

## 12 EUROPAEOLOGY? ON THE DIFFICULTY OF ASSEMBLING A KNOWLEDGE OF EUROPE IN CHINA

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The modern knowledge relationship between China and Europe has its origins in the sixteenth century. It started through a series of erratic, informal contacts at the outer edge of their two trading networks, mostly at entrepôts around the edge of Southeast Asia, from Malacca to Manila. The emerging relationship was essentially commercial, yet each pursued broader knowledge of the other in the hope of better understanding and anticipating what might happen in transactions with the other. Around the initial core of knowledge pertaining to commercial transaction there grew up, in the early decades of the seventeenth century, on both sides, a lore about the geography, language, customs, and beliefs of the other. Most of this knowledge was acquired randomly and unsystematically, but it accumulated. China and Europe became objects of each other's scrutiny and, eventually, of each other's study

In assembling a knowledge of China, Europeans had a distinct advantage. A small number were in a position to observe Chinese in context, whether the transplanted context of Southeast Asia or the more native context of Macau and other coastal ports. There they could learn the language, study with Chinese teachers, collect books, watch practices, and listen to the claims Chinese made about themselves and their culture.<sup>1</sup> On these bases they constructed a category of knowledge, 'China', and build a new discipline of study, 'Sinology'.<sup>2</sup> Of course, China was not entirely a new category to seventeenth-century Europeans. It had loomed large in the European imagination since the time of Marco Polo. But with regular and sus-

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<sup>1</sup> On the methods by which the Jesuits acquired direct knowledge of Chinese language and culture, see Liam Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2007), chapter 7.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Sinology' is attested in English only in the nineteenth century, prior to which, it would seem, information about China was distributed among other categories of knowledge and available without prejudice to generalists.

tained contact after about 1600, it became feasible as well as appealing to organize the new information about China coming into Europe into a coherent body of knowledge. Though regarded as a minor academic specialty today, Sinology in the seventeenth century played an important role in the formation of the modern European disciplines of geography, history, and social theory.<sup>3</sup>

By comparison, Chinese who sought to know Europe were at a disadvantage. They could not go to Europe for first-hand knowledge of Europe; they could go only to the Europeans who came to them. Most lacked even that opportunity, and so early Chinese knowledge of Europe was limited largely to what Europeans did by example, or what they told them, or what they wrote down for them. Europe was not present to Chinese observers as an object of direct knowledge, as China was to the Jesuits. It was blocked and filtered at every point of interface. Despite these limits, Europe did not remain entirely unknown. A process of knowledge formation went on in China at the same time as the analogous process was happening in Europe, albeit at a slower pace and within a vastly different institutional and epistemological context, and productive ultimately of different categories and disciplines of knowledge.

#### EUROPE AS THE 'WEST'

Shaping scholarly knowledge on both sides of the China-Europe relationship in the seventeenth century was the Christian mission to China. Jesuit missionaries reported on China to Europeans and made Europe accessible to Chinese, in both cases through the lens of Christian knowledge. Knowledge of Europe in China was known as *xixue* [Western learning], or more elaborately, *taixi zhi xue* [Learning of the Far West].<sup>4</sup> The core of Western Learning was Christian dogma,<sup>5</sup> yet

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<sup>3</sup> On the place of China in the formation of European social theory, see Gregory Blue, 'China and Western Social Thought in the Modern Period', in *China and Historical Capitalism: Genealogies of Sinological Knowledge*, ed. by Timothy Brook and Gregory Blue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 57-109.

<sup>4</sup> Zhou Bingmo uses the term *taixi zhi xue* in his record of a conversation in his postface to the 1628 reprinting of *Jiren shipian*; *Li Madou zhongwen zhuyi ji*, p. 590. Chen Zilong uses it in his prefatory notes to the 1643 edition of Xu Guangqi's *Nongzheng quanshu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), *fanli*, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> For one example among many that could be cited, a friend of the convert Li Jiugong (Giulio Aleni's close collaborator in Fujian) wrote in a preface to one of Li's books that, as Li was a sincere believer in and practitioner of Western learning, his book dealt ex-

the content of *xixue* was not exclusively knowledge of religious matters. Western Learning also comprised scientific knowledge, for instance. When Giulio Aleni, the Jesuit missionary to Fujian, explained Western Learning to Chinese readers in his description of the world, *Zhifang waiji* [Notes on what lies beyond the Administered Realm], he made no distinction between Christian knowledge and scientific knowledge. Western Learning embraced all aspects of learning and scholarship in Europe: religion, science, philosophy, literature, history, medicine, law, and theology, with theology given pride of place as the highest discipline of learning.<sup>6</sup>

Almost by default, Western Learning included another body of knowledge: knowledge of the place from which this knowledge was coming, Europe. Chinese who took up Western Learning generally did so for its religion or its science, but they could not avoid encountering fragments of knowledge about the culture and history of the region of the world in which European religious and scientific knowledge was formed. Being an unintended consequence of proselytization, the transmission of this knowledge was largely unsystematic, yet it formed the base from which Chinese intellectuals would go on to construct their understanding of Europe. This process has attracted little attention among historians of early Sino-European interaction, reflecting perhaps the tendency for that history to be told from the European perspective. The indifference to the process has to do with the valorization of the 'West' in and outside of Chinese culture, so it might be worth asking the question of what it meant to call 'Western Learning' *Western*.

The Jesuits adopted 'the West' as the choronym naming their place of origin as early as the 1580s, and for themselves 'scholars from the West.' Whether by intention or not, the idea that they were from the west piggybacked their enterprise onto China's other major 'Western' religious tradition, Buddhism. This identification at first aligned them

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clusively with 'respecting heaven,' that is, Christian piety; quoted in Adrian Dudink, 'Giulio Aleni and Li Jiubiao,' in *Scholar from the West: Giulio Aleni S.J. (1582-1649) and the Dialogue between Christianity and China*, ed. by Tiziano Lippiello and Roman Malek, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series XLII (Sankt Augustin: Monumenta Serica Institute, 1997), p. 169, n. 127.

<sup>6</sup> *GA*, 44-46.

<sup>7</sup> The 'Western' character of Western Learning meant that *xixue* was embargoed as a scholarly topic through much of the Qing dynasty, and indeed through much of the twentieth century; see Zhu Weizheng, *Coming Out of the Middle Ages: Comparative Reflections on China and the West*, trans. Ruth Hayhoe (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), chapter 5.

with that tradition, though it was an alignment they later chose to reject.<sup>8</sup> The West of the Buddhists, India the Jesuits called the Little West, *xiaoxi* or *xiao xiyan*;<sup>9</sup> their West was the Great West, *daxi*, or the Extreme or Far West, *taixi*. When asked where they came from, they regularly gave their native place as *xiguo*, the Western Country, or the Western Countries.

