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Global or Local? Exploring Connections between Chinese and European Geographical Knowledge During the Early Modern Period

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The term “global science”, from the session title of the workshop out of which this article grew, evokes the image of a global planisphere that occupied the third floor of the Paris observatory during the latter part of the seventeenth century.¹ Since the publication of the revised and enlarged edition of Jean Dominique Cassini’s *Ephemerides* in 1676, astronomical readings of latitude and longitude provided the most accurate basis for representing land cartographically. This technology altered the way maps were conceived; from this time even regional maps contained within them the unspoken presence of the global through the planispheric grid on which their measurements were based. A map of France, for example, could no longer be independent from maps of neighboring countries, or even far away lands. But the goal of the French Academy of Sciences under Louis XIV was more than an accurate map of France, it was a scaled representation of the whole world.

This scientific endeavor housed in Paris was global in a number of respects. The physical presence of the world map itself represented at once the vast ambition and the physical limits of geographical inquiry. The international origins of the staff at the observatory remind us that such a project, while carried out by the French state, required the best talents from beyond its borders. Like European Jesuits in China working on maps for the Qing court, Cassini was himself not

¹ Lloyd A Brown, *The Story of Maps*, New York: Dover Publications, 1979, p. 219.

native to the country where he was employed, although he was later naturalized.² Finally, there were the voyages to distant destinations undertaken by individuals who gathered information to send back for recording on the planisphere. By order of the king, the French Academy of Sciences sent a number of its members to “all of the ports of the Ocean and the Mediterranean,” as well as to England, Denmark, and parts of Africa.

Asia posed more difficult problems. It was feared that scientists might not be well received and even turned back without being able to accomplish their goals.³ This thorny problem was solved in a creative way. As the French minister Colbert himself stated, while the pursuit of sciences alone did not merit the risks involved in such travel, if missionaries were going anyway and would be willing to make such observations, why should the Academy not accept their services?⁴ Thus, Jesuit missionaries, who had received the best scholarly training in Europe and whose devotion to the propagation of the faith took them to distant lands, were central to the success of the mapping endeavor in Asia.

Those Jesuits who were sent to China found that survey technology, cartographic skills, and accurate maps were highly valued by the Qing as well as the French court. This should not be surprising. After all, China had long traditions of map making, and the more recent Qing rulers had also shown an interest in cartography. In 1646, just two years after the Qing conquest of China, the regent Dorgon commissioned a cadastral survey of the empire. The opportunity to undertake surveys using the latest advancements in scientific technology was in keeping not only with the interests of the court, but with indigenous interests in

² The Jesuits who worked on the surveys, like other Jesuits who remained in China after 1706, pledged not to return to their native countries. (See *Kangxi yu Luoma shijie guanxi wenshu* 康熙與羅馬世界關係文書 (Collection of Facsimile Documents Relative to Kangxi and the Roman Legations), in *Zhongguo shixue congshu* 中國詩學叢書, vol. 23, Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1974, document 2. See also Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001, pp. 77-78.

³ See Jean Baptiste Du Halde, *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise, enrichie des cartes générales et particulières de ces pays, de la carte générale & des cartes particulières du Thibet, & de la Corée; & ornée d'un grand nombre de figures et de vignettes gravées en taille-douce*, 4 vols., La Haye: Henri Scheurleer, 1736, p. 116. Notes refer to this edition unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ The exact wording quoted in Du Halde reads: “*Les Sciences, MON PERE, ne méritent pas que vous preniez la peine de passer les mers, & de vous réduire à vivre dans un autre monde éloigné de votre patrie & de vos amis. Mais comme le désir de convertir les Infidèles, & de gagner des âmes à J.C. porte souvent vos Pères à entreprendre de pareils voyages, je souhaiterois, qu'ils se servissent de l'occasion; & que, dans les temps qu'ils ne sont pas si occupés à la prédication de l'Évangile, ils fissent sur les lieux quantité d'observations, qui nous manquent pour la perfection des Sciences & des Arts.*” p. 117. Italics appear in the original to set off the quotation.

geographical knowledge dating to the late Ming.⁵ “Western” mapping was also far from unknown at the Qing court by this time. Ricci’s world map in Chinese had afforded him access to the Ming court where it was printed in a 1602 edition. Later, geographical treatises by Giulio Aleni and a world map in Chinese by Ferdinand Verbiest built on the foundation provided by Ricci (who had in turn derived some of the information for his map from Chinese sources).⁶

When the opportunity arose to have individuals who were trained in the latest mapping and survey technology serve in his employ, the Kangxi emperor (1662-1722) seized the opportunity.⁷ Not only did he permit Jesuit missionaries in his service to make astronomical observations, he went so far as to commission them to work alongside Manchu appointees in surveying the entire empire in order to produce a comprehensive atlas. Between 1708 and 1718 European Jesuits travelled throughout China, including the remote southwest to carry out this task. As I discuss in more detail below, they did not limit their observations to the terrain, but also recorded information on local people, customs, history, and architecture. The movements of Jesuit surveyors were restricted only in sensitive areas such as the northern border with Russia. They were also not allowed to travel to Tibet. The results of the surveys, known variously as the *Huangyu quanlan tu* 皇輿全覽圖 and the Kangxi Atlas,⁸ were published in several editions that appeared in Chinese, Chinese and Manchu, and in French.⁹ As I have argued elsewhere, these maps are not best described as “European” but as early modern efforts conceived and produced with the active cooperation of international personnel and sponsored by the Qing court.¹⁰ The cartographic observations that the Jesuits helped to compile served the interests of both courts.

⁵ Benjamin Elman, “Geographical Research in the Ming-Ch’ing Period.” *Monumenta Serica* 35 (1981-1983), pp. 1-18.

