Jesuit telling, much like atheism: 'These nations, which profess no religion, appear incapable of the most common reasoning that leads other men to the true or false knowledge of a divinity'.<sup>158</sup> According to Arnauld, Ricci had proposed that the Chinese character for mere 'material sky' was translated as 'true God' (天 Tian). Nicolò Longobardo had already refuted this meaning, but never spoke out about it. Yet, Arnauld declared that since the time of Ricci, many missionaries (mainly Dominicans and Franciscans) had demonstrated that Chinese philosophers were only materialistic, meaning that they did not distinguish between spiritual substance and mere matter. The Chinese literati therefore could have no correct notion 'neither of God, the angels, nor our soul'.<sup>159</sup> Arnauld's critique of China was mainly aimed at the Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism since, according to him, they had known the Chinese to be atheistic, but tried to hide that fact from the European public.

157 On Jansenism and its Jesuit opposition see William Doyle, *Jansenism. Catholic resistance to authority from the Reformation to the French Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Dale van Kley, 'The rejuvenation and rejection of Jansenism in history and historiography. Recent literature on eighteenth-century Jansenism in French', *French Historical Studies*, 29.4 (2006), pp. 649–684; Jeffrey D. Burson, 'Between power and enlightenment. The cultural and intellectual context for the Jesuit suppression in France', in Jeffrey D. Burson and Jonathan Wright (eds.), *The Jesuit suppression in global context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 40–64. Between 1654 and 1756, 121 of Arnauld's works were published in the Dutch Republic.

158 Antoine Arnauld, *Oeuvres de messire Antoine Arnauld*, vol. 34, *Morale pratique des Jésuites* (Paris and Lausanne: Sigismond D'Arnay, 1780), chapter 11; David Jones, *The image of China in Western social and political thought* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 17–20. The different parts of *Morale pratique des Jésuites* were published in 1692 and 1693 under the respective titles of *Histoire des différens que les missionnaires Jésuites d'une part, & ceux des Ordres de S. Dominique & de S. François de l'autre, ont touchant les cultes que les Chinois rendent à leur maître Confucius*, 1692; *Suite de l'histoire des différens entre les Jésuites de la Chine d'une part & des missionnaires des Ordres de St. Dominique et de St. François de l'autre*, 1693. Neither book has a place nor name of publication stated, but it is highly likely they were in fact printed in Amsterdam.

159 'Ni de Dieu, ni des anges, ni de notre âme', Arnauld, *Oeuvres* 34, p. 304.

The intellectual debate between those that supported the Jesuit claims and those who argued against them was reflected on the pages of learned journals. In January 1690, Henri Basnage de Beauval of the *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* reviewed Arnauld's *Morale pratique des Jesuites*. In this work, Arnauld attacked not so much the nature of Chinese thought, but what he supposed to be 'the fatally comprised Jesuit position in moral theology'.<sup>160</sup> Arnauld attested that, although Ricci may have believed that the Chinese expression for 'material sky' in actuality meant 'true God', subsequent Jesuits like Longobardo already knew this to be wrong, but remained silent. As such, the Jesuits knew that the Chinese 'profess no religion, appear incapable of the most common reasoning that leads other men to true or false knowledge of a divinity', yet concealed it to further their mission.<sup>161</sup> Furthermore, Arnauld was most appalled by what he believed to be the Jesuits' deliberate neglect of Christology (the ontology and person of Jesus), and the formative powers of the Crucifixion and subsequent Resurrection in their preaching in China. This, of course, was a harsh accusation as the Society of Jesus took its name and its principles from Christ.

A review of Arnauld's polemic could have found no better home than the *Histoire des ouvrages*, for the journal and its editor had long had a contentious relationship with Jesuit authors and their works.<sup>162</sup> Since the Society of Jesus made contributions to almost every branch of scholarship, it comes as no surprise that Basnage reviewed many works written by Jesuit authors.<sup>163</sup> In these reviews, Basnage focused almost solely on the conflicts in which the Jesuits were involved. Even when discussing works by authors who were not Jesuits themselves, the Society was cast in a less than favourable light.<sup>164</sup> Regarding the Jesuits and their mission in China, Basnage proved firmly on Arnauld's side:

And the Jesuits for their part, who do not want to frighten the Gentiles by a too rigorous [form of] Christianity, or who themselves aspire to dignities that call for these kinds of precautions (as it is said that Father Martinus was high officer of the artillery), soften the severe laws of the Gospel by this tolerance for the weakness of the converted idolaters. This

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160 *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (January 1690), pp. 192–202.

161 Arnauld, *Oeuvres*, vol. xxxiv, pp. 697–697.

162 Gemert, 'De jezuiten in de "Histoire des ouvrages des savants"', pp. 305–351.

163 Begheyn, *Jesuit books in the Low Countries*; Mordechai Feingold, 'Jesuits: Savants', in Mordechai Feingold (ed.), *Jesuit science and the Republic of Letters* (Cambridge and London: the MIT Press, 2003), pp. 1–47.

164 'La concurrence du commerce entre les Hollandois & les Jesuites qui se sourent partout, a été la premiere cause de ce changement', *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (June 1689), pp. 324–328.

scandalous policy has excited murmurs among the other missionaries, who could not have endured that the Christian religion was thus bargained through this strange union with Chinese superstitions.<sup>165</sup>

In October 1692, Basnage went a step further by reminding his readers that Matteo Ricci had been wrong in equating Xam ti with any European conception of God: 'Nevertheless, the truth is that Confucius recognized no spiritual being, and none distinct from matter, and that he attributed the creation of the world to the fortuitous movement of formless matter'.<sup>166</sup>

The mediating role of editor Basnage shaped the manner in which the polemic between Arnauld and the Jesuit missionaries was laid out before the burgeoning reading public. In the first sentence, Basnage spoke directly to his readers, noticing how 'in spite of the *obstinate* silence of the Jesuits, who have not replied to any of the three volumes [by Arnauld], by which they appear to have been overwhelmed', Mr. Arnauld is 'not at all discouraged. And [also], out of fear that they can no longer remain silent out of sagacity, or under the pretext of calling a halt to a trial that henceforth tires the world, he greatly attacks them on this point'.<sup>167</sup> In the following paragraph, Basnage explicitly called upon 'the audience before whom this trial takes place to condemn them in absentia'.<sup>168</sup> As Arnauld himself related: 'One should take their silence for an evasion and for acquiescence. This will be interpreted accordingly by most

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165 'Et les Jesuites de leur côté, qui ne veulent point effaroucher les Gentils par un Christianisme trop rigoureux, ou qui aspirent eux-mêmes aux dignitez qui demandent ces sortes de ménagemens, comme l'on dit que le P. Martinius estoit Mandarin de l'artillerie, adoucissent les severes loix de l'Evangile par cette tolerance pour les foiblesses des idolatres convertis. Cette scandaleuse politique a excité les murmures des autres missionnaires, qui n'ont pû souffrir que l'on trafiquast ainsi de la Religion Chrétienne, par cette union bizarre avec les superstitions Chinoises', *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (January 1690), pp. 200–201.

166 'La verité est cependant que Confucius ne reconnoissoit aucun être spirituel, & distinct de la matiere, & qu'il attribuoit la construction du monde au mouvement fortuit de la matiere informe. Les Jesuites eux-même ont avoué que c'est une erreur, qu'ils ont bien de la peine à deraciner de l'esprit des Chinois', *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (October 1692), pp. 94–99.

167 'Malgré le silence opiniâtre des Jesuites, qui n'ont rien repliqué à trois Volumes dont ils \* (voyez. Janvier & Août 1690 & Avril 1691) ont été affaillis, Mr. Arnaud ne se rebute point: & de peur qu'ils ne viennent à bout de persuader qu'ils se taisent par sagesse, ou sous pretexte de laisser 'teindre un procès qui fatigue desormais le monde, il les tourmente fort sur cet article', *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (October 1692), pp. 94–99 (my emphasis).

168 'Le public devant qui le procès se poursuit, les condamne par contumace', *Histoire des ouvrages des savants* (October 1692), pp. 94–99.

people, of whom one has become accustomed to believe everything about the Jesuits without further examination'.<sup>169</sup>

In the last decade of the seventeenth century, the problems of how to reconcile Confucius's supposed atheism with admiring accounts of his virtue as a Chinese sage were often publicly debated on the pages of Dutch-made learned journals. On one side stood the Jesuits, who were in favour of Confucianism, attributing to its sage 'a morality that might be said to proceed from the school of Jesus Christ'.<sup>170</sup> In their accommodation policy and the subsequent translation of the Confucian classics, the Jesuits were certainly partly motivated by a genuine interest in China, as their works often combined justifications of respectable Confucianism with extensive cultural praise. However, their European opponents, like Antoine Arnauld, not so much objected to the nature of Chinese thought, but what they took to be the fatally compromised Jesuit position in moral theology.<sup>171</sup>

These objections tied in with the bitter Jansenist-Jesuit polemics that were simultaneously taking place in France. As such, China and *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* became another way to attack the Society of Jesus. The flourishing reading public of learned journals was provided with extensive coverage of the issues, as the debate had apparently caught their interest. These journals also filled gaps in available knowledge. For instance, if the public missed Arnauld's rather lengthy exposition against the Jesuits, they had access to the sympathetic review of his work in the *Histoire des ouvrages des savants*.

During the second half of the seventeenth century, Dutch-made learned journals in French played an essential role in the intellectual dissemination of images of Chinese religion and philosophy. Their international scope facilitated widespread access to discussions about the meaning and interpretation of Confucius and the Jesuit policy of accommodation across cultural, societal, and linguistic boundaries. The erudite press spread news and knowledge more quickly than books, and more widely than correspondence; for the first time, China truly became the subject of broad public discussion.

This chapter investigated how learned journals in the United Provinces represented China and Confucius, and how the involvement of Dutch book producers helped construct the narrative of the Middle Kingdom and its religion and philosophy as an intellectual phenomenon. The erudite press influenced the early modern debate on China from two directions: from *within* by

169 'On prenne leur silence pour une fuite, & pour un acquiescement. Cela sera interpreté de même par bien des gens, que l'on a accoutuméz à tout croire des Jesuïtes sans autre examen', *Historie des ouvrages des savants* (October 1692), pp. 94–99.

170 Couplet, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, p. xcvi.

171 Kors, *Atheism in France*, pp. 163–165.

way of publishing strategies aimed at the Republic of Letters, and *externally* through peritext, most obviously the Chinese Rites Controversy and the comparison between European radical thought and the teachings of Confucius. Contributors and editors employed various forms of transtextuality, such as quotation, genre, and critical commentary, in their reaction to and interpretation of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* and the Jesuit representation of Confucius. The integrated analysis of these reviews and the original Latin book has made clear that religious, political, and intellectual conjunctures weighed heavily on images of Chinese religion and philosophy during the last decades of the seventeenth century.

As ‘print-versions’ of information that was exchanged with the Republic of Letters, learned journals performed an invaluable function in the spread of intellectual and scholarly discourse. The Dutch Republic produced a greater number of titles than any other European country and, as such, provided an important service to European scholarship. Its quality was highly esteemed, and Dutch printers and publishers thus had a pivotal function in the international exchange of news and information about China. In this exploration of Dutch-made journals, we find publishers’ strategies aimed at a growing readership of intellectuals who were part of the Republic of Letters, while simultaneously drumming up demand for their own publications. When French became the European language of letters and culture, the Dutch soon adapted. Concerning China, this development was aided by an influx of Huguenot refugees after 1685, and the French Jesuit mission to China sent by Louis XIV in the late 1680s.

In the third quarter of the century, China became a subject of growing intellectual importance. In reviewing books and information about the Middle Kingdom, learned journals spread discussions on the country and its religion and philosophy far and wide. Here, the role of the editor facilitated public conversation; in this important capacity, he functioned as a gatekeeper of information. When, in 1687, *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* was published in Paris, it was discussed extensively in the learned press; in fact, it was the only work reviewed in all major journals in that year. While these reviews seemed favourable at first, further analysis in this chapter has demonstrated that the (often) Huguenot editors were rather critical about the Jesuit translation and their interpretation of Confucius. Here, not only ideological and religious consideration played their part, reviews were also shaped by economic rules of cultural consumption and publishing strategies. This chapter noted also that the sale of books and their reviews in learned journals often worked in commercial tandem. This form of bias continues in the editors’ discussions of *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, in which personal opinions often shone through. As they reviewed both content and interpretation of the *Jesuit* translation of Confucius,

it soon becomes clear that it was particularly the Society of Jesus and their mission in China that were the points of contention. Editors sometimes proved more critical of the manner in which information about Confucius was presented, and by whom, than by its philosophical or religious consequences.

However, the consequences of the increasing cultural contacts between China and Europe were certainly on the minds of a small number of primarily Protestant intellectuals, proving that polemics concerning the Middle Kingdom often went beyond issues of religious affiliation. In particular, the issues concerning the antiquity of China and biblical chronology found their way to the pages of these learned journals. Calvinist Isaac Vossius was the main proponent of the debate over chronology from the 1660s onwards. He soon became embroiled in a war of pamphlets with fellow Calvinist Georg Hornius, who tried to refute Vossius claim that the Flood had not been universal and that the Septuagint Bible should be used as authority rather than the Hebrew text. Notably, only Vossius works were translated into Dutch. The debate between Calvinists Isaac Vossius and Georg Hornius is emblematic of the battle over biblical chronology for which China was employed as a kind of 'cannon fodder'. In this war of pamphlets, China and Confucius were considered as viable intellectual avenues of enquiry.

The writings of French Jansenist and vehement Jesuit detractor Antoine Arnauld were also extensively discussed in Dutch learned journals. He was one of the first to formulate a clear critique of the Jesuit interpretation of Confucius and his teachings, specifically taking umbrage with China's alleged atheism that, according to Arnauld, was deliberately hidden from view by the Jesuits. Again, the editor (in this case Henri Basnage de Beauval of the *Histoire des Ouvrages*) performed an important mediating role between contributor and reader by presenting (often not entirely impartially) the issue on the pages of the learned journal. This chapter has revealed the editor as a major driving influence in shaping not only the representation of China and Confucius in Dutch learned journals, but also the discussion of the Middle Kingdom as an intellectual phenomenon worthy of consideration.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, learned journals were not the only form of periodical print discussing China. The next chapter turns to newspapers and news digests printed in the Dutch Republic. Unlike erudite journals, these also appeared in Dutch and, as such, took often quite divergent approaches towards the Middle Kingdom, according to the intended audience envisaged. Additionally, the Chinese Rites Controversy became a major public issue at the turn of the century. Various Jesuit books on the subject, and their subsequent censure by Catholic authorities in Paris and Rome, were discussed extensively in both Dutch and French newspapers produced in the United Provinces.

