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University of Kent

**Misrepresentation, Manipulation, and Misunderstandings: The  
Early Jesuit Mission to China 1580-1610**

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the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History



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## Introduction

Accommodation is the label frequently applied to Jesuit missionary policy in China.<sup>1</sup> Probably the most famous Jesuit in the China mission, and a leader of the accommodation policy, was Matteo Ricci. His reputation rests on his sensitive and effective use of cultural accommodation in the efforts to convert the Chinese to Christianity. Hsia believes that this was because he understood that any dialogue between cultures could only bear fruit on the basis of equality and mutual respect.<sup>2</sup> The first phase of missionary efforts by the Society of Jesus entailed: the recruitment of Confucian elites; accommodation to Chinese lifestyle and rituals; and indirect religious propaganda which combined Christian teachings with European sciences and arts in order to attract the educated Chinese.<sup>3</sup> However, I propose that the fruit of the policy of accommodation grew not from equality and mutual respect, but from the systematic control of information presented to the Chinese through forms of misrepresentation and manipulation.

The Jesuits' desire to spread Christianity became distorted by their desire to be accepted by the Chinese elite. They saw this as the path to producing the highest possible number of converts, hoping that converting the ruling classes would result in Christianity being imposed as a state religion.<sup>4</sup> Targeting the upper echelons of Chinese society in their conversion attempts would have been virtually impossible for the missionaries if they did not capitalise on opportunities to impress the Confucian scholars. This meant using practices of dissimulation to present themselves in a particular way and strictly controlling the

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Laven, *Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit Encounter with the East* (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China, 1583-1610: A Short History with Documents* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2016), p. viii.

<sup>3</sup> Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Laven, p. 43.

information about themselves and Europe that was passed on. I aim to revisit the historiography of the accommodation policy, linking this to the discourse on early modern European dissimulation and its uses as a tool for survival.

Most religions agree that lying is a sin, yet in early modern Europe when society was possessed by religious fervour, telling lies and living a lie were cultural phenomena of everyday life.<sup>5</sup> Religious dissimulation, inwardly or secretly adhering to one religion while outwardly practicing another, was by far the most extensive form of forgery.<sup>6</sup> The Jesuits did not exactly practice this in China, yet they made use of dissimulation as a tool in order to ensure the success of their mission. The policy of accommodation relied on misrepresentations and manipulations necessary to make Christianity more acceptable to the Chinese elite. However, I do not wish to simply rename the accommodation policy as a policy of dissimulation through misrepresentation and manipulation. Others have examined the policy of accommodation as the sharing of information between two cultures, and understood adaptations to missionary teachings as cultural transactions. My focus is slightly different. I analyse the Jesuit rhetorical strategy, their actions and how they controlled information. An object which combines the control of information, misrepresentation and manipulation is Matteo Ricci's world map, which is both an integral part of the policy of accommodation and a key to understanding how it functioned. The map will be closely analysed in this light in chapter three.

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<sup>5</sup> Miriam Eliav-Feldon, 'Introduction', in *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Tamar Herzig (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1-8 (p. 1).

<sup>6</sup> Eliav-Feldon, pp.1-8 (p. 2).

This dissertation focuses on the early Jesuit mission to China, from the first expeditions of Michele Ruggieri into mainland China in the 1580s to Matteo Ricci's death in 1610. Rubiés states that the development of the accommodation policy in the Eastern missions and the later rites controversy can be roughly divided into three phases: experimentation and approval (1575-1610); resistance to criticism (1610-1675); and collapse under massive assault (1675-1704).<sup>7</sup> I concentrate on the first phase, when the policy was a process of trial and error. Matteo Ricci was not the founder of the accommodation policy but, particularly in light of the departure of Ruggieri for Rome in 1588, he has been thought of as the father and leader of Chinese Christianity.<sup>8</sup> It was Ricci who spent the next twenty years fine-tuning Jesuit missionary tactics.<sup>9</sup> This is also the period where the earliest of the missionary texts written in Chinese were produced, and by studying how the texts change in their approach to attracting the Chinese, it is possible to see the changes in the policy of accommodation. Ricci and Ruggieri published their first attempt at a Chinese catechism in 1584, only two years after they entered China, although it must be noted that Ruggieri was the lead author of this document.<sup>10</sup> There was then a break in publications as problems in the mission were encountered and strategies had to change. The second wave of publications took place in the latter half of the 1590s, when Ricci published: *On Friendship* in 1595; a treatise on *Memory* in 1596; and the compilation taken from the Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus called *Twenty-five Sayings* in 1599.<sup>11</sup> These were part of the experimentation of the accommodation policy, as Jesuits searched for the best way to attract the literati. The results of this can be seen in the writings from the last decade of Ricci's life, when experience had set the policy of accommodation in stone. During this time, there were three more editions of

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<sup>7</sup> Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'The Concept of Cultural Dialogue and the Jesuit Method of Accommodation: Between Idolatry and Civilization', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 74:147 (2005), 237-280 (p. 244).

<sup>8</sup> Laven, p. 69.; Laven, p. 72.

<sup>9</sup> Laven, p. 67.

<sup>10</sup> Laven, p. 140.

<sup>11</sup> Laven, p. 141.

Ricci's map of the world, and a translation of *A Treatise on the Constellations*. In 1605 Ricci published his definitive work on the Christian doctrine, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*. 1607 saw the publication of the *Six Books of the Elements of Euclid*, and in 1609 Ricci published both an edition of the *Isoperimetric Figures and Ten Discourses of the Man of Paradox*, which was based on conversations and debates he had with various scholars throughout his life in China.<sup>12</sup> These texts were all crucial to the Jesuit policy of accommodation and their aims to appeal to the elite male literati officials.<sup>13</sup>

Created in 1540 by Ignatius Loyola, the Society of Jesus was the most dynamic religious community of the sixteenth century.<sup>14</sup> A key difference between the Jesuits and other religious orders was their investment in education. This was highly significant to the accommodation policy carried out in China, but more generally it meant that the missionaries themselves were well-educated and thus poised to participate in the Republic of Letters.<sup>15</sup> Throughout Europe, Jesuit teachers were in great demand as their learning, doctrine and discipline won repeated invitations from ruling elites to establish colleges.<sup>16</sup> Other religious orders, like the Dominicans, generally received a rather narrow and abbreviated education, which focused on Thomistic dogmatic and moral theology. They were not trained in scientific subjects, rhetoric or philosophy, which were an integral part of the Jesuit curriculum.<sup>17</sup> The Jesuit missionaries were also far more prolific in the publishing of letters, travel accounts and natural histories on the overseas missions.<sup>18</sup> Laven suggests that the lack of monastic

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid; Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552-1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 269.

<sup>13</sup> Laven, p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen J. Harris, 'Jesuit Scientific Activity in the Overseas Missions, 1540-1773', *Isis*, 96:1 (2005), 71-79 (p. 78).

<sup>16</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Menegon, p. 57.

<sup>18</sup> Harris, pp.71-79 (p.76).



community support was made up for by a group therapy of letter writing for the close knit, but far flung, community of Jesuits.<sup>19</sup>

The benefit of the scale of Jesuit communications and publications for a historian is that there is a large corpus of extant writings. Ricci's journal, written during the last two years of his life in China and entitled *Della Entrata della Compagnia di Giesù et Christianità nella Cina* is essential for studying this period as it is not only a record of his voice, but also an edited piece of propaganda to publicise the mission throughout Europe. After his death, Ricci's journal was edited and published in Latin by fellow Jesuit Nicolas Trigault in 1615 under the title *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas*.<sup>20</sup> A great contribution to this field came in March 2016, with Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia's work *Matteo Ricci and the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents*. In this work Hsia has translated not only a wide collection of Jesuit letters and excerpts from Ricci's Chinese publications, but also official Chinese documents and many letters between Chinese literati and Buddhist clergy. Hsia's translations are the first in a European language for many of these texts.<sup>21</sup> This has widened the range of scholarship available to non-Chinese speaking scholars.

Ricci's map, annotated with Chinese characters describing the inhabitants and products of the various countries, reveals the central tenets of the missionary strategy. The Chinese characters were translated by Lionel Giles for *The Geographical Journal*.<sup>22</sup> He also translated the prefaces written by the literati elite, who attest to the accuracy of Ricci's

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<sup>19</sup> Laven, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Hsia, *Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China*, p. viii.

<sup>21</sup> Timothy Billings, 'A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552-1610 (Book Review)', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 64:3 (2011), 981-983 (p. 982).

<sup>22</sup> Lionel Giles, 'Translations from the Chinese World Map of Father Ricci', *The Geographical Journal*, 52:6 (1918), 367-385; Lionel Giles, 'Translations from the Chinese World Map of Father Ricci (continued)', *The Geographical Journal*, 53:1 (1919), 19-30

work.<sup>23</sup> Giles' translations were essential to this study as it is possible to examine precisely what Ricci presented to his target audience, as well as what he stressed or omitted. In an extensive article, 'Recent Discoveries and New Studies (1938-1960) on the World Map in Chinese of Father Matteo Ricci', Pasquale M. D'Elia provides an invaluable investigation into the various editions of the Ricci map, offering comparisons of their contents as well as suggesting origins for many of the Chinese aspects of Ricci's work. There are four editions of Ricci's world map, each one slightly revised and re-printed thousands of times in China.<sup>24</sup> There are no extant copies of Ricci's first or second editions of the map, but from other sources and research carried out in the first half of the twentieth century, they can be reconstructed.<sup>25</sup> On all the editions of the map, the only aspects that changed significantly were the various prefaces of literati and some textual descriptions of the various countries. In my discussion of the map, I focus on the third edition made in Beijing in 1602.

This dissertation intertwines elements of religious, cartographic, scientific and intercultural history as well as material culture. Several texts have already examined a combination of these themes. Hui-Hung Chen's article 'The Human Body as a Universe: Understanding Heaven by Visualisation and Sensibility in Jesuit Cartography in China' was key to understanding how religious concepts were conveyed through maps. She argues that Jesuits embedded religious meaning into the iconography of their maps which were used as visual materials to embody the teachings of mathematics and astronomy.<sup>26</sup> This argument complements that of Luci Nuti who, in her article 'The World Map as an Emblem: Abraham Ortelius and the Stoic Contemplation', shows how maps can function as manifestations of

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<sup>23</sup> Giles, pp.367-385 (p. 371).

<sup>24</sup> Pasquale M. D'Elia, 'Recent Discoveries and New Studies (1938-1960) on the World Map in Chinese of Father Matteo Ricci', *Monumenta Serica*, 20 (1961), 82-164 (p. 120).

<sup>25</sup> D'Elia, pp.82-164 (p. 85); D'Elia, pp.82-164 (p. 88).

<sup>26</sup> Hui-Hung Chen, 'The Human Body as a Universe: Understanding Heaven by Visualisation and Sensibility in Jesuit Cartography in China', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 93:3 (2007), 517-552 (p. 521); Chen, pp.517-552 (p. 520).

moral and religious thought.<sup>27</sup> This can clearly be seen in the Ricci map. Chen provides an excellent overview of the dominant Chinese cartographical styles, highlighting the difference between the centripetal Chinese grid pattern, which aimed at a central focus, and a western grid pattern that was centrifugal, aiming at expansion and domination.<sup>28</sup> In local Chinese gazette maps, the central government building would be enlarged, while the marginal areas would appear diminished, even neglected, showing where the significance lay in the Chinese mind-set.<sup>29</sup> The difference between Chinese and European cartographical styles was essential for my analysis of Jesuit misunderstandings and their cartographic control of information in chapter three. For a broader background to Jesuit activity in Europe, Mordechai Feingold's *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters* was extremely useful. Feingold supports the view that the Jesuits harnessed their intellectual endeavours to religious and political ends.<sup>30</sup> His book paints a picture of Jesuits taking part in potentially heretical discussion and not being afraid to act outside conventional orthodoxy. The Jesuits experimented with social and religious conventions to aid their religious message, often provoking controversy by trying to introduce up to date teachings in their scientific lessons.<sup>31</sup> Ugo Baldini argues that the scientific training of at least some of the missionaries had to be sufficient not only to perform certain tasks but also to attach credit to their religious teaching.<sup>32</sup> He goes so far as to state that the mathematical sciences were considered instrumental for apologetic purposes and propaganda.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Lucia Nuti, 'The World Map as an Emblem: Abraham Ortelius and the Stoic Contemplation', *Imago Mundi*, 55 (2003), 38-55 (p. 50-51).

<sup>28</sup> Chen, pp.517-522 (p. 530).

<sup>29</sup> Chen, pp.517-522 (p. 531).

<sup>30</sup> Mordechai Feingold, 'Jesuits: Savants', in *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*, ed. by Mordechai Feingold (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 1-45 (p. 3).

<sup>31</sup> Feingold, pp. 1-45 (p. 27).

<sup>32</sup> Ugo Baldini, 'The Academy of Mathematics of the Collegio Romano from 1553 to 1612', in *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*, ed. by Mordechai Feingold (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 47-98 (p. 54).

<sup>33</sup> Baldini, pp. 47-98 (p. 69).

The view of Jesuits being unafraid to experiment with concepts of orthodoxy is reinforced by the historiography on dissimulation. In *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe*, Perez Zagorin demonstrates that the issue of dissimulation long antedated the sixteenth century in discussions between Christian moral philosophers, and that a culture of dissimulation was a significant reality in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe.<sup>34</sup> Jon R. Snyder, in *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe*, explains that the widely held view of personhood at this time was that the mind was, or ought to be, secret, hidden, withdrawn and well-defended. Thoughts were inscrutable and masked in impenetrable shadows; they could be read by others only if one chose to open up and reveal the inner workings of the heart and mind.<sup>35</sup> In the Christian tradition, dissimulation was not a sin as in some circumstances it could be necessary and praiseworthy.<sup>36</sup> Of particular use in understanding Jesuit dissimulation was Stefania Tutino's article 'Between Nicodemism and 'Honest' Dissimulation: The Society of Jesus in England', in which she analyses the use of dissimulation as a political tool by Jesuit missionaries to survive in a Protestant country. She also argues that categories such as conformity and orthodoxy should not be considered as fixed abstract models, but should be interpreted as fluid and ever changing concepts.<sup>37</sup>

Maps are powerful visual sources, but can present difficulties when trying to approach them systematically and analytically. One book which achieves this is Jerry Brotton's *A History of the World in Twelve Maps*. He shows that problems of scale, perspective,

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<sup>34</sup> Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 12.; Zagorin, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (California: University of California Press, 2009), p. xiv.

<sup>36</sup> Guido Dall'Olio, 'Beyond Simulation: An Enquiry Concerning Demonic Possession', in *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Tamar Herzig (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 130-141 (p. 133).

<sup>37</sup> Stefania Tutino, 'Between Nicodemism and 'Honest' Dissimulation: The Society of Jesus in England', *Historical Research*, 79:206 (2006), 534-553 (p. 535).

orientation and projection are constant to all map makers throughout history, but the responses are specific to the map maker's particular culture.<sup>38</sup> Brotton uses small details on a map as part of a reflective process to examine the wider historical and societal context of the map's creation. This is extremely effective and sets an excellent example of how to analyse a map as a product of the contemporary influences surrounding it. Whilst Brotton does not deal with Ricci's map, he does provide comprehensive coverage of Gerard Mercator's world map of 1569, which was one of Ricci's sources for the creation of his own map.<sup>39</sup>

Mary Laven's book, *Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit Encounter with the East*, examines the specific relationship between Jesuits and local Chinese, and also a more general relationship between East and West. Her approach is non-chronological, facilitating a greater scope for analysis of thematic points. She raises an interesting discussion of gender and sexual identity in relation to the opposition between eunuchs and Jesuits. Laven concludes that the conspicuousness of eunuchs in Chinese society and the prevalence of debates of filiality intensified anxieties over what it was to be male, and that Ricci's writings reflect these uncertainties.<sup>40</sup> Also valuable was her study of Michele Ruggieri, who has been somewhat eclipsed by Ricci in the historiography following the mission. It is arguable that Ruggieri led the way in gaining insights and learning about Chinese culture.<sup>41</sup> He was the principle author of the first Chinese catechism and had written several Chinese verses in the Confucian tradition.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Jerry Brotton, *A History of the World in Twelve Maps* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> Brotton, p. 218; Giles, pp.19-30 (p. 28).

<sup>40</sup> Laven, p. 193.

<sup>41</sup> Laven, p. 75.

<sup>42</sup> Laven, p. 74.

Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia's biography of Ricci, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552-1610*, makes use of both European and Chinese sources to comprehensively cover every part of Ricci's life in China. He translates and analyses some of Ricci's most important works, assessing their role in the Jesuit policy and how they complemented Confucian wisdom. Hsia adopts a chronological order, with each chapter focused around a location where Ricci lived and recounts his interactions with notable figures and other events that took place during his residency. Hsia particularly focuses on Ricci's relationships with various scholars, and the Jesuit policy to appeal to the literati. He links the high number of visitors that the Jesuits received in Beijing to the scholars doing the final jingshi examination, who distracted themselves by visiting the famous sites of the capital. The Jesuit residence had opened as a museum of curiosities, with maps, books, astrolabes, quadrants, globes and other marvels to capture the gaze of the Ming ruling elites.<sup>43</sup>

The policy of accommodation was almost entirely a Jesuit enterprise and not undertaken by any of the other Catholic religious orders. An excellent comparison of Jesuit and Dominican processes of evangelisation can be found in Eugenio Menegon's book *Ancestors, Virgins, And Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China*. His primary focus is the Dominican mission in the latter half of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, but the comparison is still very interesting as the Dominican friars in Fuan province in the 1630s were adamant in their opposition to ancestral rituals among the converts.<sup>44</sup> This work provides a view of the climax of the China mission and the tensions over the rites controversy that eventually fractured it. Many Dominican friars were forced to

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<sup>43</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 268.

<sup>44</sup> Menegon, p. 2.

leave China as they refused to accept the conditions of the decree of the Emperor Kangxi: that all missionaries had to adhere to the Jesuit position on Chinese rites.<sup>45</sup>

One historian who focuses on the problems of the accommodation policy and argues that there was a fundamental incompatibility between Catholicism and Confucianism is Jacques Gernet. His work is important for this study as he proposes that the early mission was an exercise in seduction.<sup>46</sup> Gernet examines the linguistic and philosophical outlooks of both missionaries and the Chinese, stating that different languages express, through different logics, different visions of the world and man.<sup>47</sup> He argues that the differences between Chinese and European culture ran deeper than religion, in that there were differences in social forms, and moral, political and philosophical traditions. All the parts that make up Christianity – eternal soul and the perishable body, kingdom of God and the earthly world, and the incarnation – were all more accessible to the inheritors of Greek thought than to the Chinese.<sup>48</sup>

The ultimate aim of this study is to readdress the nature of the mission. The Jesuit mission to China is remembered as a triumph of humanist learning, eloquence and cultural synthesis.<sup>49</sup> Harris references the missionaries' skill in cross cultural intimacy, linking it to their care in learning languages, attention to customs and the desire to win the trust and confidence of the indigenous peoples.<sup>50</sup> The Jesuits were perceptive regarding the political and social conditions in China, their policies aimed at gaining social acceptance with the final aim of converting the populace. They realised that the easiest way to meet their aims was to

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<sup>45</sup> Menegon, p. 107-108.

<sup>46</sup> Laven, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> Jacques Gernet, *Chine et Christianisme* [China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures], trans. by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> Laven, p. 199.

<sup>50</sup> Harris, pp.71-79 (p.76).

employ a clear strategy of the control of information through misrepresentation and manipulation, as otherwise their mission would not succeed. I will demonstrate this by using the discussion of dissimulation to underpin my argument and inform my understanding of the Jesuits' strategy in their presentation of themselves, actions towards others, published writings and the style of their teachings.

The first chapter of this dissertation examines how the Jesuits chose to present themselves and their religion when they first entered China. It considers how dressing as Buddhists was key to being accepted as religious figures, but how this disguise resulted in misunderstandings about their identity that ultimately undermined their missionary enterprise. The second chapter analyses the attempts by the Jesuits to ingratiate themselves with the literati, and discusses the misrepresentations and manipulations surrounding gift exchange in early modern diplomacy. The third chapter centres around the early modern cartographic traditions of Europe and China, specifically analysing Matteo Ricci's world map. This chapter compares contemporary Chinese and European cartographical styles, before investigating the world presented by Ricci to the Chinese. I propose that his map controlled geographic and cultural information to misrepresent Europe. The fourth chapter studies the information control employed by the Jesuits in their communications back to Europe, showing how they had to balance between justifying their acceptance of Confucian rituals by arguing that they were the vestiges of ancient monotheism, whilst still showing that they were trying to spread true Christianity. This chapter concludes with an analysis of Jesuit esoteric teachings and how information and knowledge about Christianity was carefully regulated and hidden from the majority of Chinese so as not to deter the literati upon whom the Jesuits depended.



## 1: Presentation of the Self

The seeds of the policy of accommodation were planted at the beginning of the mission as the Jesuits chose how to present themselves and their religion to the Chinese. Their presentation was grounded in the control of information with dissimulation through misrepresentation and manipulation necessary for the success of the mission. This chapter examines how the mission to China was shaped by the experience of the Jesuit mission to Japan, and investigates the first presentation of themselves that the Jesuits chose to adopt: Buddhist monks. The Jesuits disguised themselves as Buddhist because of their desire to blend into local culture. I will apply theories on dissimulation to the Jesuits' actions and consider how Jesuit misrepresentations and their misunderstanding of the nature of Chinese religious beliefs meant that, during early contacts, most Chinese people had no clear idea as to the Jesuits' true identity.

The historical discussion of Jesuit accommodation in China is dominated by the figure of Ricci. However, the policy did not begin with him and neither did the history of the Jesuit mission to China as the first Jesuits arrived in 1555.<sup>51</sup> A major problem for the Jesuits was the law that no foreigner could reside in China, and they drew on experience from other missions to tackle this.<sup>52</sup> The Jesuit Visitor to the Far East, Alessandro Valignano, has been called the founder of the policy of cultural accommodation.<sup>53</sup> His thinking was shaped by his experience of the Japan mission, which he first visited in 1579. His missionary directives for Japan reveal that he saw the best path to conversion being the smooth blending of missionaries into the social fabric of the host culture. He stated that 'even if the local lord and many of his vassals become Christians, avoid drawing attention by destroying his temples

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<sup>51</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 59.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>53</sup> Hsia, *Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China*, p. 65.

and engaging in similar repugnant acts'.<sup>54</sup> He supported the destruction of pagan idols but insisted that they 'should be gathered and burned in secrecy little by little.' The aim of this was to prevent people from saying that '[the Jesuits] bring destruction and desolation to everything.' Of particular interest is Valignano's directive that 'when preaching the Gospel, we should avoid mixing in European customs not needed for the salvation of souls.'

Valignano led the cultural accommodation policy, and displayed an awareness of foreign culture by stating that

those of our customs that run contrary to Japanese customs will not only be rejected but will also cause the rejection of the Gospel itself [...]. Unless they are clearly against divine law, we should follow the Japanese way in all these things.<sup>55</sup>

He set a significant precedent for allowing cultural customs to continue among converts as long as they were not explicitly against Christian teachings. This policy of presenting carefully selected information was expanded upon by future generations of Jesuits causing problems such as the Chinese rites controversy.

The Jesuit mission to China was shaped by the experience of the Japan mission. This is evident in Ricci's journal where the awareness of the need to blend into society and not cause a disturbance is an ever-present theme. After Michele Ruggieri and Francisco Pasio had been expelled from Zhaoqing in 1583, Ricci and Ruggieri petitioned officials for permission to return. Significantly, 'neither in this request nor in any other way was any mention made of Christianity [...] for fear it might interfere with the one thing necessary, namely, to remain in the Kingdom.' Attempting to justify this unusual statement, Ricci argued that the Chinese

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<sup>54</sup> Alessandro Valignano and Alonso Sanchez: Two Jesuit views on evangelisation in East Asia, 1581-88, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 65-68.

<sup>55</sup> Alessandro Valignano and Alonso Sanchez: Two Jesuit views on evangelisation in East Asia, 1581-88, pp. 65-68.

were particularly averse to the preaching of new laws as previously ‘civil tumults and sedition have been caused by gathering a following of conspirators,’ all ‘under pretext of preaching a new law.’<sup>56</sup> The mission began with the insightful cultural observation that it would be necessary to conform to Chinese societal norms to be accepted, giving rise to a policy of manipulation and control of information, misrepresentation of the missionaries themselves, and misunderstandings about the other culture from both the Chinese and the missionaries.