⁶ An immense literature exists on Ricci’s world map in Chinese. See Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, p. 52, note 2.

⁷ The Jesuits who participated in the surveys were not only of French origin. For more on the composition of the survey teams see Theodore N. Foss, “A Western Interpretation of China: Jesuit Cartography,” in *East Meets West: The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773*, edited by Charles E. Ronan, S.J., and Bonnie B. C. Oh, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1988, pp. 209-251.

⁸ Sometimes referred to as the Kangxi Jesuit Atlas.

⁹ The British Library houses three different Qing versions. For details see Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, pp. 75-76. The French version published separately from Du Halde’s manuscript is Jean Baptiste Bourguignon D’Anville’s *Atlas de la Chine*, Paris, 1737. See also Laura Hostetler, “Contending Cartographic Claims? The Qing Empire in Manchu, Chinese, and European Maps,” paper presented at the Nebenzahl Lectures in the History of Cartography, The Newberry Library, October 7-9, 2004. This paper is scheduled to be published in James Akerman (ed.), *The Imperial Map*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

¹⁰ Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, see introduction, pp. 9-23, and chap. 2, especially pp. 74-80.

The surveys for the Kangxi Atlas were a cooperative international effort the results of which were produced in a variety of formats and languages. The French editions of these maps were an important component of Du Halde's *Description*.¹¹ In the introduction to his work Du Halde emphasized the accuracy of the maps he included, particularly stressing the fact that, unlike for most maps of Europe that relied on the inexact word of earlier travelers and existing maps, they were based on surveys carried out on site. The end product was, he claimed, therefore superior:

Ceux qui ont donné au Public des Cartes Géographiques de nôtre Europe, ou de quelque Royaume particulier, n'ont presque jamais pris la peine d'examiner la situation des lieux par eux-mêmes; ils se sont contentez de recouvrer différentes observations faites comme par hasard par des gens d'un génie & d'une habileté fort inégales; de ramasser les mesures des grandes routes, qui ne sont presque jamais les mêmes d'une province a une autre; de se fournir de Relations des voyageurs, qui parlent presque toujours des distances sur le bruit commun; & de ranger tout ce-la, partie sur quelques-unes de leurs observations, & partie sur des conjectures tirées des remarques des autres.¹²

According to him, these maps were not only the best maps of China to date, they were the best maps available in Europe of anywhere, made with the most precise methods available. The survey maps of China were, incidentally, completed before a complete survey of France.¹³

The inquiries of the Jesuits who went to China (or to other regions) were not limited to astronomical observations for cartography. Rather, their observations extended to nearly every aspect of the empire. While traveling in Guizhou for the surveys, for example, they took the opportunity to learn about local tribes people including the Miao and Luoluo 裸獠. Accounts of these peoples were later published in Du Halde's *Description*. This work was an encyclopedic compilation of information on China's history, geography, political system, language, literature,

¹¹ Du Halde's *Description* first appeared in 1735 (Paris, Lemercier), and was reprinted a number of times soon thereafter in French, English, German, and Russian. Du Halde was a member of the Jesuit order who undertook to compile the voluminous information that the China missionaries relayed to France. Although he himself never visited China, his work would constitute the main source of European knowledge of China for the next century. For fuller studies of Du Halde's *Description* see Isabelle Landry-Deron, *La preuve par la Chine, la "Description" de J.-B. Du Halde, jésuite, 1735*, Paris: Éditions de L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2002, and Theodore N. Foss, *A Jesuit Encyclopedia for China: A Guide to Jean-Baptiste Du Halde's Description (1735)*, Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1979.

¹² Du Halde, pp. xlviiii-xlvix.

¹³ Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, p. 74.

social customs, religions, peoples, products, natural resources, and economy based primarily on Jesuit reports sent back to France over a period of more than thirty years. In an extensive discussion of methodology in the introduction to the French editions,¹⁴ Du Halde highlighted the fact that Jesuit missionaries actually visited each province described. On this basis, one paralleling his claims for the superiority of the maps of China, he claimed that his work corrected and superceded earlier accounts where the conditions described within a relatively small area of China had mistakenly led readers to project them onto the whole of the country.¹⁵ The comprehensive nature of the four volume work was so central to the self-definition of the project that a commendation following the introduction actually makes the claim that the *Description*, is so complete that virtually no country, even in Europe, is better known than China, Tartary, and other places treated therein.¹⁶ Du Halde himself never visited China, an interesting irony due to his insistence on the eyewitness, but returned missionaries reviewed the entire work prior to publication.¹⁷

“Chinese Sciences” were of particular interest to Du Halde. By “science” Du Halde seems to have meant broadly “learning” or more specifically the system by which the Chinese educated their youth, and by which they advanced in knowledge and social standing by gaining an understanding of the laws, history, and morality of their society. Under this rubric he describes the fundamentals of the Chinese language; the related matters of ink, paper, and book printing; a regular course of study including the examination system; and the contents of the Five Classics and the Four Books.¹⁸ He describes “Chinese Science” as “containing the fundamental principles of their government, and maintaining a fine order in the empire.” He writes further that “it appears in effect that it is the most unimpeachable science of man, because it deals directly with his conduct and with the means of making it perfect according to his state and condition.”¹⁹

¹⁴ The 1736 London edition omits this lengthy introduction.

¹⁵ Du Halde, p. xv.

¹⁶ Du Halde, “Approbation,” p. lxiii: “Cette *Description*, que j’ai lue par l’ordre de Monseigneur le Garde des Sceaux, est si ample, qu’on peut assurer que presque aucun Pays, même de l’Europe, ne sera désormais mieux connu que la China, la Tartarie qui lui est soumise ou alliée, & quelques autres Etats considerables qui les touchent immédiatement. C’est avec une confiance bien fondée, que dans cet Ouvrage on s’instruit, non seulement de la veritable étendue d’une si vaste portion de l’Univers, mais aussi de tout le detail qui regarde les plus importants objets qu’elle renferme.”