## China and the Chinese Rites Controversy in Dutch Newspapers

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, developments in both Europe and China changed the manner in which the Middle Kingdom was represented to Dutch readers.<sup>1</sup> This chapter explores how newspapers and periodicals printed in the Dutch Republic during the final decades of the seventeenth century reported and discussed Confucius and the so-called Chinese Rites Controversy. In this regard, this chapter examines how changes in the Jesuit mission, combined with developments in production, distribution, and availability of printed media, produced an image of China and its religion and philosophy that was increasingly focused on the Chinese Rites Controversy and the condemnation of the Jesuit missionary approach. Furthermore, over the course of the seventeenth century, Dutch-made news became influenced more and more by French culture and language. These shifts impacted representations of China and Confucius, whereby Dutch printers, publishers, and booksellers produced and distributed a progressively Gallican image of the Middle Kingdom.

The early modern culture of news has received considerable attention in recent years. Scholars like Brendan Dooley, Joad Raymond, Joop Koopman, and Paul Arblaster have all advocated an interpretation of news that focuses primarily on production and distribution.<sup>2</sup> Their attention has concentrated on the emergence of the periodic press and the distribution of news through international networks of book producers, translators, merchants, missionaries, diplomats, and religious immigrants. Research in this field has also investigated the relationship between news and public opinion. For example, an approach towards news culture as part of the early modern book market has

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1 Parts of this chapter first appeared in 'It is said that ... The Chinese Rites Controversy in Dutch newspapers and periodicals in the seventeenth century', *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis*, 23 (2016), pp. 172–191.

2 Paul Arblaster, *From Ghent to Aix. How they brought the news in the Habsburg Netherlands, 1550–1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Brendan Dooley (ed.), *The dissemination of news and the emergence of contemporaneity in early modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Joop Koopmans, *News and politics in early modern Europe (1500–1800)* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005); Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (eds.), *News networks in seventeenth-century Britain and Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

been taken up by Andrew Pettegree and Arthur Der Weduwen.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, recent studies by Michiel van Groesen, Helmer Helmers and others have further proposed to merge the various historiographies of news and information management by integrating these fields of study with Robert Darnton's circuit of communication.<sup>4</sup> Following an integrated approach towards these methodologies, this chapter seeks to examine the role of printers, publishers, and authors in shaping the early modern representations of China in newspapers.

Reports in early modern Dutch newspapers often concerned the non-European world. These reports were significant in that they changed the manner in which readers could relate to the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Australia by providing (relatively) current information which hitherto had only been available to a small part of society. By employing the periodic press, Michiel van Groesen has demonstrated that Dutch Brazil transformed (and was transformed by) the media landscape in the Dutch Republic.<sup>5</sup> With one notable exception, little research has been done on the representation of China in the European periodic press of the seventeenth century. Edwin van Kley's ground-breaking work, 'News from China', has shown that news about the Manchu conquest of 1644 had remarkable effects on Europe; the conquest was deemed incredibly important and was subjected to a wide variety of interpretations in the periodic press. Before 1644, however, reports about China were primarily static affairs as opposed to histories or news. In the words of Van Kley: 'The image of China produced by such flat descriptions was flat; it lacked both a historical dimension in the background and individual personalities or discrete events in the foreground.'<sup>6</sup> However, the conquest changed the nature of news on the Middle Kingdom by dramatizing the events and allowing for more substantial debates over the significance of Chinese incidents.

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3 Andrew Pettegree, *The book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Andrew Pettegree, *The invention of news. How the world came to know about itself* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Arthur der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish newspapers of the seventeenth century, 1618–1700* (2 vol., Leiden: Brill, 2017); Arthur der Weduwen, 'Everyone has hereby been warned.' The structure and typography of broadsheet ordinances and the communication of governance in the early seventeenth-century Dutch Republic', in Andrew Pettegree (ed.), *Broadsheets. Single-sheet publishing in the first age of print* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 240–267; Pettegree and Der Weduwen, *The bookshop of the world*.

4 Michiel van Groesen and Helmer Helmers, 'Managing the news in early modern Europe, 1550–1800', *Media History*, 22.3–4 (2016), pp. 261–266.

5 Michiel van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic. Print culture and the making of Dutch Brazil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

6 Van Kley, 'News from China', p. 562.

News from China retained this dynamic quality in the following decades. Jesuit missionaries and merchants from various trading companies provided generally accurate accounts, and the emerging news culture encouraged discussion on a more extensive and influential level. Europe thus became increasingly familiar with China and her recent history. In the second half of the seventeenth century, an enormous amount of information about the Middle Kingdom reached the (Dutch) printing presses, which, as we have seen in previous chapters, became popular and widely read. Furthermore, when the Chinese Rites Controversy became a publicly discussed issue during the 1680s and 1690s, this information acquired even greater immediacy and dynamism. China truly became part of the European conscience, a development that was aided by printed works produced in the Dutch Republic.

This chapter aims to explain how a primarily Catholic debate, which mainly concerned France and Rome, was presented to a European public in periodicals produced by Dutch printers and publishers. It further explores how production and textual transmission influenced the possible representations of China, the Chinese Rites Controversy, and the Society of Jesus. Reports in Dutch-made newspapers may be considered either the critical commentary of one text on another text, or more passing or casual allusion, depending on the strategy of the publisher. These relationships between different texts on the Middle Kingdom are used to trace how newspapers often reported the same event, but in decisively different manners. Significantly, such a focus demonstrates how early modern images of China in print went beyond merely informing readers about events happening in a country far away. News about China was influenced by a variety of factors including its source, the strategy of the publisher and editor, and the presumed wishes of the potential readership.

This chapter focuses on news in the Dutch Republic and provides a general reflection on the unique character of Dutch newspapers and news digests. Dutch printers and publishers provided the whole of Europe with printed works that reported on recent events in Dutch and various other languages. Especially the papers in French, the so-called *Gazettes de Hollande*, were highly influential. These newspapers existed alongside their Dutch counterparts, but had a different readership; therefore, their approach towards China, the Chinese Rites Controversy, and the Society of Jesus was a divergent one. For further insights into the nature of Dutch-made print, books and pamphlets written by French Jesuit missionaries published in the Dutch Republic are discussed. During the final quarter of the seventeenth century, a Jesuit mission sent by Louis XIV played an increasingly important role in the formation of European images of China. This mission is vital to understanding not only how

the printed medium became 'French', but also how the knowledge distributed began to focus on French sources, subjects, and interests.<sup>7</sup>

A considerable amount of Dutch-made news on China was printed in French. Nonetheless, the Dutch Republic certainly saw the publication of many news items about the Middle Kingdom in Dutch. This chapter examines the nature of these notices: their content, intended public, and their representation of China. As this section reveals, Dutch-language news was mostly concerned with events that could have an economic, political, or military impact on the activities of the Dutch in Asia. Consequently, these papers only sporadically reported on the Chinese Rites Controversy or the Jesuits. China is still mentioned often, however, but in the form of advertisements as Chinese items were offered for sale by numerous merchants.

This chapter analyses French-language news published in the Dutch Republic. The censorship of Louis Le Comte's account of China by the Sorbonne (1700) shows how newspapers printed in the Dutch Republic often gave different accounts of the same event. Papers in French focused more on the presumed Catholic interests of their readers and consequently were often rather outspoken in their anti-Jesuit condemnation of Le Comte and the Chinese rites. This chapter further examines the various pamphlets that were published during the height of the Chinese Rites Controversy around 1700. These debates hardly concerned the Dutch, yet were furtively printed in Holland. Surprisingly, most of these pamphlets bear a fictitious imprint from Cologne and, as such, may offer clues to the changing role of the Dutch Republic in the provision of news on China at the turn of the eighteenth century. The last section concerns the discussion of China and the Rites Controversy in news digests. These so-called *Mercurien* summarised and ordered the news of recent months. Compared to newspapers, topics were presented in a more integrated manner. Hence, these digests provided a more comprehensive (and therefore different) discussion of China.

By considering these media, it becomes evident that even the publications that, at first glance, seemed to owe little to the Dutch, were largely indebted to the unique print culture of the United Provinces. Compared to other countries in Europe, the Dutch had fewer hesitations about openly discussing political or religious issues, and almost any major event was accompanied by a large number of pamphlets.<sup>8</sup> The Chinese Rites Controversy was primarily a French

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7 Brockey, *Journey to the East*, pp. 126–163; Rui Magone, 'Portugal and the Jesuit mission to China. Trends in historiography', *History of Mathematical Sciences* (2012), pp. 3–20.

8 Craig Harline, *Pamphlets, printing, and political culture in the early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1987), p. 3.

and Catholic debate, yet publishers in the Dutch Republic had few qualms and much to gain by joining the fray.

## 1 Publishing News in the Dutch Republic

Besides being the European nucleus for the production of books and journals, Amsterdam and the Dutch Republic were an important centre for the production and distribution of news. The origin of the periodic news sheet, however, can be traced to the Venetian Republic of the sixteenth century. There, an early form of handwritten newspaper called *avissi* or *gazettes* circulated as a single, folded sheet that appeared on a regular (often weekly) schedule. Their main function was to circulate news, especially political, military, or economic tidings, quickly and efficiently.<sup>9</sup> Soon, the periodic news sheet found its way from Italy to Germany and Holland. Newspapers came to the Dutch Republic in 1618, appearing first in Amsterdam.<sup>10</sup> By 1645, this city alone boasted seven different titles by six publishers, who issued ten weekly editions on four days of the week.<sup>11</sup> Outside Amsterdam, newspapers appeared in Arnhem (1619), Delft (1620), The Hague (1652), Haarlem (1656), Weesp (1656), Utrecht (1658), Rotterdam (1666), and Leiden (1686).<sup>12</sup>

The newspaper output of the Dutch Republic is all the more striking when compared to their publication elsewhere in Europe. In France and the Holy Roman Empire, a smaller number of periodicals served a greater number of readers.<sup>13</sup> Printed news came to Italy in the 1630s, while the first newspaper of Spain was published in 1661.<sup>14</sup> Britain's first daily newspapers were launched in

9 Filippo DeVivo, 'Paolo Sarpi and the uses of information in seventeenth-century Venice', *Media History*, 11.1 (2005), pp. 37–51; Mario Infelise, 'Roman *avvisi*. Information and politics in the seventeenth century', in Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Visceglia (eds.), *Court and politics in Papal Rome, 1492–1700* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002), pp. 212–228; Renate Pieper, 'News from the new world. Spain's monopoly in the European network of handwritten newsletters during the sixteenth century', in Raymond and Moxham (eds.), *News*, pp. 495–511.

10 Folke Dahl, *Dutch corantos, 1618–1650. A bibliography* (The Hague: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1946).

11 Folke Dahl, 'Amsterdam. Earliest newspaper center of Western Europe', *Het Boek*, 25:3 (1939), pp. 161–198.

12 Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish newspapers of the Dutch Republic*.

13 Frank Bösch, *Mass media and historical change. Germany in international perspective, 1400 to the present* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), pp. 39–55; Kenny, *The uses of curiosity in early modern France and Germany*, pp. 256–277.

14 Mario Infelise, 'The war, the news and the curious. Military gazettes in Italy', in Brendan Dooley and Sabrina Alcorn Baron (eds.), *The politics of information in early modern Europe*

1702, and the total production of the Spanish Netherlands never reached more than four titles at any given time.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in the words of media historian Otto Lankhorst: ‘The wealth of publications coming off the Dutch presses in the seventeenth century, which is sometimes referred to as “the Dutch miracle”, certainly also included the newspaper.’<sup>16</sup>

The emergence and spread of the printing press facilitated the emergence of regular news publications. In his article on the origins of the newspaper in Europe, Johannes Weber has convincingly argued: ‘At the same time, then, as the printing press in the physical, technological sense was invented, “the press” in the extended sense of the word also entered the historical stage.’<sup>17</sup> These early newspapers ushered in a new phenomenon: a system of communication that made (relatively) up-to-date information available to a socially and economically diverse public. These newspapers tied the Republic of Letters together and promoted a hitherto-unknown diffusion of knowledge. In particular, the form and regular appearance of early modern gazettes influenced the newspaper as we know it today: they were published on a folded sheet in folio size and (unlike broadsheet) generally lacked pictures and headlines. To help the reader make sense of the news, publishers quickly began to number and date each issue, as well as provide the date and place of origin of each notice they printed. Unlike books and even learned journals, newspapers were subjected to strict time constraints. Papers needed to be ready to be mailed at fixed times and printers and compositors ‘frequently work as if on a forced march’. While the work was more demanding than the publication of books and journals, publishers were ensured a more regular income as newspapers were often sold by subscription paid in advance.

Professional journalism only emerged during the eighteenth century; yet, even in the seventeenth century, some journalists managed to earn an income from editorial work. However, they were often dismissed as mercenaries who sold their writing skills for profit. Voltaire’s article in the *Encyclopédie*

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(London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 216–236; Henry Ettinghausen, ‘Politics and the press in Spain’, in Dooley and Baron, *The politics of information*, pp. 199–215.

15 Joad Raymond, ‘Introduction. Newspapers, forgeries, and histories’, in Joad Raymond (ed.) *News, newspapers, and society in early modern Britain* (London and Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), pp. 1–11; Otto Lankhorst, ‘Newspapers in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century’, in Dooley and Baron, *The politics of information*, pp. 151–159; Paul Arblaster, ‘Policy and publishing in the Habsburg Netherlands, 1585–1690’, in Dooley and Baron, *The politics of information*, pp. 179–198.

16 Lankhorst, ‘Newspapers in the Netherlands’, p. 152.

17 Johannes Weber, ‘The origins of the newspaper in Europe’, *German History*, 24.3 (2006), pp. 387–412, p. 337.

complained that few journalists measured up to the standard of being 'promptly informed, truthful, impartial, simple, and correct in his style'.<sup>18</sup> However, journalistic work was a source of income for many early modern writers and, by the end of the seventeenth century, it had become a way to establish important positions in the Republic of Letters.<sup>19</sup>

The readership of early modern Dutch-made newspapers was substantial.<sup>20</sup> The average cost of one stuiver (20 stuivers equalled one guilder) per issue was low enough to bring them within reach of the lower middle classes, while the high literacy rate, roughly 60 per cent for men and 40 per cent for women, guaranteed the broad appeal of printed news. They were read by both professionals of the news market (merchants and statesmen) and by a wide range of literate citizens from 'middling background'.<sup>21</sup> Newspapers were popular reading matter in reading rooms, coffee-houses, and cafés, where readers could perhaps enjoy a cup of Chinese tea with their gazette. In the newspapers, these readers found a range of reports from across Europe and the world beyond, summarising and supplementing news that was often heard elsewhere. While the actual print runs are difficult to gauge, it has been estimated that a single newspaper may have been read by as many as ten different readers, making the potential distribution of the medium indeed very large.<sup>22</sup>

Over the course of the century, publishers in the Dutch Republic accommodated weekly papers in French, English, Spanish, Italian, and Yiddish.<sup>23</sup> Newspapers in French proved especially important. Since the Northern Netherlands had become the dominant refuge for French Huguenot exiles, the journalistic climate had changed to accommodate them and thus

18 'Gazetier', in Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (eds.), *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project, <http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu>.

19 Jeremy D. Popkin, *News and politics in the age of revolution. Jean Luzac's Gazette de Leyde, 1772-1798* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

20 Michiel van Groesen, 'Reading newspapers in the Dutch Golden Age', *Media history*, 22.3-4 (2016), pp. 334-352.

21 Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish newspapers*, p. 5.