In the late thirteenth century, Franciscan preachers who had been well received by the Mongol regimes of central Asia brought back their initial reports about East Asian religions. These reports on prayers, meditation, texts and saints, though quite accurate, aroused little interest in Europe and the information was not followed up in any consistent way.<sup>57</sup> The most widely known sources of information about the Far East were medieval travel accounts, particularly those of Marco Polo and John Mandeville.<sup>58</sup> Information about systems of religious belief in China available to the Jesuits in the 1580s was mostly out of date and, in the case of that supplied by Mandeville, fictitious. Previous Spanish and Portuguese missionaries from the Dominican and Augustinian orders visited China in the mid-sixteenth century and composed lengthy ethnographic accounts. However, these missionaries never penetrated the higher echelons of society as the Jesuits would do, so their accounts only contained observations of common culture. Of particular interest to these early missionaries was the nature of local religion. Martín de Rada, who entered China in 1575, composed an ethnographic report in which he described religious customs and the types of local ‘friars’

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<sup>56</sup> Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610*, trans. by Louis J. Gallagher, ed. by Nicholas Trigault (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 142.

<sup>57</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), p. 101-102.

<sup>58</sup> Laven, p. 6-7.

that he encountered in China.<sup>59</sup> Another focus of these early missionaries was appraising the potential for, and obstacles to, conversion among the populace. Gaspar da Cruz travelled in Guangzhou from 1556-7. He noted that 'there is a very good disposition in the people of this country for to become converted to the faith.'<sup>60</sup> He was comforted that Chinese dietary forms would not draw them towards Islam: 'among all the meats [the Chinese] esteem pork most, it is impossible for them to become Moors.'<sup>61</sup>

The first Jesuit missionaries to enter China were relying on either outdated and sometimes fictitious information, or more recent information hurriedly gathered by Dominican and Augustinian missionaries who spent very little time in China. Consequently, the Jesuits had little concept as to what the systems of belief were, and they significantly misunderstood a vital part of Chinese religion: its syncretic nature. People could be devout Buddhists or Taoists and simultaneously adhere to some Confucian teachings. The sects were not exclusive and in the late Ming period Confucianism was permeated with Buddhist and Taoist ideas.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, Confucianism and Buddhism should not be seen as separate doctrines, as Buddhism in China had become more Taoist and Chinese than Indian.<sup>63</sup> Whilst early modern Christianity was committed to conversion and the dismantling of idolatry, the Chinese took a more syncretic approach to religion and, provided that there was no threat to

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<sup>59</sup> The Relation of Fr. Martín de Rada, in *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr Gaspar Da Cruz, Fr Martin De Rada 1550-1575* ed C. R. Boxer (London Hakluyt Society, 1953), pp. 241-310 (p.308).

<sup>60</sup> The Treatise of Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, in *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr Gaspar Da Cruz, Fr Martin De Rada 1550-1575* ed C. R. Boxer (London Hakluyt Society, 1953), pp. 45-240 (p.217).

<sup>61</sup> The Treatise of Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, pp. 45-240 (p. 218).

<sup>62</sup> Yu Liu, 'The Dubious Choice of an Enemy: The Unprovoked Animosity of Matteo Ricci against Buddhism', *The European Legacy*, 20:3 (2015), 224-238 (p. 236).

<sup>63</sup> Gemet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 78.

social stability, considered their spiritual lives to be enriched by the addition of new devotional strands.<sup>64</sup>

Two thousand Chinese people were baptised during Ricci's life. Most of these were uneducated people who had not disassociated themselves from idolatrous Buddhist customs.<sup>65</sup> In 1592, Ricci described a recent convert who was considered a good spiritual man. Before becoming a Christian, this man had 'never [eaten] meat or fish or eggs or similar food, but sustain[ed] himself on vegetables,' as well as meditating 'in the manner of the Gentile sects.' According to Ricci, this convert believed that 'to become Christian meant leaving the world and becoming a hermit.'<sup>66</sup> The missionaries had misunderstood the fact that religious belief in China could be far more unique and individual than was possible in early modern Europe. The new convert was merely sampling Christian practices and forming his own spirituality by selecting the aspects he liked and ignoring those which he did not. The effect of this composite approach to religion was that the Jesuits competed in what Menegon refers to as a religious market, trying to offer the benefits of their religion above the others.<sup>67</sup>

Keeping the cultural conceptual barriers in mind, it is interesting to examine how the Jesuits first presented themselves to the Chinese:

We are religious men who serve God, the Lord of Heaven, and come from the Extreme West, [...], on account of the reputation of the good governance of China. We wish only to remain here, where, free

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<sup>64</sup> Laven, p. 66.

<sup>65</sup> Laven, p. 209.

<sup>66</sup> Excerpts from letters written by Ricci to General Claudio Acquaviva, Shaozhou, November 15, 1592, and January 15 and 17, 1593, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 69-70.

<sup>67</sup> Menegon, p. 68.

from the noise of commerce and other secular things in Macao, we could build a small house and chapel and spend the rest of our lives serving God.<sup>68</sup>

There are several significant elements in this quotation. To start with, finding a Chinese term for God was very difficult for the missionaries. They located within the Confucian classics references to the 'Sovereign on High' and used the term Shangdi.<sup>69</sup> This word was a pre-existing term within the Confucian canon and so carried preconceived Chinese theological notions, from which the Jesuits could not always separate their own teachings. The Jesuits also tried to translate their idea of God as Tianzhu, literally meaning the 'Lord of Heaven'.<sup>70</sup> Yet again, this caused difficulties as the term was taken from the Buddhist vocabulary.<sup>71</sup> The inability of the Jesuits to express their religious ideas in new and original forms that were not burdened by pre-existing religious connotations led to several other misunderstandings. In the mid-1580s provincial governor Chen Rui agreed with Ruggieri that Tian, meaning heaven, was omnipotent and just. They did not have a common vocabulary enabling them to distinguish between various religious concepts such as the difference between God and Heaven.<sup>72</sup>

To try to define themselves, the Jesuits adopted and adapted Buddhist terminology, which permeated almost every facet of the mission from its inception. This resulted in cultural misunderstandings as, to the Chinese, in their speech the Jesuits appeared to be Buddhists. This was compounded by the fact that the Jesuits even dressed as Buddhists, an instance of their desire to control and manipulate information to ensure the survival of the

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<sup>68</sup> Excerpts from the relevant passages of Della entrata on the missionary work of the Jesuits in Zhaoqing, their *relationship with their mandarin patrons, and Ricci's scientific work*, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 61-63.

<sup>69</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 25.

<sup>70</sup> Yu Liu, 'The Complexities of a Stoic Breakthrough: Matteo Ricci's Ershiwu Yan (Twenty-five Paragraphs)', *The Journal of World History*, 24:4 (2013), 823-847 (p. 832).

<sup>71</sup> Liu, pp.224-238 (p. 234).

<sup>72</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 76.

mission. The statement that they came ‘from the Extreme West’ was an ambiguous description at best, but the Jesuits manipulated the phrase to suggest that they came from the western-most country the Chinese knew: India.<sup>73</sup> Ruggieri wanted the Chinese to identify the Jesuits with the region from where monks and sacred doctrines once came to China.<sup>74</sup> They also asked to distance themselves from Macao as part of the policy to try to appear peaceful and reassure the Chinese that they would not upset the balance of the state. Most Chinese considered the Portuguese uncivilised and uninterested in Chinese culture. Ruggieri and Ricci were desperate to present themselves different to the Portuguese traders whom the Chinese saw as ‘bellicose men.’<sup>75</sup>

Ruggieri was the first to put into practice the policy of cultural accommodation designed by Valignano.<sup>76</sup> He was advised by the official Chen Rui in Zhaoqing to dress as a Buddhist monk for his arrival in 1583. This is most likely because Chen Rui believed the Jesuits to be a sect of Buddhism due to the ambiguity of language with which they described themselves. However, the Jesuits then built on this misunderstanding with deliberate misrepresentations. In the preface to Ruggieri’s 1584 catechism, the *Tianzhu Shilu* or *The True Record of the Lord of Heaven*, he employed the Buddhist term *seng*, meaning monk, to refer to himself, and even used the fact that he had previously been in India to develop the presentation of himself as an Indian monk.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Excerpts from the relevant passages of Della entrata on the missionary work of the Jesuits in Zhaoqing, their *relationship with their mandarin patrons, and Ricci’s scientific work*, pp. 61-63.; D’Elia, pp.82-164 (p. 85).

<sup>74</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 80.

<sup>75</sup> From another letter of Father Michele Ruggieri, from Macao, the twenty-fifth of January, 1584, in *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-84* ed Howard M. Rienstra (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 21-22.

<sup>76</sup> Yu Liu, ‘Adapting Catholicism to Confucianism: Matteo Ricci’s *Tianzhu Shiyi*’, *The European Legacy*, 19:1 (2014), 43-59 (p. 44).

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*

Liu challenges the idea that the Jesuits' adoption of Buddhist dress was plain dishonesty and deception. He argues that Ricci knew he had to blend in to avoid antagonism, and that the recognition of this need motivated him to assume a persona that at once explained and somewhat concealed who he really was.<sup>78</sup> The actions of the Jesuits should not be considered as dishonest because dissimulation was a contemporary European cultural phenomenon that came in many nuanced layers, of which manipulations and misrepresentations were a part. Ricci grew up in Italy at the time of Balthassar Castiglione and Giovanni Della Casa who were authors of conduct literature – a genre which provided detailed instructions on dancing, jousting, laughing and speaking. It was a culture of disguise, where everyone was an actor, shaping their behaviour to enhance their status in the theatre of the world.<sup>79</sup>

The discourse on dissimulation was most prominent in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. A culture of self-control offered individuals emotional and mental guidance in a time of spiritual uncertainty and widespread turmoil, following the schisms in the church.<sup>80</sup> Religious affiliation was the major cause for dissimulation, and the Jesuits' religious affiliation was certainly not clear to the Chinese.<sup>81</sup> They dissimulated their identity by using manipulation and misrepresentation as tools to help their transition into Chinese society. Tutino states that two forms of dissimulation existed in the early modern period. The first form was offensive dissimulation. This was recommended to, and employed by, rulers as a political tool. Machiavelli advocated dissimulation as a legitimate, effective and sometimes necessary technique for acquiring and maintaining power.<sup>82</sup> He stated that 'it is necessary

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<sup>78</sup> Yu Liu, 'The Preparation for Proselytizing: Matteo Ricci's Treatise on Jiao-You-Lun (On Friendship)', *Mosaic*, 43:3 (2010), 167-183 (p. 168).

<sup>79</sup> Laven, p. 21.

<sup>80</sup> Snyder, p. 43.

<sup>81</sup> Eliav-Feldon, pp.1-8 (p. 1).

<sup>82</sup> Tutino, pp.534-553 (p. 534).



[...] to be a great pretender and dissembler,' and 'he who seeks to deceive will always find someone who will allow himself to be deceived.'<sup>83</sup> The second form of dissimulation was defensive, defined as a necessary falsehood in the face of repressive Church or state persecution. In times of religious persecution, concealment and dissimulation of one's faith became essential for survival.<sup>84</sup> This is the category of dissimulation that better fits the Jesuits in China. Unlike the Jesuit mission to England in the 1580s, which struggled in a country ruled by a Protestant queen, the Jesuits in China had the option of being entirely open and truthful about the nature of their presence.<sup>85</sup> The syncretic nature of Chinese religious belief meant that there was no need to dissimulate. However, the Jesuits in China behaved very similarly to their counterparts in England, disguising themselves through their dress and wearing lay clothes when they were not celebrating the Eucharist or hearing confession.<sup>86</sup> Tutino states that the Jesuit hierarchy was primarily concerned about the safety and preservation of its members, and that the strategy of concealing one's identity was aimed at securing the survival of the missionaries.<sup>87</sup> In China, the Jesuits saw that the best way to ensure the survival of the mission was the smooth integration of the missionaries into society, and so they dissimulated and blurred their identity through misrepresentations and manipulations to achieve this end.

Key forms of Jesuit dissimulation were their choice of dress, use of Buddhist terminology, and lack of information they provided about where they came from. This dissimulation, coupled with the deceptive resemblances between Christian and Buddhist practices, meant that the Jesuits were almost entirely misunderstood by common people. At

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<sup>83</sup> Niccoló Machiavelli, *The Prince on the Art of Power*, ed. by Cary J. Nederman (London: Duncan Baird, 2007), p. 130.

<sup>84</sup> Tutino, pp.534-553 (p.535).

<sup>85</sup> Tutino, pp.534-553 (p.537-538).

<sup>86</sup> Tutino, pp.534-553 (p.539).

<sup>87</sup> Tutino, pp.534-553 (p.540).

this societal level the confusion between different religious currents and influences was even greater, the level of spiritual individuality amongst common people meant that they did not adhere to any clearly defined religions.<sup>88</sup> The distinctions between Christian and Buddhist doctrines were really only clear to the Jesuits and even after the mid-1590s, when they discarded Buddhist dress, they were not always perceived as anything other than eccentric Buddhist monks. The Jesuits tried to stress the differences of their teachings to Buddhism, but historically, many Indian masters and Chinese schools of Buddhism trying to reform commonly held practices, asserted their own differences and originality. This meant that the Jesuits were merely seen as the latest sect promoting their own understanding of Buddhist texts.<sup>89</sup> The Jesuits attempted to integrate smoothly into Chinese society by adopting the appearance of a culturally familiar religious group. Unfortunately, they had a flawed understanding of the nature of Buddhism, misrepresented themselves in order to assist their integration into society, and struggled to express their own teachings as the terms they chose almost all had their roots in Chinese theology. In their writings and in their style of dress, the Jesuits appeared to be Buddhists.

Misunderstandings about Jesuit identity were assisted by the aesthetic similarities between Christian and Buddhist practices. Ignoring his presentation of himself and his order, Ricci explained that Jesuits were often mistaken for Buddhists ‘because they were celibates, had a temple and recited prayers at stated hours.’ Ricci attempted to down-play the level of similarities between his own practices and Buddhism saying, ‘the resemblance of some of the functions performed by the Fathers and by the priests of the Chinese temples caused the people to apply the same name to things that were altogether different.’<sup>90</sup> However, there

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<sup>88</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 65.; Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 75

<sup>89</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 93.

<sup>90</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 258-259.

were far more similarities than Ricci would have cared to admit. On the surface, both religions share a celibate clergy with monastic vows, who wear robes and engage in ceremonial chants, and both hold a liturgical calendar.<sup>91</sup> In addition to this, there are far deeper analogies. Both religions preach of individual salvation and warn of retributions to come. They also both declare their scorn for human senses and the world as causes of attachments detrimental to salvation.<sup>92</sup>

The missionaries reacted to the similarities between Buddhism and Christianity through a religious conceptual framework of confrontation with the Devil. Ricci stated in *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* that ‘the Devil wishes to deceive people so that they will follow him.’<sup>93</sup> An example of this perceived trickery was in 1585 when Ruggieri travelled to Shaoxing hoping to set up a new mission base there. He and his companions were invited into a Buddhist temple, which they entered ‘in order to criticise them for worshipping false gods.’ It is recorded that:

Here our fathers saw how the devil counterfeited the ceremonies of the holy Catholic Church and mimicked them so effectively that Father Antonio de Almeida, [...], would easily have been deceived into thinking that the painted lady holding the dragon and the moon under her feet could have been an image of the Queen of Heaven.<sup>94</sup>

This shows how the missionaries processed everything new through their religious understanding of the world. They would have been very familiar with the doctrine about the Antichrist and the mirroring of Christian practices to trick and deceive humanity.

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<sup>91</sup> Laven, p. 212.

<sup>92</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 77-78.

<sup>93</sup> Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (T'ien-chu Shih-i)* trans. by Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen (Taipei: Institut Ricci, 1985), p. 245.

<sup>94</sup> *Account of Ruggieri's encounter with Buddhist monks during his travels in the winter of 1585-86 to Zhejiang*, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 59-60.

This image, mistaken by Almeida for the Virgin Mary, was one of the aspects of misunderstanding between the two cultures. The Bodhisattva of compassion in Chinese belief was called Kuan-yin, one of the best-known examples of Buddhist virgin goddesses.<sup>95</sup> Yü has noted that during the years 1400 to 1600 the cult of Kuan-yin became firmly established in China, and so was at its height of popularity during the early Jesuit mission.<sup>96</sup> Confusion arose from the fact that the classical iconography of Kuan-yin depicted her holding a baby boy on her lap, making it very similar to iconography of the Virgin and Child.<sup>97</sup> The stylistic similarity between the icons was increased because the craftsmen commissioned to carve Christian images came from the same communities that produced images of Kuan-yin.<sup>98</sup>

Gernet states that the assimilation of the Christians into the Chinese mind-set as Buddhists was instantaneous. During early contacts, the Chinese behaved towards the missionaries in the same manner as they behaved towards Buddhist monks. Laymen provided oil for lamps, alms to feed the missionaries and granted an income for their land. Similarly, literati made presents of sticks of incense, bowed before holy images and asked the missionaries to officiate at their funeral ceremonies as Buddhist and Taoist monks did.<sup>99</sup> This misidentification of the Jesuits can clearly be seen in the actions of the Prefect of Zhaoqing, Wang Pan. Ricci's journal records that when important magistrates wish to favour someone, they send 'a framed wooden frontispiece.' In 1583, Wang Pan sent the Jesuits two frontispieces for their Zhaoqing residence inscribed with characters reading: 'Church of the flower of saints' and 'People coming from the holy land of the West.'<sup>100</sup> Hsia explains that

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<sup>95</sup> Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 1.; Menegon, p. 313.

<sup>96</sup> Yü, p. 258.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>98</sup> Yü, p. 259.

<sup>99</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 74.

<sup>100</sup> Excerpts from the relevant passages of Della entrata on the missionary work of the Jesuits in Zhaoqing, their *relationship with their mandarin patrons, and Ricci's scientific work*, pp. 61-63.

Ricci ignored the Buddhist significance of the characters and Ruggieri interpreted the first expression as a reference to the Virgin Mary, flower of the Saints.<sup>101</sup>

Owing to the syncretic nature of Chinese religious beliefs, religions were often evaluated according to their effects. The common people had no reason to reject the new cults and rituals that the missionaries proposed to them, as perhaps they would be more effective than the old ones.<sup>102</sup> For the Chinese, placing a misunderstood and misrepresented Christianity into their conceptual framework meant comparing it to Buddhist and Taoist styles. Baptism seems to have been generally regarded as a magical medication, fitting into a long local tradition of charmed waters, over which secret spells were uttered. In fact, Holy Water was given the name of shengshui, a term found in Buddhist and Taoist traditions.<sup>103</sup> To the Chinese, to whom Latin was unknown language, the missionaries appeared to chant magic words, pour water on children's heads in hospitals and chase the devil out of the soul of an embryo inside its mother.<sup>104</sup> Importantly though, here the missionaries were psychologically at one with the people they were trying to convert, both believing firmly in demonic possession and the powers of holy waters.<sup>105</sup> The accounts of various Jesuits throughout the mission are full of references to the restorative powers of Holy Water. For example, in Nanjing, in which the Jesuits settled in the late 1590s, one man 'lay sick for six whole years.' After a visit from Father Giovanni and studying some of the Christian doctrine the man was baptised and 'the saving water of the sacrament cleansed both his soul and his body.'<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Hsia, Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China, p. 62.

<sup>102</sup> Gernet, China and the Christian Impact, p. 83.

<sup>103</sup> Gernet, China and the Christian Impact, p. 88-89.

<sup>104</sup> Gernet, China and the Christian Impact, p. 88.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> Ricci, The Journals of Matthew Ricci, p. 431.

Another task undertaken by the missionaries was exorcism. This referred to a variety of activities from chasing away ghosts to curing fits of epilepsy.<sup>107</sup> Missionaries throughout China, from all orders, readily accepted the role of exorcists and healers, which tallied with their own theological understanding of evil's presence in the world. They saw Chinese ghosts and spirits as manifestations of the Devil.<sup>108</sup> Missionaries were usually called upon to perform exorcisms after Buddhist and Taoist methods had failed. Christians rejoiced at this as '[the Chinese] realised that the power of God worked so readily where all the efforts of the Chinese exorcists amounted to nothing.'<sup>109</sup> A successful exorcism would support the missionaries' claim of the superiority of the Christian God. For example, one convert burned all his idols and the missionaries saw that the Devil avenged the burning in a peculiar way.

Whenever [the convert] attempted to boil rice, the rice disappeared and there was nothing left but a pot full of water, as black as ink. He [...] was given a crucifix to keep in his home, and that was the end of the evil spirit of the kitchen.<sup>110</sup>

Converts promoted this image of success, boasting of the efficacy of Catholic rituals. The insertion of priests into local society fitting into an already established role helps explain their acceptance by the Chinese despite their foreign origin.<sup>111</sup> Menegon makes this point about Dominican missionaries, but it is also applicable to the Jesuits: through effective exorcisms and other religious displays they could begin to convert the population. In contrast, Gernet argues that while Christian exorcisms were sometimes seen to be more effective than traditional ones, they were still fundamentally the same thing. The missionaries may have celebrated, but the substitution of Christian for Chinese rituals was not necessarily proof of a

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<sup>107</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 89.

<sup>108</sup> Menegon, p. 208.

<sup>109</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 545.

<sup>110</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 552.

<sup>111</sup> Menegon, p. 208.

true change in mentality.<sup>112</sup> In the mind of the Chinese people, a Christian exorcism could replace a Buddhist or Taoist one without the slightest change in concepts. The missionaries believed that the veracity of Christianity was proven by performing successful exorcisms, and that they were disproving local superstitions. However, as the syncretic nature of Chinese religious belief was not fully appreciated by the missionaries, they misunderstood that common people could ask for their help and believe in the power of their methods, whilst simultaneously believing in the efficacy of Taoist and Buddhist rituals as well.

Laven states that European-style miracles were easily assimilated because of the Chinese belief in divination, demons, supernatural healing and their votive practices at shrines and temples. In addition, she notes the way that the miracles transcended language barriers.<sup>113</sup> This is important in order to understand the way in which the Jesuits were received by the Chinese. Laven then also argues that these miracles built bridges between the two cultures.<sup>114</sup> I would like to propose a slightly different interpretation. The Jesuits and Chinese did find common ground in their belief and understanding of miracles, but this means that these transcultural bridges were built on complete misunderstandings. The missionaries condemned common Chinese superstitions but failed to see that they themselves were reinforcing the very beliefs they objected to.<sup>115</sup> By fulfilling Chinese preconceptions of exorcists, the Jesuits became part of these superstitions and did not challenge them. Gernet questions whether the radical change in people's minds, that true conversion implies, did in fact take place.<sup>116</sup> Mental frameworks could accommodate Christian ideas without departing from traditional concepts. The Christian way of honouring ancestors was not completely

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<sup>112</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 90.

<sup>113</sup> Laven, p. 221.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>115</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 91.

<sup>116</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 93.

novel; Buddhism had for centuries propagated the idea of purgatory and the related tradition of death rituals to ensure the smooth rebirth of the deceased.<sup>117</sup> The Jesuits conformed so much to Chinese concepts of religious healers and exorcists, partially on purpose and partially due to an accident of aesthetic similarities, that the vital difference that the Jesuits wanted to stress between religion and superstition was missed by the people they hoped to convert.

Aside from their abilities as healers and exorcists, one rumour about the Jesuits that persisted throughout the early mission to China was that they were alchemists. The Chinese believed that ‘mercury can be changed into silver by the application of a certain herb which is only found in foreign countries’.<sup>118</sup> The Chinese knew that the Portuguese purchased great quantities of mercury from China, and took it to Japan; after which they returned in boats laden down with silver coins. From this the Chinese concluded that the Fathers practiced alchemy, ‘since [the Chinese] saw them living honestly, asking alms of no one, and engaging in no business.’<sup>119</sup> The rumour of alchemy was a result of one of the forms of Jesuit misrepresentations and the control of information, namely, their contact with the Portuguese in Macao. The significant fact is that the Jesuits wanted to distance themselves from the perceived barbaric nature of the Portuguese, whose manner of trade in the South China Sea was essentially piracy. Macao provided the Jesuits with money to sustain themselves but the Jesuits hid this transaction, not wanting to appear to be taking money from a foreign power or profit from piracy. As no source of income was obvious, it was logical for the Chinese to assume that the Jesuits were creating silver.<sup>120</sup> The missionaries and their most committed

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<sup>117</sup> Menegon, p. 299.

<sup>118</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 186.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>120</sup> Spence, p. 186.



followers acted almost as a secret society within China, hiding the relations they maintained abroad because they knew Chinese political authorities would be displeased.<sup>121</sup>

The misconception of them being alchemists brought the Jesuits a great many followers and Ricci publicly spoke out against the pursuit of alchemy, acknowledging that many of his supporters wished to learn its secrets.<sup>122</sup> The reputation for alchemy was both a help and a hindrance, it caused several problems for the Jesuits but it also made people very curious about them. Spence goes as far as to suggest that Ricci might even have hinted that he possessed special powers, as he once told another Jesuit that he thought it the lesser evil to confess to being an alchemist than to confess that they were financially dependent on Macao.<sup>123</sup> In Shaozhou in 1589, Ricci met a man named Qu Rukui. He had been attracted to the Jesuits by the stories of alchemy, but would become one of Ricci's greatest friends and have a significant impact on the Jesuits' self-presentation. Qu had been thrown out of his family and had lost his entire heritage in 'the furnace of alchemy'.<sup>124</sup> Initially, Qu 'kept it a secret that his chief interest was dabbling in alchemy.'<sup>125</sup> Ricci, recognising his intellectual potential, began to tutor him in mathematics and astronomy, and slowly taught him about the Christian religion.<sup>126</sup> The result was that Qu 'gave up the evil practice and applied his genius to more serious and elevated science.'<sup>127</sup> Whilst the reputation for alchemy was a problem for the Jesuits, this was one instance where it benefitted them tremendously. It was Qu Rukui who, in 1595, knowing the inferior social status of Buddhist clergy advised Ricci to shed the Buddhist persona, and re-identify as a scholar of the Confucian literati.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 131.