¹⁷ Du Halde, p. xvii.

¹⁸ Du Halde, p. xxvi-xxviii.

¹⁹ Du Halde p. xxviii. Translation is by the author. Original French is as follows: “Voilà proprement ce qu’on appelle la Science Chinoise, qui renferme les principes fondamentaux de leur gouvernement, & qui maintient un si bel ordre dans l’Empire. Il paroît en effet que c’est-la la Science la plus propre de l’homme, puisqu’elle regarde directement sa conduite, & les moyens de le rendre parfait selon son état & sa condition.”

Du Halde's interest in "Chinese Science" was broad enough to include history, literature, law, and society.

His inquiry also included more common aspects of Chinese daily life. Elsewhere he speaks of the "nature and character of these peoples, their bearing, physiognomy, their styles, dwellings, [and] furnishings" as well as the punishment of criminals and the organization of their prisons.²⁰ The Section in Du Halde's work on "The Skill of Artisans and the Industry of the Mean People"²¹ includes marginal subheadings on artisans, their skill, their manufactures, their singular manner of working—especially that of barbers—carriages for city use, popular hand mills, and the construction of water-powered mills. A section entitled the "Genius and Character of the Chinese Nation" includes subheadings on respect for the elderly; the complicated nature of ceremonies in China; Chinese love for vengeance; and modesty among both men and women.²²

The entire book is embellished with engravings designed to bring the varied content home to the reader in a way that is even more tangible.²³ Fold out illustrations accompany written descriptions of weddings and funerals; the silk industry; the entourage that accompanies a governor-general whenever he goes forth in public; various kinds of Chinese boats; Chinese and foreign coins; and the observatory at Peking. Etchings of paired figures include the emperor of China in ceremonial and ordinary garb; officials in winter and summer attire; Manchu and Chinese military officers; Chinese women (two pairs); a female servant and a Manchu woman; a villager and a priest; and a female villager and a priestess. This comprehensive desire to thoroughly know and describe another place and another civilization will not surprise those familiar with early modern practices in Europe. Du Halde's work is generally illustrative of a kind of early modern intellectual curiosity exercised in Europe in which knowledge about other places and peoples was compiled and transmitted. Below I will demonstrate that the Qing court also took an active interest in observing and recording the customs and habits of "other" peoples, including foreigners from other lands and minority ethnic groups resident in frontier regions of the empire.

In the remainder of this article I explore a parallel but less well known effort carried out by Chinese to know and to catalog peoples with unfamiliar traditions, languages, customs, and religious practices living in remote frontier areas of the empire. There are a variety of literary genres and geographical areas through which one could potentially explore such endeavors. My focus is on the growth and development of ethnographic representation of culturally non-Chinese peo-

²⁰ Du Halde, pp. xxiv-xxv.

²¹ "De l'adresse des artisans, & de l'industrie du menu peuple."

²² Du Halde, pp. 88-90.

²³ Du Halde, p. xxvi. The original French is "*sensible*".

ples in Guizhou province in southwest China.²⁴ I will be looking specifically at the “Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries” (*Huangqing zhigong tu* 皇清職貢圖), local gazetteers of Guizhou Province, and a genre of illustrated manuscripts known as “Miao albums”. Unlike the joint cartographic projects, these ethnographic enterprises remained separate and distinct from European pursuits. Yet, as we explore *scientia* in the early modern world we must not only explore the obvious intersections in the construction of knowledge between Europe and China, but also the possibility of separate manifestations. To this end, this article elucidates ethnographic practices in China during the early modern period—practices that have often been associated with the early modern “West”—in order to question whether they were indeed uniquely “European” or rather distinctive of the early modern period more generally.²⁵

Admittedly the object and goals of the French and Chinese endeavors I treat here differed to a considerable extent. I discuss Du Halde’s work here not primarily for the similarity of its ethnographic content or to suggest diffusion of ethnographic practices, but rather to demonstrate that its contributors had a variety of connections to China, and even to the relatively remote locales in southwest China, where the peoples described in the Miao albums lived. It is not my purpose to show direct influence of one ethnography on another. I mean rather to narrate a story in which the local and the global become interconnected and our normally clear sense of what started where—or which culture is defined by what characteristics—is called into question. The French volumes describe a fully developed civilization to which it was eager to compare itself in a number of ways and from which it had much to learn. The Chinese works, for the most part, describe a number of different small minority groups largely without their own recorded history whose limited political independence from the Qing Empire was coming to an end. Yet, the methods employed toward the goal of an improved knowledge and understanding of a people and the lands they inhabited were similar in significant ways. Just as the Qing court recognized the advantages of employing the cartographic skills that the Jesuits brought to China in representing and delimiting the empire, so too it had an interest in compiling information about its frontier populations that would assist in their governance.

²⁴ For an exploration of ethnography and travel writing in Taiwan province see Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683-1895*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004.

²⁵ For an entrée into the literature on representation of peoples see Talal Asad, “The European Images of non-European Rule” in *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, edited by Talal Asad, London: Ithaca Press, 1973, Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964, and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, New York: Routledge, 1992.

“Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples”: A Cultural Map

The “Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries” was commissioned in 1751 by the Qianlong emperor. The completed work included 304 illustrations of men and women from different nationalities or ethnic groups from all over the world. Texts in both Chinese and Manchu detail their provenance, customs, and clothing, and sometimes explicitly describe their relationship to the Qing empire as well. The work describes foreigners from other countries; peoples inhabiting the further reaches of the Qing Empire and its frontiers, and areas of China proper populated by ethnically non-Han, or culturally non-Chinese, peoples. Foreigners portrayed include residents of Korea, Japan, the Ryukyu Islands, numerous southeast Asian countries, the far western reaches of the Qing Empire and Europe. Europeans depicted include Swiss, Hungarians, Poles, English, French, Swedes, and Dutch, as well as members of European religious orders and even African slaves of Europeans. The approximate date of their first official arrival in China is mentioned, along with more recent visits, framed here in terms of tribute missions. The locations mentioned in connection with Europeans are not limited to their homelands in Europe, but extend to areas where they were engaged in colonization or trade. Spanish (*Folangji* 佛朗機) are mentioned in Luzon, as well as Portuguese (*Falanxi* 法蘭西) in Macao.²⁶ Tibetans and various Muslim peoples (*huimin* 回民) are portrayed from areas into which the Qing dynasty was expanding in the north and northwest. Non-Han peoples from within China are grouped according to the provinces of Fujian, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Gansu, Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou. The “Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples” was in a sense a global cultural map.²⁷

The methodology behind the compilation of the Illustrations of Tributaries

²⁶ Understanding the Chinese names for various European countries during the early modern period poses a number of challenges, in part because they shift over time. More work needs to be done in this area.

²⁷ The Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries exists in several editions. The most elaborate version is the Xie Sui edition, completed sometime between 1761 and 1775 (and reproduced in Zhuang Jifa 莊吉發, (ed.), *Xie Sui “zhigong tu” Manwen tushuo jiaozhu* 謝遂“職貢圖”滿文圖說校注 (The Xie Sui Manchu Edition of the *Tribute Presenting Scroll* Collated and Annotated, Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1989). Its illustrations are hand-painted in color on silk, and the texts appear in both Manchu and Chinese. The original is housed in the National Palace Museum in Taipei. A 1761 woodblock with texts in Chinese is housed in the Fu Ssu-nien Library at Academia Sinica in Taiwan. A third edition, which I have not seen, was published in 1805. See Zhuang Jifa, “Xie Sui zhigong tu yanjiu” 謝遂職貢圖研究 (A Study of the *Tribute Presenting Scroll* by Hsieh Sui), proceedings of the 1991 Taipei Art History Conference, National Palace Museum, Taipei, 1992. The *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 also includes a wood block copy of the Qing Imperial Illustration of Tributaries.

was similar to that prized by Du Halde in his *Description*, in that it prioritized direct observation. One year before the work was actually commissioned the Governor-general of Sichuan province, Celeng, received an edict from the Qianlong emperor via the Grand Council ordering him to “Take the western barbarians (*xifan* 西番), and the Luoluo with which you are familiar, and make illustrations and commentaries concerning the appearance of the men and women, their dress, ornamentation, clothing, and customs. As for those with which you are not familiar, you do not need to send [anyone] to make inquiries” In response Celeng submitted twenty-four illustrations annotated with “a clear explanation of the land, customs, costumes, preferences, and general circumstances of the places.”²⁸ The introduction to the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 edition specifically notes that the “Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries” were more reliable and true to life than *zhigong tu* of earlier dynasties.²⁹ The similarity of the claims to direct observation in *Huang Qing zhigong tu* and Du Halde’s *Description* are significant, whether or not we find them believable.³⁰

One year later, in 1751, another imperial edict spelled out the ideology behind the compilation of the work and included more precise instructions on what was still needed:

My dynasty has united the vast expanses. Of all the inner and outer barbarians (*nei wai miao yi* 内外苗夷) belonging under its jurisdiction, there are none that have not sincerely turned toward Us and been transformed. As for their clothing, caps, appearance, and bearing, each [group] has its differences [from the other groups]. Now although we have likenesses (*tuxiang* 圖像) from several places, they are not yet uniform and complete. Gather together the several models (*tushi* 圖式) that we now have, and deliver them to each of the governors and governors-general near the borders (*bian* 邊). Order them to take the Miao 苗, Yao 猺, Li 黎, and Zhuang 獞 under their jurisdiction, as well as the various outer barbarians (*wa yi fanzhong* 外夷番衆), and according to these examples copy their appearance, bearing, clothing

²⁸ *Secret Palace Memorials of the Ch'ien Lung Period*, Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1982. Memorial dated the seventeenth day of the eleventh month of the sixteenth year of the Qianlong emperor’s reign (1751). Translation from Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, p. 45.

²⁹ Introduction (*tiyao*). See also F. Jaeger, “Über chinesische Miao-Albums,” *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, Berlin, 4 (1916): 266-83, and 5 (1917): 81-89, esp. pp. 82-83.

³⁰ See also Teng *Taiwan’s Imagined Geography* on claims to direct observation, esp. pp. 48-51.

and ornaments, make illustrations and send them to the Grand Council for classification and arrangement for presentation and inspection [by the emperor].³¹

The result was the “Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries”. Not unlike the Kangxi atlas, which fulfilled the imperial desire to “unite all the parts of the empire in one glance,”³² this compendium allowed the Qianlong emperor to survey all the peoples of his realm and beyond who recognized his sovereignty from the comfort of his court. The Qianlong emperor also shared his grandfather’s interest in territory; he commissioned a revised version of the Kangxi atlas which was completed in 1755.