22 Martin Welke, 'Gemeinsame Lektüre und frühe Formen von Gruppenbildungen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Zeitunglesen in Deutschland', in O. Dahn, (ed.), *Lesegesellschaften und bürgerliche Emanzipation. Ein europäischer Vergleich* (Munich: Beck, 1981), pp. 29-53; Michael Harris, *London newspapers in the age of Walpole. A study in the origins of the modern English press* (London: Associated University Presses, 1987), p. 190.

23 Hilde Pach-Oosterbroek, 'Arranging reality. The editing mechanisms of the world's first Yiddish newspaper, the Kurant (Amsterdam, 1686-1687)', PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2014.

included a sizeable French-language press.<sup>24</sup> While Dutch-language newspapers were confined to readers who had mastered that language, the audience of French-language newspapers was more widespread, finding readers in France, the Netherlands, and throughout the whole Republic of Letters.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, Dutch-language newspapers were sold primarily in the Low Countries, while French-language newspapers also targeted foreign markets. Indeed, the very first newspapers of the Dutch Republic already appealed to this development; the *Tijdinghen uyt verscheyde quartieren* (1619–1671) and the *Courante uyt Italien & Duytschlandt* (1618–1669) were translated into French as *Nouvelles des divers quartiers* (1639–1643) and *Courant d'Italie et d'Almaigne* (1620–c. 1655).<sup>26</sup> The *Gazette d'Amsterdam* was the first Dutch-made journal published solely in French, issued from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards.<sup>27</sup> More followed, of which the *Gazette de Leyde* (also known as *Nouvelles Extraordinaires des divers endroits* 1680) was the most celebrated.<sup>28</sup>

By the end of the century, Dutch publishers in five towns printed French papers: Amsterdam, The Hague, Leiden, Utrecht, and Rotterdam.<sup>29</sup> French Huguenot refugees were usually responsible for the content, as their situation, aptitude, and needs, according to Graham Gibbs, 'ideally fitted them for the role of journalists'.<sup>30</sup> The Dutch-made *gazettes de Hollande* found an audience all over Europe. Demand abroad was considerable, regardless of their inflated prices and the persistent efforts by the French government to curtail the spread of news from the Dutch Republic.<sup>31</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century, the leading position of the *gazettes* was such that a newspaper entitled *Observateur Hollandois* was founded in Potsdam in 1744: a paper that

24 Hatin, *Les gazettes de Hollande*, p. 10–25.

25 Bots, *De Republiek der Letteren*, p. 165–197.

26 Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish newspapers*, pp. 182; Arblaster, 'Policy and publishing', pp. 131–132.

27 It is not entirely clear in what year the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* was first published: sources give the dates 1663, 1668, and 1691. See Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A social history of the media. From Gutenberg to the internet* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), p. 59; Pierre Rétaf, *La Gazette d'Amsterdam, miroir de l'Europe au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Voltaire Foundation, 2001); Jeremy D. Popkin, 'The eighteenth-century French periodical press', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 37.3 (2004), pp. 483–486.

28 Hannah Barker and Simon Burrows, *Press, politics and the public sphere in Europe and North America, 1760–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 170.

29 Hatin, *Les gazettes de Hollande*, p. 13.

30 Gibbs, *The role of the Dutch Republic*, p. 131.

31 David Pottinger, *The French book trade in the ancient regime, 1500–1791* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 60–64; Pettegree, *The book in the Renaissance*, p. 118.

had absolutely nothing to do with Holland, but ‘attempted to invest Prussian journalism with something of the reflected glory of Dutch journalism.’<sup>32</sup> French-language newspapers catered to the international Republic of Letters and, more generally, to the growing number of European readers literate in French. Latin remained the language of scholarship and education, but the opportunities to learn, read, speak, and write French increased over the course of the century. This development was stimulated by the presence in the Dutch Republic of Walloon communities that acted as centres of French culture.<sup>33</sup>

Readers could also get their news from the so-called *Mercuren* (named after the Classical winged messenger Mercury). Examples are the *Hollandse mercurius* (1650–1690), the *Europische mercurius* (1690–1756), and the *Mercure historique et politique* (1686–1782). Their editors used national and international newspapers, making the *Mercuren* an excellent source into the provision of news in the Dutch Republic as well as revealing those news items that were of enduring interest.<sup>34</sup> For instance, Joop Koopman has demonstrated that these periodicals were a separate medium with distinct characteristics, and held a contemporary significance that differed substantially from newspapers. Aside from commercial purposes, *Mercuren* were published for ‘the coherent and regular presentation and preservation of information about important and interesting topics ... for contemporary and later generations.’<sup>35</sup> The *Mercuren* also published news with explanation and commentary. Compared to newspapers, issues, such as China or the Chinese Rites Controversy, were presented in a more ‘interrelated way and with more persuasive authority’, and they therefore provided a distinct and comprehensive image of the Middle Kingdom and its religion and philosophy.

## 2 News from China

By the end of the seventeenth century, the newspaper had become a cultural phenomenon, as an ever-growing urban middle-class public integrated the reading of news periodicals into their social, cultural, economic, and political

32 Gibbs, *The role of the Dutch Republic*, p. 335.

33 Willem Frijhoff, ‘Vanishing fatherlands and moving identities. Walloons and Huguenots in the Dutch Republic’, in Yosef Kaplan (ed.), *Early modern ethnic and religious communities in exile* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), pp. 117–143.

34 Joop Koopmans, ‘De presentatie van het nieuws in the *Europische mercurius* 1690–1756’, *Mededelingen van de Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman*, 23 (2000), pp. 117–129, p. 117.

35 Koopmans, ‘De presentatie van het nieuws’, p. 266.

lives.<sup>36</sup> These readers were not only provided with Dutch and European news, but also with events that happened beyond Europe.<sup>37</sup> Van Groesen has demonstrated that news from the Atlantic world occupied a prominent place in the early modern newspaper. However, distance and opportunity made news from China less prevalent. Numerous reports on the Middle Kingdom reached the pages of the Dutch periodic press, yet there was never any consistent supply of news. This relative paucity does not mean that it has lesser value, however. The provision of news on China, however small, in Dutch newspapers confirms the degree to which the Middle Kingdom had been integrated into the main current of European culture.

In the context of this discussion, it is useful to consider what constitutes 'news'. Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen have proposed that four requirements must be met to call any publication a newspaper.<sup>38</sup> First, the material has to be periodic (frequent and regular); second, it has to be contemporary (new); third, the material has to be publicly available; and fourth, it has to have miscellaneous contents (reports need to come from different locations). In line with these conditions, news from China printed on Dutch presses was indeed publicly available and miscellaneous, but it was hardly every ever periodic or contemporary. As to periodicity: a round-trip from Europe to China took months, if not years, so when news from the Middle Kingdom reached the shipping ports of France, England, or the Dutch Republic it was always out of date on arrival. This is not to say that the information was not *new* for the recipient, it simply meant that any action required or undertaken on the basis of this information was almost certainly in vain, as the situation in Asia could have completely changed.

Consider, for instance, news about the Manchu Conquest of 1644. Edwin van Kley has shown that missives about this conquest took quite some time to reach the printing presses of Europe. Only in July 1650, six years after the event, the *Hollandsche mercurius* published a brief note 'confirming the calamities of the ingenious China'.<sup>39</sup> News from the Middle Kingdom also lacked any substantial regularity. A considerable number of European ships sailed to Asia, yet

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36 Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish newspapers*, pp. 4–10.

37 *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 6 May 1692.

38 Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish newspapers*, pp. 5–14; Pettegree, *The book in the Renaissance*, pp. 130–150; E.W. Allen, 'International origins of the newspapers. The establishment of periodicity in print', *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 7.4 (1930), pp. 307–319.

39 *Hollandsche mercurius* (Haarlem 1650), p. 25; Van Kley, 'News from China', p. 563. Van Kley does note that the wording of the message may imply that there had been earlier reports.

the frequency of these travels was not reliable until the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> Besides this, news was generally not acquired in China itself. Merchants often learned about Chinese events through intermediaries in Batavia. Even though this not necessarily diminished the topicality of the news, it certainly influenced the nature of the information.

Although news from China may have lacked some of the traditional characteristics of news, its increasing availability changed the manner in which European readers could relate to the country. Through coverage in the periodic press, the Middle Kingdom gained a historical dimension by showing an image of a more dynamic China. From the 1650s onwards, China was 'rather dramatically thrust into European consciousness, and Westerners began their first debate over the significance of Chinese event[s]'.<sup>41</sup>

This shift came as the result of the introduction of newspaper reports, which changed the way China was presented to European readers. In general, notices about Asia prior to the introduction of periodical media had been static descriptions. As Van Kley noted: 'Events that occurred in China were not reported to Europeans; Chinese government, institutions, and customs were described to Europeans'.<sup>42</sup> The distinction between reporting information and describing it is a crucial one. The representation of China in print had long been that of a remote and often idealised empire. Thanks to the influx of more detailed information, this static image was at least partially replaced with that of a more dynamic picture.

The introduction of news reports naturally increased the opportunity for debate and discussion. From the middle of the century onwards, Chinese events, such as the Manchu Conquest of 1644, provoked public speculation as to its cause and consequences. Writers began to include accounts of such events into their narratives, in which their cultural and religious background often determined how the news was presented and interpreted. For instance, the Jesuit Martino Martini presented the events of 1644 as God's punishment for the Wanli Emperor's (1572–1620) mistreatment of Christian missionaries. In contrast, Juan Palafox y Mendoza, who was embroiled in a major controversy

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40 *The Dutch East India Company's shipping between the Netherlands and Asia 1595–1795*, Huygens-ING, via <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/das>, last accessed 24 August 2021; Hosea Ballou Morse, *The chronicles of the East India Company, trading to China* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926); Blussé, 'No boats to China', pp. 51–76.

41 Van Kley, 'News from China', p. 562.

42 Van Kley, 'News from China', p. 562.

with the Jesuits over ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Mexico, never even mentioned the Jesuit mission in China in relation to the conquest.<sup>43</sup>

Newspaper reports also confirm the degree to which China had been integrated into early modern Dutch culture. The periodic press, learned journals and newspapers alike, demonstrates that the Middle Kingdom became increasingly assimilated into the main currents of society during the final decades of the seventeenth century. Readers who, beforehand, may have only had a pedestrian knowledge of China, could now seek out newsworthy information in the periodic press. They did so for a variety of reasons and it becomes clear that representations of China during the last decades of the seventeenth century were as much the result of developments back home as they were the result of events in the Middle Kingdom itself.<sup>44</sup>

In 1942, Helen MacGill Hughes, in her study about the United States, noted that news is a relative matter and of all possible 'facts', only some can be written as news.<sup>45</sup> She summed up the consequences of this observation by concluding that 'news is whatever is news for "our" readers, and thus the news and the public that wants it are defined in terms of each other'. Interestingly, MacGill Hughes's astute comment could very well apply to the Dutch Republic in the 1640s.<sup>46</sup> In the seventeenth century, as today, news was a commodity. The growing presence of China in newspapers of the early modern Dutch Republic shows how the country indeed became more ingrained in the European imagination by way of the economic rules of cultural consumption. News and the demands and wishes of the public depended on each other, and newspapers provided readers with a new way of accessing Asia.

### 3 Reports on China in Dutch-Made Newspapers

By the middle of the seventeenth century, there was a distinct divergence between Dutch and French reports on China in newspapers published in the

43 Martini, *De bello Tartarico*; Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, *Historia de la conquista de la China por el Tartaro* (Paris: Antonio Bertier, 1670).

44 For a discussion of public opinion, public sphere and its role in shaping early modern news see Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962). A critique of this highly influential work may be found in Jan Bloemendal, Arjan van Dixhoorn, Else Strietman (eds.), *Literacy cultures and public opinion in the Low Countries, 1450–1650* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). See also: Roelof Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie. Massamedia in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), p. 24.

45 Helen MacGill Hughes, 'The social interpretation of news', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 219 (1942), pp. 11–17.

46 MacGill Hughes, 'The social interpretation of news', p. 11.

Dutch Republic. Dutch news primarily focused on those events that might affect the economic interests of the United Provinces, such as shipping news, the fates of Jesuit missionaries (as intermediaries between the imperial court and the Dutch), and wars and conflicts that could disrupt trading lines. The numerous advertisements for Chinese produce further emphasise the primarily economic character of Dutch news on the Middle Kingdom.

Hundreds of tidings take note of ships named China, ships going to China, ships sinking on their way to China, ships arriving from China, ships carrying Chinese products: the list is endless.<sup>47</sup> These notes were generally brief and to the point: 'There are letters from the East Indies and from Ceylon ... that everything is well in the Indies, and that the trade with Persia and China is good'.<sup>48</sup> Readers were often meticulously informed of the exact nature of the loads carried by ships coming from Asia. Over the course of the century, Dutch newspapers published dozens of cargo-lists, informing readers (for instance) of how in 1672 'the first ten ships from Batavia' brought with them '9005 pounds of China root [and] 79800 pounds of Chinese silk'.<sup>49</sup>

Although the Chinese Rites Controversy was primarily a debate that took place within the Catholic regions of Europe and therefore of lesser importance to the mainly Protestant readers of Dutch-language newspapers, this did not mean that news regarding the Jesuits in general was not reported.<sup>50</sup> Their missionaries were an important point of contact for Dutch merchants in China; consequently, newspapers included reports on their affairs and (often) misfortunes: 'In China, there has been a dispute between Monsr. Berito and the Jesuits, who insisted on his good character. Father Adam [Schall von Bell] had died in prison, where he had been put by the king [*sic*] of China'.<sup>51</sup> The name of

47 These tidings were found using the online database Delpher, developed by the Royal Library in The Hague. A variety of keywords were used to search for China, or Chinese matters in newspapers printed in the Dutch Republic in the period 1 January 1640 to 31 December 1720. For an overview of available titles in Delpher see [www.Delpher.nl/en/kranten#krantenoverzicht](http://www.Delpher.nl/en/kranten#krantenoverzicht), last accessed 24 August 2021.

48 'Daar zijn brieven uit Oost-Indie en van Ceylon ... dat het in Indie nog alles wel staat, en de handel in Perzië en mede in China goed was', in *Amsterdamse courant*, 20 February 1677; Pettegree, *The invention of news*, p. 39.

49 'De ... eerste tien schepen van Batavia ... 9005 pond radix China [en] 79800 pond of Chinese Zijde', in *Amsterdamse courant*, 18 August 1672.

50 Trude Dijkstra, 'De Oprechte Haerlemsche courant en het nieuws uit China', in Thijs Weststeijn and Menno Jonker (eds.), *Barbaren en Wijzgeren. Het beeld van China in de Gouden Eeuw* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2016), pp. 61–66.