<sup>122</sup> Laven, p. 158-159.

<sup>123</sup> Spence, p. 186.

<sup>124</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 122.; Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 230.

<sup>125</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 231.

<sup>126</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 123.

<sup>127</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 231.

<sup>128</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 136.

The aim of the Jesuits' policy of accommodation, from their arrival to the mid-1590s, was to seamlessly blend into the local society and not provoke animosity through aggression towards any aspect of local culture. However, the Jesuits' attempts to accommodate Chinese customs were based on their misunderstandings of the nature of Buddhism, as well as the manipulation of information and misrepresentation of themselves in describing where they came from. This was then compounded by their inability to separate their own teachings from Buddhism, since they relied on its terminology, and the misunderstanding of the Chinese people who were generally unsure as to who the Jesuits were and what they were trying to achieve. The Jesuits' dissimulations ensured that they began blending into local culture, but because of the misunderstandings and misrepresentations they met and fused with pre-established roles in Chinese society and performed tasks that were expected of holy Buddhist or Taoist preachers. The policy of accommodation meant that the Jesuits' identity was lost in the confusion surrounding the presentation of their self.

## 2: Material Friendship

If you would become my true friend, then love me out of affection; do not love me for material things.<sup>129</sup>

This chapter focuses on the Jesuits' second self-representation: literati scholars. It examines why the Jesuits chose to target the Confucian elite in a campaign of friendliness and gift presentation. Also, this chapter considers the embassies to the Wanli Emperor, and the misrepresentations and misunderstandings of the gifts.

Throughout medieval and early modern encounters, one factor was crucial in European dealings with China: trade in commodities and exotica. European understandings of China changed with the transformation of global trade.<sup>130</sup> After the maritime voyages of Zheng He from 1405-33, Ming China withdrew from sea trade before the period of Portuguese expansion.<sup>131</sup> By the early sixteenth century the push and pull of isolationism and expansionism moved China towards the centre of European attention.<sup>132</sup> Europeans were desperate to trade with China, which the Portuguese finally managed in 1557 by securing a base in Macao.<sup>133</sup> However, in an interesting example of cultural transaction, whilst European merchants were buying Chinese commodities in Macao, the Jesuits were utilising European commodities and scientific instruments to ingratiate themselves with Chinese elites.

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<sup>129</sup> Translations from *On Friendship*, the first Chinese work written by Ricci in Nanchang (excerpts), in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 83-84.

<sup>130</sup> Laven, p. 7.

<sup>131</sup> Benjamin Z. Kedar and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge World History Volume V: Expanding Webs of Exchange and Conflict 500 CE – 1500 CE*, ed. by Benjamin Z. Kedar and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1-40 (p. 4).; Laven, p. 8.

<sup>132</sup> Laven, p. 9.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*

The recommendation that the Jesuits present themselves as literati instead of Buddhists came from Qu Rukui. The Jesuits had been aware from the outset of the mission that the literati held the majority of power and influence in Ming society, and tried to court their support through flattery, the presentation of gifts and appealing to them as intellectuals. In some of Ricci's first letters, he wrote that the literati officials 'enjoy such esteem,' that 'they are like gods on earth.'<sup>134</sup> It was significant for the Jesuits that the ruling class of China held its position not because of inherited privilege or wealth, but from scholarship and intellectual agility tested in rigorous examinations.<sup>135</sup> This perception of the Chinese government determined the central tenet of Jesuit missionary strategy after 1588 and their expulsion from Zhaoqing. The Jesuits targeted the literati in conversion efforts as the most powerful element in society, but also communicated with them as fellow intellectuals.<sup>136</sup> There were similarities between the Chinese civil service exams and the Jesuits' own education: both intense and highly competitive. The Jesuits would have identified with the cut and thrust of male careerism.<sup>137</sup> A significant part of the Jesuits' reputation in Europe rested on their gruelling education system. English Catholic Gregory Martin visited Rome in the 1570s and was impressed by the well-rounded education received by the Jesuits: 'in one house, there is an whole universitie of learning and lessons. [...] Hast thou seen in Oxford wreten over the Schoole doors, Metaphysica, Astronomica, Dialectica, and so forth? So it is here within one College.'<sup>138</sup>

Whilst Jesuit education centred on Christian teachings, especially those of St. Thomas Aquinas, there was also a humanist element in which Aristotle featured prominently. The

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<sup>134</sup> Ricci's letters from Macao to Martino de Fornari and Claudio Acquaviva, February 13, 1583, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia p. 53.

<sup>135</sup> Laven, p. 132.

<sup>136</sup> Laven, p. 134.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid; Laven, p. 136.

<sup>138</sup> Gregory Martin, *Roma Sancta* 1581, trans. by George Bruner Parks (Rome: Edizioni di Storia E Letteratura, 1961), p. 162.

Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, which St Ignatius completed in 1550, demonstrate how the Jesuits considered secular learning: ‘since the arts and natural sciences [...] dispose the mind for theology, and serve to perfect its knowledge and application [...] let them be treated with whatever diligence is proper.’<sup>139</sup> It is significant that the Constitutions stipulate that logic, physics, metaphysics, moral science and mathematics will be taught ‘in so far as it helps toward the attaining of our proposed end.’<sup>140</sup> This was to be vital for the Jesuit mission in China as there were major differences between the European and Chinese education systems. European intellectuals celebrated oratory whereas the Chinese were far more impressed by the written word.<sup>141</sup> However, because the Jesuits were well trained in the scientific subjects, they could establish a transcultural learned dialogue with the people they hoped to convert.

The Jesuits’ aim to communicate with the literati as fellow intellectuals involved a multifaceted approach, within which lay misrepresentations, manipulations and misunderstandings. In 1595, the Jesuits shed their Buddhist clothes, grew their hair and beards, and also wore silk habits without which they would not be ‘considered to be the equal of a Magistrate or even one of the educated class.’<sup>142</sup> The Jesuits justified this approach towards conversion by arguing that the Chinese were ‘slow to take a salutary spiritual potion, unless it be seasoned with an intellectual flavouring.’<sup>143</sup> The intellectual flavouring that the Jesuits’ settled upon was that of scientific knowledge. They made sure to praise Chinese learning, and present their own as enhancing already sound scholarship. In his translation of Euclid’s *Elements of Geometry*, Ricci stated that ‘I have seen that [in China] there are many

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<sup>139</sup> ‘The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus (Part IV)’, trans. Mary Helen Mayer, in *St Ignatius and the Ratio Studiorum*, trans. Mary Helen Mayer and A. R. Ball, ed. by Edward A. Fitzpatrick (London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1933), pp. 46-118 (p. 101).

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>141</sup> Laven, p. 136-137.

<sup>142</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 259.

<sup>143</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 325.

scholars and works on geometry, but I have not seen any fundamental theoretical works.’<sup>144</sup> Ming China was a culture that venerated the written word and the social status of literacy and scholarship – books were immensely popular.<sup>145</sup> The Jesuits exploited this extensive print culture to their advantage. They could ‘more easily propagate our holy Christian religion with books that can travel everywhere without hindrance; books reach more people, more often, than we can, and can provide greater detail and precision than we can orally.’<sup>146</sup> Also, whilst Chinese language differed in its spoken pronunciation from region to region, the written characters remained constant. This meant that the Jesuits could address a wider audience with greater accuracy than would otherwise have been possible.<sup>147</sup> An additional benefit of print culture was that it allowed the Jesuits to further control and manipulate information and the presentation of themselves.

When the Jesuits began dressing as Confucian scholars they also changed the way they signed their work so as to better appeal to Chinese tastes. Chinese scholars had several names and a proper name was ‘never used except by a superior or when one names himself or signs his signature.’ These scholars, therefore, had ‘an added and a more honourable name,’ which was used by all others. The Jesuits had always introduced themselves and signed their work using their own names and ‘to the Chinese this was [...] quite unrefined.’ In response, the Jesuits adopted honour-names for themselves ‘so as to make it appear they always had it.’<sup>148</sup> When Ricci adopted Confucian garb he socially translated himself into Li Madou.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Preface by Ricci on the Chinese translation of Euclid and on his collaboration with Xu Guangqi (1608), in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 109-110.

<sup>145</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 257.

<sup>146</sup> Excerpts from a letter by Ricci to Francesco Paiseo, vice-provincial in the Japan Jesuit mission, February 15, 1609, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 119-122.

<sup>147</sup> Laven, p. 141-142.

<sup>148</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 178.

The Jesuits planned to spread their scientific teachings and later their religion through print culture, and it seems possible that by adopting honour-names they attempted to remove European connotations of their doctrines aiding their acceptance into Chinese culture.

Social acceptance was a crucial condition for the Jesuits' mission.<sup>150</sup> To prove their intellect and be accepted by the literati it was not enough to display European learning, they needed to engage in debates on Confucian doctrine. Translating Confucian texts into European languages meant that the Jesuits could study them and offer their own interpretations to impress scholars, but perhaps more importantly they searched for assimilable doctrinal points that they could use to promote Christianity. Ricci said that Alessandro Valignano ordered him 'to translate [the Four Books] into Latin in order to help me prepare a new catechism in [Chinese].'<sup>151</sup> A knowledge of Confucian texts brought the Jesuits great respect from the literati, as shown in a description of Ricci by a Shaozhou scholar. The scholar was asked by a magistrate if Ricci was well versed in the classics. They visited Ricci and quizzed him on the Book of Poetry and the Book of Changes. The scholar records that '[Ricci] knew all the texts,' and the magistrate said 'we each study one classic and [Ricci] knows both; have we not made ourselves ridiculous in his eyes?'<sup>152</sup> The imperial Ming civil service examinations required candidates to write essays on the Four Books, and then select one of the Five Classics as their speciality. The Book of Poetry and the Book of Changes were the most popular texts to be selected.<sup>153</sup> A detailed knowledge of the whole

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<sup>149</sup> Kevin N. Cawley, 'Deconstructing the Name(s) of God: Matteo Ricci's Translational Apostolate', *Translation Studies*, 6:3 (2013), 293-308 (p. 296).

<sup>150</sup> Laven, p. 106.

<sup>151</sup> Excerpts from letters written by Ricci to General Claudio Acquaviva, Shaozhou, November 15, 1592, and January 15 and 17, 1593, pp. 69-70.

<sup>152</sup> Excerpt from a description of Ricci by a Mandarin in Shaozhou, written ca.1592, in *Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents* ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 71-76.

<sup>153</sup> Hsia, *Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China*, p. 76.

Confucian canon was vital for the Jesuits' in their aim to connect with the literati, and won them a great deal of respect which they then built upon through social networking.

The presentation of gifts was fundamental to Jesuit strategy in China and they were convinced that providing the correct gifts for Chinese was the key to their enterprise.<sup>154</sup> Father Cabral recorded that literati visited the Jesuit house to see 'some things of Europe which to them are unusual and strange,' and that 'this gives us the opportunity to deal familiarly with them.'<sup>155</sup> There was a slow but significant shift in the presentation of gifts throughout the early mission to China. When the Jesuits first presented gifts they mainly gave explicitly religious gifts, whilst secular novelties and scientific curiosities were secondary offerings. When visiting a Buddhist temple, Ruggieri and Almeida presented the monks with 'some copies of the catechism in [Chinese], in which the falsity of the idol is confuted.'<sup>156</sup> Ruggieri composed the 1584 catechism for the literati because many of them wanted to know more than just the Ten Commandments and so the catechism 'refuted some points of sects of China and explained the main doctrines of the holy faith'.<sup>157</sup>

Religious texts were common gifts at the start of the mission but the Jesuits came to realise that European commodities and scientific items were of more interest to the Chinese, and therefore more useful in aiding social networking. It was Ruggieri who discovered the importance of *contracambio*, the exchange of gifts as a mechanism for smoothing cross-cultural relations.<sup>158</sup> This is illustrated by one of his first important cultural interactions that

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<sup>154</sup> Laven, p. 111.; Spence, p. 179.

<sup>155</sup> From a letter of Father Francesco Cabral, Portuguese, from Macao, on the eighth of December, 1584, in *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-84* ed Howard M. Rienstra pp. 25-28.

<sup>156</sup> *Account of Ruggieri's encounter with Buddhist monks during his travels in the winter of 1585-86 to Zhejiang*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>157</sup> Excerpts from the relevant passages of Della entrata on the missionary work of the Jesuits in Zhaoqing, their *relationship with their mandarin patrons, and Ricci's scientific work*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>158</sup> Laven, p. 85.



took place in 1582, when the missionaries were still confined to Macao and trying to get permission to settle outside the city. The local provincial governor, Chen Rui, was ordered to expel westerners from the peninsula. He summoned the two figureheads of the Portuguese community, the Bishop of Macao and Captain Major, to meet him in Zhaoqing.<sup>159</sup> They were unwilling to leave the relative safety of Macao and so Valignano appointed Michele Ruggieri to represent the Bishop, 'hoping that he would be able to obtain permission for a permanent residence,' and Mattia Penella, the City Auditor, instead of the Captain Major. Worried that Chen Rui would interrupt trade, and to compensate for their inferior status, they presented him with gifts which 'they knew were specially prized by the Chinese.' This collection consisted of 'cloth of pure silk, [...] pleated garments, crystal mirrors and other such novelties, valued in at more than a thousand gold pieces'.<sup>160</sup>

The meeting with Chen Rui went very well, no doubt helped by the gifts. Penella returned to Zhaoqing soon after to tell Chen Rui that they intended to present him with a beautiful 'mechanism made of brass that struck the hours without anyone touching it.'<sup>161</sup> The offer of this gift is particularly noteworthy because when Rui heard about the watch he invited Ruggieri to come and see him and bring the wonderful gadget. Ruggieri noted that the watch 'pleased [Rui] very much as a thing of ingenuity and completely new to China.'<sup>162</sup> The significance of this lay in Rui's letter which proved to be 'an official document granting the Fathers public authority to build a house and church in the city of Canton.'<sup>163</sup> This was their first real chance to leave Macao and enter mainland China, and it happened because of the gift of a watch. From this very early cultural transaction the Jesuits began to realise that

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<sup>159</sup> Laven, p. 38

<sup>160</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 136.

<sup>161</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 137.

<sup>162</sup> From a letter of Father Michele Ruggieri, Neapolitan, the seventh of February, 1583, from the City of Chao ch'ing, in *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-84* ed Howard M. Rienstra pp. 15-19.

<sup>163</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 138.

secular commodities would prove far more useful than religious catechisms in courting the friendship of literati officials.

Watches and clocks were especially popular gifts with the Chinese because of their novelty. Ricci stated that the Chinese had few instruments for measuring time and that they all 'fall far short of the perfection of our instruments.'<sup>164</sup> Clocks were recurring items in Jesuit gift presentations, and a key element in winning Chinese favours.<sup>165</sup> China's clock making industry had declined after the fall of the Northern Song in 1127 and not recovered. Therefore, incense was generally used for time management as it burns at an even rate.<sup>166</sup> Thus a clock would have been a rare exotic luxury item to the Chinese. Europe in the 1570s and 1580s, however, was experiencing a clock making revolution resulting in a great increase in the sales to the middle classes and not just the rich.<sup>167</sup> A clock would have a very different value in European and Chinese markets. Laven refers to this as the mutability of worth.<sup>168</sup> This was highly significant and I believe that it allowed the Jesuits to further a policy of misrepresentation. They controlled the information about the worth of various items to misrepresent the value of their gifts, knowing that the Chinese would attribute great worth to the gifts and misinterpret the level of Jesuit generosity. The Jesuits exploited the dawning world of globalisation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by misrepresenting the value of commodities. This was not just limited to clocks but also to 'triangular glass prisms, mirrors, some beautiful vestments, linen cloth, small hour-glasses and many glass vases; [all] necessary to make acquaintances and [...] oil the wheels of social progress'.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 23.

<sup>165</sup> Spence, p. 180.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid*; Silvio A. Bedini, *The Trail of Time: Time Measurement with Incense in East Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 53.

<sup>167</sup> Spence, p. 180.

<sup>168</sup> Laven, p. 70.

<sup>169</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 350.

Venetian glass triangles are another example of the mutability of worth. They were relatively cheap in Europe but could be sold for a high price in the East, and the Jesuits used them repeatedly in gift exchanges.<sup>170</sup> In 1595, Ricci was travelling by river with the vice minister of war, Sun Kuang, towards Beijing. Ricci's boat overturned and Sun Kuang, deciding to continue the journey on land, considered sending Ricci back to Shaozhou.<sup>171</sup> Ricci bribed Sun's secretary with a glass prism, saying that 'he had intended to give this glass to his hero, [Sun Kuang],' but promised it as a gift if the secretary would take him to Beijing.<sup>172</sup> The secretary believed the prism to be a precious jewel and arranged to help Ricci travel as far as Nanjing.<sup>173</sup> The value with which the Chinese viewed glass prisms is demonstrated by Qu Rukui, who, after receiving 'one of the famous triangular glass prisms,' put it in a silver case and decorated it 'with an inscription [...] that this gem was a fragment of the material of which the sky is composed.'<sup>174</sup>

The prism was an object of value to Qu because of its rarity; it was an expensive item in China. The Jesuits' misrepresentation lay in their control of information about the price that the prisms were acquired for in Europe. Qu was not alone among the Chinese in referring to the Jesuits' prisms as pieces of the sky. This was a propaganda triumph as the Jesuits were trying to accommodate Chinese veneration of the heavens into Christian belief in the Lord of Heaven.<sup>175</sup> It is also significant that a common European commodity was being associated by the Chinese with the heavens meaning its perceived value was even greater. The Jesuits ingratiated themselves with powerful literati scholars by meeting them as fellow intellectuals, and their letters frequently mention friends they made. In 1583, Francesco Pasio described his

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<sup>170</sup> Laven, p. 70.

<sup>171</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 142.

<sup>172</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 265.; Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 143.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>174</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 318.

<sup>175</sup> Laven, p. 159-160.

optimism about being able to obtain a license to re-enter the mainland because of ‘our familiarity and acceptance by the Gentiles.’<sup>176</sup> In addition to presenting themselves as intellectuals, the Jesuits climbed the Chinese social ladder by wooing the literati with elaborate gifts, the worth of which was often misunderstood or subtly manipulated by the Jesuits to further their ends.

A fascinating example of material exchange was the proposed embassy to the emperor, and the list of items selected to win his favour. The first European embassy to the Emperor of China was proposed by the Spanish in 1580 but ultimately failed because of fierce Portuguese resistance. The idea of an embassy stagnated for a few years, but was revived in the late 1580s after a period when the missionaries were harassed in Zhaoqing, their mission house attacked and Ruggieri falsely accused of adultery.<sup>177</sup> When Valignano learned of the ‘turbulent state of affairs,’ he tried to discover ‘some new means by which they could acquire more prestige.’<sup>178</sup> He concluded that the most appropriate method seemed to be an ‘Apostolic Delegation to the King of China [...] equipped with gifts and authorised by letters from the Pope.’<sup>179</sup> Ruggieri was chosen to return to Europe with a list of gifts and organise a Papal embassy to China. It has been argued that Ruggieri was chosen because he was old and a bad linguist. Liu even states that Ricci managed to persuade Valignano to send away his senior colleague, so that he could assume greater control of the mission.<sup>180</sup> However, it seems far more likely that Ruggieri was chosen because of his experience and reliability. Whilst he may have struggled to speak the language, Ruggieri’s skills in reading and writing Chinese were, in fact, impressive and he had cultivated many high ranked

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<sup>176</sup> From a letter of Father Francesco Pasio, Bolognese, the twenty-seventh of June, 1583 [from Macao], in *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-84* ed Howard M. Rienstra pp. 19-20.

<sup>177</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 309.; Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 192.

<sup>178</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 193.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>180</sup> Yu Liu, pp. 43-59 (p. 50).

Chinese friends.<sup>181</sup> Also Ruggieri was Italian, unlike most Jesuits in the China mission who were Portuguese, and he had good contacts in Italy that could aid the organisation of an embassy.<sup>182</sup>

The list of gifts drawn up by Valignano and Ruggieri is strikingly secular.<sup>183</sup> It is a noticeable change from earlier in the mission when Ruggieri and Almeida were presenting refutations of Buddhism, or translations of the Ten Commandments. The Jesuits had learned to select gifts which made them appear as foreign intellectuals and connoisseurs of material items rather than missionaries. When religious images formed part of the proposed gifts, Valignano insisted that they be confined to *cosas alegrias* or happy things and exclude representations of the Passion.<sup>184</sup> This was not exclusive to the China mission. In writing about Jesuit missionary dissimulation in England, Tutino states that the missionaries had behave with *allegrezza modesta* or restrained cheerfulness. They should be able to handle a conversation about hunting or other non-religious matters, and if the person they aimed to convert proved fond of gambling or dancing, then they should comply as much as possible without themselves committing a sin.<sup>185</sup> It was this perceived laxity in the Jesuit missionary approach that Blaise Pascal would attack in his work *The Provincial Letters*, written from 1655-6. He wrote that Jesuits were so prepared to adapt that

when they happen to be in any part of the world where the doctrine of a crucified God is accounted foolishness, they suppress the offence of the cross and preach only a glorious and not a suffering Jesus Christ. This plan they followed in the Indies and in China.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Laven, p. 74.

<sup>182</sup> Laven, p. 74-75.

<sup>183</sup> Laven, p. 95-96.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>185</sup> Tutino, pp.534-553 (p.541).

<sup>186</sup> Letter V, in *The Provincial Letters* by Blaise Pascal trans. Thomas M'Crie (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1998), pp. 36-47

Between them, Valignano and Ruggieri compiled a list of twenty-one gifts for the emperor, each intended to showcase European sophistication and technology as well as flatter Chinese tastes.<sup>187</sup> In this category were hybrid objects: Flemish locks adorned with Chinese characters; Venetian stained glass with lions, serpents, and dragons; cloth decorated with flowers in coloured hues favoured by the Ming court.<sup>188</sup> The European objects were selected to impress with beauty and preciousness: strings of coral, mirrors, and decorated reading desks; or illustrated architecture books and picture histories of popes and emperors designed to conjure up a life beyond the reach of the Chinese.<sup>189</sup>

The choice of the Jesuits to turn towards more secular gifts, thereby misrepresenting themselves through minimising the missionary aspect of their identity, can be seen in the fact that only two of the twenty-one gifts held any religious significance: an illustrated manuscript of the New Testament; and a collection of religious paintings.<sup>190</sup> Even these explicitly religious gifts would probably have been viewed in a purely secular context: the manuscript would have been indecipherable to most Chinese, and the paintings would have been appreciated as visual spectacles rather than for their iconographic meaning. If the paintings were seen as religious, owing to the confusions over Jesuit identity that still persisted, the painting of the Madonna and Child was probably misunderstood to be Kuan-yin. Whilst this attempt at an embassy failed, it demonstrates that the Jesuits were prepared to exploit the centrality of material exchange to early modern diplomacy, and present an almost entirely secular collection of gifts, knowing that these would have more success than purely religious ones.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Laven, p. 70.

<sup>188</sup> Laven, p. 70-71.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid

<sup>190</sup> Laven, p. 71.

<sup>191</sup> Laven, p. 102.

After several failed attempts the Jesuits finally entered Beijing in January 1601. This was not the grand entrance imagined by many Jesuits. They were not welcomed in as missionaries bringing in the saving word of Christianity, but as a tribute-bearing delegation just like any other barbarian nation. It is important to understand the historical context of tribute and gifts being presented to the Ming court. Chinese political structure and belief rested on the idea that everyone who was not Chinese was an uncivilised barbarian, and that the emperor ruled all under heaven. Therefore, all barbarians were theoretically the emperor's subjects, even if they did not live in China, and so would send him tribute.<sup>192</sup> The tributary system asserted and sustained Chinese claims to political legitimacy; it was an expression of a heavenly mandate and the emperor's morally grounded right to rule.<sup>193</sup> Smith uses the term *guest ritual* to refer to the tribute system, as it was a purely formal acknowledgement of power that often lacked true conviction behind the gesture of gifts.<sup>194</sup> This was something that obviously irritated the Jesuits. They resented being locked in the Hostel for Barbarians compound, sleeping on the floor in mere stables with other tribute bearers from far poorer countries that bordered China, whose gifts were not worth a fraction of what the Jesuits had brought.<sup>195</sup> Clearly the Jesuits would not have gained entry to Beijing if they had presented religious texts and refutations instead of European commodities as gifts. It took all their networking, combined with misrepresentations and manipulations to climb the Chinese social ladder far enough to be accepted as representatives of a barbarian tribute bearing nation recognising Chinese superiority. They were not the bringers of religious truth.