Although the content of the “Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries” is more narrowly circumscribed to illustrations of ethnic groups and relatively brief descriptions of their whereabouts and practices, it is reminiscent of the Jesuit project on China in the nature of its content and its methodology. Both the texts and the illustrations reflect an intense interest in the provenance, dress, social customs, religious practices, and livelihood of commoners as well as people of status. The information on these topics was solicited from officials with direct contact with the peoples described, or based on actual visits of foreigners to China. The similarity in choice of paired figures for illustration in the *Description* and the “Illustrations of Tributaries” is particularly striking.³³

Ethnographic Writing in Gazetteers of Guizhou Province

The similarity, however apparently superficial, in the illustrated ethnographic depictions of the *Description* and the Illustrations of Tributaries raises the question of cultural influence. Certainly in the case of surveys and cartography early modern methodologies from Europe were directly adopted and employed by the Qing state.³⁴ However, we have no reason to presume that the Jesuit presence in

³¹ *Daqing lichao shilu: Qing Gaozong chun huangdi shilu* 大清歷朝實錄: 清高宗純皇帝實錄 (QSLGZ), 390: 8-9. Translation from Hostetler, p. 46.

³² Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla, *Histoire générale de la Chine; ou, Annales de cet empire: Traduites du Tong-kien-kang-mou*, Paris, 1777-1785, vol. II (reprinted Taipei: Ch’eng-Wen Publishing Company, 1967), p. 314.

³³ This kind of ethnographic representation is also found in the context of the Ottoman empire. A number of albums housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France include illustrations reminiscent of the “Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries”. Cf. Ms. Arabe 6074-6077. For more on early modern ethnography see Laura Hostetler, “Early Modern Ethnography in Comparative Historical Perspective,” in *The Art of Ethnography: A Chinese “Miao Album”*, translated and edited by David M. Deal and Laura Hostetler, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006, pp. xvii-lxvii.

³⁴ I have argued elsewhere that the Kangxi atlas was, however, not simply a European project carried out in China, but a joint project whereby the Qing court, well aware of the

China sparked interest among scholars at the Qing court regarding the cultural practices of non-Chinese peoples, or that the questions they asked about non-Han populations during their extensive travels while surveying the empire had an impact on the way officials in frontier areas thought about peoples in those regions. Examining writings on local customs, or *fengsu* 風俗, in provincial gazetteers does, however, allow us to trace the growth of ethnographic writing in China significantly before the appearance of the „Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries”. The evidence demonstrates convincingly that a kind of proto-ethnography was developing on its own in China well before the arrival of European influence. Between 1560 and 1834 seven different publications appeared that include sections detailing the customs of the non-Han peoples in Guizhou province.³⁵ A close reading of the ethnographic portions of these works suggests that Chinese ethnography was developing on its own without outside influence. If there was any connection between the visit of the European surveyors to southwest China and the emergence of the Miao album genre discussed below, it was because conditions in China were already ripe.³⁶

Ethnographic descriptions of culturally non-Chinese peoples in the southwest appear as early as 1560 in a publication entitled *Yanjiao jiwen* 炎徼紀聞 (The Southern Frontier: A Record of Things Heard).³⁷ As the title indicates, the work deals with the southern frontier broadly, and its contents are a compilation of hearsay, not claimed to be authenticated by direct verification. The work mentions sixteen different ethnic groups found in southwest China, not all of them resident in Guizhou province. The author, Tian Rucheng 田如成, held the *jinshi* 進士, the highest level degree in Ming China, and had served in official posts in southwest China, including Guizhou province. His interests in native peoples may have been connected to his role in suppressing a number of tribal rebellions.

In 1608 *Qian ji* 黔紀 (A Record of Guizhou) appeared. This work specifically detailed thirteen different ethnic groups living in Guizhou province. The

utility of improved cartographic accuracy, chose to employ foreigners trained in the most precise methods available to map the empire. See Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, esp. pp. 70-71.

³⁵ I use Han here as a loose equivalent to “culturally Chinese”. The term was used in this way in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China.

³⁶ Of course China also has a long indigenous tradition of descriptive writing about others long predating the early modern period. See Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, chap. 3, esp. pp. 87-96.

³⁷ Tian Rucheng 田如成, *Yanjiao jiwen* 炎徼紀聞, 1560, *Yingyin wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 edition. Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan reedition, 1983. The standard dynastic histories also include sections describing foreign or other peoples. I limit my inquiry here to provincial gazetteers (both officially commissioned and private), because I am interested specifically in tracing the rise of a local ethnography based on direct observation. For more on Chinese writings about other peoples prior to the early modern period, see Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, pp. 87-96.

content was in some cases similar to that of *Yanjiao jiwen*, but also differed significantly in regard to some groups discussed. Its author Guo Zizhang 郭子章, another *jinshi* degree holder, had come to know Matteo Ricci earlier in his career when they were both living in Guangdong province. The two shared an interest in geography, and Guo even reprinted Ricci's world map in one of his own works. Guo served as Governor of Guizhou province from 1599 to 1608. To what degree, if any, Guo's interest in ethnographic description of non-Han peoples may have been influenced by this relationship is impossible to say. Their common scholarly pursuit of mapping is significant. Cartographic and ethnographic pursuits were different manifestations of a larger interest in geography. Albums of Yunnan province, for example, sometimes include both maps and ethnographic description. Ricci's world map also contained textual descriptions of various peoples as well as a cartographic depiction of the globe.

Between 1673 and 1692 three more works including descriptions of the customs of Guizhou's non-Han peoples were published. The texts of the Guizhou gazetteer of 1673 and *Qian shu* 黔書 dating from 1690 are nearly identical in their ethnographic content. *Qian shu*'s author, Tian Wen 田文, served as Governor of Guizhou. The Gazetteer was imperially commissioned by the Kangxi emperor and was probably a joint undertaking among a number of local notables. Both contain thirty entries describing different ethnic groups in the province. The preface to *Qian shu* distinguished the work from earlier accounts on the basis of its methodology. Those accounts reportedly relied on the existing literature a method which was "not as satisfactory as observation."³⁸ The fact that *Qian shu* apparently relied almost entirely on the 1673 gazetteer is not addressed. Presumably the compilation of that work, in which Tian Wen was almost certainly involved, had its basis in observation. More significant revisions and additions were made to the 1692 edition of the Guizhou gazetteer including the enumeration of a thirty-first group.