51 'In China was geschil geweest tussen de Jezuiten en Monsr. Berito, die daar zeer hard hadden gestaan op zijn karakter: de pater Adam [Schall von Bell] was overleden in de gevangenis, waar in hem de koning van China had doen zetten', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 6 October 1672. In reality, Adam Schall von Bell did not die in prison. The separate events of an earthquake in Beijing on 16 April 1665, and a palace fire on 29 April of the

the Jesuit Schall von Bell would have been familiar to the well-informed readers for, according to Johan Nieuhof, he had wilfully sabotaged the Dutch trading embassy of 1655–1657.<sup>52</sup> Tidings on China were not just concerned with the Dutch East India Company, but also foreign trade. For instance, the *Amphitrite* departed out of Port-Louis in France for Guangzhou in March 1701.<sup>53</sup> On board were the French Jesuit Jean de Fontaney and nine of his colleagues. The ship arrived at its destination on 9 September.<sup>54</sup>

Even news that was not directly related to shiploads or cargo bore a distinct economic character, since the focus remained on the commercial interests of the Dutch and all that may have influenced the activities of the trading companies in Asia. For example, newspapers reported on wars and conflict but often omitted human involvement: ‘This letter [of 1662] is said to report that from there 12 valiant warships were sent against the Chinese pirates, to counter them in the water.’<sup>55</sup> Political events were likewise of importance to trade and were similarly reported: ‘Mekin, in China, the 28 December, 1674. Here in this empire, it is full of unrest, and it seems great change is coming.’<sup>56</sup>

The economic character of Dutch-language news on China is further emphasised by dozens of advertisements announcing the sale of Chinese goods. These advertisements had become ubiquitous by the end of the century, and were intended (in the words of a contemporary):

For the sale or rent of dwellings, houses, fields, farms, gardens, cows, oxen, horses, sheep, books, &c. prices of grain, bread, butter, cheese, meat, bacon and a hundred other things which concern general society or the communality, and which [messages] are especially useful and necessary

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same year were interpreted as signs of Heaven’s displeasure with the imprisonment of the Jesuit missionary. He was subsequently released. He died the next year.

52 Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap*, pp. 162–163; Keevak, *Embassies to China*, pp. 68–70.

53 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe* (vol. 20, Berlin: Akademie Verlag), letter 318: Joachim Bouvet to Leibniz, pp. 533–534.

54 Florence Hsia, *Sojourners in a strange land. Jesuits and their scientific mission in late imperial China* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 110–111.

55 ‘Deze brief zegt men dat zoude behelsen dat 12 kloeke oorlog schepen van daar tegens den Chinese rovers waren gezonden, om hem te water tegen te gaan’, in *Ordinarisse middel-weeckse courante*, 14 February 1662. See also Robert J. Anthony, ‘Turbulent waters. Sea raiding in early modern South East China’, *The Mariner’s Mirror*, 99.1 (2013), pp. 23–38, p. 27.

56 ‘Mekin, in China, den 28 december, 1674. Alhier in dit rijk is het vol beroerte, ende laat hem aanzien tot een grote verandering’, in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 29 August 1675. See also Harry Miller, *State versus gentry in early Qing dynasty China, 1644–1699* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

for those who seek to engage in trade, and who wish to make an honest profit.<sup>57</sup>

Recently, Arthur der Weduwen has demonstrated that advertisements in Dutch newspapers changed from short announcements primarily about the sale of books to a broad range of goods and services. By the end of the century, these public notices of sale catered mostly to a local urban elite by providing 'new platforms for the exchange of commercial goods and luxuries'.<sup>58</sup>

In the Dutch Republic, advertisements were influenced and stimulated by the book trade. Until the 1640s, newspaper advertisements were generally dedicated to the sale of books and prints, through which booksellers targeted a broad public of potential buyers. During the first half of the century, devotional and spiritual works, recreational literature, professional and educational books, and maritime handbooks were most often advertised.<sup>59</sup> This last category regularly included books on China. For example, in February 1645, the Amsterdam widow of Evert Cloppenburch offered a reprint of Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinerario* for sale in *Tijdinghe uyt verscheyde quartieren*.<sup>60</sup> By publicly announcing the sale of this expensive book, the widow hoped to catch the eye of the urban middle- and higher classes: those with the commercial, social, and political powers and means to be interested in such printed works. Advertisements for books in newspapers such as the *Amsterdamse courant* were not limited to books printed in Holland. In 1699, Jan van Leeuwen of Tiel in Guelders sold (through Anthony Schouten of Utrecht) his *Reis-beschryvinge van Polen na Muscovien* which contained 'some remarks on the journey of

57 For example: 'ADVERTISSEMENTEN of BERIGTEN ... van Verkoppingen, of Verhuuringen van Plaatzten, Huizen, Akkers, Hovingen, Tuinen, Koejen, Ossen, Paarden, Schapen, Boeken; &c. Pryzen van Granen, Brood, Boter, Kaas, Vleisch, Spek, en 100 andere dingen meer die de algemeene Maatschappy of 't Zamenleving der Menschen betreffen, en welke Berigten inzonderheid nuttig en nodig zyn, voor Menschen die zig met de Kopenschap bemoejen, en daar door een eerlyke en geoorloofte winst zoeken', in J.H. Knoop, *Kort onderwys, hoedanig men de couranten best lezen en gebruiken kan*, Leeuwarden, Abraham Ferwerda, 1758, p. 16, via Arthur der Weduwen, 'From piety to profit. The development of newspaper advertising in the Dutch Golden Age', in S. Gøril Brandtzæg, Paul Goring and Christine Watson (eds.), *Travelling chronicles. News and newspapers from the early modern period to the eighteenth century* (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2018), pp. 233–253, p. 233.

58 Der Weduwen, 'From piety to profit', p. 236.

59 Der Weduwen, 'From piety to profit', pp. 238–241.

60 't Amsterdam by de weduwe van Everhard Cloppenburch zal wort uitgegeven Ian Hugen van Linschoten, op nieu overzien en verbeteret', in *Tijdinghe uyt verscheyde quartieren*, 25 February 1645. The book advertised is Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Reys-geschrift vande navigatien der Portugaloyzers in Orienten* (Amsterdam: Evert Cloppenburgh, 1644).

Spatarus from Russia, by way of Siberia, to China'.<sup>61</sup> Advertisements in newspapers enabled publishers to announce their books to the wealthy burghers of the republic, in and outside of the urban regions.

From the early 1640s onwards, printed works were no longer the only advertised commodity in newspapers. Other products and goods were also offered for sale, indicating a shift not only in content of advertising but also in purpose. By promoting their Chinese wares in newspapers, merchants hoped to increase their profits and boost their overall business profile.<sup>62</sup> Goods were often sold through a *makelaar* (broker). In September 1703, Cornelis de Roos de Jonge and Pieter Raket in the *Amsterdamse courant* offered the estate of the late Bartel Verhagen for sale, containing 'porcelain, lacquerware and many curiosities', among which '24 bottles of oriental figures of different sorts, six large pots, the same number of small ones, bottles, 1,000 "rinsing" bowls, a large batch of red, blue, and brown tableware for coffee, chocolate, and teacups, 100 teapots, a batch of large and small statues, a cabinet with nice shells and horns, Chinese bows, arrows, sabres, and rudders with silver fittings', as well as 'unicorn horns, elephant teeth, and rhinoceros horns and much more'.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, in April 1685, Herman van Pamburg of Amsterdam announced a public auction to be held on 17 April of a batch of 'Chinese tea, various cotton goods, painted Chinese coverlets, Chinese flowers of gold and silk, three remarkable and large Chinese pots'.<sup>64</sup> Throughout the century, the public of the Dutch

61 'Tot Tyel, by Jan van Leeuwen, Boekverkoper, is gedrukt, en te bekomen tot Utrecht by Antony Schouten, Reis-beschryvinge van Polen na Muscovien behelsende de Oorlogen van de Muscoviters in de Krim ... eenige aenmerkingen over de Reise van Spatarus van Ruschland doer Siberien, na China', in *Amsterdamse courant*, 6 June 1699.

62 Der Weduwen, 'From piety to profit', p. 424.

63 'Cornelis de Roos de Jonge, en Pieter Raket makelaers sullen op woensdag den 3 October 1703, ten huysse van Anthony Swanenburg, Kasteleyn in 't Oude Heere Logement, 's morgens ten 9 en 's namiddags ten 2 uuren verkoopen de nagelate porceleynen, lakwerk en veele rariteyten van Bartel Verhage, bestaende in 24 flessen Orientaelse figuren van alderhande soort, 6 groote potten, kleynder dito, flessen, 1000 speelkommen, een groote party root, blaeuw, en bruyen koffie, chokolaet, en tegoed, 100 de trekpotten, een party groote en kleyne beelden, een kabinet met mooie schelpen, horens, &c. Chinesee Bogen, pylen, sabels, en roers met zilver beslag; eenhoorens, olifants-tanden, en rinoceros horens', in *Amsterdamse courant*, 15 September 1703.

64 'Herman van Pamburg, makelaar, zal dinsdag den 17 April 't Amsterdam verkopen een partij puike Chinesee thee, diverse catoene lywaren, geschilderde Chinesee sprien, gouden en zijde Chinesee bloemen, 3 curieuze grote Chinese potten', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 14 April 1685; *Catalogus van de naargelaten porcelenen, lack-werck, en rariteyten ... naargelaten door Bartel Verhagen, die verkoft sullen worden ... den 3 oktober 1703. ten huysse van Anthony Swanenburg ... door de makelaars Cornelis de Roos de Jonge en Pieter Raket, s.l.s.n. [1703]; Notitie van de volgende porceleynen, lak-werk en rariteyten, nagelaten door Bartel Verhagen, die verkost sullen werden door de makelaars Cornelis de*

Republic indeed became very well informed about the sale of Chinese goods through newspaper advertisements, which also raised public visibility and familiarity with the Middle Kingdom.

China is also mentioned in newspaper advertisements as part of the somewhat unfortunate category of 'stolen goods'. These concerned personal announcements requesting the assistance of the general public. In the night of 15 February 1702, for instance, we learn that five dyed Chinese satins were stolen in Amsterdam, along with 'a very expensive veil with gold embroidered at both sides and heavy gold lace at the bottom; a very expensive apron, all made of gold; five dyed Chinese satins; a satin coverlet, as well as various women's clothing and many processed linens with the initials S.M.S. with a little crown above it'. The advertisement concludes with the hopeful request that if one sees the items somewhere, to 'please hold them, and bring them to Doctor Krytenberg, living at the Prinsegracht, near "The Elephant" brewery, for the reward of 25 guilders.'<sup>65</sup> Doctor Krytenberg apparently believed the return of his textiles could be achieved through these means, for he posted the advertisement the day after the theft in the *Amsterdamse courant* as well as in the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* of 16 February.<sup>66</sup>

Newspapers thus supplied readers in the Dutch Republic with ample opportunity to satisfy their interests in China in their own language. Yet, news coming from and pertaining to this country was limited and mostly concerned economic, political, or military affairs. The papers therefore primarily focused on information coming from the trading companies, since these reports had the greatest impact on the (economic) interests of Dutch readers. The bulk of references to China had less to do with the Middle Kingdom itself and more with the commercial products that were the direct result of the increased

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*Roos de Jonge en Pieter Raket ... den 3 oktober 1703. ten huysse van Anthony Swanenburg, s.l.s.n. [1703]; Appendix van eenig lackwerk ... stoffen en cabayen, behoorende tot de catalogus van de naargelaten porcelenen, lakwerk en rariteyten, naargelaten by Bartel Verhagen die verkost sullen werden den 4 oktober 1703. ten huysse van Anthony Swanenburg ... door de makelaars Cornelis de Roos de jonge, en Pieter Raket, s.l.s.n. [1703].*

65 'Daar zyn tusschen Dingsdag en Woensdag den 15 February 1702 tot Amsterdam gestolen de navolgende goederen, een seer kostelyke Sluyer met gout aen weerzyde geborduurt, met een sware goude kant onder aen; een seer kostelyk voorschoot, alles van gout; 5 geverfde Chineese Satynen; een satyne gestikte Sprey; als mede verscheyde vrouwe klederen, en een partye gemaekte lynwaten, gemerkt s.m.s. en een kroontje daer boven. Die het bovengemelde of een van het eerte genoemde goed mogte voorkomen, geliefte het aen te houden, en te regt te brengen aen den Doctor Krytenberg, woont op de Prince-graft, by de Brouwery van de Oliphant, sal 25 gulden voor een vereering hebben', in *Amsterdamse courant*, 16 February 1702.

66 *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 16 February 1702.

contacts between Europe and Asia, such as books, commodities like tea and porcelain, and objects of art such as lacquerware. As such, newspapers reflected the economic impact of the increased intercultural contact between Europe and China for Dutch readers.

#### 4 The Middle Kingdom in French-Language Newspapers

Dutch newspapers in French reported differently on China, which was mainly due to an expansion in readership. Their public consisted not only of French exiles in the Dutch Republic and readers in the Southern Netherlands and France, they also encompassed the whole European Republic of Letters as their potential audience.<sup>67</sup> This broad circulation made news with a local (Dutch) economic focus superfluous, because Dutch readers of French papers were already supplied with economic news related to China in their own language. The majority of the reports on China in French-language newspapers concerned the Jesuits and their mission, especially since Louis XIV sent his own French envoy in the late 1680s.

France came to play a more prominent role in the Chinese missionary effort during the last quarter of the seventeenth century.<sup>68</sup> In the 1670s, the Flemish Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest was instated as the new scientific teacher of the young Kangxi Emperor. Verbiest worried about the lack of Jesuit scientists, which he believed to be fundamental in the missionary efforts in China. He made an urgent appeal to the Jesuits in Europe, who then persuaded Louis XIV to send his own envoy.<sup>69</sup> Known as the *mathématiciens du roi* (the 'king's mathematicians'), this envoy aimed at spreading French and Catholic influence at the Chinese court under the pretext of transmitting scientific knowledge. Sending a royally sponsored mission was also in line with Louis's policy of religious autonomy, which asserted the independence of the French Church from Rome. As related by Virgile Pinot, the main goal of the envoy combined interests of diplomacy, trade, and religion and its policies, with those of the sciences: 'Sending to China Jesuit mathematicians was but an expedient of the

67 Bots, *De Republiek der Letteren*, pp. 165–170.

68 Louis Pfister states that Joachim Bouvet only presented '49 magnificently printed volumes' to Louis XIV. However, Bouvet himself declared in a letter to Gottfried Leibniz, on 18 October 1697, that he brought 300 volumes to the library of the French King. See L. Pfister, *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine (1552–1773)* (Shanghai: Imprimerie de la mission Catholique 1932), p. 434; Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 301.

69 Han Qi, 'Sino-French scientific relations', pp. 138–139.

king's government in order to have in China missionaries who would not only be representatives of the Pope'.<sup>70</sup>

The king's mathematicians were tasked with making astronomical observations, investigating native flora and fauna, and mastering various technical arts.<sup>71</sup> In late 1684 and early 1685, Joachim Bouvet, Jean de Fontaney, Jean-François Gerbillon, Guy Tachard, Claude de Visdelou, and Louis Le Comte were summoned to the *Académie Royale des Sciences*, where they met with Gian Domenico Cassini. Cassini was the director of the *Observatoire de Paris*, and he suggested that the Jesuits make astronomical observations in China.<sup>72</sup> Cassini was primarily interested in Chinese chronology, biblical antiquity, and astronomical calculations (discussed in the previous chapter). As such, many of the Jesuits sent to China were respected astronomers, who brought with them a variety of their instruments. Their regular correspondence with the *Académie Royale des Sciences* in Paris made for a swift and broad distribution of the information gathered.<sup>73</sup>

70 Pinot, *Documents inédits*, p. 40; Lanrdu-Deron, 'Les mathématiciens envoyés en China par Louis XIV en 1685', pp. 425–429; Jami, *The emperor's new mathematics*, pp. 102–119.