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<sup>192</sup> Richard J. Smith, *Mapping China and Managing the World: Culture, Cartography and Cosmology in Late Imperial Times* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p. 55.

<sup>193</sup> Smith, p. 79.

<sup>194</sup> Smith, p. 55.

<sup>195</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 209.

Two themes are striking in the events surrounding the Jesuits' tributary mission to the emperor: the mainly secular nature of their gifts with their reluctance to state that they were religious missionaries; and the differences between European and Chinese perceptions of worth and misunderstandings about various items. Like the original list of gifts that Ruggieri and Valignano prepared, the gifts presented in 1601 were mostly curiosities for the Chinese. There were three religious paintings, a breviary, a decorated crucifix; but also a copy of Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, a large mechanical clock and a small palm sized one, two prisms, mirrors and glass vases, a clavichord, a rhinoceros horn, two sand clocks, and European belts, fabrics and coins.<sup>196</sup> The Chinese admired the realism of European paintings but there were misunderstandings about the characters whom the paintings were supposed to depict. The Wanli (萬曆) Emperor and his mother, the empress dowager, knew nothing about Christianity and mistook Christ for Buddha, and the empress dowager offered daily incense and prayers before the Madonna and child which she took as a novel representation of Kuan-yin.<sup>197</sup> The emperor understood so little about the Jesuits that when he saw paintings of Ricci and Pantoia, he declared that the bearded men were very obviously Muslims.<sup>198</sup>

Communication with the Wanli Emperor was a difficult process. For several years he had been engaged in a dispute with his officials about his successor and had essentially gone on strike. He refused to go to imperial ceremonies and only met with his eunuchs and concubines. Furthermore, if an official died or resigned he often refused to appoint new ones.<sup>199</sup> He kept himself in almost total seclusion and all messages were delivered via

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<sup>196</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 207.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>198</sup> Shelia Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2004), p. 54.

<sup>199</sup> Melvin and Cai, p. 53.



eunuchs.<sup>200</sup> The Jesuits were reluctant to reveal the religious aspect of their mission, asking the eunuchs to tell the emperor that ‘their own great desire was to live and die in [Beijing], and that they wanted nothing else of him.’<sup>201</sup> When entering Beijing, the Fathers were ‘deliberately slow, in beginning to spread Christianity, for fear that the novelty of it might arouse suspicion and impede their immediate purpose of establishing a residence.’<sup>202</sup> Stating that the Jesuits wanted to minimise the religious nature of their identity might seem paradoxical, especially as one of their gifts was a breviary. However, it appears that this was never intended to be a gift and that Ricci was uncomfortable in giving it away. In 1600, the missionaries were waiting to be granted access to Beijing and the eunuch Ma Tang had their possessions searched for more gifts. Subsequently, ‘in addition to the statues and the clocks, and the triangular glass prisms, [Ricci] had to give up his nicely bound Roman Breviary, the clavichord, and a copy of ‘The World Theatre’ by Ortelius’.<sup>203</sup> The tone of this passage in Ricci’s journal suggests that he was never intending to present these gifts to the emperor. It also appears that Ricci and the other missionaries were unwilling to give the emperor a copy of Ortelius’ *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, which is highly significant when the popularity of Ricci’s map, and its use as a gift, is considered. Melvin and Cai state that Ricci’s reasons for not including the breviary, Ortelius’ map and clavichord are unclear.<sup>204</sup> However, I propose that the Jesuits wanted the Chinese to see only the world map made by Ricci, as Ortelius’ map contained none of Ricci’s misrepresentations and manipulations, which will be analysed in detail in the following chapter.

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<sup>200</sup> Laven, p. 173.

<sup>201</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 374.

<sup>202</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 471.

<sup>203</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 364.

<sup>204</sup> Melvin and Cai, p. 50.

Gifts saved the Jesuit mission. On several occasions, disaster was only averted by a timely gift. When they finally did get permission to enter Beijing, and then live there, they were not being welcomed as religious missionaries, but as mechanics. The Jesuits had spent almost an entire year in virtual imprisonment just outside Beijing until the emperor ‘suddenly remembered a certain petition that had been sent in to him’ and said ‘where is that clock that rings of itself?’<sup>205</sup> It was this whim of the emperor’s that allowed the Jesuits into Beijing, and they were only permitted to stay because they alone knew how to correctly operate and maintain the clock.<sup>206</sup> When it first failed to function, the emperor sent it to the Jesuit house to be repaired and crowds formed to see it. Upon hearing this, Wanli issued an order ‘that in the future the clock should not be taken out of the palace, and that if the clock needed attention the donors should be called to the palace to take care of it.’ This was a propaganda triumph for the Jesuits who ‘spread about a story of the good will of the King towards the Europeans.’<sup>207</sup> Being able to present themselves as representatives of a civilisation with technological and scientific knowledge to offer was the root of Jesuit successes.<sup>208</sup> Harris explains that the coherence of the Society’s overseas science depended upon the Jesuits’ ability to retain the traditional meaning of *Scientia* as knowledge of God and intertwine it with the emerging meaning of *Scientia* as knowledge of nature.<sup>209</sup> However, it was as members of a Renaissance civilisation, not as Christians, that the Jesuits in the sixteenth century accomplished more in China than their medieval predecessors.<sup>210</sup>

Europeans setting up residence in the forbidden city of Beijing was momentous in the history of the mission, but also in the history of early modern cultural contact between

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<sup>205</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 369.

<sup>206</sup> Laven, p. 173.

<sup>207</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 392-393.

<sup>208</sup> Rubiés, pp. 237-280 (p.256).

<sup>209</sup> Harris, pp.71-79 (p.79).

<sup>210</sup> Rubiés, pp. 237-280 (p.261-262).

Europe and China. Gifts gained the Jesuits entry into Beijing and, because some of these gifts required maintenance, they had ensured permission to reside in the city. People knew they were foreigners, and some even knew they held a different religion, but no one considered them missionaries whose sole purpose was to spread a foreign religion. The Jesuits' aim to be accepted into Chinese society had led them away from the fundamental point of their being in China. They succeeded in identifying with the scholar elites by presenting themselves as scholars and builders of scientific and musical instruments. This representation undermined their missionary enterprise as they were perceived to be learned mathematicians, astronomers and clock builders, not religious preachers. This can clearly be seen by reading the work of Nanjing writer Gu Qiyuan. Writing in 1598-9, he stated that Ricci had composed the *Tianzhu Shiyi* (True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven) and *Shilun*, which Hsia says is a reference to Ricci's work *Ten Discourses of the Man of Paradox*, but significantly Gu Qiyuan stressed that, whilst these texts have 'many novel sayings,' Ricci was 'more skilled in astronomy and mathematics.'<sup>211</sup> It is quite clear that most Chinese regarded the Jesuits as mechanics and scholars, not missionaries.

The Jesuits were aware that their residency depended on their being useful and interesting, and knew how quickly their novelty could wear off. For example, once the initial recital of European music to the emperor had been completed, there was never any further request from the eunuchs for more clavichord lessons or any more musical demonstrations.<sup>212</sup> The Jesuits, therefore, had to maintain their novelty and try to ingratiate themselves through material items. Their plan to identify with the literati educated elite was a success and, through wooing them with gifts, they created a network of high ranked contacts to help them

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<sup>211</sup> The Nanjing writer Gu Qiyuan's description of Ricci (ca.1598-99), in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 93-94.

<sup>212</sup> Melvin and Cai, p. 59-60.

more firmly cement themselves in China. However, even to this network of friends they misrepresented themselves. They exploited the widespread print culture in China by adopting honour names to help the dissemination of their teaching. The Jesuits were aware of how the value of material items changed as they travelled and used this to their advantage, giving the Chinese gifts like prisms that were easy to attain in Europe but would be viewed as extraordinary in China. Their choices of gifts were also notably secular, even the religious themed ones, like paintings and statues, were appreciated for their artistic value rather than religious content, as well as often being misunderstood as being representations of Buddhist deities. The Jesuits were so relieved when they were allowed into Beijing, that they did not want to do anything to endanger their presence there. The result was that, through their actions, they were misunderstood to be scholars who were either Buddhist or held a similar religion, rather than missionaries who also were knowledgeable about scientific subjects. It is particularly interesting that Ricci was unwilling to give up his copy of Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, as geographical knowledge was one of the things that the Jesuits most wanted to share with the Chinese, to showcase their learning and skill in cartography. However, this was because Ricci's map of the world was a carefully constructed piece of propaganda that relied on subtle misrepresentations and manipulations to achieve its end.

### 3: Images of the World

Matteo Ricci's map is one of the most famous artefacts surviving from the early Jesuit mission to China. It is seen to epitomise the accommodation policy: sharing European knowledge that the earth is spherical; and appealing to Chinese tastes by placing China at the centre. The question raised in this chapter is whether the map should be regarded rather as an example of Jesuit propaganda. By comparing early modern European and Chinese cartographic traditions, I aim to demonstrate that the Jesuits' belief that they were introducing new astronomical knowledge and mapping techniques was based on their misunderstanding of the societal role and purposes of maps in China. The chapter concludes with a close analysis of Matteo Ricci's map, examining what he tried achieve and the manipulations and misrepresentations he employed.

World maps allow historians to study a culture's conceptions of the other, and provide important information about the collective self of their creators.<sup>213</sup> Maps vary greatly and different cultures hold different priorities in presentational styles. The impact of Jesuit cartography in China, especially the manipulations and misrepresentations in Ricci's map, should be understood in the context of the differences between Chinese and European cartographic traditions. One of the most famous medieval European maps is the Hereford Mappamundi (See Figure 1). It is an encyclopedic vision of what the world looked like to a thirteenth century Christian, reflecting contemporary theological, cosmological, philosophical, political, historical, zoological, and ethnographic beliefs.<sup>214</sup> Christianity reluctantly embraced geography, owing to the inexact and vague references to locations in the

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<sup>213</sup> Smith, p. 50.

<sup>214</sup> Brotton, p. 84.

Bible.<sup>215</sup> Therefore, medieval European cartography was based on a Christian theological understanding of the world and biblical history, rather than emphasising geographical accuracy and scientific methodologies.<sup>216</sup> The main catalyst for change in European cartography was the rediscovery of Ptolemy's *Geographia* in the early fifteenth century.

The fifteenth century witnessed the rebirth of classical knowledge. In cartographical terms, the secular, measured, projected and scaled maps proposed by Ptolemy in the second century CE were set against the allegorical, non-metrical medieval *mappaemundi*.<sup>217</sup> Ptolemy used a grid of geometrical lines of longitude and latitude to project the earth onto a flat surface.<sup>218</sup> The reason for the absence of longitude and latitude in medieval European cartography was the loss of Ptolemy's *Geographia* which had been kept in Constantinople until scholars, fearing the Ottoman threat, began to take prized works out of the city.<sup>219</sup> Humanism and veneration of classical knowledge defined the early modern period, and the field of cartography was no exception. Whilst the Hereford *Mappamundi* and its contemporaries drew on the Roman and early Christian authors to confirm their religious understanding of creation, early modern maps reached further back to the Hellenistic world of Ptolemy.<sup>220</sup>

An excellent example of this is the world map of 1507 by Martin Waldseemüller (See Figure 2). This map, based on Ptolemy's model, had a much better geographical projection than medieval *mappaemundi* but also, like many of its contemporaries, reproduced Ptolemy's

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<sup>215</sup> Brotton, p. 91.

<sup>216</sup> Chen, pp.517-552 (p. 542).

<sup>217</sup> *The History of Cartography*. Vol 3, *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, ed. by David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 6.

<sup>218</sup> Brotton, p. 11.

<sup>219</sup> Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World* (London: The British Library, 1997), p. 9.

<sup>220</sup> Brotton, p. 152

errors and showed a geocentric view of the universe.<sup>221</sup> Ptolemy's authority was still evident in 1570 when Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius launched what is commonly thought of as the first atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*.<sup>222</sup> Ortelius paid tribute to Gerard Mercator, describing him as Ptolemy's counterpart and the major geographer of modern times.<sup>223</sup> Both Mercator and Ortelius produced various maps with which Matteo Ricci would have been familiar, and which served as a basis for his own world map.

Unlike the vast and disparate social and cultural inheritance of the Graeco-Roman world in Europe, which gave birth to a variety of competing religious and political environments, pre-modern East Asia was shaped by one universal empire: the Chinese.<sup>224</sup> China had a highly sophisticated bureaucracy and its political ideology rested on the idea of China as the central kingdom under the heavens.<sup>225</sup> Chinese interest in the outside world was limited to the use of the imperial tribute system already discussed and there was no religious incentive to extend their influence. Neither Confucianism nor Buddhism require the spread of belief as a divine duty, unlike Christianity and Islam. This is reflected in a cartographic tradition focused on the establishment of boundaries.<sup>226</sup> Traditional Chinese maps were generally not drawn to scale and their makers were often scholars and artists rather than trained technicians.<sup>227</sup> These artistic-scholars saw their productions as part of a larger intellectual and cultural enterprise which embraced science, philosophy, art, literature, religion and particularly history.<sup>228</sup> By combining aesthetics, cosmology and history, Chinese world maps often blurred the distinctions between actual, lived in space and imaginary,

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<sup>221</sup> Brotton, p. 154.

<sup>222</sup> Nuti, pp.38-55 (p. 39).

<sup>223</sup> Nuti, pp.38-55 (p. 41).

<sup>224</sup> Brotton, p. 119.

<sup>225</sup> Brotton, p. 120.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>227</sup> Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 10.; Smith, p. 52.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid*

idealised space.<sup>229</sup> These works had a limited practical value, instead their purpose was to generate an emotional response from their audience.<sup>230</sup> The places depicted in Chinese maps were designed to provoke powerful reactions, it was of little importance as to whether the places were real or mythological.<sup>231</sup> A fact misunderstood by the Jesuits was that, despite a long tradition of sophisticated geographical and cartographical scholarship as well as foreign exploration and conquest, the outer world was largely unimportant in Chinese cartography. The force behind European cartography was the interest in capturing the whole world in a single ordered image, ignited by the voyages of discovery from the late fifteenth century onwards.<sup>232</sup> Early modern Chinese cartographers made choices to depict the world in terms of how their audience wanted it to appear.<sup>233</sup>

The Jesuits noted that to the Chinese a map of China and a map of the world were essentially the same thing. The Jesuits understood this to be a combination of Chinese ignorance and self-superiority. Ricci says that Li Zhizao, who would become one of highest ranked converts in the history of the Jesuit China mission, in his youth ‘[published] an excellent description of the entire Kingdom of China [...] which to him meant the entire world.’<sup>234</sup> Li was later ‘surprised at the limitations of his own work, when he came upon a map of the world, as made by Father Ricci.’<sup>235</sup> The annotations on Ricci’s map report that Li was convinced of the veracity of Ricci’s work, as it was based ‘on an immutable law,’ and acknowledged the ‘narrow scope of his own previous map.’<sup>236</sup> An example of Sinocentric cartography is the Amalgamated Map of the Great Ming Empire or Da Ming Hunyi Tu, from

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<sup>229</sup> Smith, p. 85.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid

<sup>231</sup> Smith, p. 86.

<sup>232</sup> Smith, p. 87.

<sup>233</sup> Smith, p. 88.

<sup>234</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 397.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid

<sup>236</sup> Giles, pp.367-385 (p. 368).



the late fourteenth century (See Figure 3). China dominates the landscape of the map as the Sinocentric assumption of universalistic overlordship blurs the distinction between a map of China and a map of the world.<sup>237</sup> The political beliefs of the Ming dynasty, in relation to inferior barbarian states, can clearly be seen in the diminished depiction of Africa and the rest of Eurasia. To Europeans, familiar with an emphasis on geographical accuracy and precision, these maps probably seemed outdated. The Jesuits celebrated the fact that they could show the Chinese the correct depiction of the world, and challenge archaic Chinese beliefs.

In Jesuit writings, the Chinese were always amazed by European maps, and instantly admitted the errors of their own cartographic traditions. Ricci's journal records that when the Chinese saw the size of their country as depicted in his map (See Figure 4.1)

the ignorant ones began to ridicule and scorn. But those more learned, seeing the beautiful order of the lines of latitude and longitude, of the equinoxes, the tropics, and the five zones, with the customs of the different countries and the whole world full of different names [...], which gave credit to this novelty, could not but believe that all of this was truth.<sup>238</sup>

It is tempting for historians to be drawn to teleological interpretation and view the Jesuits as providing more advanced cartographic techniques and new geographic information to an ignorant Chinese audience – a conviction held by the Jesuits themselves. They relished in the propaganda of the Chinese admitting that the Jesuit charts 'really did represent the size and figure of the world,' and that scholars, like Sun Kuang, examined Ricci's map 'in an effort to memorise this new idea of the world.'<sup>239</sup> However, whilst the Jesuits celebrated the fact that they were teaching new techniques to the Chinese, they had actually misunderstood the

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<sup>237</sup> Smith, p. 56.

<sup>238</sup> Excerpts from the relevant passages of Della entrata on the missionary work of the Jesuits in Zhaoqing, their *relationship with their mandarin patrons, and Ricci's scientific work*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>239</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 167.; Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 301.

ideological purpose of Chinese cartography, and not recognised its differences to the contemporary European tradition.

It was common knowledge to the Jesuits that the Chinese believed the world was flat. However, this was also a misunderstanding about Chinese science. Ricci's journal reports that the Chinese 'could not comprehend [...] that the earth is a globe.'<sup>240</sup> All editions of Ricci's map aimed to correct the traditional belief that the world was a square plain composed mostly of Chinese territories. The annotations on the map state that 'the real shape of the earth is spherical,' and Ricci aimed to demonstrate this by '[drawing] two hemispheres,' one of the north and the one of the south 'so as to give some idea of the real shape of the earth.' (See Figure 4.2).<sup>241</sup> Before 1585, Ricci had made three terrestrial globes for Wang Pan, the prefect of Shaoqing.<sup>242</sup> At the time he believed that these were the first of their kind in China as, before his arrival, 'the Chinese had never seen a geographical exposition of the entire surface of the earth,' either as a globe or a map.<sup>243</sup> In 1623, the Jesuit fathers Manuel Dias the younger and Nicolo Longobardo created a detailed terrestrial globe. The explanatory legend on this globe also shows their concern to challenge the idea that the earth was flat.<sup>244</sup> What Ricci, as well as Dias and Longobardo, misunderstood was that their creations were not the first terrestrial globes in China, and Chinese astronomical knowledge was more advanced than they realised. The first terrestrial globe had been made in China in 1267 when Chinese scholars became acquainted with the astronomical and geographical knowledge of the Arabs present at the imperial court.<sup>245</sup> Ricci himself was confronted by

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<sup>240</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 167.

<sup>241</sup> Giles, pp.367-385 (p. 369).

<sup>242</sup> Helen M. Wallis and E. D. Grinstead, 'A Chinese Terrestrial Globe A.D. 1623', *The British Museum Quarterly*, 25:3/4 (1962), 83-91 (p. 83).

<sup>243</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 326.

<sup>244</sup> Helen Wallis, 'The Influence of Father Ricci on Far Eastern Cartography', *Imago Mundi*, 19 (1965), 38-45 (p. 41).

<sup>245</sup> Wallis and Grinstead, pp.83-91 (p. 83).

evidence of previous globe construction in the College of Chinese Mathematicians in Nanjing in 1600. He was shown several astronomical instruments, including a globe from the thirteenth century Yuan dynasty.<sup>246</sup>

As for teaching the Chinese that the earth was not flat, the Jesuits were unaware that Chinese astronomers were writing of the sphericity of the earth in the second century BCE.<sup>247</sup> In addition to this, the Buddhist textual canon which was conveyed through Indian conduits contained texts on scientific subjects, including Greek astronomy.<sup>248</sup> Whilst mathematical astronomers used ecliptic as well as equatorial coordinates in the celestial mapping, Chinese cartographers saw no reason to project them onto the earth.<sup>249</sup> This was because traditional Chinese world maps were cultural statements about the world, rather than accurate renderings. Therefore, geographical realism was not important.<sup>250</sup> To the traditional Chinese cartographer in a society where maps demonstrated China's political power and authority it was of little importance whether the earth was flat or spherical. Chinese maps served a variety of purposes, whilst some were practical education tools, others were a means of asserting territorial claims and depicting the perceived link between the heavens and the earth.<sup>251</sup> Schooled in the European cartographic tradition, the Jesuits did not comprehend the fact that the Chinese could know that the Earth was spherical but still depict it as flat. It was not lack of skill or backwardness that determined the nature of traditional Chinese cartography.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid

<sup>247</sup> Wallis, pp.38-45 (p. 41).

<sup>248</sup> Charles Burnett, 'The Transmission of Science and Philosophy', in *The Cambridge World History Volume V: Expanding Webs of Exchange and Conflict 500 CE – 1500 CE*, ed. by Benjamin Z. Kedar and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 339-358 (p. 354-355).

<sup>249</sup> Smith, p. 53-54.

<sup>250</sup> Smith, p. 86.

<sup>251</sup> Smith, p. 52.

<sup>252</sup> Smith, p. 54.

The Jesuits did not introduce globes to China, nor did they teach the Chinese that the earth was spherical. What Jesuit cartography offered was new geographical knowledge and a more scientific approach towards cartography based on mathematical precision. The missionaries probably believed that they were ushering in a cartographic revolution in China. This can be seen in the words of Ricci's fictitious Chinese scholar from *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, who is so impressed by western mapping techniques and Ricci's map that he states that 'there is not the slightest error in it.'<sup>253</sup> Everyone to whom a copy of Ricci's map was presented seemed to rejoice in seeing its truth. One scholar 'esteem[ed] it so much that he [kept] the print with him, not wanting anyone to learn about it except those to whom he slowly [presented] it.'<sup>254</sup> However, the Jesuits did not have the impact they believed. The popularity of Ricci's map with scholars was probably down to its intrinsic novelty and exoticism, rather than revolutionary cartographic techniques. At the height of Jesuit power in the seventeenth century they helped create more mathematically accurate local maps, but had little long term impact on world maps. Ricci's map exerted little influence on Chinese cartography. Chinese world maps produced after the presence of the Jesuits continued to depict the world traditionally with foreigners existing precariously on the fringes of the Chinese Empire, and whole continents as tiny offshore islands or inconsequential additions to China's landmass. Not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was mathematical precision considered a cartographic end in itself in China.<sup>255</sup>

Mapping the world and reporting on the social customs of its inhabitants was an essential precondition of the Jesuits' accommodation policy and the sharing of information.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 243.

<sup>254</sup> From a letter of Father Matteo Ricci, Maceratense, the thirteenth of November, 1584, from the city of Canton, in *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-84* ed Howard M. Rienstra pp. 24-25.

<sup>255</sup> Smith, p. 85.; Wallis, pp.38-45 (p. 43).; Smith, p. 87.

<sup>256</sup> Laven, p. 18.

Therefore, it might seem strange that Ricci introduced manipulations and misrepresentations into his map. However, his purposes become far clearer when the idea of sharing geographic information is considered along with Ricci's desire to depict Europe in a particular way. The political thought behind missionary mapping was that a recognition of the rigor and precision of Western mathematics and astronomy could reinforce the authority of Christianity; if the missionaries displayed accurate knowledge of the visible world, their claim of expertise about the unknown regions of Heaven and Hell would be supported.<sup>257</sup> This is an aim of Ricci's map, but I propose that he also aimed to manipulate the image of the world presented to the Chinese in order to show that Europeans and European culture were not a threat. In its discussion of Ricci's map, this dissertation refers to the Beijing example of 1602, entitled *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu* meaning the Universal Map of the World and Countries.<sup>258</sup>

Ricci was certainly capable of making a map up to contemporary early modern European standards. At the Jesuit college, Ricci had acquired 'a sufficient knowledge of mathematics,' as he was 'the disciple of Father [Christopher Clavius] in Rome.'<sup>259</sup> Clavius (1538-1612) was a remarkable mathematician and one of the most respected astronomers in Europe. One of the results of his work was that mathematics and natural philosophy were granted a place in the Jesuit curriculum.<sup>260</sup> The *Ratio Studiorum*, states that the professor of mathematics should lecture on the elements of Euclid but also, when the students had become

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<sup>257</sup> Jacques Gernet, 'Christian and Chinese Visions of the World in the Seventeenth Century', *Chinese Science*, 4 (1980), 1-17 (p. 3); Urs App, *The Birth of Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p. 381.

<sup>258</sup> Chen, pp.517-552 (p. 522).