But the West is not a country, of course, in the sense that *Zhong-guo*/China is. It is a direction or, at best, a region lying in a direction. Only context can distinguish whether Western Country/ies is singular or plural, and in most cases that context is not given.<sup>10</sup> The naive reader is left to assume *xiguo* to be the name of a singular place.<sup>11</sup> When Matteo Ricci's acquaintance Wang Jiashi refers to Ricci as a *daxiguo ren*, as does in his preface to the posthumous edition of Matteo Ricci's *Jiren shipian* [Ten Discourses of an Eccentric],<sup>12</sup> we see the phrase and translate it as 'European.' But a Chinese reader would have read this phrase literally as 'a native of the Great Western Country,' as though Europe were a great *guo* in just the way that China was the Great Ming *guo*. The ambiguity is less acute with the terms that suggest a more general designation: *taixi* or *xitai*, the Far West;<sup>13</sup> *xitu*, the Western Territory; *xifang*, the Western Quarter; *xiyu*, the Western Region; and most elaborately of all, *xizou*, the Country at the Western Extremity,<sup>14</sup> as Ricci calls Italy in his preface to the translation of Euclid's *Elements*.<sup>15</sup> The variants were many, but common to all was the West, which is why the knowledge that came from this region was known as Western Learning.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Mathematician Wu Xuechao (jr. 1687) notes the common western origin of Buddhism and Christianity in his preface to the 1700 edition of Euclid's *Elements* to contrast the emptiness of Buddhist teachings with the substantiality of Christian; translated in Peter Engelfriet, *Euclid in China: The Genesis of the First Translation of Euclid's Elements in 1607 and its Reception up to 1723* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. 463.

<sup>9</sup> For examples see *GA*, 34-5; and *LM*, 218 and 262.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. *LM*, 580.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Hong-kay Luk also notes this ambiguity surrounding the singularity of *xiguo* in 'A Study of Giulio Aleni's *Chih-fang Wai Ch?*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 60 (1977), 58-84.

<sup>12</sup> *LM*, 591.

<sup>13</sup> *XG*, 66 and 73.

<sup>14</sup> *LM*, 535.

<sup>15</sup> *LM*, 343. Engelfriet (*Euclid in China*, p. 454) translates *xizou* as 'Far West'.

<sup>16</sup> Sometimes the Jesuits identified themselves, and were identified as, *ouluoba-ren*, 'Europeans', as Matteo Ricci does in his *Mappa mundi* (*LM*, 223) or Li Zhizao does in his preface to the translation of Clavius. The latter is reprinted in *Mingmo tianzhujiào*

The habit of speaking of Europe, and later of the Americas as well, as the West derives from this early moment of contact. But consider what happens when we restore the original meaning of the Jesuit's 'West' and translate every *xi* as what it originally denoted, Europe. The missionaries come now as Europeans, not as denizens of a general region or—and this sense would develop only later—embodiments of a more general concept. The effect of this shift in translation convention on Western Learning, re-rendered as European Learning, is equally striking. The Jesuits' learning can no longer be so easily epitomized as knowledge in the abstract. It becomes a body of knowledge specific to Europe. This, of course, is exactly what it was: not pure knowledge that had escaped its historical particularity and risen to the level of pure truth, but knowledge grounded in the historical experience of Renaissance Europe. *Xixue* was knowledge written in a European Christian code, every detail of which derived from that code. Rather than being knowledge unmoored from its place of production, it was knowledge rooted in European conditions. The effect on us of thinking of this knowledge as peculiarly European rather than as generically Western is twofold: it alerts us to the provisional nature of the knowledge that reached Chinese from Europe, and it reminds us that what Chinese learned of Europe was learned through this filter of Occidentality. Western Learning texts remained indifferent to knowledge about Europe, and one would not go to such texts to gain such knowledge, and yet through them, Europe emerged into Chinese view.

Even if we change our translation of *xixue* from Western Learning to European Learning, as I think we probably should, there remains the category of knowledge that needs to be separated out from it, the study of Europe. For that, I propose to coin a term by creating a linguistic parallel to Europe's study of China, Sinology, and that would be Europaology. (Sinology being *hanxue* in Chinese, then the Chinese study of Europe must become *ouxue*, not *xixue*.) The problem with this word is that it seeks to name something that no one has thought needed a name until now. There were no Europaologists in seventeenth-century China in the way that there were emergent Sinologists in seventeenth-century Europe: no Chinese specializing in knowledge of Europe analogous to the Europeans who specialized in knowledge of China. Arguing from absence is a dubious practice, but

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*sanzhushi wenjian zhu* [Annotated Selection of Writings by the Three Pillars of Christianity in the Late Ming], ed. by Li Tiangang (Hong Kong: Daofeng shushe, 2007), p. 145.

the hole in the analogy intrigues me. It seems to point to a difference in the epistemological and institutional foundations of the knowledge each assembled of the other. Both China and Europe had to learn about the other, but the imbalance in terminology suggests that learning took place in different ways, and to different effects.

The difference is not innocent. It has everything to do with the epistemological assumptions behind the habit of taking *xi* to mean an abstract West rather than a concrete Europe. The object of Sinological knowledge, China, has been regarded as a region that has to be known in its particularities. Until very recently, Sinology has not offered, nor been asked, to furnish a universal model of the world. Many European Sinologists have been interested in inserting their knowledge of China into universal structures of knowledge, but their learning has usually been received as furnishing a local case for a paradigm constructed in the first instance from other cases. Here we need to return to *xixue*, for the Chinese who took it up have been regarded as engaging in a project of acquiring universal knowledge: knowledge that may have come from Europe, but that metastasized into absolute knowledge when it reached China. In this scheme of knowledge, China was a realm of particularities and variants, Europe the realm of truth.

The epistemological imbalance is not so much between knowledge of China (Sinology) and knowledge of Europe (Europaeology), but between knowledge *of* Europe (Europaeology) and knowledge *from* Europe (Western Learning). This imbalance goes back to the Jesuit strategy of accommodatively shaping the knowledge they passed on to Chinese so that it not clash with the cultural norms of the context into which it was being introduced. Western Learning was not designed to produce knowledge of Europe, not did it have to. This was in part because the purveyors of Western Learning did not regard such knowledge as directly relevant to the mission enterprise; in part, though, as I intend to show, it was because the Jesuits preferred to project an ideal image of the place from which Christianity came rather than provide a clear account of a real place where Christianity was only one feature among many, and a hotly contested one at that.

In the brief account that follows of the formation of a Chinese knowledge of Europe in the early decades of the seventeenth century, I sketch two phases: a first phase, dominated by Matteo Ricci's Chinese writings, in which a limited set of ideas about Europe leaked out from the Jesuits texts; and a second phase, typified by Giulio Aleni's writings on Europe of the 1620s and 1630s, when Europeans begin to

provide somewhat more consistent information about Europe. I will also glance briefly at the reception of this knowledge by two scholars of the Shanghai region, the determined Catholic convert Xu Guangqi early in the century for the first phase, and the hostile Dong Han later in the century for the second. The outcome will not be a portrait of Europaology, which is perhaps a portrait that cannot be painted, so much as a mural of how the formation and reception of Western Learning changed over time.