By the 1741 edition of the Guizhou provincial gazetteer the number of Miaoman 苗蠻 groups described for Guizhou had grown to thirty-eight. The geographical expanse reflected in the entries also suggests a closer familiarity with Guizhou's geography. The individual entries also include more detail than earlier works indicating that more information had been collected since the previous editions of the Guizhou provincial gazetteer.

The latest work I have seen for Guizhou province is the 1834 *Qian ji* 黔記 by Li Zongfang 李宗昉. The work has a greatly expanded taxonomy, listing eighty-two separate headings for different non-Han groups in the province. However, the entries themselves are severely curtailed in length indicating, if anything, that the effort to collect as much information as possible about each group had waned by the nineteenth century.

³⁸ Tian Wen 田雯, *Qian shu* 黔書, 1690, republished in the *Qiannan congshu jicheng* 黔南叢書集成, Guiyang: Wentong shuju [1936], preface, p. 1a.

Over the course of almost three centuries we see the body of ethnographic information grow significantly, and take shape in a number of distinctive ways. Gradually more territory is covered in the scope of ethnographic inquiry, the role of direct observation becomes more important in deciding what kinds of information to include in the accounts and what to omit, and a more and more intricate taxonomy is created.³⁹ Their rootedness in observation seems to become increasingly important up to at least the early to mid eighteenth century. The inclusion of ever greater amounts of detail paralleled the efforts at creating ever more detailed and accurate maps of the territory of the empire.

Miao Albums

In the mid eighteenth century we see the emergence of a new ethnographic writing genre known as in English as “Miao albums”.⁴⁰ Albums exist for Hunan, Guangdong, and Taiwan, but seem to be most plentiful for the southwestern provinces of Guizhou and Yunnan. These colorful hand-painted manuscript albums depicting non-Han populations started to appear several decades after the surveys for the Kangxi atlas when the government was speeding up a process of colonizing the southwestern frontier. For centuries these frontier areas had been overseen by native chiefs known as *tusi* 土司 whose sons would inherit their positions. Nominally recognized by the Qing court, they had a great deal of autonomy. During the reign of the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723-1735) more direct administration of southwest China by court-appointed officials was implemented. This process, known as *gaitu guiliu* 改土歸流, involved replacing *tusi* with officials appointed directly by the Qing court. As was the practice in the rest of China Proper, the new appointees would not be native to the area and would serve for limited terms.⁴¹

This change, implemented through military conquest, caused a great deal of upheaval in the area. It also created a need for sources of information about the area’s inhabitants. Officials from other parts of China who had minimal familiarity with the region needed a way to learn about who they were to be governing. More specifically they would need to know where the different non-Han populations were located, how to identify them, how to distinguish members of one group from another, what they could expect of each in terms of its relationship

³⁹ For a more in-depth analysis of these six works see Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, chap. 5.

⁴⁰ *Bai Miao tu* 白苗圖 or *Miaoman tu* 苗蠻圖 in Chinese.

⁴¹ For more on *gaitu guiliu* see Kent C. Smith, “Ch’ing Policy and the Development of Southwest China: Aspects of Ortai’s Governor-Generalship, 1726-1731,” Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 1970. For more on transitions within the *tusi* system under the reign of the Kangxi emperor see John Herman, “Empire in the Southwest: Early Qing Reforms to the Native Chieftain System,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 56.1 (1997): 47-74.

toward authority, and something about the distinctive beliefs and practices of each group, including the dates of important festivals. The Miao albums served this purpose.

Illustrated ethnographies were not entirely new in China. The 1673 and 1692 editions of the Guizhou gazetteer had included wood block illustrations of the groups discussed in the *fengsu*, or customs, sections. Provincial gazetteers described multiple aspects of the province including history, local notables, geography, products, etc.⁴² By contrast, the albums were devoted exclusively to information about the non-Han peoples of the province (or sometimes an even smaller administrative unit). They also included much additional ethnographic information. Whereas the 1692 Guizhou provincial gazetteer included information on thirty-one non-Han groups and the (non-illustrated) 1741 gazetteer included thirty-eight, most Miao albums for Guizhou province included headings for eighty-two different ethnic minorities. Although it is difficult to judge the accuracy of the visual depictions of costume in the albums, the attention to detail surpassed that found in the provincial gazetteers, and the color added a whole new dimension.⁴³

The layout of the albums also distinguishes them from the gazetteers. While there is some variation in their design, two basic formats predominate. Both formats include one hand-painted color illustration for each group accompanied by a textual description headed by the name of that group, such as White Miao 白苗, Flowery Miao 花苗, Red Miao 紅苗, etc. Sometimes the illustration and text appear on separate pages opposite each other, in other albums the text is written directly in the illustration. The length of the textual entries varies a great deal from album to album. Only in cases where the text is more curtailed does it appear on the illustration.

Textual entries were adapted from the information recorded in local gazetteers. They generally begin with the name of the group. The name is followed by a listing of the areas in which they are found including the names of prefectures, departments, districts, or smaller administrative units. Normally a description of the clothing worn by both men and women comes next. Color, length, and sometimes even the fiber from which garments were made merited note, as did any distinctive hairstyle or headdress that might help to identify a given group. This basic information is followed by passages that describe distinctive cultural practices including courtship rituals, betrothal arrangements, religious beliefs and

⁴² Gazetteers of empire-wide character also existed for the Ming and Qing. They are called the *Da Ming yi tong zhi* 大明一統志, and the *Da Qing yi tong zhi* 大清一統志 respectively. Gazetteers were also compiled for administrative units as small as counties.