<sup>259</sup> Excerpts from the relevant passages of *Della entrata on the missionary work of the Jesuits in Zhaoqing, their relationship with their mandarin patrons, and Ricci's scientific work*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>260</sup> Martha Baldwin, 'Pious Ambition: Natural Philosophy and the Jesuit Quest for the Patronage of Printed Books in the Seventeenth Century', in *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*, ed. by Mordechai Feingold (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 285-329 (p. 288).

more adept, ‘add something of geography or of the sphere.’<sup>261</sup> In examining the accuracy of Ricci’s map, the implications of Clavius having been his tutor are highly significant. Ricci, also a talented mathematician, was drawn towards the subject during his education. Clavius was famous for inspiring his students with his own original work, particularly astronomical observations and geographical calculations.<sup>262</sup> Under Clavius, students learnt to use astronomical and cartographical equipment to calculate eclipses and measure the position of the sun to determine longitudes.<sup>263</sup> Geometry enabled the imagination of celestial space and thereby facilitated the process of cartography, which was expanding in the sixteenth century.<sup>264</sup>

Ricci created his first map in 1584 after mandarins showed an interest in a chart hanging up in the Zhaoqing mission house. Laven questions the assumption that this was a map of the world, saying that it could have been a famous copperplate by Mercator or Ortelius, but Ricci lamented in 1585 about the shortage of books in his possession and was grateful to receive a copy of Ortelius’ *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* in 1608. From this, Laven concludes that it is unlikely that the Jesuits had such lavish volumes in their possession early in the mission and so the map was probably a cheaper and more functional navigational aid.<sup>265</sup> However, I believe that whilst the exact authorship of the map is uncertain, it was undoubtedly a map of the world. In two different translations of Ricci’s journal there are references to a world map being on the wall in Zhaoqing: ‘the Fathers had in their hall a map of the world’, and ‘hanging on the wall of the reception room in the Mission House,’ there

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<sup>261</sup> ‘The Ratio Sudiorum of 1599’, trans. A. R. Ball, in *St Ignatius and the Ratio Studiorum*, trans. Mary Helen Mayer and A. R. Ball, ed. by Edward A. Fitzpatrick (London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1933), pp. 119-254 (p. 175).

<sup>262</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p.16.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>264</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 16-17.

<sup>265</sup> Laven, p. 22-23.

was ‘a view and a description of the entire world.’<sup>266</sup> The world map in the mission house sparked a great deal of interest. Wang Pan the Prefect of Zhaoqing ordered Ricci ‘to translate all the annotations of the map since he wanted to print and circulate it in all of China.’<sup>267</sup> To Ricci, this was an opportunity to continue networking with the literati by presenting himself as an able mathematician and cartographer, but also an opportunity to introduce cartographic propaganda to the Chinese.

The most striking aspect of Ricci’s map is the arrangement of the continents: Europe is consigned to the upper northwest corner; the American continent occupies the eastern half of the map; whilst the Pacific Ocean, with China on its western edge, dominates the centre (See Figure 4.1). The geographical arrangement clearly demonstrates that the map was designed for a Chinese audience. However, the foundation of Ricci’s mapping method is the Ptolemaic model, and his sources were from the forefront of early modern European cartography.<sup>268</sup> Baddeley believes that placing China in the centre was not a cartographic innovation, but that Ricci copied a European map, shifting the globe along the equatorial line until China occupied the place he desired.<sup>269</sup> This is supported by Ricci’s journal which states that he was ‘obliged to change his design,’ and ‘[omit] the first meridian of the Fortunate Islands.’ This enabled ‘the Kingdom of China to appear right in the centre.’<sup>270</sup> Ricci made a further accommodation to Chinese tastes by presenting the information on his map through annotations rather than images.

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<sup>266</sup> Excerpts from the relevant passages of *Della entrata on the missionary work of the Jesuits in Zhaoqing, their relationship with their mandarin patrons, and Ricci’s scientific work*, pp. 61-63.; Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 165-166.

<sup>267</sup> Excerpts from the relevant passages of *Della entrata on the missionary work of the Jesuits in Zhaoqing, their relationship with their mandarin patrons, and Ricci’s scientific work*, pp. 61-63

<sup>268</sup> Chen, pp.517-552 (p. 523).

<sup>269</sup> T. F. Baddeley, ‘Father Matteo Ricci’s Chinese World-Maps, 1584-1608’, *The Geographical Journal* 50:4 (1917), 254-270 (p. 269).

<sup>270</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 167.

To determine the extent of Ricci's misrepresentations, it is important to understand which European maps he was using as his main sources, and how he departed from them. Heawood states that there seems no reason to look beyond the original maps of Ortelius and Mercator for the main sources of Ricci's map.<sup>271</sup> Wallis and Grinstead also suggest that Ricci's insets of the polar hemispheres seem to have been inspired by Petrus Plancius.<sup>272</sup> Ricci appears to have relied mainly upon Ortelius for his world map, especially in the oval projection adopted.<sup>273</sup> However, as there is no complete accord with any single Ortelius map, it is probable that Ricci used his own discretion in compiling his map, drawing on Mercator, Ortelius and Plancius as his main sources, and occasionally consulting general geographical literature.<sup>274</sup>

It has been stated that the aim of Jesuit maps was to aid the acceptance of their teachings by demonstrating their technical and cartographical skills. In addition to this, the textual information that adorns Ricci's map was derived from both European and Chinese works.<sup>275</sup> One of the most important Chinese sources that Ricci used for his mapping of China was Guang Yu Tu. Printed in 1555 this was a revised map of the work of an earlier cartographer, Zhu Siben (1273-1333).<sup>276</sup> Ricci's use of Chinese sources ensured that his audience would find familiar geographic and ethnographic statements about the world within the map. It is probable that Ricci hoped his accommodation to Chinese tastes would encourage literati to accept his misrepresentations and manipulations of European culture and geography. These were: the claim that Europe was peaceful and united in the Catholic faith; a choice of map projection that distorted Europe; a slight elongation of the western latitude of

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<sup>271</sup> E. Heawood, 'The Relationship of the Ricci Maps', *The Geographical Journal*, 50:4 (1917), 271-276 (p. 276).

<sup>272</sup> Wallis and Grinstead, pp.83-91 (p. 87).

<sup>273</sup> Heawood, pp.271-276 (p. 271-272).

<sup>274</sup> Heawood, pp.271-276 (p. 272).

<sup>275</sup> Hostetler, p. 55.

<sup>276</sup> Chen, pp.517-552 (p. 525).



mainland Europe; and a significant manipulation of the land around the Black and Caspian Seas.

The Jesuits knew the delicate situation in which they operated, and needed to present an image of Europe that would most appeal to the Chinese elite. The annotations on Ricci's map describing Europe are designed specifically to achieve this aim. They claim that all countries in Europe 'follow no heterodox doctrine, but are reverent adherents of the holy Christian religion,' and that the Pope is 'revered by all.'<sup>277</sup> In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this was quite simply not the case. The purpose behind this claim was to convince the Chinese that Europe was peaceful, sophisticated and worthy of respect and interest. This desire to control information and be the only source of knowledge about Europe accessible to the Chinese, is shown by Valignano's insistence that other religious orders should not be allowed into Japan or China. In 1558 Valignano wrote to Phillip I of Portugal saying that the attempts of other Catholic orders to enter China made the mission more difficult and would cause embarrassment because the mandarins would react with distrust.<sup>278</sup> The Jesuits wanted to keep the illusion of a united Church and prove the veracity of their teachings, which would be questioned if the Chinese knew the true extent of European sectarianism. Valignano argued that the success of the mission required complete uniformity of doctrine so as to exercise a degree of cultural control.<sup>279</sup> A demonstration of the unity of Europe would prove that further contact with Europeans and the continuing integration of the missionaries into Chinese society would not upset the balance of state. The image of a united European Christendom presented by Ricci was aimed at drawing a parallel in the Chinese mindset between the achievements and learning of Chinese and European civilisation. This

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<sup>277</sup> Giles, pp.367-385 (p. 377); Giles, pp.367-385 (p. 378).

<sup>278</sup> FR. A. Valignano S.J., Visitor, to Philip I, King of Portugal, in *Documenta Indica* ed. by Josef Wicki (Rome: Monumenta Historica Soc. Iesu, 1981), XV, 838-839

<sup>279</sup> Rubiés, pp. 237-280 (p.255).

was the simplest form of manipulation for Ricci to employ, partly because the Jesuits had full control over this information as the Chinese had no other sources of information about Europe with which to oppose his statements, and also because it relied on no geographic misrepresentation.

Two sections of Ricci's map are particularly interesting to examine when considering geographic misrepresentation: his depiction of Europe; and the land around the Black and Caspian Seas. An analysis of these areas in the light of this extract from Ricci's journal reveals some aspects of his propaganda.

When [the Chinese] saw on the map what an almost unlimited stretch of land and sea lay between Europe and the Kingdom of China, that realisation seemed to diminish the fear our presence had occasioned. Why fear a people whom nature had placed so far away from them, and if this geographic fact of distance were generally known by all the Chinese, the knowledge would serve to remove a great obstruction to the spread of the Gospel throughout the kingdom.<sup>280</sup>

This extract demonstrates that Ricci was aware of Chinese suspicions about Europeans and that a geographic demonstration of the distance between the two could alleviate some of this mistrust. It is impossible to know how the areas of Europe and the Black and Caspian Seas were depicted on the first two editions of Ricci's map, but I would like to suggest that, by the time of the third edition in 1602, Ricci had purposely, on the basis of no new geographical knowledge, differed from his sources of Mercator, Plancius and Ortelius and manipulated geography so as to increase the distance between Europe and China. I believe this to be the case because there seems to be no other reason, aside from manipulating and controlling the information that Ricci knew would appeal most to the Chinese, for him to have departed from his sources in key areas. The Jesuits wanted above all things, to be successful in their proselytising mission and turn souls towards Christianity, an aim which in Reformation

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<sup>280</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 167-168.

Europe, justified all manner of means.<sup>281</sup> In this case, the practice of dissimulation and selecting certain information to either disguise or manipulate was essential to Jesuit successes.

Ricci's depiction of Europe is markedly different from his sources. On his map, Europe appears stretched, as well as smaller and less significant, nestling in the upper left corner. The section of the 1569 Mercator map which displays the majority of Europe as well as North and Central Africa, does not appear to differ greatly from a modern map covering the same region (See Figure 5.2). The boot shape of Italy is clear and well defined, as is Greece with its many islands. All the countries within Europe are in roughly proportionate size to one another, and the western most edge of Europe makes a line from Ireland to Spain, falling just short of the longitudinal line of ten degrees. This is very similar to two Plancius maps of 1590 and 1594 (See Figure 6.1). Whilst they adopt a slightly different projection, demonstrating the sphericity of the earth by presenting it as two hemispheres, both maps also mark Europe's western most edge on the longitudinal line of ten degrees (See Figure 6.2). Ortelius' world map from the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* similarly places Ireland and Spain just short of the longitude of ten degrees (See Figure 7.2).

Ricci's Europe, in comparison to his sources, appears inaccurate and elongated from east to west. This is partially due to his choice of projection as, in all maps, distortion increases as the view moves towards the periphery. As Ricci's map is not Eurocentric, Europe appears distorted and diminished. However, even when this is considered, Ricci still extended France and Spain to the west so that Spain reaches past the longitudinal line that it shares with Ireland on the other maps, and instead stretches towards the longitudinal line of

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<sup>281</sup> Laven, p. 26.

West Africa (See Figure 4.2). The extension of France and Spain is a relatively small adjustment in itself, but because of the extra distortion caused by Ricci's choice of projection, Europe appears diminished in its north to south extension, as well as elongated away from China towards the west. Ricci's placement of China in the centre of his map was primarily aimed at conforming to Chinese tastes. However, it also served his purposes because elements of misrepresentation, manipulation, dissimulation and distortion were all part of the policy of accommodation. The map's oval projection, combined with China's location in the centre, allowed for a greater distortion of Europe's north to south, as well as east to west extensions.

Cartographers make choices about how every detail of their maps is presented as well as what they include or omit.<sup>282</sup> It is striking that Ricci's depiction of Europe, as well as seeming diminished and elongated, is far less accurate in its delineations of the countries than compared to his sources. Italy's distinctive boot shape is hardly recognisable and Greece lacks any hint as to the intricacy of its coastline (See Figure 4.2). Ricci had access to maps that displayed Europe's countries in great detail, but his map provides only a rough idea of their relative positions. This is because he was not interested in sharing any accurate information about Europe to the Chinese, geographic or otherwise. He only required a rough image to accompany his propaganda statements which were the more important aspect of his representation of Europe. This is clearly shown in the annotations that cover the map where far less information is provided about Europe than other parts of the world.<sup>283</sup> The Europe that Ricci presented to the Chinese was a peaceful one united in devotion to the Pope – it bore little relation to the true political condition. Therefore, the exact shape of Europe was of little importance on the map, just that it existed. The only area of Ricci's map where geographical

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<sup>282</sup> Brotton, p. 15.

<sup>283</sup> Giles, pp.367-385 (p. 377).

accuracy was particularly important was China itself, shown by the fact that the geography of China is decidedly superior to that of Europe.<sup>284</sup>

Ricci demonstrated Europe to be peaceful through his annotations which misrepresented the religious diversity and political tensions of early modern Europe. The depiction of Europe on the map as diminished and distant from China, was caused partly by his choice of projection, and partly by a slight extension of the European landmass to the west. A more significant extension was Ricci's adjustment of the geography of the land around the Black and Caspian Seas to further distance China from Europe. On the Mercator map of 1569, the western edge of the Black Sea lies on the longitudinal line of fifty six or fifty seven degrees (See Figure 5.3). This matches both Plancius maps, as well as being almost identical to Ortelius', who places the Black Sea's western edge on a longitude of roughly fifty eight degrees (See Figures 6.3 and 7.3). On this point, Ricci's map conforms to his cartographic predecessors, and all four map makers agree that there existed a longitudinal alignment between the west coast of the Black Sea and the area just to the east of the Cape of Good Hope (See Figure 4.3). Ricci's deviation becomes evident when the eastern edge of the Caspian Sea is examined.

The maps by Mercator, Plancius and Ortelius are all, broadly speaking, in agreement as to the position of the east coast of the Caspian Sea. On the Mercator map it falls on a longitude of around ninety nine degrees, which is about half way between Oman on the Arabian Peninsula and India (See Figure 5.3). Ortelius concurs with Mercator almost exactly, as does Plancius on his world map of 1590 (See Figures 7.3 and 6.3). Plancius revised his representation of the Caspian Sea in his 1594 map, suggesting that the longitudinal line falls

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<sup>284</sup> Giles, pp.367-385 (p. 378).

within the Arabian Peninsula itself (See Figure 6.3). Ricci's map, however, is significantly different. If his longitudinal line is followed southwards, instead of being near the Arabian Peninsula, it roughly equates with Sri Lanka (See Figure 4.3). This extension can also be seen if the longitudinal lines that span the Black and Caspian Seas on the maps are counted.

Mercator, Ortelius and Plancius depicted the whole area covering about forty degrees of longitude, whilst on the Ricci map it is around fifty (See Figures 5.3, 7.3, 6.3 and 4.3). This strange and seemingly unfounded decision makes the position of many central Asian cities highly peculiar. The enormous lateral extension of the Black and Caspian seas means that the space available for the countries in that area is highly limited. Tibet, for instance, is almost entirely crowded out.<sup>285</sup> This choice only makes sense when Ricci's desire to distance Europe and China from each other is considered.

The Jesuits misunderstood fundamental elements of traditional Chinese cartography. They underestimated the scientific knowledge that already existed within China and believed that they were introducing revolutionary and precise mapping techniques. In reality, Chinese mapping methods remained relatively unchanged and the Jesuits had little long term impact. It is highly significant that Ricci was unwilling to give up his copy of Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* to the imperial eunuchs in 1600, as this would have undermined the information control in Ricci's own map. Ortelius did not place China in the centre and so Europe appeared larger and more significant than in Ricci's map. Ortelius's map also did not include the manipulations of a slight westward extension of Europe, or a large eastward extension of the Black and Caspian Seas. These interventions were intended to increase the distance between Europe and China, demonstrating that there was no need to fear a military or cultural intrusion into China. Ricci's map did not share accurate geographical knowledge

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<sup>285</sup> Giles, pp.367-385 (p. 383).

with the Chinese; Europe was indistinct and the annotated description about it was propaganda intended to aid the integration of missionaries into Chinese society. The map was key component of Jesuit misrepresentation and manipulation of information about their homeland.

#### 4: Hidden Knowledge

Misrepresentations and manipulations were essential to Jesuit success in China. However, they had to prove to their superiors in Europe that they were promoting orthodox Christian practices. This chapter examines esoteric aspects of Jesuit teaching in China and how they misrepresented their own actions and policies in reports to Europe, justifying their changes and their presentation of themselves.

Reformation Europe was gripped by religious tension and diversification. The Council of Trent (1545-63) was intended to end the schism in the Church, but resulted instead in Christian Europe's permanent division.<sup>286</sup> Throughout Europe orthodoxy and heterodoxy were intensely debated, with many Catholic thinkers worried that abandoning orthodox ways would weaken Christian Europe. Theodor Loher wrote in 1535 that when Greece became schismatic it 'was cast away by God, [and] fell into the hands of the Muslims.'<sup>287</sup> He stated Christianity had become 'tainted by all manner of dissent, sects, and heresies.'<sup>288</sup> Hsia compares the Catholic Church during the Reformation to a body afflicted by the contagion of Protestant heresies, and the Jesuits as its blood vessels restoring life and energy.<sup>289</sup> However, Feingold shows that Jesuit scholars in Europe were often open and adventurous in their discussions despite the dangers of such exchanges, especially with heretics.<sup>290</sup> The Jesuits were criticised from within and outside the Church for their teachings and willingness to bend the rules of orthodoxy.<sup>291</sup> Prominent in these attacks was Blaise Pascal's, *The Provincial*

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<sup>286</sup> Hsia, Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China, p. 7.

<sup>287</sup> Excerpt from the Chronicle of a Carthusian monk in Cologne, 1535, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 41-42.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid

<sup>289</sup> Hsia, A Jesuit in the Forbidden City, p. 10.

<sup>290</sup> Feingold, pp. 1-45 (p. 23-24).

<sup>291</sup> Zagorin, p. 155.



Letters, which delivered a permanent blow to the order's reputation and to their casuist teachings.<sup>292</sup>

The Reformation led to crises of conscience caused by successive and conflicting demands for oaths of allegiance from various leaders. Casuistry was the study of cases of conscience and moral dilemmas.<sup>293</sup> Jesuits were closely identified with this practice and were criticised for it, as well as for probabilism and mental reservation.<sup>294</sup> The Jesuit with whom Pascal debates in *The Provincial Letters* refers to probabilism as 'the very A, B, C, of our whole moral philosophy.'<sup>295</sup> The Jesuit explains that 'an opinion is called probable when it is founded upon reasons of some consideration,' and that the authority of a 'learned and pious' man is 'entitled to very great consideration.' When Pascal asks how to choose between two contrary authorities, the Jesuit replies that '[a man] has only to follow the opinion which suits him best.'<sup>296</sup> Pascal depicts probabilism as the hypocritical art of deceiving conscience for the pursuit of personal interest, an opinion supported by many Catholics as well as Protestants.<sup>297</sup> Mental reservation and equivocation were aimed at concealing or dissimulating the truth without incurring the sin of lying. Equivocation entailed the use of words or expressions with a double meaning different for the speaker than for the hearer. Whereas Mental reservation was an untrue statement followed by an unexpressed addition in the mind which made it true.<sup>298</sup> The example of mental reservation provided by Pascal is that a man may swear 'that he never did such a thing (although he actually did it), meaning within himself that he did not do so on a certain day, or before he was born,' as long as the words 'he employs have no such

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid

<sup>293</sup> Richard Sorabji, *Moral Conscience Through the Ages: Fifth Century BCE to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 117.

<sup>294</sup> Zagorin, p. 162.

<sup>295</sup> Letter V, pp. 36-47.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid

<sup>297</sup> Carlos Martínez Valle, 'Jesuit Psychagogies: An Approach to the Relations of Schooling and Casuistry', *Paedagogica Historica*, 49:4 (2013), 577-591 (p. 577).

<sup>298</sup> Zagorin, p. 163.

sense as would discover his meaning.<sup>299</sup> The justification behind mental reservation was that God would know the reserved mental part and understand the true meaning of the person's utterance.<sup>300</sup> The fractured nature of Christianity in Europe, and the focus on orthodox teachings, forced the Catholic Church to demonstrate to both internal and external critics that its missionary efforts were conducive to the expansion of a genuine form of Christianity.<sup>301</sup> The Jesuits were at the centre of this as they dominated the evangelisation of South and East Asia.<sup>302</sup> Facing criticisms of laxity and hypocrisy they had to justify their actions and show they were teaching Christianity in a way which would be approved of in Europe.

The extent to which Christianity could be adapted to the cultural and social traits of a local civilisation was a matter of contention in Europe.<sup>303</sup> The accommodation policy was followed by Jesuits in China, Japan and India. Audacious adaptations allowed the missionaries to implant Christianity beyond the narrow limits of the thalassocratic sphere of Portuguese influence established in Asia after Vasco da Gama's 1498 voyage.<sup>304</sup> However, simple success in implanting Christianity into other cultures did not fully justify to those in Europe the changes that were made to the faith. All Jesuit letterbooks were edited by the secretary of the Society, who enlisted others in translating, abbreviating and censoring.<sup>305</sup> These editors wanted to describe a triumphant and culturally superior Christianity, whereas in reality the missionaries were writing of the necessity of a cultural transformation of European

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<sup>299</sup> Letter IX, in *The Provincial Letters* by Blaise Pascal trans. Thomas M'Crie, pp. 80-91

<sup>300</sup> Zagorin, p. 176.

<sup>301</sup> Paolo Aranha, "Les meilleures causes embarrassent les juges, si elles manquent de bonnes preuves": Père Norbert's Militant Historiography on the Malabar Rites Controversy', in Thomas Wallnig, Thomas Stockinger, Ines Peper, and Patrick Fiska eds. *Europäische Geschichtskulturen um 1700 zwischen Gelehrsamkeit, Politik und Konfession* (Walter de Gruyter, 2012) pp. 239-269 (p. 240).

<sup>302</sup> Aranha, pp. 239-269 (p. 241).

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>305</sup> *Jesuit Letters from China 1583-84* ed Howard M. Rienstra (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 6.

Christianity into a Chinese setting.<sup>306</sup> This led to misrepresentations, justifications and often censorship being used in the reports that returned to Europe. Anything deemed not to be of benefit to the public, or hard to understand, was edited out and propaganda inserted. Jesuit letterbooks were not pieces of disinterested historical scholarship, but rather tools used to promote interest and support for their missionary endeavours.<sup>307</sup>

This propaganda can be seen clearly in missionary texts. In 1599, when the Jesuits were presenting themselves as literati and publicly criticising Buddhism, Ricci and a famous Buddhist preacher, Xuelang Hong'en, held a heated debate which Ricci recorded in detail. He stressed that Xuelang, 'differed from the other Buddhist clerics in being a great poet, intelligent, and learned in the doctrines of all the sects.'<sup>308</sup> The propaganda stressing the truth of Christianity is obvious from Ricci's description of Xuelang's 'fantasy.'<sup>309</sup> It is then reported that 'all of Nanjing spoke about this dispute,' and that 'the father debated the famous Buddhist monk and was victorious.'<sup>310</sup> The early missionaries to China had great difficulty in explaining why the Gospel had to be accommodated to Chinese culture. Propaganda like this was necessary to appease prevailing European attitudes of racial and cultural superiority.<sup>311</sup>

The Jesuits misrepresented Confucianism in their letters back to Europe in order to justify their accommodation to its styles, and their allowing converts to continue practicing Confucian rituals. The Jesuits' missionary strategy was centralised around forming close friendships with the literati for the purpose of social advancement. They did not want to

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<sup>306</sup> Rienstra, p. 8.

<sup>307</sup> Rienstra, p. 7.

<sup>308</sup> *Excerpt from Della entrata on Ricci's debate with the Buddhist abbot Xuelang Hong'en in Nanjing, 1599*, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 85-87.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid

<sup>310</sup> Ibid

<sup>311</sup> Rienstra, p. 8.

alienate these potential assets through anti-idolatry campaigns. The Jesuits chose to describe Confucianism to Europe as a distinct and separate doctrine from Buddhism or Taoism, which was actually belied by the syncretic nature of Chinese religious belief in the late Ming period. They, therefore, engaged in discussions with those Confucians who rejected the late Ming syncretism with Buddhism, and focused on ancient Confucian texts.<sup>312</sup> One such scholar was Zhang Huang. In a letter to Duarte de Sande, Ricci said that Zhang was considered a ‘master of the doctrine of the literati,’ which ‘is very similar to ours because there is nothing about [Buddhist] beliefs and only treats virtues and ethics in this life.’<sup>313</sup> This in itself was not a complete misrepresentation as Confucianism is not a religion and the Jesuits had found evidence for this within Confucian texts. For instance, in *The Analects* it states that ‘the Master never spoke of the supernatural, [...], or gods and spirits.’<sup>314</sup>

The misrepresentation lay in the statement that there were clear divisions between Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. In a letter to Pasio, Ricci stated that ‘there are three sects in this realm: the most ancient, the literati, has always governed China; the other two are idolatrous, [...] and are always combated by the literati.’<sup>315</sup> However, the Jesuits actually knew the level of individuality and syncretic belief existing in China, and that many Confucian literati were also Buddhist. Not only had they met the Prefect of Zhaoqing, Wang Pan, who was a devout Buddhist, but Confucian texts also teach that ‘the noble-minded are all-encompassing, not stuck in doctrines. Little people are stuck in doctrines.’<sup>316</sup> The Jesuits presented clear distinctions in order to justify their friendliness towards the literati, whose approval was needed to live in China. Ricci stated that Confucian ethics ‘are almost entirely

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<sup>312</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 161.