#### SOURCES FOR LEARNING ABOUT EUROPE

Compared to what they made available to early Sinologists, the Jesuits provided Chinese interlocutors with little from which to construct a knowledge of Europe. Early European Sinologists, however badly served by their sources, had something to work with: missionary publications based on direct experience in China, as well as a limited number of Chinese texts in translation. Chinese interested in Europe had almost nothing from which to write an account of Europe, which is why there are no such accounts. The early Sinologists may at times have turned China into a marvellous and puzzling realm, but it was a realm about which ever more could be known. The Europe of the Chinese in the last half-century of the Ming (1594-1644) was a distant, shadowy, and un-experienced place. A Chinese might learn something from informal contacts with Chinese merchants, informal contacts with European missionaries, and formal European publications in Chinese. Though the scholars who were able to gain access to any of these sources were few, each played its part in shaping Chinese knowledge of Europe, and each deserves some attention.

The first source of information were Chinese who gained first-hand experience through commercial transactions with Europeans. In the 1617 preface to his *Dongxi yangkao* [Notes on the Western and Eastern Oceans], the most complete survey of foreign maritime regions in the late Ming, Zhang Xie credited the seafarers he talked to in his home region for some of the information in his book. Zhang lived near Yuegang, Moon Harbour, the port that tied the prefectural capital of Zhangzhou to the trading economy of the Southeast Asia, most importantly Manila.<sup>17</sup> Zhang has little to say about Europe in the book, yet he derived some information from locals who interacted with Europeans in Southeast Asia.

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<sup>17</sup> Zhang Xie, *Dongxi yangkao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), pp. 19-20.

The second source of information were the Jesuits themselves. Direct contact was unavailable to most people, of course. What those who had direct contact learned is difficult to reconstruct, though they certainly gleaned something from their European interlocutors. Missionaries often found that curious information about Europe could incite interest, thereby helping to open doors for the transmission of Christian teachings. The Jesuits were fond of using historical stories and fables to illustrate moral lessons, and these stories had to be explained to those who did not already know them.<sup>18</sup> As some knowledge of Europe might be necessary to make sense of the stories, fragments of that knowledge invariably crept down the channel that this form of cross-cultural communication opened up.

The third source of knowledge for the budding Europaeologist were European publications in Chinese. In the first decade of the seventeenth century these were few. Of them only one, Matteo Ricci's *Mappa mundi, Complete map of the Ten Thousand Countries of the Earth* [*Kunyu wanguo quantu*], intended to communicate knowledge of the world beyond China. Other books would appear in the following decades, some alluding to Europe, some addressing Europe as their topic. As this printed material accumulated, a lore about Europe began to take form, and learning about Europe became possible. It is to these works that we now turn to understand what Europe might have meant to Chinese in the late Ming.

#### MATTEO RICCI'S EUROPE

The earliest image of Europe that the Jesuits published for Chinese is a visual one: Matteo Ricci's map of the world, drawn according to the conventions of European cartography and labelled for the benefit of Chinese readers. Basic information about the names and disposition of major countries and cities throughout the world became available in China for the first time. Though this marvellous map was reproduced in numerous Jesuit and non-Jesuit editions and appears to have circulated widely, it is difficult to assess its affect on Chinese viewers. It was probably received as a curiosity in the first instance; but what it elicited beyond curiosity is difficult to assess. As Cordell Yee has pointed out, 'the mere fact of transmission does not always

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<sup>18</sup> On the Jesuits' use of stories and fables, see the work of Li Sher-Shiueh [Li Shixue], *Zhongguo wan Ming yu Ouzhou wenxue* [Late-Ming China and European literature] (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, 2005), especially chapters 3-4.

translate into reception.<sup>19</sup> Although indigenous reproductions were prone to 'mislabel certain countries, misinterpret Ricci's notes as place-names, and fail to consider geographical extent when locating countries by coordinates', yet there was basic information here for interested Chinese to acquire.<sup>20</sup>

The map does not give visual priority to Europe, though it is not hard to imagine missionaries drawing their viewers' attention to the place from which they came, if only to impress upon Chinese the scale of the Eurasian continent across which their two civilizations were polarized. In addition to place names, the map includes short descriptions of important places. Beside Rome, for example, Ricci gives this short annotation:

In this place the king of the teachings, who does not marry, carries out the teachings of the Lord of Heaven. He is in the country of Roma, and all the countries of Europe obey him.<sup>21</sup>

In the space of the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of France, he provides a more complete description of Europe:

This is the continent of Europe. There are over thirty countries, all of which employ the laws of the former kings [monarchical government]. No heterodoxy is adhered to, and only the holy teachings of the Emperor on High who is the Lord of Heaven [*Tianzhu shangdi*] are worshipped. Officials are of three grades. The highest propagate the teachings, the next judge and order secular affairs, and the lowest devote themselves to military matters. The land produces the five grains, the five metals, and the hundred fruits. Wine is made from grape juice. The artisanate is skilled. by There is nothing about astronomy or principles of things [*xingli*] that is not thoroughly comprehended. People by custom are sincere and trustworthy and hold to the five relationships. Material accumulation is great, the relationship between lord and servitor vital and prosperous. In all seasons they have dealings with foreign countries, and their itinerant merchants travel the world. It is eighty thousand *li* from China. In ancient times there was no contact. As of today there has been interaction for almost seventy years.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Cordell Yee, 'Traditional Chinese Cartography and the Myth of Westernization', in *The History of Cartography*, II/2, ed. by J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 199.

<sup>20</sup> Yee, 'Traditional Chinese Cartography', p. 177.

<sup>21</sup> *LM*, 260.

<sup>22</sup> *LM*, 264.

Ricci's portrait of Europe is, not surprisingly, a favourable one: good order, devotion to sacred teachings, a priority of men of wisdom over civil officials, and of civil officials over military, and material prosperity. The effect is achieved in part by using a Chinese lexicon to express the virtue of Europe: five grains, five metals, five relationships, principles of things, the relationship between lord and servant. For those who know about the differences between China and Europe, all these concepts have to be adjusted when they are translated into the European context. Ricci's purpose here is not to accentuate difference, however; it is to show congruence. When he raises minor points of difference, he does so to create quiet openings to criticize China. In placing priests over secular officials, he expresses the ideal of the scholar above the official, which would have pleased his literati audience. Endowing Europe with great material prosperity could imply that China is worse in this regard, though the criticism is mild. Where the contrasts are sharp is in the European acceptance of foreign relations and maritime trade. Given China's restriction on embassies from abroad to certain times and places, and its discouragement of maritime trade, Ricci implies that Chinese should think of themselves at a disadvantage in these matters. That China and Europe have been in contact for not quite seventy years is treated as an improvement over the mutual isolation of ancient times, closing the passage with a sense that their interaction is now a permanent state of affairs.

Ricci guides his readers to certain assumptions about the commensurability of China and Europe, on the one hand, and the gap between their practices, on the other. He also misleads his readers on two key points when he insists on the universal sway of the Pope throughout Europe and implies that the Pope exercises authority over secular governments. These claims are part of the image of the authority of his religion vis-à-vis the state that he wants to project in China, in order to assist him in his strategy of representing Christianity as a religion that serves the state, and thus of portraying the Jesuits as candidates to serve the Ming emperor.