71 Han Qi, 'Sino-French scientific relations through the French Jesuits and the Académie Royale de Sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', in Stephen Uhalley and Xiaoxin Wu (eds.), *China and Christianity. Burdened past, hopeful future* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), pp. 137–147.

72 Cassini was also one of the founders of the *Académie Royale des Sciences*, and he had been interested in Chinese astronomy since at least 1689, when he received some manuscripts on this subject from the Duke du Maine (Louis-Auguste de Bourbon), Catherine Jami, 'The Jesuits' negotiation of science between France and China (1685–1722). Knowledge and modes of imperial expansion', in Laszlo Kontler etc., *Negotiating knowledge in early modern empires. A decentered view* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 53–77.

73 The expansion of European religion and science in China had been greatly hindered during the 1660s. During the early Qing period, an anti-Christian movement was launched by Yang Guangxian 楊光先, who was the head of the Bureau of Astronomy from 1665 to 1669. It led, among other things, to the arrest of Jesuit missionary and imperial advisor Adam Schall von Bell, and the execution of a large number of Chinese converted astronomers. The events greatly influenced the young Kangxi Emperor, who soon began to study astronomy for himself in order to resolve a dispute concerning the calendar. Yang Guanxian was tasked to produce a valid calendar during a competition with the Jesuits astronomers, yet he could not do so. Yang was removed from his post as head of the Bureau of Astronomy, and replaced by the Flemish Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest. The case against the Jesuits was subsequently reinvestigated, and all previous findings were reversed. See: Agustín Udías Vallina, *Jesuit contribution to science. A history* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2015), pp. 90–95; Stefano Salvia, 'The battle of the astronomers. Johann Adam Schall von Bell and Ferdinand Verbiest at the court of the celestial emperors', in Antoni M. Roca Rosell (ed.), *The circulation of science and technology. Proceedings of the 4th international conference of the European Society for the History of Science* (Barcelona:

The French Jesuits arrived in Beijing in February 1688, and they were favourably received by the Qing Emperor Kangxi. The emperor appreciated them for their scientific knowledge, and he retained Gerbillion and Bouvet at court.<sup>74</sup> The king's mathematicians regularly returned to Europe, where their informative manuscripts on their findings were soon turned into print.<sup>75</sup> Regular contact between Paris and the Middle Kingdom facilitated the exchange of books, journals, instruments, and maps. This helped bring French and European science and culture to the Middle Kingdom and, in turn, further informed Europe about China.<sup>76</sup>

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the French reports on the Middle Kingdom came to overshadow information from other sources.<sup>77</sup> During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, not only the printed medium containing information on China became increasingly French; via the royal mathematicians, the knowledge distributed in print began to focus on French sources and content as well. This contributed to a (partial) shift in production from the Dutch Republic to France. The Dutch Republic had been a favourite location for authors to publish their books on China throughout the seventeenth century. Even those affiliated with Rome or Paris often chose for the printing presses of Holland due to the high quality of their products, the excellent possibilities of distribution, and the relative lack of interference from government or church.<sup>78</sup>

However, in the last decade of the seventeenth century, those unique circumstances lost some of their decisive advantage. For one, governmental censure was less of an issue for the French Jesuits, as they worked and wrote

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Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2010), pp. 959–963; Mungello, *The great encounter between China and the West*, pp. 47–65.

74 Jami, *The emperor's news mathematics*, pp. 139–151.

75 Jean de Fontaney, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé à la Chine en 1697, 1698 & 1699, à l'occasion d'un établissement que M. l'Abbé de Lyonne a fait à Nien-Tcheou, Ville de la Province de Tche-Kiang* (Liège: Daniel Moumal, 1700); Joachim Bouvet, *L'estat present de la China, en figures* (Paris: Pierre Giffart, 1697); Joachim Bouvet, *Icones regia monarchae Sinarum nunc regnantis* (Hannover, s.n., 1699); Jean-François Gerbillon and Philippe Couplet, *Elementa linguae Tartaricae* (Paris: Thomas Moette, [1682]); Louis Le Comte, *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* (Paris: Jean Anisson, 1696); Louis Le Comte, *Des cérémonies de la Chine* (Liège: Daniel Moumal, 1700); Guy Tachard, *Voyage de Siam des pères Jesuites envoyez par le Roy aux Indes & à la Chine* (Paris: Arnould Seneuze and Daniel Horthemels, 1686).

76 Brockey, *Journey to the East*, pp. 126–163; Magone, 'Portugal and the Jesuit mission to China', pp. 3–30.

77 Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in early modern France. Eurasian trade exoticism and the ancient regime* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2008), pp. 101–136.

78 Dijkstra, 'De cost en de baet', pp. 222–225.

primarily in the service of their royal missionary policy. Besides, while the printers of Holland were especially renowned for their illustrated books in folio, the writings of the mathematicians were mostly published in relatively small sizes without engravings. Furthermore, for the proofreading and correcting of astronomical or mathematical works, someone versed in the specific field was preferred. While linguistic proofs could mostly be corrected by anyone knowledgeable in the text's language, the correctness of mathematical formulas proved difficult to gauge for someone without a firm grounding in the subject. This explains why the King's mathematicians chose printers and publishers in France, where they could control the production process; at least, for a while with little hinderance from the French government.

The production of books on China partially shifted from the Dutch Republic to France; yet, the Dutch still greatly influenced the image of the Middle Kingdom through the publication of newspapers, learned journals, and books. Dutch-made periodicals in French provided readers throughout the international Republic of Letters with information about the Middle Kingdom, the Jesuit mission and, eventually, the Chinese Rites Controversy. However, a distinct variance between reports related to China in French and Dutch papers soon became visible. Generally speaking, the Dutch papers focused inwards, led by the commercial and economic interests of their readers. They reported events that could impact the Dutch presence in Asia, paying special attention to incidents that might disrupt lines of trade and communication. A paper might, for instance, report on wars with these elements in mind: '[Letter] from Peking, capital of China, the 8th of October, 1696. During this year, the Emperor was busy undertaking war against the king of Elouth, a land located in Tartary, at three hundred leagues from here to the north-western side'.<sup>79</sup> In contrast, French-language papers were more outwardly focused, giving voice to those developments in, and relating to, China that could influence religious and cultural interactions in China. Additionally, French-language papers became preoccupied with the Chinese rites when these became part of a Jesuit-Jansenist controversy, in which Louis XIV tried to influence the mission in China through the *Société des Missions étrangères de Paris* and the Faculty of Theology of the Sorbonne.

The difference between French and Dutch-language newspapers is clearly evident when they report on the same event, illustrating how textual transmission (from source to printed paper) could influence content and interpretation.

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79 'De Pekin Capitale de la Chine le 8. Octobre 1696. L'empereur a été coupé [sic, probably occupé] pendant cette année à faire la guerre au Roi d'Elouth, pays situé dans la Tartarie, à trois cent lieues d'ici du côté du Nord ouest', in *Gazette de Rotterdam*, 22 January 1699.

On 3 March 1709, the *Gazette d'Amsterdam* informed its readers that 'this Thursday, the Pope offered his assistance to a congregation devoted to the mission in China, from which Father Provana, Jesuit, has arrived after a long and arduous journey, accompanied by a mandarin lodging with the Fathers of the Society [of Jesus]'.<sup>80</sup> On the same day, the *Nouvelles extraordinaires des divers endroits* carried the same notice but without mentioning the congregation on the China mission.<sup>81</sup> The next day, the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* also reported on the arrival of Father Provana and the mandarin, using essentially the same words.<sup>82</sup> Three newspapers, two in French, and one in Dutch, noted the return of Father Provana: all reports were brief and in accordance with each other.

Yet a week later, only the Dutch *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* carried another notice about Provana, this time specifying that 'the arrival of the Jesuit Provana with the Mandarin from the Empire of China has caused more than a little fear about these affairs at the court ... since it would do great damage to ... the *commerce that would be lost* in these regions'.<sup>83</sup> One week after the arrival of Antonio Provana, more information about his Asian stay was made public, and this knowledge posed a threat to commercial and religious interests of the Dutch. French-language papers would have had access to this information, if not by way of a primary source, then through other papers, yet they did not think it worthy enough for publication as their potential readers held fewer commercial stakes in the Middle Kingdom.

Publishing strategies were thus aimed at either French or Dutch potential readers and their presumed interests and demands. However, when the Chinese Rites Controversy became more publicly visible during the last decades of the seventeenth century, it overshadowed almost all other news related to China. As such, papers in both French and Dutch became increasingly pre-occupied with this polemic debate.

80 'Le Pape assista Jeudi à une Congrégation sur les Missions de la Chine; d'ou le Père Provana Jésuite est arrivé après une fort longue navigation, avec un Mandarin, qui est logé chez les Pères de la Société, in [*Gazette d'Amsterdam*], 22 March 1709.

81 'Le Jésuite Provana est revenu ici de la Chine, avec un Gentilhomme de ce Pais là, in *Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits*, 22 March 1709.

82 This mandarin must have been Louis Fan Shouyi (1682–1753), a native of Shanxi province. Fan stayed in Europe for 12 years, primarily in Italy, before returning to China. 'Alhier is na en lange Reys uyt China aangekomen Pater Provuna, Jesuyt, met een mandarijn', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 23 March 1709.

83 'De komste van den Jesuyt Provana met den Mandarijn uyt het Keyserrijk van China heeft geen kleyn vrees over de bewuste Saken aen dit Hof veroorsaect, ... aademael het een seer groot nadeel soude wesen voor ... de *commercie* die men in die Gewesten stont te verliezen', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 30 March 1709. My emphasis.

The debate concerning the Chinese rites had been an internal concern of religious authorities in Paris and Rome since the beginning of the seventeenth century. While the Jesuits claimed that the Chinese rites were secular rituals compatible with Christianity, Dominicans and Franciscans disagreed and reported the issue to Rome. In 1645, Rome's Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* ('the congregation of the Roman Curia for missionary work and related activities'), sided with the latter and condemned the Chinese rites. However, in 1656, the *Propaganda Fide* briefly reversed this decision in favour of the Jesuits. In 1704, Rome issued a decree (later reinforced by a bull in 1715) in which Pope Clement XI banned the rites. Benedict XIV reaffirmed the prohibition and forbade further debate in 1742. In 1721, the Kangxi Emperor objected to the decrees of 1704 and 1715 and he banned Christian missions in China. The Yongzheng Emperor (1722–1735) also reinforced various anti-Christian policies during his reign. The Chinese Rites Controversy would not be formally resolved until 1939, when the Holy See allowed Christians to participate in ceremonies involving Confucius and to observe ancestral rites. In the meantime, leading universities in Europe had been involved in the conflict, together with eight popes and the Kangxi Emperor.

The sometimes-furious discussion often went beyond issues concerning the civil or religious character of Confucian ceremonies. In Rome, the *Propaganda Fide* had long wished to control the mission in Asia through its apostolic vicars. Since the Society of Jesus resisted such control, the *Propaganda Fide* had grown hostile towards them. This animosity was exacerbated by the fact that the *Propaganda Fide* was generally under the influence of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders. In France, the debate on the Chinese rites became part of a Jesuit-Jansenist controversy, combined with Louis XIV's efforts to influence the mission in China through the Société des Missions étrangères de Paris and the Faculty of Theology of the Sorbonne.<sup>84</sup>

## 5 The Chinese Rites Controversy in the Public Eye

Both Paris and Rome had motives that transcended the issues of the Chinese rites proper, which aggravated the discussion of the Jesuit policy of accommodation. However, this conversation was primarily carried out behind closed doors until 1696, when the publication of *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* by the *mathématicien du roy* Louis Le Comte catapulted the debate

84 Doyle, *Jansenism*; Tara Alberts, *Conflict and conversion. Catholicism in Southeast Asia, 1500–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 34–46.

into the public consciousness. A veritable war of pamphlets broke loose, in which Dutch-made newspapers facilitated a swift distribution of the latest information and all its relevant movers and shakers.<sup>85</sup>

The Chinese Rites Controversy was a long-contested issue, which became an increasingly public debate from the late 1600s onwards. The periodic press subsequently picked up the dispute, which also increased the number of reports on China in both Dutch and French newspapers. Before the issue of the Chinese rites entered the European stage, Dutch-made newspapers in French had been quite confident in their evaluation of the Jesuit mission. This may be related to the fact that news from China in French-language papers was largely supplied by the Society of Jesus, especially through letters sent by their missionaries to Rome or Paris. The *Gazette de Rotterdam* of 12 September 1695 printed one such missive, reporting that the Chinese emperor was very fond of the Christian religion and the Society of Jesus: 'From Rome a letter was sent to Father de la Chaise. It had been written on the 10th of February 1694 in Beijing, the capital of China, by father Antoine Thomas, Flemish missionary to the general of the Jesuits. This letter reports that the emperor is always very affectionate towards the Christian religion and the Society of Jesus.'<sup>86</sup> It may be clear from such reports that the Jesuit provenance heavily influenced both tone and content, presenting the results of the mission as inherently positive. Dutch-language newspapers were apparently influenced by this Jesuit approach as they, too, added a subtle note of confidence to the mission, albeit in a more implicit manner: 'That the emperor of China has deigned the missionaries by means of an edict, to preach the gospel in his empire, and to his subjects to embrace the Christian religion.'<sup>87</sup>

85 Jacques Davy, 'La condamnation en Sorbonne des "Nouveaux memoires sur la Chine" de P. Le Comte', *Recherches de science religieuse*, 37 (1950), pp. 366–397.

86 'On a envoié de Rome au Père de la Chaise une lettre écrite de Peking Capitale de la Chine le 10. Février 1694 par le Père Antoine Thomas missionnaire Flamand [sic] au Général des Jésuites. Cette lettre porte que l'Empereur est toujours très-affectionné à la Religion Chrétienne & à la Compagnie de Jesus', in *Gazette de Rotterdam*, 12 September 1695. Antoine Thomas came from Namur in Wallonia and as such was not Flemish. Until 1692, the city was part of the Spanish Netherlands, after which it was annexed to France by Louis XIV.