<sup>313</sup> Excerpts from a letter by Ricci to Duarte de Sande, Nanchang, August 29, 1595, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 79-81.

<sup>314</sup> Confucius, *The Analects* trans. David Hinton (California: Counterpoint, 1998), p. 72.

<sup>315</sup> Excerpts from a letter by Ricci to Francesco Pasio, vice-provincial in the Japan Jesuit mission, February 15, 1609, pp. 119-122.

<sup>316</sup> Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City*, p. 81.; Confucius, p. 14.

in concordance with ours,' and justified to Pasio why he 'praise[d] the literati in [his] books,' saying that 'doing so allowed me to use them to confute the other sects without refuting the Confucian texts.'<sup>317</sup> This is also clear in *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, where the fictitious Chinese scholar states that 'the superior men of my country too are vehement in their dismissal of Buddhism and Taoism and have a deep hatred of them.'<sup>318</sup>

The Jesuits aided their misrepresentation of Confucianism as a separate doctrine by reporting back to Europe that the literati supported their attacks on Buddhism, selecting the views of those who did and presenting them as representative of the entire class. An example was Feng Yingjing, a 'distinguished member of the class of the literati.'<sup>319</sup> He and Ricci became friends and remained in contact even during Feng's imprisonment for opposing the eunuchs.<sup>320</sup> Feng wrote an endorsement for *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* which stressed the enmity between Confucianism and Buddhism: '[Buddhists] inflated their talk as if Buddha was higher than our Six Classics.'<sup>321</sup> He also published Ricci's *On Friendship*, this was particularly useful to the Jesuits because in the early seventeenth century missionaries were not permitted to publish any works. Ricci circumvented the process of seeking authorisation from the ecclesiastical censors by obtaining Valignano's approval for his practice of having his Chinese friends publish for him.<sup>322</sup> Ricci did not reveal to these friends the possible censorship of his personal writings, wanting to control the knowledge of the organisational link between the Jesuit mission and foreign, potentially aggressive, European

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<sup>317</sup> Excerpts from a letter Ricci to Francesco Pasio, vice-provincial in the Japan Jesuit mission, February 15, 1609, pp. 119-122

<sup>318</sup> Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 99.

<sup>319</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 394.

<sup>320</sup> Laven, p. 178-9.

<sup>321</sup> The mandarin Feng Yingjing's endorsement of Ricci's *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (1603), in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 97-98.

<sup>322</sup> Liu, pp.823-847 (p. 825).

powers. He exploited the Chinese custom of friends publishing writings for one another to skirt censorship problems.<sup>323</sup>

The Jesuits' justification for allowing some literati converts to continue Confucian practices was that Confucianism was an ethical rather than spiritual doctrine. They highlighted similarities between Confucianism and Christianity such as the Confucian principle of reciprocity: 'never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself.'<sup>324</sup> Jesuit reports back to Europe avoided any mention of the doctrinal points shared by Christianity and Buddhism, and misrepresented those of the literati who were not opposed to Buddhism. In 1608, Buddhist layman Yu Chunxi wrote to Ricci: 'when I read your comparisons of heaven and hell, it seems you have not flipped through the books [of Buddha].'<sup>325</sup> He continued that while the Confucian classics are worthy of citation there are 'many places in the Buddhist sutras that are harmonious with your teachings. Yet, without a casual reading, you attack them.' He concludes that Ricci's work 'is no different from Buddhist teachings!'<sup>326</sup> Jesuit misrepresentations of Confucianism helped maintain approval for their mission from their superiors as well as answering European critics.

One argument put forward by the Jesuits, with implications for both the China and India missions, was that monotheism once existed in Asia passed down from the children of Adam, and this could be rediscovered by studying the writings of Asian antiquity. Urs App, in *The Birth of Orientalism*, refers to this as the Ur-tradition: the attempt to revive an ancient original teaching that has been forgotten or adapted. Ur-tradition movements arise during

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<sup>323</sup> Liu, pp.823-847 (p. 826).

<sup>324</sup> Liu, pp.43-59 (p. 45); Confucius, p. 176.

<sup>325</sup> Letter by the Buddhist layman Yu Chunxi to Ricci, in which he criticises Ricci's opposition to Buddhism (1608), in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 115-117.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid

times of doctrinal rivalry or when new religions or reform movements want to establish and legitimise themselves.<sup>327</sup> A common characteristic is a tripartite scheme of a golden age, a period of degeneration and then a time of regeneration. Those seeking to renovate an Ur-tradition need to define an original teaching, identify the stages of degeneration, and present themselves as agents of regeneration.<sup>328</sup> The Jesuits argued that genuine monotheism had existed in a relatively pure state in China until the time of Confucius. Their missionary role, therefore, consisted in reawakening the old faith, documenting its “prophecies” regarding Christ, identifying its fulfilment as Christianity, and eradicating the causes of religious degeneration such as idolatry, magic, and superstition. The vestiges of ancient monotheism, such as Confucian rituals, were permitted to continue because the Jesuits strived to reinterpret their ancient writings as Christian.<sup>329</sup>

Feng Yingjing’s endorsement reflects this Jesuit interpretation. According to Feng the Lord of Heaven is Shangdi, the God on High, referred to in the classical texts which say: ‘fear God on High,’ ‘help God on High,’ and ‘serve God on High.’<sup>330</sup> Both the Jesuits and their converts claimed that Christian ideas had previously existed in China, they argued that ‘our Lord of Heaven is the Sovereign on High mentioned in the ancient [Chinese] canonical writings.’<sup>331</sup> However, there was a difference in their approach. In letters to Europe or their superiors, the Jesuits justified their attempts to regenerate an Ur-tradition by comparing Chinese civilisation, to the civilisations of European antiquity which were so admired by Renaissance scholars. In one letter, Ricci stated that from ‘antiquity, the Chinese have followed the natural law more exactly than in our countries.’ He claimed that Chinese idols

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<sup>327</sup> App, p. 255-256.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid

<sup>329</sup> App, p. 28-29.; Liu, pp.43-59 (p. 47).

<sup>330</sup> The mandarin Feng Yingjing's endorsement of Ricci's True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (1603), pp. 97-98.

<sup>331</sup> Ricci, The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven, p. 123.

were less destructive than those of the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, and reinforced the point that the books of the literati, 'which are the most ancient and most authoritative, describe no worship except for that of heaven and earth and its lord.'<sup>332</sup>

The Jesuits' Chinese converts, on the other hand, referred to more recent evidence of Christianity existing in China. In 1623, a buried Tang dynasty stele was discovered with annotations apparently written by a Christian monk in 781. The stele provides a history of Nestorian Christianity in China.<sup>333</sup> It inspired two of the Jesuits' most famous converts, Li Zhizao and Xu Guangqi. Li wrote that the literati 'have grown familiar with [the Jesuits'] virtuous doctrines and practices.' However, he added that there are doubters who 'criticise [Christianity] as a new doctrine,' when it had been 'propagated [in China] for nine hundred and ninety years!'<sup>334</sup> Xu Guangqi wrote that the stele proved that 'the religion of Heaven has been known in China for more than one millennium and is not newly invented.' He used the fact that it dated from the Tang dynasty to support the argument that Christianity is 'harmonious with a prosperous reign.'<sup>335</sup> The discovery of the stele was problematic for the Jesuits. They could not use it in celebratory propaganda to Europe since Nestorian Christianity was deemed heretical, and neither could they use it to help their missionary efforts in China as they would have to explain about the sectarian nature of Christianity. This last point would undermine the image of a united Europe that they were trying to present and make their attempts to keep other Catholic orders out of China pointless.

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<sup>332</sup> Excerpts from a letter Ricci to Francesco Pasio, vice-provincial in the Japan Jesuit mission, February 15, 1609, pp. 119-122

<sup>333</sup> Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2011), p. 7.

<sup>334</sup> *The Legacy of Ricci in China*, in Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 123-126

<sup>335</sup> *The Legacy of Ricci in China*, pp. 123-126



A Christian past, or at least a monotheistic Ur-tradition, existing in China was the basis for the Jesuits' justification for trying to lead the Chinese back to ancient Confucianism, which then validated their propagation of Catholicism.<sup>336</sup> Ricci's emphasis on the Ur-tradition shows that what he really wanted to promulgate in China was the Judaic basis of Christian theology, that of a Father God. Ricci searched for arcane biblical themes in the Confucian canon which could have been shared by both cultures before China's alleged divergence. Liu treats the Jesuit search for ancient monotheism in Chinese texts with skepticism saying that it never served much more than a tactical cover for Christianity.<sup>337</sup> In this way, it functioned as a misrepresentation back to Europe to justify the necessary change towards Judeo-Christian theology, rather than the strictly orthodox, designed to ensure the success of the mission. In addition to this, Liu states that there is no evidence that Feng Yingjing or Xu Guangqi ever truly endorsed Ricci's monotheistic reading of Confucian texts.<sup>338</sup> This is supported by Rubiés who believes the Jesuits used accommodation opportunistically, as a temporary measure rather than as a long-term acceptance of cultural diversity.<sup>339</sup>

To wed Christianity and Confucianism through a monotheistic Ur-tradition, the Jesuits needed to provide a link between Chinese history and their own understandings of biblical history. This manifested itself in the hijacking of the other culture's history and embedding it into a biblical scenario.<sup>340</sup> The Jesuits knew some Chinese history and were 'accustomed to use the authority of [Confucianism] to their own advantage, by commenting only on what happened since the time of Confucius, who lived some five hundred years

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<sup>336</sup> Liu, pp.43-59 (p. 49).

<sup>337</sup> Liu, pp.43-59 (p. 43).

<sup>338</sup> Liu, pp.823-847 (p. 847).

<sup>339</sup> Rubiés, pp.237-280 (p. 239).

<sup>340</sup> App, p. 279.

before the coming of Christ.<sup>341</sup> The Jesuits could not reject Chinese historical narratives without alienating the literati. To help them draw parallels between biblical history and the Chinese annals, which would then need to be justified in Europe, the China missionaries made use of Septuagint chronology. This particular reading of biblical history added 959 years to the world's age, meaning that the date for the start of human history preceded that of the Chinese annals.<sup>342</sup> This revision of biblical text brought the Jesuits much criticism, as it opened the possibility of challenging biblical authority.<sup>343</sup>

Such actions were at the root of Jesuit misrepresentations and paradoxes. In China they made maximum use of European classical heritage, by linking together stoicism with neo-Confucianism, whilst simultaneously in Europe they were highly selective anti-Erasman humanists.<sup>344</sup> It seemed baffling to European readers that the Jesuits could concurrently maintain that ancient Confucians believed in one God, whilst arguing that Confucian rituals were purely secular.<sup>345</sup> The Jesuit misrepresentation of Confucianism as a secular ethical code, distinct from Buddhism and Taoism, was necessary to appease critics in Europe. However, their desire to combine Chinese annals and biblical history had to be supported through the use of unorthodox chronology, which made Europeans question the validity and orthodoxy of their actions. It is clear from the discussions in which Jesuits in Europe were willing to engage, and their use of dissimulation, casuistry and probabilism that they were not afraid to experiment with notions of orthodoxy to spread their Christian message. It was this readiness to experiment that created the need to perform a balancing act, constantly justifying their actions, which could only last for so long.

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<sup>341</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 448.

<sup>342</sup> App, p. 34.

<sup>343</sup> Rubiés, pp.237-280 (p. 265).

<sup>344</sup> Rubiés, pp.237-280 (p. 257).

<sup>345</sup> Rubiés, pp.237-280 (p. 275).

The Jesuit alliance with Confucianism was based on presenting themselves as educated scholars and rejecting Buddhist and Taoist ideas on the basis of rationality. The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven scorns Buddhist teachings as fantasies and superstitions. Ricci, in his voice as the Western scholar, dismisses the Buddhist belief in reincarnation as ridiculous as it would introduce ‘great confusion into the rules governing human relations.’<sup>346</sup> He argues that as Buddhists do not kill animals in case they are the reincarnations of parents or friends, ‘how can they bear to yoke oxen to the plough to till their fields?’ Farming was essential to life and could not be abandoned, nor the use of draught-animals avoided. This proved to Ricci that ‘the assertion that men can be transformed into animals cannot be believed.’<sup>347</sup> From the mid-1590s onwards, the writings circulated by the Jesuits in China had a strong humanistic, rather than religious orientation.<sup>348</sup> The connections formed with the literati through rejections of Buddhism and reasoned arguments were highly useful to securing the Jesuits an expanding network of powerful friends that they could rely on. However, what made them successful was also their weakness. Through the approach of complete rationality and logic, the Jesuits backed themselves into a corner and made it difficult to discuss Christian mysteries or revelations.<sup>349</sup> This meant that the Jesuits had to outwardly dissimulate and misrepresent their religion by only demonstrating its moral and ethical teachings, with the additional notion of the Judaic Father God. Simultaneously, they had to control knowledge of the miracles and revelations performed by Jesus as esoteric teachings reserved only for the Chinese who had already converted.

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<sup>346</sup> Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 257.

<sup>347</sup> Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 255.

<sup>348</sup> Willard J. Peterson, ‘Learning from Heaven: The Introduction of Christianity and other Western Ideas into Late Ming China’, in *China and Maritime Europe 1500-1800: Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy, and Missions*, ed. by John E. Wills (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 78-134 (p. 94).

<sup>349</sup> Liu, pp.167-183 (p. 180).

It is clearly stated in Ricci's journal that when 'going anywhere in China, for the purpose of spreading the Gospel [Ricci] had always to conceal his intention, on first acquaintance.'<sup>350</sup> The Jesuits knew that miracles of the Christian faith, as well as the miracles being performed in China by the missionaries which were attracting converts from the common people, would not appeal to the literati whom the Jesuits courted.<sup>351</sup> The intentions, which Ricci had always had to conceal, can be seen in one of his dreams. He met a stranger, who asked him if he thought he could 'uproot an age-old religion and replace it with a new one?' Ricci's journal records that he had always kept this 'ultimate design an utter secret.'<sup>352</sup> This passage is interesting, not only because Ricci is admitting the fact that he kept his missionary role completely secret, but also because there is no mention of a synthesis between Christianity and the Ur-tradition of ancient monotheism. The Jesuits were highly successful in cultivating the friendship of the Confucian literati, and became well respected for their knowledge and scientific capabilities, but had to disguise many elements of their religion through misrepresentation and manipulation. The result was that many literati were bewildered by Jesuit activities in China. This is summarised succinctly by scholar Li Zhi, who in 1599 wrote 'I have no idea why [Ricci] is here.' He wondered whether Ricci wanted to 'use his teachings to change our Confucian learning, but surely that would be silly.'<sup>353</sup> The Jesuits' esoteric practices and manner of conversion meant that Li Zhi had no knowledge of their western teachings.

The most famous proselytising text from the mission is Ricci's *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*. The starting point of this work was Ruggieri's earlier catechism *The*

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<sup>350</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 270.

<sup>351</sup> Laven, p. 221.

<sup>352</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 273.

<sup>353</sup> Letter by the Chinese dissident and scholar Li Zhi to a friend, in which he describes his impressions of Ricci (ca. 1599), in *Matteo Ricci & the Catholic Mission to China: A Short History with Documents* ed Ronnie Po-chia Hsia pp. 89.

True Record of the Lord of Heaven.<sup>354</sup> A significant difference between these texts is their dealings with the intricacies of the Christian faith, and Ricci's reliance on misrepresentation through esoteric teaching. In 1584, Ricci wrote that Ruggieri's catechism had been well received and that it 'presented all the things necessary to be a Christian,' refuted the 'principle sects of China,' and outlined 'the Ten Commandments, the Pater Noster, and the Ave Maria.'<sup>355</sup> For his later work, Ricci retained the scholastic rationalism of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas to discuss the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the distinctions of humans from plants and animals, and the divine judgement of good and evil after death.<sup>356</sup> Elements that Ricci neglected to cover in his own work, which had been articulated by Ruggieri, were the Apostle's Creed, the Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and Ave Maria. The discourse which existed in Ricci's work which was absent from Ruggieri's was the detection of a monotheistic Ur-tradition.<sup>357</sup>

Ricci's deletion of certain doctrinal points was designed to present a Christianity based on ethics and rational argument. He stated that the missionaries needed a new catechism 'since the other which was composed in the beginning, has not succeeded as well as it should.'<sup>358</sup> The change from Ruggieri's catechism to Ricci's was justified back to Europe by Trigault, through his editing of Ricci's journals. He stated that Ruggieri's text was written when '[the missionaries] were inexperienced, and with the help of interpreters,' so 'was revised, augmented and re-edited.'<sup>359</sup> In reality, all the wood blocks of Ruggieri's work had been destroyed on Ricci's orders in 1594 as he had come to despise the Buddhist

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<sup>354</sup> Liu, pp.43-59 (p. 45).

<sup>355</sup> From a letter of Father Matteo Ricci, Maceratese, the thirteenth of November, 1584, from the city of Canton, pp. 24-25.

<sup>356</sup> Liu, pp.43-59 (p. 45).

<sup>357</sup> Liu, pp.43-59 (p. 45).

<sup>358</sup> Excerpts from letters written by Ricci to General Claudio Acquaviva, Shaozhou, November 15, 1592, and January 15 and 17, 1593, pp. 69-70.

<sup>359</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 448.

terminology within it.<sup>360</sup> The new catechism, with its esoteric teachings, focused to a greater extent on what Christianity was not, rather than what it was: the teaching of the Lord of Heaven ‘has nothing to do with the doctrines of voidness and nirvana [...], but is concerned only with leading men’s minds, through sincerity.’<sup>361</sup>

The Jesuits adopted arcane teaching styles because they knew that the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ would be intellectually repugnant to many Confucians.<sup>362</sup> For this reason, Christ is conspicuous by his absence in *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*. When he is mentioned, his entire life is summarised almost in a single paragraph. The Western scholar states that the Lord of Heaven ‘descended to this world Himself to save it,’ and that ‘His name was Jesus [...]. He established His own teachings and taught for thirty-three years in the West. He then reascended to Heaven’.<sup>363</sup> The Western scholar provides little information about Jesus, saying only that he ‘showed many signs and His actions greatly surpassed those of all other saints.’<sup>364</sup> In the very brief description of Christ, what is most interesting to examine is the end of his time on earth. His ascension to heaven involves no suffering on the cross, and merely happened ‘in broad daylight at a time clearly forecast by Himself,’ once ‘His work of preaching was complete.’<sup>365</sup> This description departs from biblical history as the Jesuits knew the literati would not take kindly to a God ignominiously put to death for violating the laws of his country.<sup>366</sup> This degrading execution did not fit the image of Christianity they were trying to present.

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<sup>360</sup> Laven, p. 200.

<sup>361</sup> Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 389.

<sup>362</sup> Rubiés, pp.237-280 (p. 240).

<sup>363</sup> Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 449.

<sup>364</sup> Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 451.

<sup>365</sup> Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 453.

<sup>366</sup> Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, p. 227.

More detailed information about the life of Jesus and the inner workings of Christianity was reserved for catechumens and converts; this abridged description was all that was advertised to the Chinese. Peterson states that Ricci was quite explicit about this aspect of his work.<sup>367</sup> The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven was ‘chiefly adapted for use by the pagans,’ because ‘it was thought that the neophytes would receive sufficient religious instruction from the catechism lessons they attended as catechumens, and from the frequent exhortations they attended, after their conversion.’<sup>368</sup> Therefore, Ricci’s work, which publicised Christianity to China, ‘consisted entirely of arguments drawn from the natural light of reason, rather than such as are based upon the authority of Holy Scripture.’<sup>369</sup> Consequently, Christianity was misrepresented by the control of information through esoteric teachings; only certain assimilable aspects of the religion were allowed to be published and circulated among the Chinese.

One of the first Jesuit catechisms in the Far East was composed by Alessandro Valignano in 1586. This was a textbook used by every aspiring missionary to Asia and student in Jesuit schools.<sup>370</sup> The True Meaning of The Lord of Heaven was partially modelled after Valignano’s catechism and partly after Ruggieri’s, but with Ricci’s own esoteric slant applied. It was not a catechism in the traditional sense but a *praeparatio evangelica*: a way to entice the rationalist upper echelon of Chinese society through the refutations of the corrupting religions of Buddhism and Taoism.<sup>371</sup> Ricci justified his approach by arguing that he was attempting to establish a firm foundation of knowledge about Christianity. It represented an introduction to the Christian understanding of the name of God, with the

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<sup>367</sup> Peterson, pp. 78-134 (p. 95).

<sup>368</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 448.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>370</sup> App, p. 10.

<sup>371</sup> App, p. 22.

assumption that a fuller explanation would be sought from the Jesuits.<sup>372</sup> To use App's phrase, Ricci's catechism was not yet the Good News itself, but a first step towards it.<sup>373</sup> Removing certain elements from Christianity to reduce it to its Judaic theological basis and divorcing it from the strict European interpretation was the only way the missionaries' religion would be accepted. This was demonstrated to the Jesuits by an interaction they had with the leader of a Jewish community in China who they met a few years after settling in Beijing. The Jewish community had become assimilated into Chinese culture, their leader had already achieved the first level of the literati examinations. He had read a Chinese book about the European visitors and, learning that the Jesuits 'believed in only one God,' concluded that they must follow 'Mosaic Law.'<sup>374</sup> The Jewish man was so distant from the European interpretation of the Judeo-Christian tradition that he did not understand the difference between the two Abrahamic religions and "knew of no such word as Jew."<sup>375</sup> To survive in China the Jesuits had to reinterpret their teachings. An adoption of monotheism among the Chinese elite was the main aim of Ricci's catechism, as a full conversion to Christianity among most literati would be impractical to achieve. If a conversion to monotheism based on Judeo-Christian theology could be achieved, this could be reported back to Europe as the successful spread of Christianity.

Concealment in Jesuit teachings was essential so as not to deter the Confucians upon whom the Jesuits depended for support, whilst still serving the purpose of educating people about Christianity. As a result of the emperor's disinclination for administration, the official reply to their request to live in Beijing was 'not forthcoming.'<sup>376</sup> The Jesuits never received a

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<sup>372</sup> Cawley, pp.293-308 (p. 303).

<sup>373</sup> App, p. 22.

<sup>374</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 107.

<sup>375</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 108.

<sup>376</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 593.



confirmation of their right to live in Beijing, and so needed high ranked supporters who could aid them if there was ever an attempt to expel them. The process of trying to attract literati, and then revealing esoteric teachings to individuals initiated into the faith was slow.

However, it was a perfect representation of early modern Christian honest dissimulation: the reserved Christian individual possesses a precious inner core only revealed to a select few.<sup>377</sup>

Whilst effective, esoteric teachings left the Jesuits open to criticism from Europe. In *The Provincial Letters*, Pascal protests about the Jesuit mission in China where the Jesuits advised those converts who had received more instruction in the Christian faith than the uninitiated, to disguise their religious devotions. Pascal records that they

permitted Christians to practice idolatry itself, with the aid of the following ingenious contrivance: they made their converts conceal under their clothes an image of Jesus Christ, to which they taught them to transfer mentally those adorations which they rendered ostensibly to [their idols].<sup>378</sup>

The Jesuits walked a fine line between appeasing Confucian literati, which would allow them to remain in China, and justifying their actions back to their critics and superiors in Europe. The Jesuits tried to link a reduced Judeo-Christian ethical and moral teaching with an Ur-tradition of ancient monotheism that they read into the Chinese classics. Ricci was aware that converting the literati to European Christianity was impractical. The aim of his catechism and the Jesuits' strategy was for an adoption of monotheism, which could be regarded as Judeo-Christian in disguise. This was a pragmatic approach as it would form a basis for later conversions to Christianity. The Jesuits argued that Buddhism was a damaging addition to Confucianism that arrived in China after Emperor Ming of the Han dynasty heard of the teachings of Christ in the west and sent ambassadors on a mission to search for canonical writings, 'midway these ambassadors mistakenly took India to be their goal, and

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<sup>377</sup> Snyder, p. 52.