This and similar information about Europe leaks out of Ricci's other publications. I will cite examples from his catechism, *Tianzhu shiyi* [The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven], and from the follow-up volume, *Jiren shipian* [Ten Discourses of an Eccentric]. *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* is structured as a dialogue between a Chinese scholar, *zhongtushi* [a scholar of the Central land] and a

Western scholar, *xitushi* [a scholar of the Western land].<sup>23</sup> In the course of instructing the Chinese scholar, the European speaker makes intermittent references to 'my Western country' [*wu xiguo*].<sup>24</sup> The dialogue is structured as a series of contrasts, most of which get phrased in terms of what goes on in 'my unworthy country' compared with what goes on in 'your esteemed country'.<sup>25</sup>

Both interlocutors accept the polarization of China and Europe that allows Ricci to set Europe apart from China, and not just apart but above. As he does with his map, Ricci needs a common ground of commensurability, without which dialogue is impossible and Christianity cannot be accommodated to China. But his main concern is to show where commonality breaks down. Without difference, his Chinese reader will see no point in abandoning his own beliefs for Ricci's; worse, the likenesses between Christian and indigenous doctrines might persuade him to accept them as the same, and therefore see no point in switching his allegiance. Maintaining the delicate balance between commensurability and incompatibility is a difficult intellectual project, but Ricci has to look for that balance every time he invokes Europe to expose gaps and errors in Chinese notions of truth. Polarization between Christian and non-Christian is an essential device in the proselytizer's toolkit, but it has to be managed in a way that instructs without alienating.

The polarity is employed consistently in the final chapter on 'the customs and tastes of the Great West'.<sup>26</sup> Although mainly a justification of clerical celibacy, the chapter nonetheless looks for contrasts between various European and Chinese practices to argue for European superiority. The Chinese scholar states Ricci's theme for the chapter in its opening line: 'Since your esteemed country practices the

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<sup>23</sup> The dialogue format was favoured by European missionaries writing for the edification of Asian readers; see Pascal Girard, *Les religieux occidentaux en Chine à l'époque moderne: essai d'analyse textuelle comparée* (Lisbon/Paris: Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, 2000), pp. 305-309.

<sup>24</sup> *TS*, 294.

<sup>25</sup> For example, Ricci has the Chinese scholar say, 'In your esteemed country you have defined goodness as that which is lovable and evil as that which is hateful. But in my humble country there are those who say that goodness emerges from goodness and evil from evil' (*TS*, 353). The dialogue ends with the European scholar saying, 'The learned men of my European country say that virtue is the precious adornment of the spirit, and that if one habitually thinks of righteousness this will result in righteous behavior.' (*TS*, 357).

<sup>26</sup> *TS*, 408.

teaching of the Lord of Heaven, its people must be simple and honest and its customs correct and refined. I would like to hear about your customs'.<sup>27</sup> After the European's response, in which he touches on the papacy and the Society of Jesus, the Chinese is made to observe, with admiration, 'A nation that elects the good to rule over its people and that sends scholars in all directions to instruct the common people is a nation that emphasizes virtue.'<sup>28</sup> Europe is thus represented as the place that realizes Chinese ideals in a way that Chinese cannot. In the same vein, the European declares that 'the ten thousand nations [*wanguo*] throughout the territory of the Great West can all claim to be places where sages have appeared, such that no age is without its sages'.<sup>29</sup> Arguably this statement was designed simply to assert that Europe has had sages, just as China has; yet speaking of Europe in terms of its many nations conveys an impression of sage production on a vast scale. The contrast reaches its most aggressive pitch when the European goes on the attack against the Chinese scholar's doubt about the wisdom of clerical celibacy and observes, 'In China there are those who reject correct sexual behaviour and visit houses of ill repute, and who even put aside sexual relations with women and amuse themselves with boys.'<sup>30</sup> By implication, these are practices not to be found in Europe – although, of course, they were, and provocative of some anxiety for Ricci and other Jesuit missionaries in Asia.<sup>31</sup>

In the years following the revised edition of *Tianzhu shiyi* of 1603, Ricci continued to test his arguments in conversation. Some of these conversations can be found, heavily redacted, in his *Jiren shipian*, engraved in 1607 and printed in 1608.<sup>32</sup> Ricci conceived of *Ten Discourses*

<sup>27</sup> *TS*, 409.

<sup>28</sup> *TS*, 411.

<sup>29</sup> *TS*, 434.

<sup>30</sup> *TS*, 426.

<sup>31</sup> On homosexuality as a source of anxiety for the Jesuits, both in their relations with Chinese and among themselves, see Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Penguin, 1985), pp. 220-29.

<sup>32</sup> I have worked from both the 1628 edition of *Jiren shipian* included in Li Zhizao's *Tianxue chubao* (First collection on the heavenly learning) and the punctuated version in Zhu Weizheng's edition of Ricci's Chinese writings, *Li Madou zhongwen zhuyi ji*, pp. 507-98. *Jiren shipian* has attracted little scholarly scrutiny. Pasquale D'Elia first examined it in a long footnote in *FR*, II, 301-304. To date the only study of the book, D'Elia's 'Sunto Poetico-Ritmico di *I Dieci Paradossi* di Matteo Ricci S.I.', *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 27 (1952), 111-38, consists primarily of translations of the prefaces by Zhou Bingmo and Wang Jiazhi and the opening verse summary of the book's contents. I am grateful to Nicolas Standaert for sending me a copy of D'Elia's essay.

as a companion volume to *The True Meaning*.<sup>33</sup> The book circulated more widely than the catechism and proved to be his most successful.<sup>34</sup> Although the conversations cannot be regarded as transcripts, his interlocutor is always an actual person, not a generic 'Chinese scholar'.<sup>35</sup> The invocation of the philosopher Zhuang Zhou in the title—the term *jiren* comes from the *Zhuangzi*, where it signifies a person of unconventional behaviour—alerts the reader to anticipate stories of strange creatures and stranger people who challenge conventions, defy expectations, and derive lessons from surprising situations. And this is what he gets. The stories are drawn not from the *Zhuangzi*, however, but from European literature: a few from the Bible, many from classical history, and many more from Aesopian fables. Ricci did not intend to employ these sources to produce an impression of Europe for the reader, yet as one reads through the book, such an impression emerges. More than any publication aside perhaps from the *Mappa mundi*, which he cites in the book, *Ten Discourses* is where a Chinese in 1608 could go to learn about the West.<sup>36</sup>

*Ten Discourses* works within a theological framework opposing 'this world' [*ci shijie*] to heaven [*tiantang*].<sup>37</sup> Ricci's stories take place not in relation to this *shijie*, however, but in relation to another world-category, which he expresses by the familiar Chinese term of *tianxia*, 'under heaven'.<sup>38</sup> This is the world that all things and people share. It is a singular place through which institutions and customs vary, but only in details and not in their essence. Chinese and Europeans share this *tianxia* and on this basis experience commonality. For example, China has its ancient sages [*zhongguo shengxian*]<sup>39</sup> as does Europe [*xi-*

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<sup>33</sup> *LM*, 557.