87 'Dat de keizer van China door een edict aen de Missionarissen vergunt heeft, het Euangelium in sijn Rijck te verkondigen, en aen sijn Onderdanen, de Christelijcke religie t'omhelsen', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 27 April 1697. This notice may refer to Kangxi's edict of Christianity, issued in 1692. This decree compared Christianity on an equal level with Confucianism: 'The Europeans are very quiet; they do not excite any disturbances in the provinces, they do no harm to anyone, they commit no crimes, and their doctrine has nothing in common with that of the false sects in the empire, nor has it any tendency to excite sedition. We decide therefore that all temples dedicated to the

During the last years of the seventeenth century, French-language newspapers began to demonstrate a certain opposition to the Jesuit presence in China, especially where it concerned the issues of Confucius and the Chinese rites: 'The Jesuits understand that they can no longer prevent, nor elude for long, an evaluation of the case of the Chinese cults ... themselves having remained quietly in agreement about the truth of the facts concerning the rites of Confucius and [worship of] the dead, which are the principal points to evaluate.'<sup>88</sup> Another paper demonstrates concerns about the role of Pope Innocent XIII (1691–1700), who by the end of 1699 was already gravely ill: 'One does not know whether or not the setback of the Pope's illness will postpone the judgment of the case of the Chinese rites against the Jesuits.'<sup>89</sup> Meanwhile, papers in Dutch kept printing news about China in a more descriptive manner. Yet, the main sources of news shifted from shipping reports to letters from missionaries, which were combined with tidings from Rome. These also began to inform readers about the growing unease of the Roman Curia concerning the role of the Jesuits in China.

The Rites Controversy came to a boiling point on 18 October 1700, when eight deputies filed their report on Louis Le Comte's *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* to the Faculty of Theology at Sorbonne University of Paris, to decide whether this account should be officially censured. After brief deliberations, the faculty strongly condemned the text, denouncing the majority of 19 selected passages as 'false, reckless, scandalous, impious, contrary to the word of God, heretical, subversive to the faith and religion of Christ, obviating the virtues of the Passion and the Cross of Jesus Christ'.<sup>90</sup> The main reason for this censure was Le Comte's defence of the Jesuit accommodation

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Lord of heaven, in whatever place they may be found, ought to be preserved, and that it may be permitted to all who wish to worship this God to enter these temples, offer him incense, and perform the ceremonies practised according to ancient custom by the Christians. Therefore let no one henceforth offer them any opposition.' See *Pelican history of the Church. History of Christian missions* (vol. 6, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), pp. 189–190.

88 'Les Jésuites s' aperçoivent qu'ils ne peuvent plus empêcher ni reculer long-tem[p]s le jugement de la cause des cultes Chinois ... eux-mêmes étant demeurez tacitement d'accord de la vérité des faits touchant les cultes de Confucius & des morts, qui sont les principaux points à juger', in *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, 19 November 1699.

89 'On ne sait pas si le contretemps de la maladie du Pape éloignera le jugement de la cause des cultes Chinois contre les Jésuites', in [*Gazette d'Amsterdam*], 30 November 1699.

90 'Fausse, téméraire, scandaleuse, impie, contraire à la parole de Dieu, hérétique, renversant la foi et la religion chrétienne, rendant inutile la vertu de la Passion et de la Croix de Jésus-Christ', in Roger Étienbles, *Les Jésuites en Chine. La querelle des Rites, 1552–1773* (Paris: Julliard, 1966), pp. 56–57.



FIGURE 28 *Portrait of the Kangxi emperor in Louis Le Comte, Beschryvinge van het machtig keyserryk China (The Hague: Engelbreg Boucquet, 1698) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (O 87-21)*

of various Chinese rites, which were considered idolatrous by the *Société des Missions étrangères de Paris*.<sup>91</sup> Anti-Jesuit forces celebrated the censure as a victory, especially so, because it was soon followed by additional official attacks on the Jesuit interpretation of the Chinese rites. These assaults proved so effective that Rome eventually ruled against Jesuit accommodation in the Papal bulls *Ex illa die* (1715), and *Ex quo singulari* (1742).<sup>92</sup>

Le Comte had been part of the French envoy sent to China to strengthen Louis XIV's influence in the Middle Kingdom.<sup>93</sup> After a stay of only two years, Le Comte was enjoined to return to Europe to inform his superiors of the dire situation in which the Jesuits in China had found themselves. He left in 1691 and reported to Rome and Paris. Thereafter, he returned to France, where he became confessor to the duchess of Bordeaux, never to return to China again.<sup>94</sup> In France, Le Comte soon started work on a book about China, entitled *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine*, which was first published by Jean Anisson in Paris. Two reprints appeared within the year, and translations in English, Dutch, and German followed before the end of the century.

The work was mainly descriptive with a focus on 'the largest provinces, and many cities, palaces, rivers, canals, ships, roads, and passages, as well as its [China's] antiquity, good statesmanship and government'.<sup>95</sup> Had Le Comte constrained himself to a simple description of China, the book would probably

91 Isabelle Landry-Deron, 'Confucius au coeur des polémiques sur la scène européenne au tournant des XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles', in Flora Blanchon (ed.), *Le nouvel âge de Confucius. Modern confucianism in China and South Korea* (Paris: PUPS, 2007), pp. 155–163, pp. 157–159.

92 Mungello, *Curious land*, pp. 356–358. For the full text of both edicts see Dun Jen Li, *China in transition, 1517–1911* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969), p. 224.

93 Pfister, *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les Jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine*, pp. 440–441.

94 John W. Witek, *Controversial ideas in China and Europe. A biography of Jean-François Foucquet, S.J. (1665–1741)* (Rome: Institutum Historicum s.i. 1982), p. 68.

95 Subtitle to the Dutch edition: Behelsende d'overgroote Provintien, en menigvuldige Steden, Paleysen, Rivieren, Kanalen, Schepen, Wegen, en Passagien,.... Wyders Der selver Outheyt, goede Staatskunde, Regeringe, in Le Comte, *Beschryvinge Van het machtige Keyserryk China*, title page. The English translation also mentions 'Memoirs and observations topographical, physical, mathematical, mechanical, natural, civil, and ecclesiastica', as well as 'the Chinese pottery and varnishing; the silk and other manufactures; the pearl fishing; the history of plants and animals. Description of their cities and publick works; number of people, their language, manners and commerce; their habits, economy, and government', in Louis Le Comte, *Memoirs and observations topographical, physical, mathematical, mechanical, natural, civil, and ecclesiastical*, title page. The German subtitle specifies that the book concerns: 'Durch Curieuse An verschiedene/ hohe Geist- und weltliche Standes-Personen/ Staats-Ministren/ und andere vornehme gelährte Leute gefertigte Send-Schreiben/ Den Liebhabern seltener Sachen zu sonderbarer Vergnügung vorgestellt', in Le Comte, *Das heutige Sina*, title page.

not have caused such a stir as it did. The book's biggest issue lay in the second main subject, on 'the progress of the conversion of the inhabitant to the Christian faith'.<sup>96</sup> The popular success of this propagandistic account made the book a convenient target for those trying to undermine the Jesuit mission, and its rather unsophisticated explanation of complex theological issues only added fuel to the fire.

David Mungello has noted that it is both surprising and unfortunate that Le Comte became such a primary figure in the Chinese Rites Controversy; his short stay in China had prepared him poorly for the role of spokesman for Jesuit accommodation.<sup>97</sup> To begin, it is unlikely that he was literate in Chinese or had any real acquaintance with Chinese literature. Besides, his writings were 'far less intellectually distinguished', compared to those by his fellow mathematicians.<sup>98</sup> However, while Visdelou may have been better versed in Sinology, Bouvet more creative, and Fontaney and Gerbillon more scientifically educated, Le Comte's popular tone and subject made his work attractive to a much larger public of potential readers. His *Nouveaux mémoires* concentrated on descriptions of travel, climate, and geography, as well as shorter treatments of Chinese government, history, culture, language, religion, and the Jesuit mission.

These were exactly the subjects that, time and again, had proved their popular potential. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Le Comte was the only one of the king's mathematicians to be translated and reprinted.<sup>99</sup> On 2 February 1697, *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* announced the publication of the Dutch translation, printed and published by Engelbrecht Boucquet in The Hague, 'with fine illustrations'.<sup>100</sup> Earlier that year, a French edition was published by Étienne Roger and Jean Louis de Lorne in Amsterdam.<sup>101</sup> The work was

96 'En eyndelijk De voortgangen van de bekeringe der Inwoonders tot het Christen Geloof, in Le Comte, *Beschryvinge van het machtige Keyserryk China*, title page.

97 Mungello, *Curious land*, pp. 330–331.

98 Mungello, *Curious land*, pp. 330–331.

99 At least ten reprints had been published, and an English translation was made in 1697 by Benjamin Tooke and Sam Buckley of London, while the Dutch translation appeared in The Hague in 1698. In 1699–1700, a German reprint was made by Christoph Riegel and Christoph Fleischer of Frankfurt.

100 'In 's Gravenhage by Engelbrecht Boucquet is gedruckt en wert uytgegeven: Nieuw Verhael van den tegenwoordigen Staet van China door den Vader Louys Le Comte, Jesuyt, Mathematicus van den koning van Vranckrijck, in 4: met schoone figuren', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 2 February 1697; Louis Le Comte, *Beschryvinge van het machtige keyserryk China* (The Hague: Engelbrecht Boucquet, 1697).

101 Louis Le Comte, *Nouveaux memoires sur l'etat présent de la Chine* (Amsterdam: Etienne Roger and Jean louis de Lorme, 1697).



FIGURE 29 *Louis Le Comte, Beschryvinge van het machtig keyserryk China (The Hague: Engelbreg Boucquet, 1698) Allard Pierson Amsterdam (O 87-21)*

apparently so much in demand that Antoine Schelte of Amsterdam had already issued a reprint of the French edition in 1698.<sup>102</sup> Through the popularity and broad dissemination of *Nouveaux mémoires*, and its subsequent discussion in the periodic press, Louis Le Comte would become one of the prime figures in 'that phase of the Chinese Rites Controversy which climaxed at Paris in 1700'.<sup>103</sup>

Sorbonne's censure of Le Comte not only exacerbated the institutional discussion of the Chinese Rites Controversy, it also made the dispute over the religiosity of Confucius's teachings and other Chinese rituals visible to the general public through the pamphlet war of 1700. One of the most vicious of these was *L'enterrement de Confucius*, a leaflet distributed in various churches in France.<sup>104</sup> It attacked both Confucius and the Jesuits: 'Confucius lived in error and died in paganism. His ashes enclosed in an urn awaited in horror for the reunion with his soul, to be sad companions to his eternal misery: but he still he found the geniuses who, against their own conscience and by cruel stubbornness, have resurrected him in order to present him as a model for Christianity'.<sup>105</sup>

The growing public dissemination of the Rites Controversy was not limited to France. The forceful rejection of Confucius in *L'enterrement* was reprinted verbatim in the Dutch-made newspaper *Gazette de Rotterdam* less than a month later, on 4 November 1700. According to the editor of the *Gazette*, readers would surely be interested since 'the case of Father Le Comte had caused

102 Louis Le Comte, *Nouveaux memoires sur l'etat présent de la Chine* (Amsterdam: Antoine Schelte and Henri Desbordes, 1698).

103 Mungello, *Curious land*, p. 330.

104 Landry-Deron, 'Confucius au coeur des polémiques', p. 158. For a fairly complete list of pamphlets, see R. Streit, *Bibliotheca missionum* (30 vol., Freiburg: Herder, 1917–2012), vol. 7, pp. 1–44. The most important publications include: [Louis Thiberge, *Lettre ... au Pape, sur les idolatries et les superstitions chinoises* (Brussels, 1700); *Réflexions générales sur la lettre qui paraît sous le nom de messieurs des missions étrangères au pape, touchant les cérémonies chinoises* (Paris, 1700); *Affaire de la Chine* (Paris, 1700), which included the pamphlets: Louis Le Comte, *Lettre à monseigneur le duc de Mayne sur les cérémonies de la Chine. Lettre écrite de la province de Fokien, dans la Chine, où l'on rapporte le cruel traitement que les chrétiens des Jesuites ont fait souffrir à Maigrot et au R.P. Croquet; Histoire apologétique de la conduite des Jésuites en Chine adresée a MM. des Missions Etrangères* (s.l., 1700).

105 'Confucius avait vécu dans l'erreur et était mors dans la paganisme. Ses cendres resserrées dans une urne attendaient avec horreur la réunion de son âme, pour être les tristes compagnes de son malheur éternel: et cependant il a trouvé des génies, qui contre leur propre conscience et par un entêtement cruel l'avaient ressuscité et proposer pour modèle aux Chrestienne', in *Gazette de Rotterdam*, 4 November 1700.

so much turmoil'.<sup>106</sup> The Dutch-made periodical *Mercure historique et politique* printed a similar notice, here accompanied by the comment that "if he [Le Comte] does not defend it better ... he should ... stop digging in the ashes [of Confucius]".<sup>107</sup>

Le Comte shared the role of spokesman for the Jesuit policy of accommodation with Charles Le Gobien, a French Jesuit and procurator in Paris for the China mission who had never travelled to the Middle Kingdom. However, apropos the public discussion of the Chinese rites, Le Gobien had written extensively on the country.<sup>108</sup> In 1698, he joined Le Comte with the publication of *Historie de l'edit de la Chine en faveur de la religion Chrestienne*. He allied himself to Le Comte by providing an account and explanation of the Kangxi Emperor's Edict of Toleration 正教奉傳 (1692), which recognised the Roman Catholic Church, barred attacks on Catholic churches, and legalised the practice of Christianity in China.<sup>109</sup> To this, Le Gobien added a clarification of the honours presented by the Chinese to Confucius, followed by letters and reports of events related to the Chinese Rites Controversy. Due to the combined efforts of Le Comte and Le Gobien, the polemics in France soon reached 'an almost hysterical pitch', which would last from 1697 until 1700, when a final decision on the subject was made by Pope Clement XI.<sup>110</sup>

In France, the offensive against the Chinese rites was led by the eminent Dominican theologian Noël Alexandre.<sup>111</sup> In 1699, he published a lengthy exposition on the history of the Dominican Order in China and their growing discontent with the Jesuit policy of accommodation.<sup>112</sup> The following year,

106 'L'affaire du Père Le Comte a tant fait de bruit', in *Gazette de Rotterdam*, 4 November 1700.

107 'Mais s'il ne le défend pas mieux ... qu'il ne fouille plus dans ses [Confucius] cendres', *Mercure historique et politique* (November 1700), p. 534.

108 Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe*, p. 429.

109 Ku Weiyang, 'Father Tomás Pereira, SJ, the Kangxi Emperor and the court Westerners', in Artur K. Wardega and Antonio Vasconcelos de Saldanha (eds.), *In the light and shadow of an emperor. Tomás Pereira, SJ (1645–1708)* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 64–84; Nicolas Standaert, 'The "Edict of tolerance". A textual history and reading', in Wardega and Vasconcelos de Saldanha (eds.), *Tomás Pereira, SJ*, pp. 308–358.

110 Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe*, p. 429.