<sup>378</sup> Letter V, pp. 36-47.

returned to China with Buddhist scriptures which were then circulated throughout the nation.<sup>379</sup>

The removal of Jesus from Ricci's work made it inevitable that his own evangelical effort would be questioned in Europe.<sup>380</sup> The Jesuits tackled this through careful selection of information to be transmitted to Europe as propaganda. When Ricci showed a high ranked scholar-official an ornamented crucifix, the literatus 'stood in silent admiration,' and said 'it surely is not the image of any merely mortal being, and this room is no fitting place to expose the image of the Lord of Heaven and earth.'<sup>381</sup> The Jesuits presented educated men as being stunned by Christian artefacts and swayed by their divine power. This propaganda avoided the necessity of explaining that many of their teachings were secret. Esoteric teachings were essential to the mission's survival but ultimately could not be sustained. Rubiés challenges Gernet, arguing that it was not fundamental cultural incommensurability that hampered the mission. Rather, as the Chinese literati learnt that Christian Revelation involved concepts quite different from Confucian philosophy, the majority had little wish for it. It is significant that Ricci introduced the Incarnation, but not the Resurrection, in *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, and that his work is one of Christian apologetics, as he knew otherwise his teachings would not be accepted.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 453-455.

<sup>380</sup> Liu, pp.167-183 (p. 180).

<sup>381</sup> Ricci, *The Journals of Matthew Ricci*, p. 303.

<sup>382</sup> Rubiés, pp.237-280 (p. 261).

## Conclusion

If you look at their intentions, examine their motives, and scrutinise what brings them contentment – how can people hide who they are? How can they hide who they really are?<sup>383</sup>

The Jesuits' motives in China were often unclear to the Chinese because of the practice of dissimulation and esoteric teaching. In addition, the ways in which they attempted to achieve their aims earned them criticism from Europe. Essential to their successes was their policy of accommodating themselves to Chinese aesthetics, language, rituals and mannerisms. Without these changes, they would have failed to court the literati elite upon whom they depended for support to continue living in China. The other orders that tried to enter China had nowhere near the success of the Jesuits because they did not pursue a policy of accommodation. The Dominicans struggled in their early attempts to enter China because of opposition from the Jesuits and the suspicions of the Chinese.<sup>384</sup> They remained concerned with maintaining ritual purity and patrolled their communities for suspicious activities; their vision of Christian life, in comparison to that of the Jesuits, had more rigid obligations.<sup>385</sup> It is significant that the Jesuits, despite accommodating themselves to Chinese tastes and sharing scientific and geographic knowledge, were highly selective with what they chose to share. The policy of accommodation was not based on complete openness as the Jesuits knew that certain aspects of their culture and religion would estrange the literati. Accommodation was, therefore, founded upon the rigorous control and manipulation of information backed up by tactical misrepresentations, all aimed at gaining acceptance by the Chinese ruling classes.

When the Jesuits first entered China, they were dressed as Buddhist monks to try to ensure they were accepted as religious figures into Chinese society. This disguise was

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<sup>383</sup> Confucius, p. 13.

<sup>384</sup> Menegon, p. 58.; Menegon, p. 56.

<sup>385</sup> Menegon, p. 58.

intended to translate their identity into a Chinese context. However, because they struggled to truly express their own teachings in pre-existing Chinese terminology, their identity was not completely understood. Many of the Chinese thought that the Jesuits were alchemists, which brought them a great deal of attention. This misconception was a result of Jesuit secrecy and dissimulation as they wanted to disguise the fact that they were financed by foreign powers. The Jesuits thought that they proved the veracity of their religion through successful exorcisms but, to the Chinese, seemingly successful Christian exorcisms did not necessarily disprove the effectiveness of Buddhist and Taoist rituals. This was because the syncretic nature of Chinese religious belief simply incorporated Christianity into its framework, rather than being replaced by it.

The Jesuits changed their garb from Buddhist to Confucian dress when they realised that monks held a lower status than the educated literati. To connect with the ruling elites, the Jesuits worked on building a network of high profile friends by presenting themselves as scholars and bestowing gifts upon those they wished to impress. They controlled information about certain gifts to increase the perceived worth of these items. They also dissimulated their missionary motives by emphasising European learning and scholarship. The result of this disguise of their missionary identity is that they were understood to be scholars and technicians rather than missionaries. The Jesuits were highly selective in the nature of their gifts, as well as the information they presented to the Chinese about them. This is clearly shown by the fact that Ricci was reluctant to give up a copy of Ortelius' map, which revealed certain information that was either irrelevant to the Jesuit cause or which they wanted to disguise.

Reports to Europe, that the Chinese were immediately impressed by the accuracy of European maps, assumed a propaganda value that was based on the Jesuit misunderstanding of the purpose of traditional Chinese maps. The differences between Chinese and European political thought were manifested in their cartographic practices. Ricci's map, while based on some of the most famous works from the European cartographic tradition, departs from them in certain key areas as part of the strategic attempt to win favour with the highest ranked Chinese. Ricci's map exemplifies the central aims of Jesuit adaptations and manipulations and showcases the vision of the world that Ricci wanted to present to the Chinese. Europe is shown to be peaceful and united in one common belief, which was politically and religiously inaccurate. In addition to this, the choice of an oval projection for the map, combined with a slight westward extension of Europe and a large geographic manipulation of the land around the Black and Caspian Seas, resulted in an elongated and seemingly narrowed Europe that is distanced from China. These manipulations were, like all Jesuit accommodations, designed to demonstrate that Europe and Europeans were peaceful and that the adoption of European sciences, and eventually religion, would only serve to increase the prestige of Chinese civilisation.

As a whole, the Society of Jesus was experimental in its methods. It invested more in education than most religious orders and became a major power in the cultural interactions between Europe and the Far East. The Jesuits chose innovative ways to tackle the problems of proselytisation as they knew that attempting missionary activities in China in a traditional, iconoclastic manner would meet great resistance. They were perceptive as to the structure of Chinese society and so all their adjustments to themselves and their religion were aimed at ingratiating them with the literati. This highly successful policy was faced with one significant problem: justifying Jesuit policy to critics and superiors in Europe. The Jesuit

mission to China was vulnerable because of the context of its historical moment. Europe was gripped by religious divisions and confrontations, and people's actions were under constant scrutiny. Therefore, dissimulation became widespread as religious authorities tried to police notions of orthodoxy.

Interestingly, however, it was also a period when people throughout Europe were experimenting with their own notions of conformity. In early seventeenth century England, the term Church Papists was used to denote people who did not think that attending Protestant services was necessarily incompatible with being a good Catholic.<sup>386</sup> The Jesuits also tested the limits of their own teachings. One of Ricci's maxims in *On Friendship* states that 'the harm that is done by a friend's excessive praise is greater than the harm that is done by an enemy's excessive calumny.'<sup>387</sup> This phrase is taken from Erasmus, who had been severely criticised by Ignatius of Loyola and was generally not considered appropriate material for Jesuit readers. Ricci was not limited in his writings by strict orthodoxy, but sought the fullest range and most significant and effective quotations.<sup>388</sup> Had the Jesuits not been obliged to report back to Europe and explain their actions, it seems probable that China would have been a very profitable missionary ground. The image of Christianity presented to the Chinese had been carefully constructed and edited so that it resonated as much as possible with Confucian doctrine. They wanted to ensure that they could convert their Chinese audience, who were culturally and religiously diverse and sophisticated, into a general and overarching Judeo-Christian version of monotheism. This was necessary as the mysteries and revelations of Christianity would have seemed like superstition to most Confucians. The Jesuits avoided advertising these aspects of Christianity through esoteric teachings. The

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<sup>386</sup> Tutino, pp.534-553 (p. 535).

<sup>387</sup> Matteo Ricci, *On Friendship: One Hundred Maxims for a Chinese Prince* ed. and trans. Timothy Billings (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 101.

<sup>388</sup> Spence, p. 150.

pragmatic solution of preaching Abrahamic monotheism – founded upon the Judaic notion of a single Father God, salvation and afterlife – was one aspect of the accommodations, adjustments and manipulations that were vital to Jesuit successes in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. However, these eventually led to the rites controversy that ended the mission in the early eighteenth century as the Jesuits could no longer maintain the balance between effective policies and appeasing their critics in Europe.

In this dissertation, I aimed not to dismiss such ideas as Billings' statement that Ricci wanted to establish a common ground for cross cultural understanding, respect and goodwill to pave the way for proselytising, but to try to apply a more nuanced analysis to them.<sup>389</sup> I believe that Ricci and other Jesuits formed many close friendships with locals within China and that there were many instances of true cross cultural interaction. I also attempted to show that they were never completely open or honest about themselves and that this was a necessity for the survival of the mission. The equality of the mission has been challenged before, most notably by Jacques Gernet, who focused on the incompatibility of Christianity and Confucianism. I have tried to place the mission in the context of the contemporary complexities surrounding orthodoxy and honesty, so as to appreciate the pragmatism of the Jesuit approach and the disguises they employed. I hope to have demonstrated this by integrating the discourse on early modern dissimulation and its application as a means of survival into the historiography of the early Jesuit mission to China.

One of the first objects that drew me towards investigating this field was Matteo Ricci's map. A further aim of this dissertation was to challenge the conception of Ricci's map as a gift of European geographic and astronomical knowledge. I see it as a carefully

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<sup>389</sup> Billings (ed. and trans.), *On Friendship*, p. 12.

constructed piece of propaganda relying on geographic manipulation and the control of information about Europe. My belief that the map was a deliberate misrepresentation furthering the Jesuits' political aims is founded upon Ricci's deviations from his sources, as well as the manipulation he employed in describing the political and religious climate of Europe. I have examined the intercultural, cartographic, religious and scientific history of the mission, as well as elements of material culture, with a specific focus on dissimulation and Jesuit rhetorical practice. Much has been written on dissimulation in early modern Europe as a tool for either social advancement or for survival when facing persecution. Historians like Tutino and Zagorin have examined the relationship between dissimulation and conformity, while Snyder expanded the field by focusing on the emergence of a discourse on dissimulation among the dominant social groups of the Old Regime, rather than examining the development of state security apparatus or underground religious groups.<sup>390</sup> However, these have all focused primarily on dissimulation as a European phenomenon. I hope to have broadened the discussion in this field by applying the theories of dissimulation to an early modern Far Eastern religious mission, and showing how it functioned in a different cultural context.

Jesuit accommodation was a policy of essential adjustments made by the missionaries for the success of the mission. It was a clear strategy to gain acceptance from the highest levels of society, and its final goal was the conversion of the emperor and the adoption of Christianity throughout China. The Jesuits had to use all their means in the accommodation policy: dissimulating aspects of their culture and religion that they knew were unsavoury, and promoting their knowledge of science and mathematics for which they were so esteemed. The Jesuit mission to China experienced many difficulties throughout the 1580s, but once the

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<sup>390</sup> Snyder, p. xiv-xv.



Jesuits settled on the correct presentation of themselves, and had begun courting friendships through gift presentation, they had rapid success which was only halted just over a century later by the rites controversy. The successes of the early Jesuit mission to China were as a result of their dissimulation strategy which involved the control and manipulation of certain information, and the misrepresentation of their culture and religion. I would like to suggest that Matteo Ricci's world map should be seen as the product of this strategy: it presents a depiction of Europe and the world which would be most politically, religiously and geographically acceptable to the Chinese elites they wished to convert.

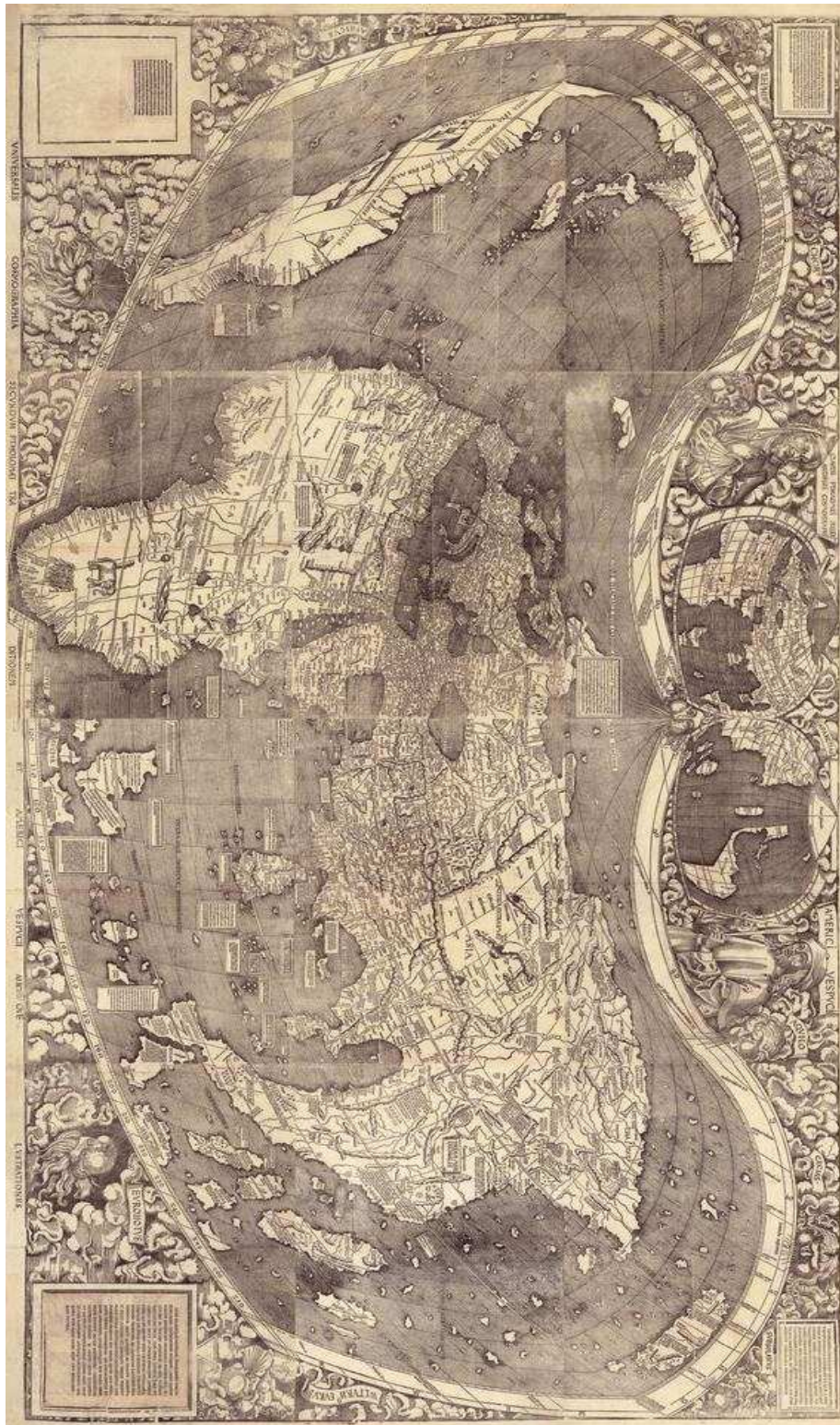
## Appendix of Maps

Figure 1.: The Hereford Mappamundi.<sup>391</sup>



<sup>391</sup> UNESCO Webpage [online]. The Hereford Mappa Mundi, 2007 [cited 03 August 2017]. Available from: <https://www.unesco.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Mappa-flat-copy.jpg>

Figure 2.: Map of 1507 by Martin Waldseemüller.<sup>392</sup>



<sup>392</sup> Library of Congress Webpage [online]. Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucii aliorumque lustrationes [cited 03 August 2017]. Available from: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3200.ct000725C/>

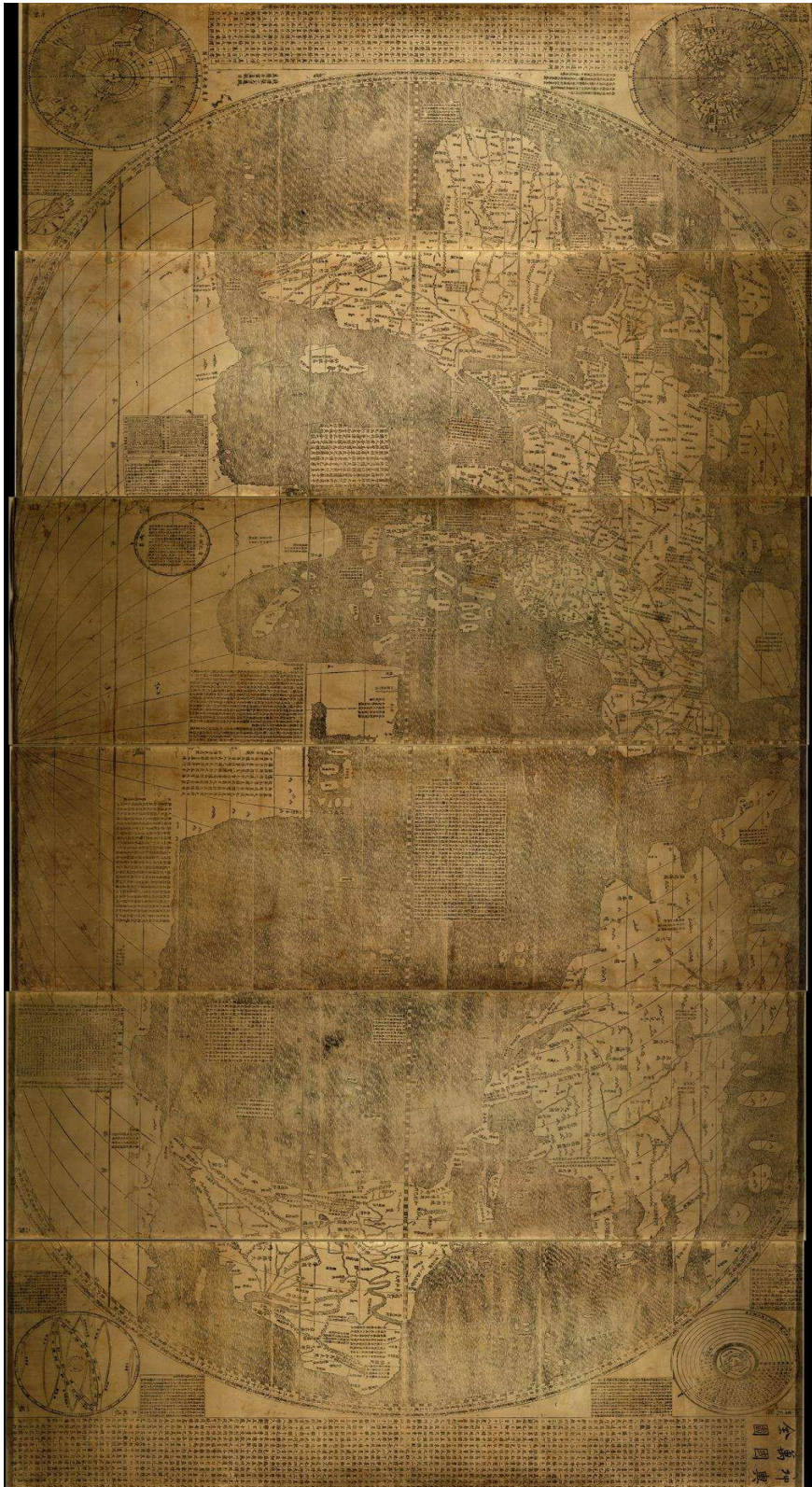
Figure 3.: Da Ming Hunyi Tu or ‘Amalgamated Map of the Great Ming Empire’.<sup>393</sup>



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<sup>393</sup> Wikipedia Webpage [online]. Da Ming Hunyi Tu [cited 03 August 2017]. Available from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Da\\_Ming\\_Hunyi\\_Tu#/media/File:Da-ming-hun-yi-tu.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Da_Ming_Hunyi_Tu#/media/File:Da-ming-hun-yi-tu.jpg)

Figure 4.1.: *Kūnyú Wànguó Quántú* or ‘Complete Geographical Map of all the Kingdoms of the World by Matteo Ricci’ (Third edition, 1602).<sup>394</sup>



<sup>394</sup> World Digital Library Webpage [online]. Great Universal Geographic Map, updated 24 May 2017 [cited 03 August 2017]. Available from: <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/4136/view/1/1/>

Figure 4.2.: Polar Hemispheres on Ricci's Map, the slight westward extension of Spain that stretches towards the same longitude as Africa's west coast, and a vague outline of Italy and Greece



Figure 4.3.: Ricci's (Mis)representation of the Black and Caspian Seas in agreement with his sources as to the eastern edge of the Black Sea, the western edge of the Caspian Sea runs on the same longitude as Sri Lanka

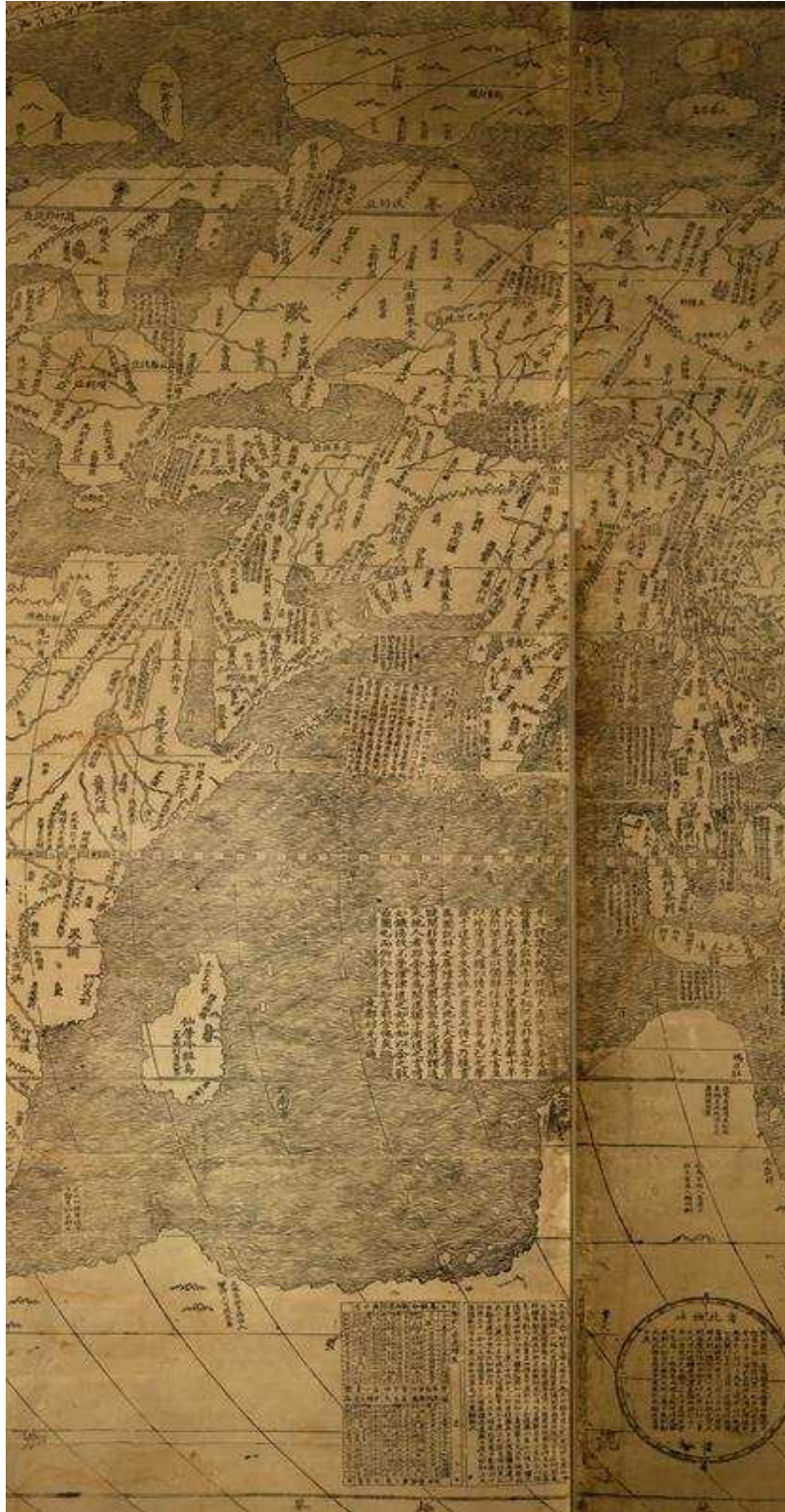
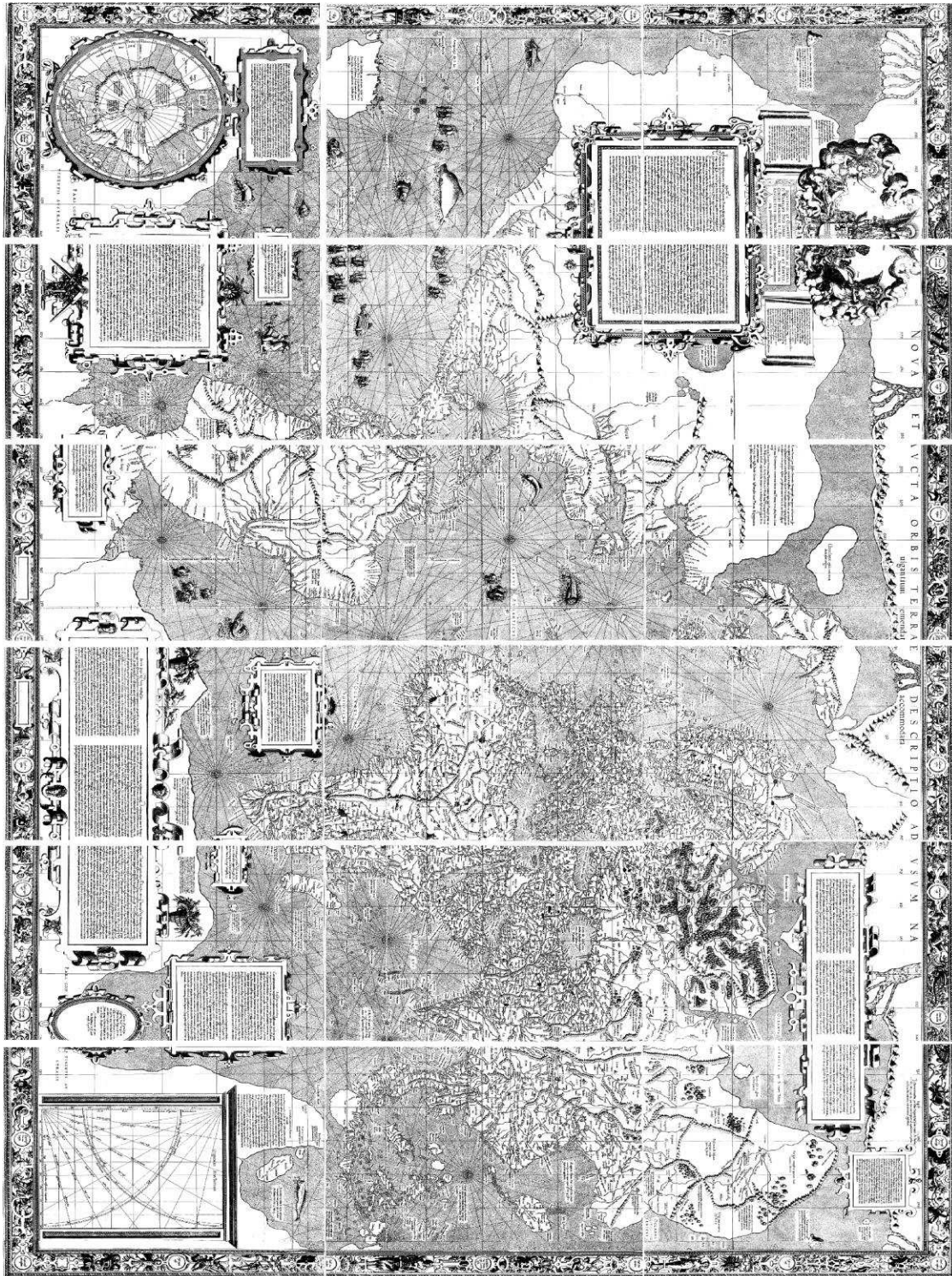


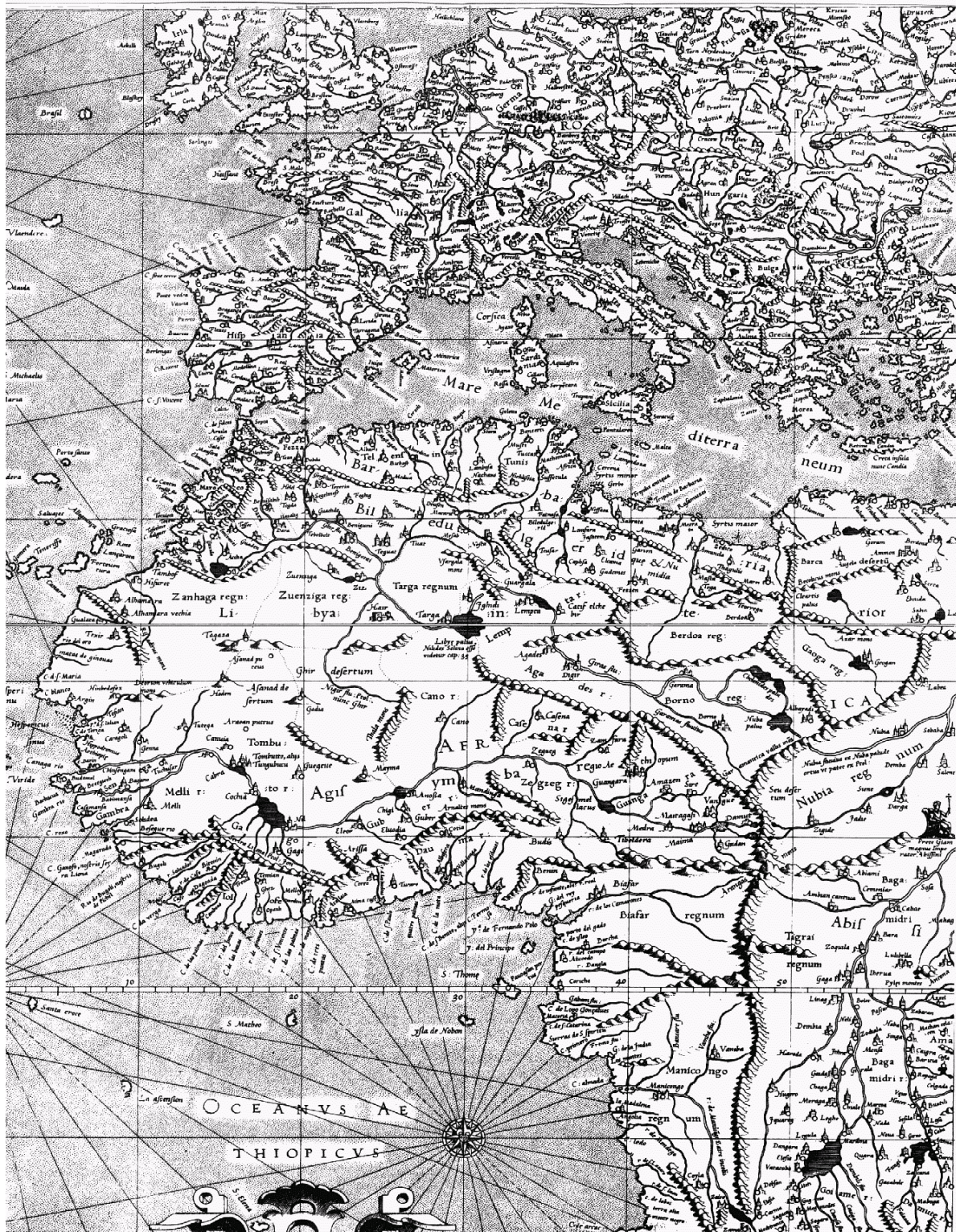
Figure 5.1.: Nova et Aucta Orbis Terrae Descriptio ad Usum Navigantium Emendate Accommodata or ‘New and More Complete Representation of the Terrestrial Globe Properly Adapted for use in Navigation’ by Gerard Mercator.<sup>395</sup>



<sup>395</sup> Wikimedia Webpage [online]. Mercator 1569 World Map, updated 25 October 2017 [cited 03 August 2017]. Available from: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4b/Mercator\\_1569\\_world\\_map\\_composite.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4b/Mercator_1569_world_map_composite.jpg)



Figure 5.2.: Sheet 10 from the Mercator Map depicting mainland Europe, showing its western edge at roughly  $10^{\circ}$ .<sup>396</sup>

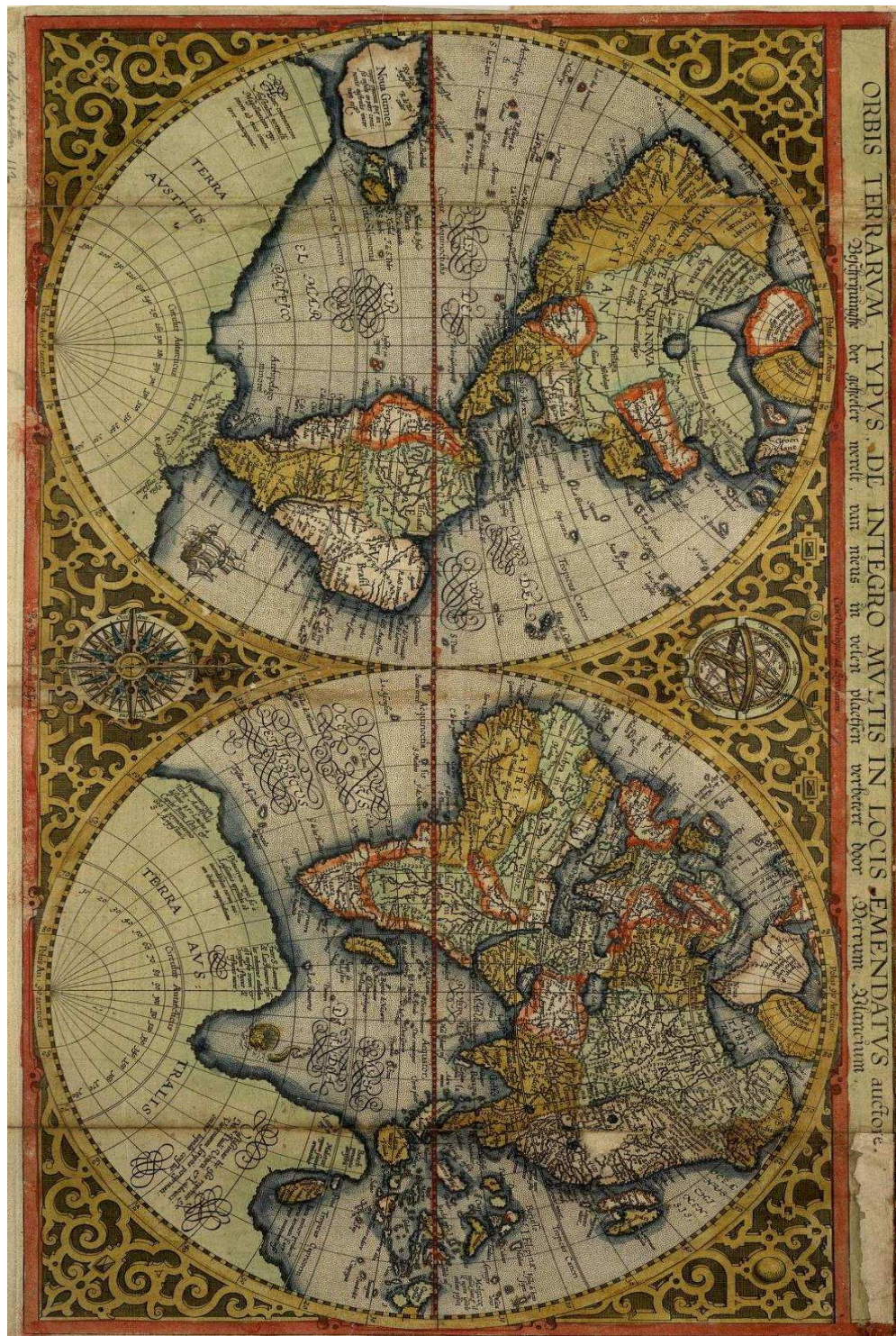


<sup>396</sup> Wikimedia Webpage [online]. Mercator 1569 World Map Sheet 10, updated 25 October 2017 [cited 03 August 2017]. Available from: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4a/Mercator\\_1569\\_world\\_map\\_sheet\\_10.PNG](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4a/Mercator_1569_world_map_sheet_10.PNG)

Figure 5.3.: Black and Caspian Seas on the Mercator Map running from 56° or 57° and ending on a longitudinal line that falls between the Arabian Peninsula and India



Figure 6.1.: Orbis Terrarum Typus de Integro Multis in Locis Emendatus by Petrus Plancius, 1590, and Orbis Terrarum Typus de Integro Multis in Locis Emendatus by Petrus Plancius, 1594.<sup>397</sup>



<sup>397</sup> Wikipedia Webpage [online]. 1590 Orbis Terrarum Plancius, updated 07 December 2007 [cited 03 August 2017]. Available from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1590\\_Orbis\\_Terrarum\\_Plancius.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1590_Orbis_Terrarum_Plancius.jpg) ; Wikipedia Webpage [online]. 1594 Orbis Plancius, updated 07 December 2007 [cited 03 August 2017]. Available from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1594\\_Orbis\\_Plancius\\_2.12\\_MB.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1594_Orbis_Plancius_2.12_MB.jpg)

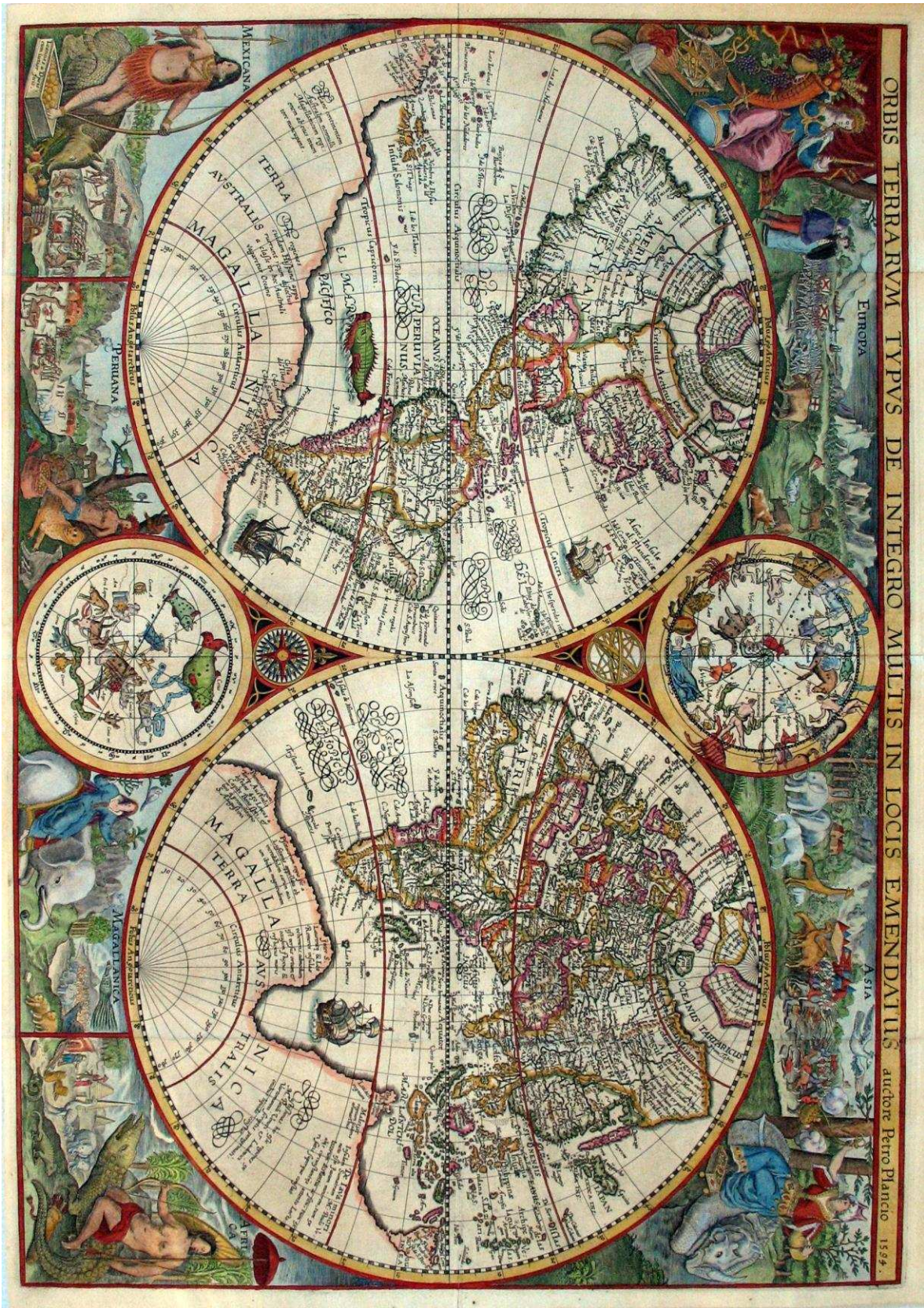


Figure 6.2.: Europe's western edge on both Plancius maps on a latitude of roughly 10°

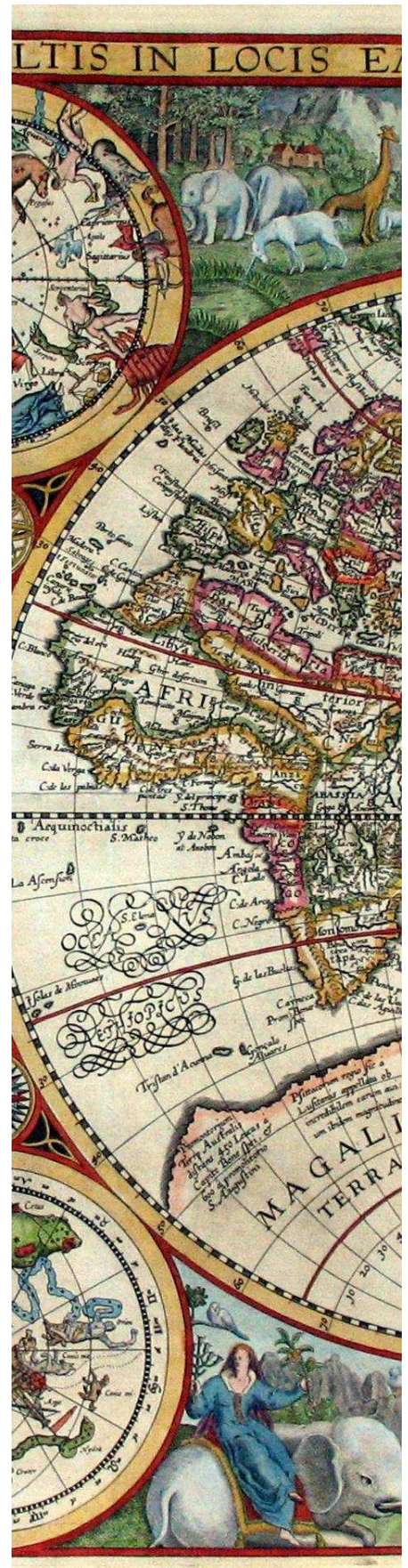


Figure 6.3.: Black and Caspian Seas on the Plancius Maps running from 56° or 57° and ending on a longitudinal line that falls just off the Arabian Peninsula on the 1590 map and just within the Peninsular on the 1594 map

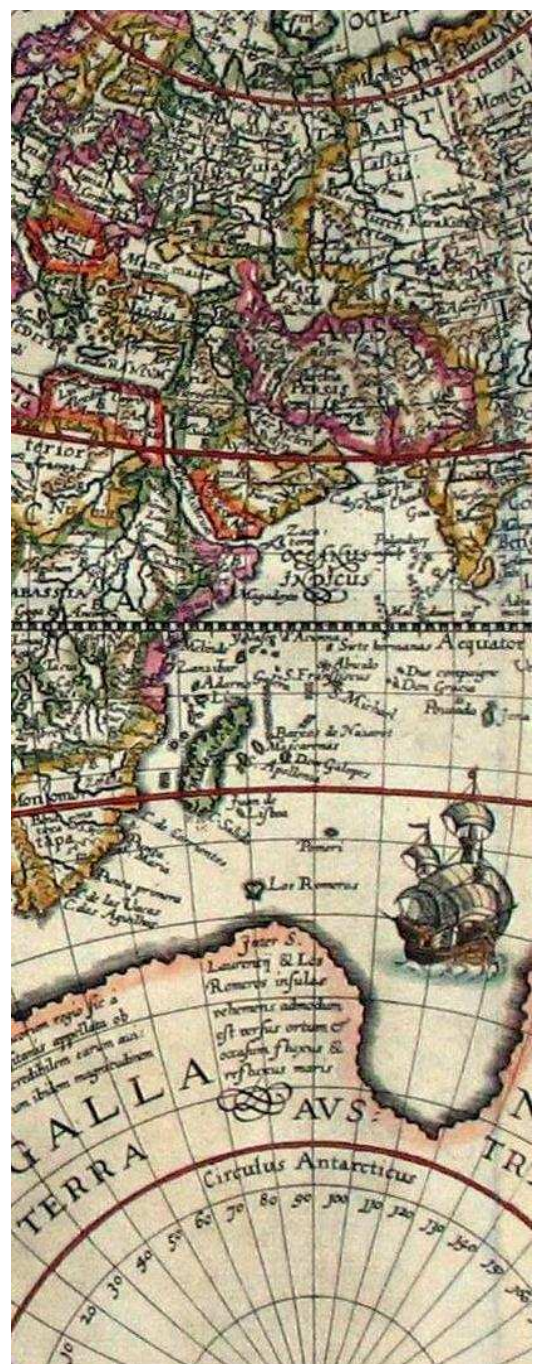
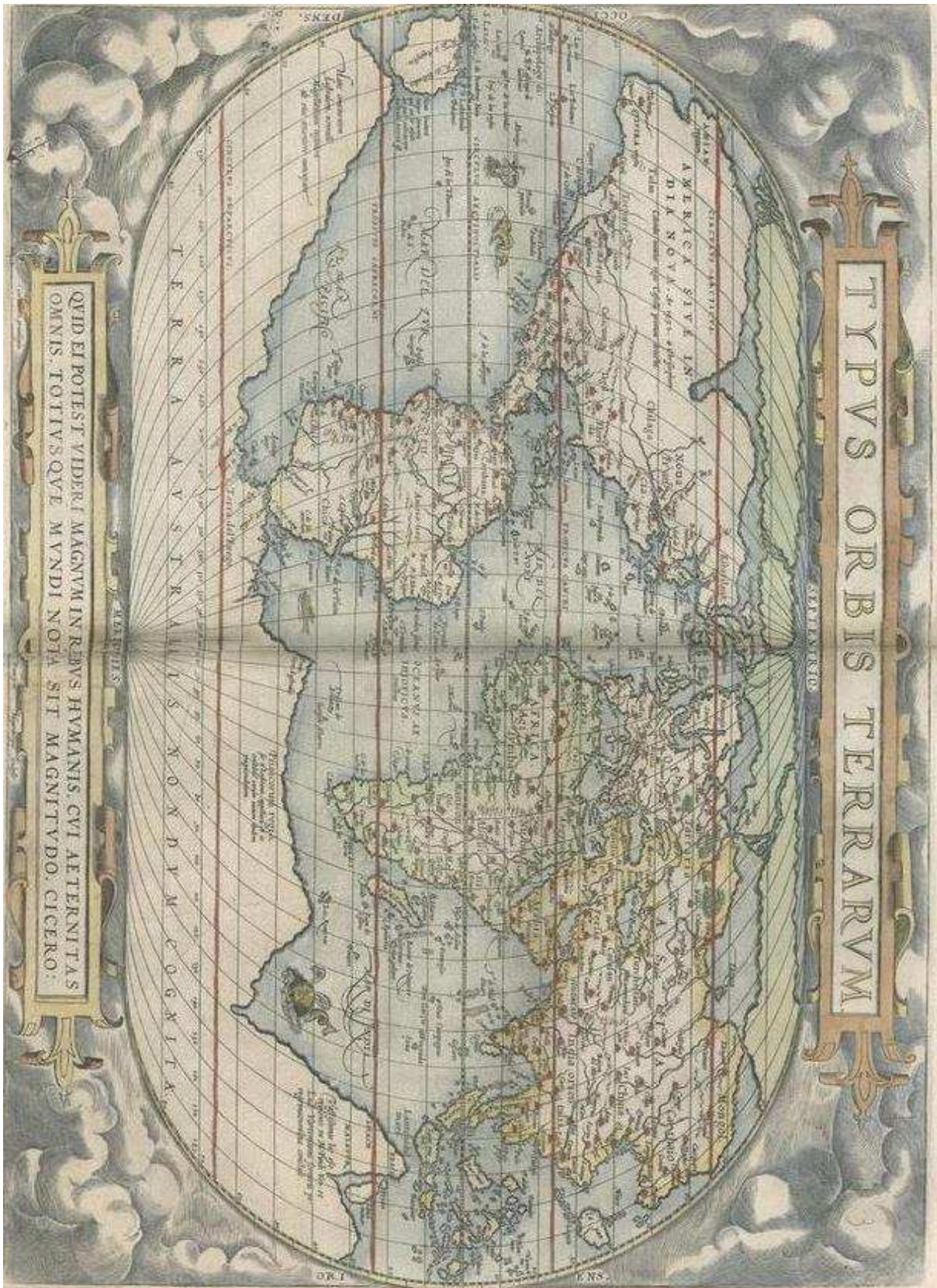


Figure 7.1.: Cover Map from Abraham Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*.<sup>398</sup>



<sup>398</sup> World Digital Library Webpage [online]. Theatre of the World, updated 24 May 2017 [cited 03 August 2017]. Available from: <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/8978/view/1/14/>

Figure 7.2.: Europe's western edge on Ortelius' map at roughly 10°





Figure 7.3.: Black and Caspian Seas on the Ortelius Map running from 58° and ending on a longitudinal line that falls between the Arabian Peninsula and India



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