⁴³ For full reproductions and translations of Miao albums of Guizhou province see David M. Deal and Laura Hostetler, *The Art of Ethnography*, and Nicholas Tapp and Don Cohn, *The Tribal Peoples of Southwest China: Chinese Views of the Other Within*, Bangkok: White Lotus, 2003.

practices, burial rituals, means of livelihood, architectural features of their dwellings, and any other distinctive feature or practice of a given group, including whether its members could read and write Chinese.

A wide variety of customs surrounding courtship rituals and marriage are recorded. Those different from Han ways seem to have drawn the most attention. Young people among the Kayou Zhongjia 卡猶中家 were free, for example, to choose their own mates. At a festival observed on the sixth day of the sixth month unmarried men and women would gather under the light of the moon, and sing and dance together. Mutual affection was signalled through tossing and catching of a colorful cloth ball. Gradually couples would pair off. Only afterward would a matchmaker be engaged to work out an agreement over betrothal gifts. The Qing Zhongjia 青狎家 also chose their own mates. Men and women engaged in illicit intercourse before marriage, which the daughter's parents did not forbid—although she had to hide it from her brothers. Eventually a betrothal agreement involving cattle and wine was reached. The “dog-eared” Longjia 狗耳龍傢 similarly choose their own mates. Details of the marriage were worked out using a matchmaker only after elopement when the parents of the bride would redeem her through a gift of cattle and horses. The Yao Miao 夭苗 built raised bamboo structures for use during courtship; young men played bamboo flutes from the ground, serenading the young women on the platform above.

Other practices related to marriage, but not readily categorized as courtship rituals were also recorded. The “Chiseling-tooth” Gelao 剪頭犵狫, for example, required that the front teeth of a bride be broken off to assure that she would not bring trouble to the grooms' family. Typically the illustration to this entry shows a young woman surrounded by a group of older women. In cases where the actual chiseling is not depicted the instruments that will do the job are. Among the Songjia 宋家 the groom's family would send a party to “kidnap” the bride against which her family members would vociferously protest, ritually attempting to fend the intruders off, sometimes with blows. Women's roles seem to have been particularly circumscribed among the Caijia 蔡家. Albums relate that it was taboo for daughter-in-law and father-in-law to speak together. Furthermore, in cases where a husband would precede a wife in death it was said that the widow would be buried with her husband's body unless someone from her natal family came to claim her. The importance of proper marriage rituals in the dominant Confucian culture may account for the degree of interest in this topic.

Next to courtship and marriage practices burial rituals claim the most attention in the Miao album texts. Means of disposal of the body, and any accompanying ceremonial practices were of particular interest. Following a death the Bulong Zhongjia 補龍狎家 would hold a large gathering at which cattle would be butchered and all the guests would eat and drink. The host, however, would not eat meat, but only fish or shrimp. The “East” Miao 東苗 also slaughtered cattle, performed solemn sacrifices, and then fed the guests. The White Luoluo 白裸獮 are described as wrapping the corpse in a horse or a water buffalo skin and burn-

ing it. The Cengzhu Longjia 曾竹龍家 cremated their dead and buried the bones. Annually on the seventh day of the seventh month they performed sacrifices at the graves. The “Flowery” Miao 花苗 buried their dead, but without using a coffin. The location was determined through divination. The Gelao 仡佬, by contrast, used coffins, however, they did not bury them but rather placed them in caves or grottoes, or sometimes in a forest near a river. The “Red” Miao 紅苗 made a likeness of the deceased using its clothing. They would then sing and dance to drumming. The Yao Miao 天苗 did not bury their dead, but rather bound the corpse to a tree with rattan leaving it to the elements to transform it. The Liu Ezi 六額子 did use coffins to bury their dead. However, one year later they would divine for an auspicious day, perform sacrifices, open the casket, and wash the bones until they were clean and white. Among the Mulao 木佬 the eldest son was expected to watch over the corpse for a period of twenty-nine days. The “Stirrup” Longjia 馬蹬龍家, who normally wore white, would change into blue clothing to observe mourning. The fascination that non-Han burial ritual and marriage practices held for the Chinese is undoubtedly related to the importance of these rituals in their own lives.

The Miao albums also recorded information on the livelihood of the different groups. The Luoluo were known for their excellent horses and skill at hunting, the “Water” Gelao 水仡佬 for their skill at fishing—even in the cold of winter, the Ge Zhuang 仡獐 for the agricultural skill of the men and the weaving of the women, the “Cape” Gelao 披袍仡佬 for their smithing skills; Gelao men cast ploughshares by trade. The Yaoren 猺人 collected medicinal herbs in the mountains and practiced medicine as well as engaging in agriculture. The Boren 僰人 were linguistically skilled and often served as interpreters. The Gulin Miao 谷蘭苗 made cloth so fine that people vied with each other to buy it in the market.

Miao albums also describe other distinctive practices that are less easily categorized. The “Virtuous and Kind” Miao⁴⁴ were unusual for their practice of the couvades in which the father stayed at home to care for a newborn for the first month after birth while the mother worked outside. Among the Luoluo the wife of the Chieftain, who carried the title Nüguan 女官 (“female official”) by virtue of her position, could serve in the capacity of her husband upon his death until a son was old enough to take over. The “Pig-filth” Gelao 豬屎仡佬, who were known for their vengeful natures, valued life only lightly, easily becoming involved in another’s vendetta simply for the price of a meal. The “Pot-ring” Gelao 剪髮仡佬⁴⁵ did not take medicine when sick, but would instead make a tiger’s head out of flour, decorate it with colorful thread, place it in a winnowing basket, and engage a shaman to pray. The Yaoren 猺人 had books in ancient seal script

⁴⁴ I. e. Langci Miao 郎慈苗. Langci, which translates literally as “virtuous and kind”, is an epithet for mothers.