111 Ulrich L. Lehner, *The Catholic Enlightenment. The forgotten history of a global movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

112 Noël Alexandre, *Apologie des dominicains, missionnaires de la Chine ou Réponse au livre du père Le Tellier, jésuite, intitulé. Défense des nouveaux chrétiens et a l'éclaircissement du P. Le Gobien, de la même compagnie, sur les honneurs que les Chinois rendent à Confucius et aux morts* (Cologne: Corneille d'Egmond, 1699). The work was ostensibly printed in Cologne, yet in reality was published in Amsterdam, see E. Weller, *Die falschen und fingierten Druckorte. Repertorium der seit Erfindung der Buchdruckerkunst unter falscher Firma*

Alexandre issued *Conformité des cérémonies chinoises avec l'idolatrie Grecque et Romaine*, which was a direct attack upon the Jesuit position by way of a comparison between these rites and the (already) acknowledged idolatrous ceremonies of ancient Greeks and Romans.<sup>113</sup> Again in 1700, the Dominican launched his last major salvo by publicly addressing seven letters to Le Comte concerning the rites, together with the publication of a collection of writings about Confucian ceremonies.<sup>114</sup> Much of the flurry of publications that accompanied and fuelled the public discussion of the controversy was supposedly published in Cologne, either by Corneille d'Egmond or Jean le Sincere. However, this Cologne imprint is likely fictitious.<sup>115</sup> It is more reasonable to suspect that the pamphlets were published in Amsterdam.<sup>116</sup>

Neither the political nor ecclesiastical powers of the Dutch Republic were ever able (or willing) to exercise the same degree of control over the production and trade in print as France or England could.<sup>117</sup> While decrees and proclamations were made by the States General or the provincial States against the publication of certain texts on a regular basis, even works that were deemed seditious, blasphemous, or otherwise harmful to the state, church, or public interest could usually be published without much difficulty.<sup>118</sup> The publication

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*erschienenen deutschen, lateinischen und französischen Schriften* (3 vol., Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1856–1864).

- 113 Noël Alexandre, *Conformité des cérémonies chinoises avec l'idolatrie Grecque et Romaine. Pour servir de confirmation à l'apologie des Dominicains missionnaires de la Chine* (Cologne: Corneille d'Egmond, 1700). Again, this work was supposedly published in Cologne, yet in reality came from Amsterdam, see Weller, *Die falschen und fingierten Druckorte Repertorium*.
- 114 Noël Alexandre, *Lettre d'un docteur de l'ordre de S. Dominique sur les cérémonies de la Chine* ([Amsterdam]: s.l.s.n., 1700), see Weller, *Die falschen und fingierte Druckorte Repertorium; Recueil des pièces des differens messieurs des missions Etrangères et des religieux de l'ordre de S. Dominique, touchant le culte qu'on rend à la Chine au philosophe Confucius* (Cologne: Jean le Sincere, 1700); For a listing see n. 4. in Foster Stockwell, *Westerners in China. A history of exploration and trade, ancient times through the present* (Jefferson and London: McFarland & Company, 2017), p. 50.
- 115 Begheyn, *Jesuit books in the Dutch Republic*, p. 419.
- 116 E. Weller, *Die maskierte Literatur der älteren und neueren Sprachen* (vol. 2, Leipzig: Falcke & Rössler, 1856), pp. 63–65.
- 117 Femke Deen, David Onnekink, and Michel Reinders (eds.), 'Pamphlets and politics. Introduction', in Femke Deen, David Onnekink, and Michel Reinders, *Pamphlets and politics in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 3–30; Roelof Harms, 'Thievery of literature. Consequences of the interaction between politics and commerce for the form and content of pamphlets', in Deen, Onnekink, and Reinders, *Pamphlets and politics in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), pp. 37–62.
- 118 Roelof Harms, 'Handel in letteren. De ambulante handel in actueel drukwerk in zeventiende-eeuws Amsterdam', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 23 (2007), pp. 216–229.

of pamphlets concerning the Chinese rites served a dual purpose: first, it was a relatively easy way to keep the printing presses going and, thus, make money. A pamphlet could be made within a day, distributed the next, and be profitable within the week. Second and related to the first, pamphlets fuelled the discussion on Chinese rites, which led to the publication and sale of additional pamphlets (and maybe even increased demand for related work).

For instance, in 1700 alone, nine pamphlets in 12 editions by Noël Alexandre were issued in Amsterdam.<sup>119</sup> His seven *Lettres d'un docteur en théologie de l'ordre de S. Dominique sur l'idolatrie et les superstitions de la Chine* demonstrate the 'back and forth' of the debate between supporters and detractors of the Chinese rites, which saw their publishers laughing all the way to the bank. Charges and rebuttals of the rites circulated in the form of 'letters' to the Pope and other dignitaries of the Catholic Church. The Jesuits were accused of insincerity, idolatry, and a lack of uniformity in their ideas. Alexandre further argued that, while the Jesuits reconciled the Chinese god as the creator of the universe with the law of nature and the Ten Commandments, they had concealed Original sin, the faith in Jesus Christ and His incarnation, death and resurrection because they felt it to be irrelevant.<sup>120</sup>

With these pamphlets, Dutch book producers took yet another publication strategy. Pamphlets allowed for discussion on a widespread level, and they served to change the manner in which religious, cultural, and social conversations were viewed and carried out. As such, pamphlets also created new ways of communication and news styles of language. Before this point, the country had seemed a static entity in the eyes of the European public. Through the Chinese rites pamphlet war, the Middle Kingdom had now truly become

119 Noël Alexandre, *Conformité des ceremonies chinoises avec l'idolâtrie Grecque et Romaine* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700); *Apologie des dominicains missionnaires de la Chine. Ov Response au livre du père Le Tellier jésuite, intitulé, Défense des nouveaux chrétiens* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700); VII. *lettre d'un docteur en théologie de l'ordre de S. Dominique. Sur l'idolâtrie et les superstitions de la Chine* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700); VI. *lettre d'un docteur en théologie de l'ordre de S. Dominique, sur l'idolâtrie & les superstitions de la Chine* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700); V. *lettre d'un docteur en théologie de l'ordre de Saint Dominique sur l'idolâtrie et les superstitions de la Chine* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700); IV.(-V.) *lettre d'un docteur en théologie de l'ordre de Saint Dominique sur l'idolâtrie et les superstitions de la Chine* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700); III. *lettre d'un docteur de l'ordre de Dominique au R.P. Le Comte ... sur son système de l'ancienne religion de la Chine* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700); *Lettre d'un docteur de l'ordre de S. Dominique sur les ceremonies de la Chine au R.P. Le Comte* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700); *Conformità delle cerimonie chinesi, colla idolatria greca, e romana* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700); *Conformité des cérémonies chinoises avec l'idolâtrie grecque et romaine* (s.n. [Amsterdam], 1700).

120 Alexandre, III. *Lettre*, p. 4f.

a subject of public discussion and polemic debate.<sup>121</sup> These urgent events related to China added historical dimension 'in the background and individual personalities or discrete events in the foreground'.<sup>122</sup>

Noël Alexandre brought the case against the Jesuits officially to the Sorbonne in 1700, assisted by Nicolas Charlot of the *mission étrangères*.<sup>123</sup> A letter dated 20 April 1700 from the foreign mission of Paris to Pope Innocent XIII denounced six propositions taken from both Le Comte and Le Gobien's works. Another letter followed on 1 July, written by Solomon Prious, Doctor of theology at the Sorbonne and one of the directors of the mission, condemning Le Comte's *Nouveaux mémoires*, Le Gobien's *Historie*, and the anonymous *Lettre sur les ceremonies de la Chine*, on the basis that they contained propositions that had to be censored. On 2 August, Charles Boileau, member of the deputies, presented the report of the foreign mission to the Sorbonne Faculty of Theology. Subsequently, the faculty began their deliberations on the subject on 17 August.

By this time, Louis Le Comte had become a well-known figure and representative of the Jesuit mission, and his presence as such can be traced through newspapers and periodicals. Both French and Dutch papers reported on his comings and goings, like his departure from France and arrival in Rome in July 1700, and the rumour that he would soon return to China.<sup>124</sup> Notices in French-language papers on Le Comte and his fellow Jesuits turned grim after *Nouveaux mémoires* was brought before the Sorbonne in 1700. At the end of that month, just before the book was condemned, the *Nouvelles extraordinaires des divers endroits* somewhat prematurely reported that 'the king [Louis XIV] has proposed three Jesuits to the duchess of Burgundy, so that she may choose one as her confessor, in place of Father Le Comte who is *disgraced*'.<sup>125</sup> In August, 'this affair continues in a heated manner' for Le Comte.<sup>126</sup> On the 26th of that

121 Harline, *Pamphlets, printing, and political culture in the early Dutch Republic*, p. 3.

122 Van Kley, 'News from China', p. 562.

123 In *Historia cultus Sinensium seu varia scripta de cultibus Sinarum, inter vicarios apostolicis gallos aliosque missionarios, & patres Societatis Jesu controversis, oblata Innocentio XII. Pontifici Maximi. I-II*, Charlot edited a collection of evidence which concerned the case against the Jesuits. See Streit VII, pp. 23–24. Again, this work was probably printed in the Netherlands, while the title page states it was published in Cologne, see Weller, *Die falschen und finfierten Druckorte Repertorium*.

124 *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 17 July 1700; [*Gazette d'Amsterdam*], 19 July 1700; *Gazette de Rotterdam*, 19 July 1700.

125 'Le roy a proposé a la Duchesse de Bourgogne 3 Jésuites, afin qu'Elle en choisisse un person Confesseur en la place du Père Le Comte qui est disgracié', in *Nouvelles extraordinaires des divers endroits*, 20 July 1700 (my emphasis).

126 'Cette affaire poursuit avec chaleur', in [*Gazette d'Amsterdam*], 26 August 1700.

same month, a French paper reported that the Faculty of Theology gave their opinion on the propositions, and that they had declared them 'reckless [and] scandalous'.<sup>127</sup> Three other French-language newspapers copied this message in the days that followed.

Surprisingly, while papers in French presented the censure of Le Comte's propositions as a done deal, Dutch-language papers were more nuanced. They spoke of the 'supposed idolatry of Confucius', giving Le Comte the opportunity to 'refute the allegations of the missionaries of China on the false idolatry of Confucius', which (at least according to *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*) he did so with 'very great expertise'.<sup>128</sup> However, it would take another two months before a Dutch newspaper would again comment on the proceedings of the Sorbonne, while French papers remained very clear in their opposition of the Jesuits.

The deliberations of the Sorbonne concluded on 18 October, when the propositions of Le Comte and Le Gobien were condemned as 'false, erroneous and foolhardy'.<sup>129</sup> *La Gazette d'Amsterdam* articulated why Confucius and the Jesuit accommodation of the Chinese rites were denounced and Le Comte's book served as a concrete example of everything that was wrong with the Jesuit mission in China. In this tiding, a writer who signed with the pseudonym 'De Champ Veille' ['From the Vigilant Field'] first repeated the propositions of Le Comte, and then emphasised their absolute 'falseness, recklessness, scandalousness and wrongness'.<sup>130</sup> The author finished his litany by noting that the 'the sacred faculty further declares that it will not hear of approving the other things contained within these books.'<sup>131</sup>

Dutch newspapers provided less information about the censure of Le Comte's book than their French counterparts. Only one Dutch digest, *Europische mercurius*, reported in detail on the issue; however, it mainly outlined the arguments from the side of the Jesuits. This news digest devoted two pages in its second edition of 1700 (July to December) to the 'Assembly of the Faculty of

127 'Téméraires, scandaleuse', in [*Gazette d'Amsterdam*], 26 August 1700.

128 'De gesupposeerde Idolatrie van Confucius', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 4 September 1700 (my emphasis); 'dat den Jesuyt Le Comte met seer groote bescheydentheydt sijne wederleggingen tegen de Beschuldiginggen van de Missionarissen van China over de valsse idolatrie van Confucius in 't Licht gegeven heeft', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 2 October 1700.

129 Étienne, *Les Jésuites en Chine*, pp. 56–57.

130 'fausse, téméraire, scandaleuse & erronée', in [*Gazette d'Amsterdam*], 28 October 1700.

131 'La Sacrée Faculté déclare en outre qu'elle n'entend pas approuver les autres choses contenues dans ces Livres', in [*Gazette d'Amsterdam*], 28 October 1700.

Theology of Paris about the case of the Chinese rites'.<sup>132</sup> It opened with a short description of the proceedings of the Sorbonne and their decision to censure Le Comte. The digest seemingly presented both sides of the argument but with the effect of nuancing the severity of the case: 'Among the doctors who gave their opinion, were some who thought the word heresy to be too grave'.<sup>133</sup>

In a salient move, Louis Le Comte's propositions were quoted in full; however, without the disclaimer that these were considered idolatrous by the Sorbonne. This information was, of course, available to the editors of this digest, since other Dutch newspapers had already included it in their reports. In *Europische mercurius*, Dutch readers were thus confronted with statements like 'China has practised the purest precepts of moral philosophy, while Europe and almost all the rest of the world lay in error and corruption', but without the context to put the recently condemned nature of this proposition into perspective.<sup>134</sup> For a fuller understanding of this article, readers could have obtained this context from other sources, such as articles in French-language newspapers. Yet, so far, no report in a Dutch-language publication elaborated on the fact that the statements in Le Comte's work had been condemned by the Sorbonne.

The *Europische mercurius* was not yet finished with the case. In the first issue of 1701, a notice entitled, 'Jesuits protest against the verdict of the Sorbonne', listed all the arguments given by the Jesuits as to why the censure was unjust.<sup>135</sup> The popularity of Le Comte's book was emphasised: 'Over the past four years ... his books have been reprinted several times, even in various languages'. Moreover, in those years 'neither complaints nor allegations were made'.<sup>136</sup> Besides, Le Comte would have based his work 'only on historical facts about religion in the ancient Chinese books', and works written by members of the Sorbonne.<sup>137</sup> It is therefore proper that 'Father Le Comte protests [in order]

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132 'Vergadering van de Faculteit der Theologie van Parys over de zaak van den Dienst der Chineezzen', in *Europische mercurius*, March 1701, pp. 139–141.

133 'Onder de doctoren, welke opineerden, waren eenigen die meenden dat het woord Kettersch al te hard was', in *Europische mercurius*, March 1701, pp. 139–141.

134 'China heeft de zuiverste grondregelen van de Zedekonst geoeffend, terwyl Europa, en byna al het overige van de Wereld, in dwaling en verdorvenheid lag', in *Europische mercurius*, March 1701, pp. 139–141.

135 *Europische mercurius*, January 1701, pp. 99–101.

136 'Dat sedert vier Jaren ... dezelve verscheide maalen zyn herdrukt, zelfs in verscheidene taalen', 'geene Klagten of beschuldigingen zyn opgesteld geweest', in *Europische mercurius*, January 1701, pp. 99–101.

137 'Puur als Historische feiten op het geloof der oude Chineesche Boeken', in *Europische mercurius*, January 1701, pp. 99–101.

to nullify all that has been undertaken so far'.<sup>138</sup> A protest which, according to the *Europische mercurius*, should be considered seriously.