<sup>34</sup> Cited in d'Elia, *Fonti Ricciane*, vol. 2, p. 301, n. 3.

<sup>35</sup> The interlocutors are: 1. Li Dai (ca. 1531-1607), minister of personnel (1598-1603); 2. Feng Qi (1559-1603), minister of rites (1601-1603); 3 and 4. Xu Guangqi; 5. Censor-in-Chief Cao Yubian (1558-1634), a convert; 6. Li Zhizao, a Christian convert; 7. Wu Zhongming, appointed to a censorial post in Nanjing in 1599 (alternatively identified as Wu Dake); 8. Gong Daoli in a conversation dated 1605 (alternatively identified as Gong Sanyi); 9. Guo Dunhua (b. 1531), who met Ricci in Shaozhou; and 10. an unidentified convert Ricci met during his sojourn in Nanjing.

<sup>36</sup> *LM*, 518.

<sup>37</sup> *LM*, 516, 526, and 569.

<sup>38</sup> *LM*, 565 and 577. Ricci also uses *sibai*, 'within the four seas' (*LM*, 347 and 557) and *sifang*, 'within the four directions' (*LM*, 556), to speak of the world.

<sup>39</sup> *LM*, 578.

*fang shengren, xitu guxian, xi shengren*].<sup>40</sup> China has its scholars [*zhong-guo shi*] as does Europe [*xishi*]. China is a large country [*dabang*]<sup>41</sup>, and so too Europe is large. Where their commonality ends is in their structure of sovereignty, Europe being a place of many countries and China being only one country. It was not Ricci's intention to diminish China's status by treating it as one country as against the many of Europe, but once Europe's plurality of states is noted, China ends up being simply one of 'the ten thousand countries in the world' [*tianxia wanguo*] and therefore commensurable to all other individual countries and not to Europe as a whole.<sup>42</sup> Ricci is aware that this presentation may diminish China and thus provoke mockery or hostility rather than understanding,<sup>43</sup> but he has to take this course, for it prepares the ground for viewing the world in a way that will oblige his scholarly interlocutors to change their evaluation of China's place in the world.

*Ten Discourses* offers little to Chinese readers by way of geographical information about Europe, as Ricci rarely locates the sites of his stories. Place names do appear, but they tend to be from the stories set in the classical past, such as Athens [*Yadena*],<sup>44</sup> Syracuse [*Xijiliya*], and the Nile [*Niluohe*].<sup>45</sup> Perhaps he avoids naming contemporary countries to avoid confusing his Chinese reader, but the same avoidance applies to Europeans as well as their places. With the rare exception of a figure from the Bible, most of the people he names come from Europe's classical age: Socrates [*Sugeshuade*], Aesop [*Esubo*], Zenon [*Zenuan*], and Alexander [*Yaruxilao*], to mention a few.<sup>46</sup> Only

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<sup>40</sup> *LM*, 556, 566, and 569.

<sup>41</sup> *LM*, 579.

<sup>42</sup> For example, Ricci has one of his Chinese interlocutors observe that 'each of the ten thousand countries in the world sets up a ruler who monopolizes the power to reward and punish' [*tianxia wanguo geli junwang, yongzhuan shangfa zhi quan*] (*LM*, 557). By implication, China becomes one among this ten thousand.

<sup>43</sup> *LM*, 545.

<sup>44</sup> *LM*, 536. Athens appears in other Jesuit writings as a classical centre of learning; e.g., Vagnoni's *Tongyou jiaoyu* of 1628; cited in Li Sher-Shiueh, 'The Art of Misreading: The Jesuit Use of European *Fables* in Late Ming China', p. 323. Athens may be what Xu Guangqi has in mind when he describes universities in ancient Europe in his notes to Euclid's *Elements* (*XG*, 76).

<sup>45</sup> *LM*, 555 (Syracuse) and *LM*, 518 (Nile) respectively.

<sup>46</sup> *LM*, 535 and 539 (Socrates); 535 and 539 (Aesop); 536 (Zenon); and 530 (Alexander) respectively. Is Alexander correctly identified? Ricci says he was the West's most famous general, but he also identifies him as 'someone from my native area!' Some of the other identifications may also be erroneous.

very occasionally does he name a later figure, such as Salah al-Din Yusuf Ibn Ayyub [*Salading*],<sup>47</sup> the twelfth-century conqueror of Cairo. Otherwise, he declines to name anyone any closer to the present. Historical time has as little role to play in his book as geographical specificity. Stories that took place in antiquity require only that general period designation (e.g. *gu*, *shanggu*, *guxi*, among others). When he introduces Euclid [*Oujilide*] in his preface to the *Elements*, he tells the reader that Euclid lived in the more recent period of antiquity [*zhonggu*], without bothering to indicate when that was.<sup>48</sup> His Europe in the *Ten Discourses* is the Europe of classical times. No European reader would mistake it for the present, but a Chinese reader might.

One moment in historical time that he does date in the *Elements* is the beginning of the Christian era, though even then the reference is ambiguous. In the passage preceding the reference to Euclid, he dates the time 'when Christianity was not yet widely practised' [*weidaxing*] in 'my Western country' [*wuxiguo*] to 1600 years in the past.<sup>49</sup> Though the number is rounded, the dating is fairly exact, given that he was writing in 1607. But there is a curious fiction in the expression 'not yet widely practised,' inasmuch as there was nothing that could be called Christianity when Jesus was in his seventh year. To be fair, Ricci is not dating the birth of Jesus in this passage. He is referring to a period when the plurality of European states [*lieguo*] produced great strategists of siege and defence, which he analogizes to the time of Gong Shu and Mo Di in China's Spring and Autumn Period.<sup>50</sup> It is unclear to what period of European history Ricci is referring — the Trojan Wars, perhaps? — and why he finds it useful to locate this period at the turn of the Christian Era, when he could have pushed back the date by a few centuries and align Europe's warring states with the period of Warring States in China.

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<sup>47</sup> LM, 528.

<sup>48</sup> *Zhonggu* was commonly used not for the middle period of antiquity, but for its later part, prior to *jinggu*, which could come up to the recent past. Engelfriet (*Euclid in China*, p. 457) translates it as 'the more recent antiquity.' On the flexible imprecision of the Chinese concept of mediocrity and the ambiguity of mapping it onto the European concept, see my 'Mediaevality and the Chinese Sense of History,' *The Medieval History Journal* 1:1 (Jan.-June 1998), pp. 145-64.

<sup>49</sup> MR, 346.

<sup>50</sup> Xu Guangqi names the same pair, Gong Shu and Mo Di, in the context of explaining how European knowledge is not at odds with Chinese (XG, 67). Mo Di also comes up in Zhou Bongmo's preface to *Jiren shipian* (2b).