⁴⁵ The name “Pot-ring” derives from their distinctive hairstyle.

which they passed down from generation to generation. The Gedou Miao 犵 兜 苗 were famous for their poisoned arrows. The Boren observed Buddhist practices, the Yaoren worshiped Pan Hu 盤 瓠.⁴⁶ Some observations were related gender roles. Bafan Miao 八 番 苗 women were thought to be particularly diligent, but the men indolent, looking idly on as the women worked. Red Miao 紅 苗 men were described as particularly prone to violence, even among themselves. Qing Zhongjia women were skilled at playing chess. Other observations centered on domestic arrangements. Louju Miao 樓 居 苗 lived in two-storey houses with animals occupying first floor. The Yaoren brought running water to their houses by means of bamboo pipes so that they did not need to fetch it.

The illustrations in the Miao albums are less formal than those found in the “Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributaries”. Instead of depicting two solitary paired figures, one male and one female, the illustrations in the albums generally include three to five figures, some of them children. More significantly they are portrayed in the context of their natural environment. Some illustrations depict architectural structures, others do not. Each illustration focuses around one activity characteristic of that group. Some showcase activities relating to worship: the Boren and White Ezi 白 額 子 kneel before Buddhist alters, the Mulao 木 佬 sacrifice a chicken. More prosaic daily activities were also depicted. Ge Zhuang women work at a loom, Qing Zhongjia women play chess, Bafan Miao women engage in agricultural tasks while men watch. For other groups courtship activity is highlighted. The Flowery Miao are represented by a group of young men and women dancing together, the men playing reed pipes, the women shaking bells. A White Zhongjia 白 狝 家 couple dances together lasciviously while others play a drum. The “dog-eared” Longjia dance around a May pole. The illustrations complement the textual descriptions adding color while at the same time more firmly etching a stereotypical image of each particular group in the mind of the viewer.

The level of interest in the customs and practices of the culturally non-Chinese groups along China’s southwestern frontier, and in their variation as seen in the provincial gazetteers of the province, the “Illustrations of Tributaries”, and the Miao albums is significant. It demonstrates that the Qing administration was purposeful and systematic in its collection of ethnographic information and its dissemination. As genres, the French project described at the outset of this paper and the Chinese ethnographic documents I have described differ considerably. My intent has not been to compare them, but rather to demonstrate the similarity in their methodology and claims to legitimacy, both of which were grounded—however imperfectly—in observation. The collection of information about different peoples, its careful organization, and utility was both recognized and practiced in China during the early modern period.

The trajectory of this paper has taken us nearly half way around the world

⁴⁶ Pan Hu is a mythical dog figure who, according to legend, is the progenitor of the Yao along with a Chinese princess.

from the global planisphere housed in Paris to the remotest regions of southwest China, coordinates of which were to be represented on that map. As such it has allowed us to trace connections between the global and the local by following the French interest in cartography from the imperial observatory in Paris to the remotest regions of China whose coordinates were in due course recorded at both the Qing and French courts in Chinese, Chinese and Manchu, and French versions. Europe and China were intimately connected through cartography by their common representation on the globe, through individuals who traveled from Paris to Qing China to make observations, and through the shared interests of the Qing and French courts in scaled cartographic representation. During the early modern period both in China and in various part of Europe we see a growing interest in the sciences of cartography and ethnography as the world and its inhabitants were observed and represented in ever greater detail and with ever greater efforts at precision. Europeans and Chinese actively pursued geographic inquiry—both cartographic and ethnographic. In this article I have traced the geographic trajectory of Europeans from Paris to remote parts of southwest China, showing how these locales were connected by individuals who travelled between them, as well as by common survey technologies that allowed both to be represented on early modern scaled maps. My main interest in this article, however, has not been cartography but the related practice of ethnography. While the contours of this international trajectory traced between Paris and various parts of China were formed in significant part by the search for geographic information, the information collected was not limited to what could be portrayed cartographically. Whereas cartography focused on the representation of territory, ethnography focused on the people who inhabited it. That these two aspects of geography were intimately related in the early modern mind is seen in Du Halde's *Description*, through the plethora of other European works of the time (not described here) that combined maps with textual descriptions and illustrations of the regions and cultures described therein, and the dual pursuit of ethnographic and cartographic information in Qing China. As part of their ongoing pursuits of geographic knowledge, both the French and Chinese also collected information about peoples with whom they came into contact.

Approached from this angle, the indigenous ethnography of peoples in southwest China takes on a special significance as we explore questions of cultural influence in the sciences during the early modern period. The drive for knowledge about frontier peoples and the criterion for its collection and evaluation (observation rather than accepting textual sources without verification) were present in China as well as in early modern Europe. Unlike the Kangxi atlas that recorded the territories of the Qing Empire, the ethnographic descriptions of the peoples who inhabited its southwestern regions were made with no direct foreign involvement. Yet, as attested by the relationship between Matteo Ricci and Guo Zizhang, who was engaged in ethnographic description of Guizhou's non-Chinese peoples already in 1608, by the early seventeenth century it is impossible to distinguish two entirely separate scholarly or scientific spheres between China

and Europe. In fact, *Chinese* interest in science may have pushed the Jesuits to excel in this area in order to maintain their welcome in China. In any case, the interactions we see were not sparked by a single catalyst. Thus, determining whose science may have influenced whom becomes fraught with complexity. I would like to suggest in conclusion that it might be equally or even more productive to ask in what ways we see scholars in both China and Europe engaging *scientia* that we associate with the early modern period, leaving aside for the moment the vexing question of who started what. Decoupling our conceptualization of early modernity with place would open up for consideration the possibility of a shared experience of early modernity, which for too long has been associated exclusively with Europe.