However, this was not to be. The Sorbonne and Pope Clement XI remained firm in their condemnation of the propositions, along with a general rejection of the accommodation of the Chinese rites by the Jesuit missionaries in China. On 20 November 1704, Pope Clement XI condemned all the rites and rituals with the decree *Cum Deus optimus*, which also outlawed any further discussion. The Papal bull *Ex illa die* of 19 March 1715 reaffirmed this condemnation and, in 1742, Benedict XIV reiterated Clement XI's decrees, which required all missionaries in China to take an oath never to argue the matter again.<sup>139</sup>

As a direct result of the Pope's objections to the Chinese rites, the attitude in China towards Catholic missionaries changed. In 1721, the Kangxi Emperor commented that: 'I have concluded that the Westerners are petty indeed. It is impossible to reason with them.... From now on, Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China, to avoid further trouble'.<sup>140</sup> The Jesuits were especially affected in the following years. Despite all their efforts, their progress in China stalled and their movements were severely restricted. Newspapers reported that 'the emperor of China published a rigorous edict against all missionaries ... who have to leave the empire on punishment of death'.<sup>141</sup> But, as the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* informed its readers, matters could always

138 'Vader Le Comte protesteert van nulliteit van alles't geen tot hier toe is ondernomen', in *Europische mercurius*, January 1701, p. 101. The arguments were probably taken from Louis Le Comte's *Éclaircissement sur la dénonciation faite au Pape des Nouveaux mémoires de la Chine* ([s.l.], 1700).

139 *Confirmatio et innovatio constitutionis incipientis. Ex illa die* (Rome: Ex typographia Reverendae Camerae Apostolicae, 1742); George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy. From its beginning to modern times* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), p. 69.

140 Li, *China in transition*, p. 22.

141 'De Keyser van China had een rigoreus Edict tegen al de Missionarissen ... die op Levensstraf uyt het Rijk moeten gaen, laten publiceren', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 7 December 1709. *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* was not entirely correct here. The expulsion of all missionaries and the prohibition of Christianity only took place in 1724, decreed in January of that year by Kangxi's son, the Yonzheng Emperor. The 'rigorous edict' the Haarlem newspaper speaks of probably refers to a permit needed by all missionaries in which they had to declare to adhere to the rules of Matteo Ricci, which were in favour of an accommodation of the Chinese rites. Additionally, while the newspaper reported that the missionaries had to leave on punishment of death, many missionaries asked for a permit, and those that did not were expelled or went to Macao. See Thomas David DuBois, *Religion and the making of modern East Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 92–92.

be worse: 'We have heard that many of these missionaries embarked on a ship to save their lives, but have lost them by shipwreck'.<sup>142</sup>

This chapter aimed to explain how Dutch-made newspapers and digests reported on China during the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and how the Dutch provenance of printed works influenced possible representations of the Middle Kingdom. Dutch tolerance, combined with the country's famous economic pragmatism, allowed printers, publishers, and editors to publish periodicals. The quality of the Dutch product guaranteed that even Catholic authors would often choose Amsterdam over Rome or Paris. Add to this the extensive trading network of Dutch book producers, it becomes clear that the Dutch Republic had long been Europe's primary storehouse for publications on the Middle Kingdom, in which the veritable 'Dutch-ness' of the product only added to their appeal.

In this period, Dutch printers and publishers provided much of Europe with periodic printed works, not only in Dutch but in French, English, Spanish, Italian, and Yiddish. The papers in French catered to the international Republic of Letters and the growing number of readers literate in French. Dutch-made newspapers enjoyed a considerable readership and they were dispersed far and wide. They were read not only by professionals but by an increasing number of literate citizens from a middling background. On the pages of newspapers and digests, which summarised and supplemented news that was heard elsewhere, these readers were informed about events happening across Europe and the world beyond.

This growing number of newspapers reports significantly changed the manner in which China was represented. Before their introduction, notices about the Middle Kingdom had been rather static descriptions of an idealised and remote empire. However, the increase of more detailed information replaced these descriptions (at least partially) with more dynamic images. The introduction of news reports also expanded the possibilities for discussion and debate: Chinese events began to provoke public speculation and polemic argument. Here, the cultural and religious background of the reporting parties determined how the news was presented and interpreted.

Newspapers from the Dutch Republic frequently reported on China, informing readers about events happening in the Middle Kingdom: especially those developments that would have an impact on Europe. However, there was a distinct divergence between reports in Dutch and French. Dutch news mainly

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<sup>142</sup> 'En men verstaet, dat veele van dese Missionarissen, op een schip gegaen zijnde, om 't leven te behouden, door Schipbreuck 't selve verloren hebben', in *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 7 December 1709.

focused on those events that might affect the economic interests of the United Provinces, such as the fates of ships and wars and conflicts that could disrupt lines of trade and commerce. Additionally, numerous advertisements for products from China accentuated this primarily economic focus of Dutch news on the Middle Kingdom. As such, most news was less concerned with China itself and more with the commerce that resulted from the contacts between China and Europe.

In contrast, papers in French had a far broader potential audience, the whole Republic of Letters, making economically centred reports redundant. French-language reports were more concerned with the Jesuits and their mission. In the late 1680s, Louis XIV sent a French Jesuit mission to China, which came to play an increasingly influential role in providing Europe with knowledge of the Middle Kingdom. Regular contacts between Paris and Beijing facilitated the exchange of goods and information, which not only helped to bring French and European science and culture to China, but also further informed Europe about the Middle Kingdom.

Dutch publishing strategies thus aimed at French or Dutch readers and their presumed wishes and demands. Yet, in the last decades of the seventeenth century, the Chinese Rites Controversy cast a long shadow over all other news related to China, turning the country into a dynamic and interactive entity. The debate had long been an internal concern of religious authorities in Rome and Paris. However, Le Comte's *Nouveaux mémoires* of 1696 catapulted the debate over the religiosity of Confucius's teachings and other Chinese rituals onto the public stage. In this context, the resulting pamphlet war was fundamental in disseminating the latest information in a swift and comprehensive manner.

The official censure of Le Comte's book in 1700 further exacerbated the public discussion of China. And thanks to the increasing number of books, pamphlets, newspapers, and digests, the dispute was brought to the public's attention. This growing public dissemination was not limited to the Catholic regions of Europe, Dutch newspapers also concerned themselves with the issue. For the Dutch, their interests remained economic rather than religious. The controversy provided an easy way to keep the printing presses going and periodicals made a quick profit. The debate on Chinese rites also fuelled further discussion, leading to additional publications and maybe even increase demand for related works.

It is necessary to note that when regarding newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets, the function of the printing location plays an important role as well. In the analysis of the development and distribution of early modern periodicals on China, it becomes evident that even publications that seem far removed from the Dutch printing phenomenon do, in fact, owe much to

the unique influence of the culture of print of the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century. Through newspapers, news digests, learned journals, pamphlets and other periodical printed works, Dutch printers, publishers, and booksellers facilitated the public discussion of various religious, political and cultural matters: the Chinese Rites Controversy among them. Their publishing strategies allowed for conversation on a broad and influential level. As a result, they changed the way in which China and its religion and philosophy was viewed and represented. Indeed, the extensive coverage of the Chinese Rites Controversy in Dutch-made periodicals made the Middle Kingdom truly a subject of public discussion, dissemination, and polemic debate.

Readers who, beforehand, may have had only a pedestrian knowledge of China were now urged to seek out newsworthy information in the periodic press. They did so for a variety of reasons, and representations of China during the last decades of the seventeenth century were as much the result of developments back home as they were due to events in the Middle Kingdom itself. Newspaper reports thus confirm the degree to which China had been integrated into early modern Dutch culture. We have seen that the periodic press, learned journals and newspapers alike, demonstrates how the Middle Kingdom became increasingly assimilated into the main currents of society during the final decades of the seventeenth century. However, this assimilation soon narrowed the gaze of spectators and players alike; China may have provided the stage, the players remained decidedly European.

# Epilogue

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, ‘Holland had lost its interest in China.’<sup>1</sup> The decline of the Dutch East India Company had set in, whereafter the Dutch concentrated on Java for their direct trade and increasingly began to rely on Chinese and Portuguese intermediaries for contacts with China.<sup>2</sup> Dutch scholarly preoccupation with the Middle Kingdom also waned. No further projects of translation were undertaken and, after Vondel, Van Hoorn, and Van der Goes, no Dutch literary project made China its subject. Furthermore, the Sinophilia expressed by the likes of Vossius and Witsen found little continuation in the Dutch Republic but, instead, moved to specialised academies in Paris and London. In the same period, China’s Confucian literati became ‘disenchanted’ with the West, leading to a marked decrease in interest in European learning. In the early eighteenth century, the European objections to the Chinese rites had led to the expulsion of Catholic missionaries from China. In 1721, the *Decree of Kangxi* proclaimed in no uncertain terms that ‘Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China, to avoid further trouble’, hammering the point home by stating that ‘I [Kangxi] have concluded that the Westerners are petty indeed.’<sup>3</sup>

As this ‘century of mutual exchange drew to a close’, the Dutch printing and publishing business also underwent considerable changes.<sup>4</sup> Around the turn of the eighteenth century, the industry experienced a recession that led to a period of contraction and concentration on the domestic market. After a century of exceptional growth, the number of publishing firms fell, and Dutch printers and booksellers lost ground on foreign markets. Additionally, the Dutch no longer held the market of French-language books and periodicals in France. This meant that printers, publishers, and booksellers increasingly began to depend on the Dutch domestic market.<sup>5</sup> Combined with lessening scholarly

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1 J.J. Duyvendak, ‘China in de Nederlandse letterkunde’, *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* (1938), pp. 3–14, p. 15.

2 Thijs Weststeijn, “Sinarum gentes ... omnium sollertissimae”. Encounters between the Middle Kingdom and the Low Countries, 1602–92’, in Song Gang (ed.), *Reshaping the boundaries. The Christian intersection of China and the West in the modern era* (Hong Kong: HKU Press, 2016), pp. 9–34.

3 Jen Li Dun, *China in transition, 1517–1911* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1969), p. 22.

4 Weststeijn, ‘The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries’, p. 229.

5 Karel Davids (ed.), *The rise and decline of Dutch technological leadership* (2 vol., Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 150–173; J.A. Gruys, P.C.A. Vriesema and C. de Wolf, ‘Dutch national bibliography 1540–1800. The STCN’, *Quaerendo*, 13 (1983), pp. 149–160.

interests and a decrease in first-hand accounts and travelogues, changes in the Dutch book market resulted in a decline in the number of books, pamphlets, newspapers, and learned journals on China published in the Dutch Republic at the turn of the eighteenth century. At this moment when Dutch interest in China began to wane, Europeans generally viewed the Middle Kingdom in a positive light. Confucius was written about in glowing terms, the Chinese system of government was looked upon with admiration, and Chinese products such as porcelain and silk were in high demand.

Less than a century later, however, this appreciative attitude had undergone an almost complete reversal. By 1800, China was portrayed as a backwards and stagnant country, with a corrupt system of government that was associated with force and oppression. Earlier views of Chinese superiority were deconstructed in favour of European supremacy, placing the foreign country fully into the newly formed Eurocentric worldview.<sup>6</sup> Modern historians are not the only ones to notice this shift. In 1788, the English translator of a popular description of China noted how European Sinophilia of the seventeenth century was turning into eighteenth-century Sinophobia:

The learned seem to differ widely in their ideas respecting [the Chinese]. By some they have been extolled as the wisest and most enlightened of mankind; while others, perhaps equally, if not more remote from the truth, have exhibited them in the most contemptible point of view, and represented them as a despicable people, deceitful, ignorant, and superstitious, and destitute of every principle of human justice.<sup>7</sup>

In France, Montesquieu and Voltaire represented opposite sides of this spectrum; the German thinker Johann Gottlieb Herder thought the Chinese greedy, full of ‘crafty hustle and subtlety’,<sup>8</sup> while his countryman Gottfried Leibniz was

6 Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe*, vol. 3; Mungello, *The great encounter*; Colin Mackerras, *Western images of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

7 Jean Baptiste Grosier, *A general description of China. Containing the topography of the fifteen provinces which compose this vast empire* (2 vol. London: C.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1788), p. iv, in Ashley Eva Millar, ‘Revisiting the Sinophilia/Sinophobia dichotomy in the European Enlightenment through Adam Smith’s “Duties of Government”’, *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 38 (2010), pp. 716–737.

8 Johann Gottlieb Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (vol. 3, Carlsruhe: Christian Gottlieb Schmieder, 1790), p. 14, as quoted in Blake Smith, ‘Colonial emulation. Sinophobia, ethnic stereotypes and imperial anxieties in late eighteenth-century economic thought’, *History of European Ideas*, 43.8 (2017), pp. 914–928; Trude Dijkstra, ‘The *Lettres Chinoises* and its shaping of contrasting perceptions of China’, in James Raven and

probably one of early modern Europe's foremost Sinophiles. Even though the colonial environment in the seventeenth century sometimes fostered intercultural interactions, places like Batavia (1740) saw an increase in European hostilities to Chinese communities, culminating in Sinophobic pogroms.<sup>9</sup> The scholarship is still undecided as to what caused this shift in intercultural attitude, when it started, and how to conceptualise it. Various contributing factors are proposed, such as economic causes,<sup>10</sup> changing perceptions towards art,<sup>11</sup> and an increase in class mobility.<sup>12</sup>

This eighteenth-century shift was again most visible in print. By analysing form, content, and material-technical aspects of various text types, the present study has provided insights into the ways in which seventeenth-century readers could take note of China. But of course, related processes would continue to influence European perceptions of the Middle Kingdom in the centuries beyond. And so, we now have a good sense of the earliest processes of European-Chinese textual transmission from creator to consumer, accounting for publishing strategies and marketing structures; the reciprocal effects of printed works on the intended audience; and the importance of authors, translators, printers, publishers, editors, illustrators, engravers, and booksellers in shaping (inter)cultural consumption. But there is so much still to uncover.

Of course, the ways in which various media shape (global) cultural encounters in the present day is well recognised. Yet this influence has hardly been considered for the early modern period.<sup>13</sup> The present study has demonstrated how representations of intercultural contacts in print influenced, and were in their turn influenced by, contemporary artistic, literary, and religious

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Mark Towsey, *Knowledge and communication in the Enlightenment world* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, forthcoming).

- 9 Leonard Blussé and Nie Dening (eds.), *The Chinese Annals of Batavia, the Kai Ba Lidai Shiji and other stories (1610–1795)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018); Smith, 'Colonial emulation'.
- 10 Geoffrey Hudson, 'The historical context of encounters between Asia and Europe, as seen by a European', in Raghavan Iyer (ed.), *The glass curtain between Asia and Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); David M. Jones, *The image of China in Western social and political thought* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
- 11 Adolf Reichwein, *China and Europe. Intellectual and artistic contacts in the eighteenth century*, trans. by J.C. Powell (London: Kegan, 1925); Christiane Hertel, *Sitting China in Germany. Eighteenth-century Chinoiserie and its modern legacy* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2019).
- 12 Waley-Cohen, *The sextant of Beijing*.
- 13 Dana Mastro and Riva Tukachinsky, 'The influence of media exposure on the formation, activation, and application of racial/ethnic stereotypes', *The international encyclopedia of media studies*, online 2012.

discourse and controversy. No singular European image of China existed in the seventeenth century, *nor* in the centuries thereafter. By considering how printed works and their producers influenced representations, intercultural encounters are better understood, which becomes all the more relevant in our ever-globalising world.

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