Ricci's writings commonly refer to the plurality of European countries, but in one passage in the *Ten Discourses* this plurality rises into the hundreds:

As a rule, in the several hundred countries in Europe that are of the same Way as me, they bury their dead inside cities. Lest they forget to prepare for death, they have adopted this plan as a way to sustain their vigilance.<sup>51</sup>

The fragility of the claim that Europe consists of hundreds of countries is compounded, at least from our perspective, by the claim that he is counting only those European nations that are 'of the same Way as me' [*wu tongdao*], that is, Catholic. Add in the Protestant and Muslim nations, and the number must rise even further. Some Chinese were aware of the Catholic-Protestant schism to the extent that it was provoking intra-European piracy off the China coast, but this was precisely the sort of conduct that Ricci did not want associated with his idealized image of Europe. Should we make much of these prevarications? Li Sher-Shiueh has suggested not. Jesuits liked to speak and write in fables, which have a way of migrating away from particularity of place.<sup>52</sup> Fables are true to the extent that their moral was valid. The facts they might drag along with them are not important, and therefore it is not important to get them right. Make it several countries, or several hundred countries: it does not much matter. What matters is impressing the listener with the striking willingness of Europeans to face death.

Under the weight of such fabulizing, the real Europe disappears. One of the neatest examples of the disappearance of the real Europe in the *Ten Discourses* is this fable:

Europe has two rivers close to each other. When people drink the water of one river, they laugh themselves to death and cannot stop. When people drink from the other river, they stop laughing and are cured of the sickness. The water that causes people to laugh themselves to death is the worldly pleasure that deludes people and harm their minds. The water that stops the laughing and cures the

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<sup>51</sup> *LM*, 524.

<sup>52</sup> Li, 'The Art of Misreading: The Jesuit Use of European 'Fables' In Late Ming China', p. 314: 'a fable is always subordinate to the "place" it is told. In the case of [stories in] *Jiren shipian*, the 'place' to which [a story] pertains is the person named Ricci.'

sickness is the thought of the imminence of death. Isn't this something worth reflecting on?<sup>53</sup>

No European listener would have thought that Ricci was talking about real rivers, but a Chinese reader had no way to interpret this story other than as a description of two real rivers. Renaissance discourse intended such marvellous stories of hidden realities to 'reflect the deepest ways in which a culture plots its place, and the places of the individuals that constitute it, in the world'.<sup>54</sup> But a Chinese reader curious to learn something about Europe had no way to know that.

#### XU GUANGQI'S EUROPE

We can test the reception of Ricci's ideas about Europe by seeing how they are refracted in the writings of Chinese who knew him. For this, there is no better candidate than Xu Guangqi. Xu was enthusiastic about acquiring new knowledge of the world. He made a particular point of learning what he could from the Jesuits about the outside world. He was better informed about Japan, for instance, than most of his contemporaries,<sup>55</sup> and he probably had greater knowledge of Europe than any Chinese scholar of his generation.

Xu's Europe—Ricci's Far West—was shaped by the context in which Ricci used it to narrate his relationship with China: a relationship that expressed both commonality and polarity. Both are at work in a conversation with Ricci that Xu recalls in the preface to his translation of Sabatino de Ursis's account of European hydraulics, *Taixi shuifa* [Hydraulic Methods of the Far West]. Ricci told him,

I have travelled through upwards of a hundred countries [*shushi bai guo*], and from what I have seen of the land and people of the Central Territory [*zhongtu*], while China is famous for its rites and music and deserves the top rank among all countries within the seas [*hainei*], most of its people are impoverished, so that as soon as they encounter a flood or drought, the roads are littered with corpses.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> LM, 526.

<sup>54</sup> Gary Tomlinson, *Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Timothy Brook, 'Japan in the Late Ming: The View from Shanghai', in *Sagacious Monks and Bloodthirsty Warriors: Chinese Views of Japan in the Ming-Qing Period*, ed. by Joshua A. Fogel (Norwalk CT: EastBridge, 2002), pp. 42-62.

<sup>56</sup> XG, 66.

Xu reports the passage because he accepts its postulates about what China can and can't claim vis-à-vis Europe. This passage provides no information about Europe, but it does situate China in a relationship of commonality with Europe—both are bound to the same commitments to good order and moral conduct ('rites and music'). But this is also a relationship of difference, as China, unlike Europe, is shown to be unable to meet the subsistence needs of its people.

The actual references to Europe in Xu's texts, mostly traceable to Ricci's writings, are thin. He includes nothing about Europe in his masterwork, *Nongzheng quanshu* [Complete Handbook on Agricultural Administration]. The sole mention of the Far West is in the title of the two chapters in which he reprints portions of his translation of de Ursis's hydraulic treatise. Where one might have expected some comment on European applications of technology, he is silent; he does not name Archimedes when he features his screw in the first of these chapters, nor note where the invention came from.

The one passage in which Xu presents a coherent image of Europe is in the memorial he submitted in 1616 in defence of Alfonso Vagnone and Álvaro Semedo, the two Jesuit missionaries impeached by Shen Que for fomenting sectarianism in the southern capital. These men, he declared, 'were regarded as one in a thousand, nay one in ten thousand, in their own country.' They travelled eastward to China over several tens of thousands of *li* because, 'being devoted to cultivating the self and serving heaven, they heard that the teaching of the sages of China is likewise entirely to cultivate the self and serve heaven'.<sup>57</sup> The causal construction of this declaration misleadingly suggests that the missionaries came to China because they were drawn by its reputation for virtuous conduct, not because they wished to replace Chinese teachings with Christian. Xu's purpose was to show, as Ricci had done, that Chinese had nothing to fear from the Europeans, and that the best European values were commensurable with the best Chinese values. He then goes on to offer this description of Christian Europe:

Over thirty countries adjacent to the Western [Atlantic] Ocean have practised this teaching for a dozen centuries down to the present. Greater and lesser care for each other, superior and inferior seek each other's security; nothing is lost on the road and the gates are not barred at night. They have been at peace and well governed in this way for a long time. Even so, those who are concerned

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<sup>57</sup> XG, 431.

for the well-being their country exert themselves, fearing only that they might fall into error and offend the Lord on High.<sup>58</sup>

The idealization of Europe here is hardly surprising in a document designed to swing support at court against Shen Que's accusations. Nor is it surprising to find tropes in missionary writings repeated here, for where else could an aspiring Europaeologist go to find information?<sup>59</sup> Xu's Europe of thirty countries is Ricci's Europe in the *mappa mundi*; so too it is a place where hierarchical relations between rulers and ruled are properly ordered. This image of Europe is oriented to the same high standards as China. Both are places where, as Xu phrases this commonality elsewhere, 'principles common to both East and West' [*dong xi zhi tongli*]<sup>60</sup> guide social life. One can expect practices to diverge at the two extremities, but underlying these divergences is commonality.<sup>61</sup>

In idealizing Europe, Xu accepts Ricci's device of polarizing China with it. Polarity for Xu is never the final outcome of comparison, however; it is always a strategic move to agitate that China lift itself to Europe's accomplishments and accept the Jesuits' help to bring this about. With Ricci it is the opposite. Commonality is a strategic move made to expose the essential difference between Christian and non-Christian (and the failure of the non-Christian to be Christian) that underlay the Jesuit project of converting the world to Christianity. For Xu, on the other hand, it was the unity of all things that enabled him to convert to Christianity, not the idea of a fundamental difference between China and Europe. Always his point of reference remains China. As he notes in his preface to Ricci's *Wanguo erhuan tu* [Double Hemispheric Map of the Ten Thousand Countries] of 1601, the value of Ricci's cartographic method is revealed once one applies it 'from the point of view of the Central Region' [*zi zhongzhou*

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<sup>58</sup> Xu Guangqi, *Xu Guangqi ji*, p. 433. This appears to be Xu Zongze's recension; for a fuller version of the passage, see Chien Cunfu, 'Trying to Assess Aleni's Mission: Success or Failure?', in *Scholar from the West*, ed. by Lippiello and Malek, p. 430.

<sup>59</sup> For example, Aleni in his *Xifang dawen* also claims that objects dropped on the road are not taken and that gates are not barred at night (GA 48).

<sup>60</sup> XG, 67.

<sup>61</sup> The unity of the world was a position that other sympathetic Chinese readily shared. by Wang Jiazhi in his preface to *Jiren shipian* declares that 'the world is not subject to two different principles' [*shi wu erli*], which clears the way for him to affirm the unique truth of Christianity: [*yang wu ertian, tian wu erzhu*] (591).

*yan'er*].<sup>62</sup> His conviction that there were 'principles common to both East and West' enabled him to integrate his view of the world with the Europeans without abandoning his China-centredness. Europe could thus offer ideas and technologies that China did not have, without posing a threat. It was simply a benign force that could supplement practices already known to Chinese scholars [*buru*].

Xu did not assemble a knowledge of Europe other than what Ricci projected. Europe never really mattered to Xu, except perhaps as an expression of an ideal. His Europaeology remained that of the keen amateur whose real concerns lay with China. In this he was not so different from the keen amateurs of China in seventeenth-century Europe who gleaned bits of information from Jesuit writings to elaborate some at times truly far-fetched theories about China in order to understand their still novel encounter with the world.

#### GIULIO ALENI'S EUROPE

The possibility of assembling a knowledge of Europe changed after 1620 as missionary writers such as Giulio Aleni began to compose accounts of Europe for Chinese readers. Nothing like a Chinese discipline of 'Europaeology' took form, yet a literature on Europe in Chinese did begin to appear. Europe became more than a site for amazing tales; it became a place where people lived, in some ways as Chinese did and in other ways not. Europe remained singular, but variants and particularities came into view.

Aleni's *Zhifang waiji* [Records of Areas outside the Administered Realm] of 1623, as Bernard Luk characterizes it, is 'a Renaissance geography' that represents the world in relation to the heavens as well as to the newest advances in astronomy and survey mathematics.<sup>63</sup> Europe is the topic of the second of the book's five chapters, and the longest. According to Luk, Aleni's goal was to describe the world in a way that 'placed Europe in an indisputably advantageous light for the late Ming Chinese.' Europe appears prosperous, socially stable, and morally upright, unrivalled in the non-Chinese world and at least on a par with China, if not slightly above. The image is not unlike Ricci's, though it is presented in a more coherent fashion, which is perhaps why its idealization seems so pronounced. Luk is critical of Aleni's account. As he points out, Aleni depicts a Europe that

<sup>62</sup> XG, 63.

<sup>63</sup> Luk, 'A Study of Giulio Aleni's *Chih-fang Wai Chi*,' p. 61. The following account is based on Luk's assessment and partial translation of the chapter on Europe.

[...] had no conflict between Church and State, no Reformation, no Peasants' War, no religious wars, no very serious Ottoman threat, no price revolution, little disharmony and injustice. It is a remarkably static view of a society that might have existed in the high Middle Ages but never really did. The question naturally arises: would Aleni's Chinese readers have believed in the reality of such an ideal society?<sup>64</sup>

Luk's answer is that it depended on which Chinese read the book. If the reader had turned to Christianity as an alternative to what he regarded as China's debased traditions, he might have accepted the superiority of European learning and the greater perfection of Europe's social and political systems. Xu Guangqi would seem to fall into this category. Others might not, as we shall see.

Fourteen years later in 1637, Aleni wrote another account of Europe, which appears in his *Xifang dawen* [Answers to Questions about the Western Region].<sup>65</sup> He explains in the preface that he wrote it to satisfy Chinese scholars who 'have deigned to ask me about the principles of the Catholic religion and the customs and usages of my native country'.<sup>66</sup> Whereas the previous book focused on geography and took in the entire world, this one deals only with European customs, providing the most comprehensive account of Europe in seventeenth-century China. The image offered in *Xifang dawen* is, again, idealized. All ships are government vessels, built and equipped by rulers; the Pope rules the Italian state; officials are selected on the basis of examinations and are well paid; theft is almost unheard of; the innocent are not interrogated by flogging; the five Confucian virtues are especially esteemed; and, perhaps most surprisingly, 'ceremonies for the ancestors are very important in my native country.' One could argue that Aleni was not so much describing Europe as providing his Chinese readers with an impression of how a Christian country might be governed and a Christian people behave, regardless of where this might be located. That would be a generous interpretation of a text written to convince Chinese of the superiority of Christianity as a technology for transforming society. On the other hand, the same could be said of early works of Sinology, which idealized China in order to propagate humanist values in Europe. At both ends of the

<sup>64</sup> Luk, 'A Study of Giulio Aleni's *Chih-fang Wai Chi*,' p. 74.

<sup>65</sup> *Xifang dawen* is translated by John Mish in his 'Creating an Image of Europe for China: Aleni's *Hsi-fang ta-wen*. Introduction, Translation, and Notes,' *Monumenta Serica*, 23 (1964); the examples are from pp. 36, 43, 46-49, 61.

<sup>66</sup> *GA*, 30.

Eurasian continent, however, there were those who refused to accept what the texts they read presented as knowledge.

#### DONG HAN'S EUROPE

The Achilles heel in the Jesuits' image of Europe was not purely its idealization, though certain strong claims did provoke suspicion among careful readers. Rather, it was a matter of trust. The transfer of knowledge from one cultural milieu to another involves more than a transfer of information; it requires legitimation as well. In matters of science in particular, new paradigms arrive cloaked in assumptions and practices that may have no grounds for legitimacy in the receiving culture. This may change slowly through a process of deliberation and debate, but the surer path to acceptance is encouraging trust in those who bring the new knowledge.<sup>67</sup> Until Chinese could travel to Europe and collect their information first hand, their knowledge of European culture and history was not amenable to demonstration or proof. Without trust in those who brought the knowledge, it could be subjected only to the yardstick of what the culture accepted as common sense, and many of the Europeans' claims were found wanting.

There is no indication in his writings that Xu Guangqi regarded trust as a problem. At no point does he express doubt about what he learned from them. For most Chinese, however, the Jesuits' foreign origin compromised the possibility of trust. Dong Han (b. 1628, js. 1661), another scholar from the Shanghai region, writing toward the end of the seventeenth century, is a good example. Dong saw no reason to extend trust to the missionaries. Dismayed by the number of people who were 'seduced' by Christianity, he felt that he had to argue against what the Europeans taught in order to protect Chinese culture. After reading Aleni's *Zhifang waiji*, he wrote an essay criticizing the book. His method of attack is to select Aleni's more preposterous facts and stories, and use these to question the entire account.<sup>68</sup>

Dong begins with some of the core geographical facts underpinning Aleni's account: that the distance from Europe [*xiyang*] to China is ninety thousand *li* (increased from Ricci's estimate by ten thou-

<sup>67</sup> Pingyi Chu, 'Trust, Instruments, and Cross-Cultural Scientific Exchanges: Chinese Debate over the Shape of the Earth, 1600-1800,' *Science in Context* 12:3 (1999), p. 405.

<sup>68</sup> Dong Han, *Chunxiang zhubi* [Superfluous notes from Waterplant Village], eighteenth-century *Shuoling* edition, reprinted in *Zhongguo jindai xiaoshuo shiliao huibian*, vol. 20 (Taipei, 1980), 2.14a-15b.

sand); that the world consists of a huge plurality of countries (Ricci and Aleni both speak of 'ten thousand countries'); and that it is possible to locate the territories of all countries through the use of a coordinate system referencing their positions to the equator and the two poles. For Dong, these knowledge claims conjure a world that is too large. Though he has no contrary evidence other than his own cultural lore to offer against it, he is clearly not persuaded. For him, the scale being proposed cast doubt on other Jesuit knowledge claims, especially with regard to religion. He begins with Aleni's claim that the Lord of Heaven created the territory of every country and has every country under his direction; that he descended to earth in Judea [*Rudeya*] (a fact that Ricci records on his *Mappa mundi*); that he endowed twelve disciples with the capacity to know the languages and scripts of every nation without having to make the effort of studying them; and much more besides. Dong turns finally to some of Aleni's brief observations regarding European maritime expansion. He notes Aleni's claims that it took Columbus a month to sail across the Atlantic Ocean; that when Cortez introduced horses to America, the indigenous people thought horse and rider were one creature; and that Magellan circumnavigated the globe to a distance of 300,000 *li*.

Dong has no method of evaluation that will enable him to make discriminations among these facts. He thus rejects all three categories at face value without feeling compelled to argue why. What determines his rejection is what underlies it, and that is a profound mistrust of the Europeans bringing the knowledge. It was a mistrust strong enough to negate the entire knowledge project in which Aleni and others were engaged. Indeed, it would seem effectively to have blocked any legitimacy to a field of learning that might have been called *Europaology*, had it been allowed to develop. Dong concludes his dismissal of Aleni in the harshest terms:

The assertions he makes are all more or less like this, fantastical and exaggerated and without any basis whatsoever. To allow these little monks to come from across the ocean and bring their heterodox doctrines into the Chinese realm [*zhonghua*] and then to permit them to build temples where they can live and to support them with lavish official salaries is to delude people's minds and cause them to turn their back on the true Way. Who is responsible for this?<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Dong Han, *Chunxiang zhuibi*, 2.15b.

Dong's parting shot should alert us to the possibility that his attack on the Jesuits was in fact a covert attack on those who permitted them to enter the country and draw court salaries; in other words, the Manchus. We know from Dong's one other book to survive, *Sangang shilüe* [A brief account of the Three Bonds], that he remained loyal to the deposed Ming house and denied the legitimacy of the Qing.<sup>70</sup> The thoroughness with which he pores over suspect portions of Aleni's account suggests nonetheless that his rejection of the Jesuit knowledge of Europe is more than just an occasion to find fault with his new overlords. Still, it is difficult to determine how deep this rejection ran. Does Dong's mistrust indicate that he repudiated everything Aleni wrote, or has he only cherry-picked what struck him as the most ludicrous bits in order to launch a broader attack on the popularity of Christianity? If his rejection is not total, then what basis did he have to select among Aleni's claims, and for what purpose? Is he aware of better claims about the size of the globe, or is it because he wants to challenge the cosmography on which such claims are based? Even if we could sort out the bases of his objections, we still need to assess his assumptions about other aspects of knowledge of Europe embedded in Jesuit accounts. Does he accept the historicity of Columbus, Cortés, and Magellan even as he disputes what Aleni says about them? Dong Han himself provides no hint as to how we might answer these questions. At the very least, we can say that some did not trust the Jesuits as a source of knowledge, and that such distrust corroded the idea of pursuing knowledge of Europe for its own sake.

It is hardly surprising, then, that Europaeology did not get off the ground until the nineteenth century, only to be subsumed by the new (also European) disciplines of history, geography, and sociology. Trapped between the absence of direct knowledge of Europe prior to the nineteenth century and the universalization of academic knowledge categories thereafter, Europaeology could never exist as a field of study as Sinology did, or as Oriental or Asian Studies do today. Fragments of knowledge about Europe made their way into Chinese intellectual circles, but the possibility of assembling a coherent body of knowledge about Europe that could then be subjected to comparative analysis, as eighteenth-century Europeans were doing of China, did not arise.

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<sup>70</sup> Dong Han, *Sangang shilüe*, reprinted in *Sishu weishoushu jikan*, vol. 301. I am grateful to Wang Fansen for pointing out this text to me.

The widespread indifference of Qing Chinese to knowledge of Europe could not have been predicted from the moderately encouraging interest that late-Ming literati showed in the Jesuits. However, political and social circumstances in the Qing did not press home the need for such knowledge. Nor did Europe really matter to China outside the trade its merchants conducted in Southeast Asia. There was no imperative to undertake research on Europe because there was no intellectual pressure to absorb difference when difference remained at a distance. Nor was there an opportunity. The few Chinese who travelled to Europe in the eighteenth century did so as lone individuals in the service of European missionaries or merchants. Scholars did not go abroad. This asymmetry of movement produced an asymmetry of knowledge, which in turn had serious consequences for China when knowledge of Europe was needed and not there.<sup>71</sup>

If Europaeology ever had a chance, it was in the late Ming, when statecraft activists such as Xu Guangqi could challenge those who saw no value in knowledge of what lay outside China. 'How can it be said,' Xu's editor, Chen Zilong, demanded in 1643, 'that only when etiquette is lost may one seek for it among foreigners?' Chen laid down this challenge in the course of defending the inclusion of a clearly 'foreign' text - de Ursis's text on hydrology - in Xu's generically Chinese agricultural handbook.<sup>72</sup> The rhetorical appeal did not rouse his readers to go seeking for knowledge among the foreigners, however. This would be one of the last calls to recognize a plurality of traditions as a benefit to China, until the catastrophic events of the nineteenth century forced a new knowledge relationship with the West.

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<sup>71</sup> Bernard Luk traces the influence Aleni's image of Europe on Chinese accounts of Europe into the 1870s; 'A Study of Giulio Aleni's *Chih-fang Wai Chi*,' p. 83.

<sup>72</sup> Chen Zilong, in Xu Guangqi, *Nongzheng quanshu, fanli*, p. 3. Shi Shenghan notes that the phrase alludes to the seventh year of Duke Zhao in the Zuo Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals.