

## **In the Shadow of Cathay: A Survey of European Encounters in Discerning, Mapping, and Exploring Tibet during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries**

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This article aims to review the European literature and other extant sources of information pertaining to Tibet in the early modern period. Tibet was not only somewhat unknown to Europeans, but it was also usually associated with Cathay, both believed to be home to Christian communities. This survey explores the process by which, for some Europeans in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Tibet gradually started to emerge as a distinct land, from their hazy geographical knowledge and cartographic representations of central Asia, and out of the shadow of Cathay.

The study is organized into three major themes concerning the European experience of Tibet: discerning, mapping, and exploring the region. Its chronological scope encompasses the arrival of the Jesuits at the Mughal court in 1580 until the late seventeenth century. The first part of the survey sets the analysis into context by examining the ambiguous relationship in the European mind between Tibet and Cathay, amidst vague geographical references and a varied nomenclature for Tibet. The focus of this first part of the essay then shifts to the undertaking of an expedition beyond the Himalayas from the Mughal court, followed by the establishment and closure of a mission in Tibet by António de Andrade SJ<sup>1</sup> in the third decade of the seventeenth century, when this mission was still motivated by the belief in the existence of Christian communities. However, the analysis shows that these expeditions did not stimulate a European cartography of central Asia, which drew heavily on the meagre geographical information provided by European medieval travellers, such as Marco Polo and Odoric of Pordenone.

The second part of the survey analyses how Jesuit cartography

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1 António de Andrade, \*1580, Oleiros (Portugal), SJ 16.XII.1596, Coimbra, † 19.III.1634, Goa (India), (DHCJ I, 160–61).

produced in China in the first half of the seventeenth century, partially drawn from Chinese sources, gave Tibet — here under the name *xifan* 西番 — a location independent from Cathay. It discusses how, in the second half of the seventeenth century, Tibet–*Xifan* found its way to Europe, where certain cartographers and publishers sought to reproduce some of the Jesuit maps drawn in China, and how, once in Europe, Cathay re-entered the cartographic scene and continued to share the spotlight with Tibet.

Finally, the third section of the study takes as its point of departure Jesuit explorations in Tibet in the mid seventeenth century by Johann Grueber SJ<sup>2</sup> and Albert d'Orville SJ,<sup>3</sup> who crossed Tibet and Nepal on an overland route from Peking to Agra. Feeding on all the information obtained from these expeditions in central Asia, it shows how Athanasius Kircher's<sup>4</sup> *China Illustrata* (1667) became one of the main sources of European knowledge about Tibet, drawing on the weight of a legendary and imaginary past embodied in the figure of Prester John, and the fresh first-hand information from these expeditions.<sup>5</sup>

### Discerning Tibet in the Shadow of Cathay

To many European travellers, cartographers and, in general terms, all curious men eager to receive information from different parts of Asia in the sixteenth century, Tibet was a land of hearsay, rumours, and geographical speculation. Medieval travellers had left their imprint with the relatively unreliable knowledge of Tibet they conveyed in their writings, which had also inspired its cartographical representation.

The European presence in central Asia decreased in parallel with the decline of the Mongolian empire.<sup>6</sup> It was with the arrival

2 Johann Grueber, \*28.X.1623, Linz (Austria), SJ 13.X.1641, † 30.IX.1680, Sárospatak (Hungary) (DHCJ II, 1827).

3 Albert d'Orville \*12.VIII.1621, Brussels, SJ 1646, Landsberg (Baviera), † 8.IV.1662 Agra, India (DHCJ II, 1141).

4 Athanasius Kircher, \*2.V.1601 Geisa (Germany), SJ 2.X.1618, Paderborn (Germany), † 27.XI.1680, Rome (DHCJ III, 2196–98).

5 The full name of Kircher's work is *China monumentis qua sacris profanes, nec non variis naturae & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata China*. It first appeared in Amsterdam in 1667 in a Latin edition, followed by a Dutch edition in 1668, by an abridged English edition in 1669, and by an expanded French edition in 1670. See Mungello, *Curious Land*, 134–42.

6 Luciano Petech, *I Missionari italiani*, I, xvi

of Jesuit missionaries in Mughal India in the sixteenth century that a strong interest in Tibet arose. At that time, Tibet was not only relatively unknown to Europeans, but it also tended to be associated with Cathay. The use of the name “Cathay” — which originates from the Khitans of north-east Asia — to refer to China was widespread in central Asia, but in the European imagination it had become a quest with multiple purposes. While the mythical Cathay had inspired Christopher Columbus to go westwards in search of a new route across the Atlantic and to “discover” a new continent, the Jesuits in Mughal India felt that Cathay could well be the land of Prester John.<sup>7</sup> Jesuit missionaries in the Mughal court, eager to organize expeditions in central Asia, had been preceded by Muslim travellers for a long time, who frequently provided them with information about both Tibet and Cathay.

As an empire, from its unification during the early seventh century until the first half of the ninth century, Tibet had coexisted with the Abbasid Empire, which was founded in 750 with its capital in Baghdad, and Tang China (618–907) to the east, with its capital in Chang’an (Xi’an). Moreover, there was the presence of the Turkic Uyghurs in the mid eighth century in large parts of the Mongolian steppe north of the territories controlled by Tibet. Tibet was an important point on the Eurasian trade routes. A route from Arabia to Persia via northern Indian and into Tibet was active in the eighth century, and continued to be until modern times.<sup>8</sup> As for its Chinese neighbours, whenever Tibet expanded it threatened Chinese domination along the Silk Road.<sup>9</sup> Tibet adopted Buddhism, which together with Islam became one of the two major religious movements in central Asia.

7 Jerome Xavier, Superior of the Mughal Mission, said as much in a letter entitled “Cathay is the true kingdom of Prester John”. See Didier, *Fantômes d’Islam et de Chine*, 47–48. The figure of Prester John had been the most popular at the time of the Mongols, in his appearance in the accounts of missionaries and travellers who had traversed the empire of Genghis Khan in Latin chronicles, and in French and Eastern sources in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Cf. Aigle, *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality*, 41.

8 Akasoy, Burnett, and Yoeli-Tlalim, eds, *Islam and Tibet*, 1.

9 Diplomatic contacts between Tibet and China were sealed with the wedding of the Chinese princess Wencheng (d. 680) and the crown prince, Songtsen Gampo. According to Tibetan historians, the princess’s greatest contribution was the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet. However, at the beginning, Tibetan interest in Buddhism was still restricted to the court. Cf. Van Schaik, Tibet, 18 and Schaeffer, Kapstein, and Tuttle, eds, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, 4.

What probably most European travellers, missionaries, and merchants knew about Tibet was based on accounts of the voyages of medieval travellers featuring the kingdom of Tibet as a province in the extreme west of the Great Cathay, the latter being a vast kingdom next to China, with Genghis Khan as its ruler. One of the first Western mentions of Tibet came from Benjamin of Tudela (1130–73), a twelfth-century Jewish traveller from Spain. He had heard of Tibet while in modern Iraq. However, this reference remained unknown in Europe, as the original in Hebrew was not translated into Latin until the late sixteenth century, when it was published in Antwerp in 1575.<sup>10</sup> The medieval travellers who followed Tudela, like John da Pian de Carpine (c.1185–1252) made reference to the conquest of *Burithabet* by the Mongols, although Pian de Carpine does not provide a description of it.<sup>11</sup> He was the first one to allude to Cathay — *Kytai*.<sup>12</sup> William of Rubruck (c.122?–129?) mentions Tebet in a chapter and described it as being populated by “various peoples, including those who eat their relatives”, this alleged custom having been attributed to the Tibetans by his predecessor, Pian de Carpine. Tebet lay behind Tangut, which the Mongols called Qashi — from the Chinese *Hexi*, “west of the Yellow river”. In 1254 Rubruck reached Karakorum, capital of the Mongol Empire between 1235 and 1260. He explains that Karakorum belonged to the Uyghurs, who had submitted to Genghis Khan, being their lands “bounded by the entire territory of Prester John and his brother Unc”.<sup>13</sup> Next, Marco Polo (1251–1324) featured Tebet as a very large province within the Great Cathay — the kingdom of Genghis Khan — which bordered with *Mangi*.<sup>14</sup> Unlike his predecessors, whose references to Tibet were rather meagre, Polo dedicates three chapters to it. Friar Odoric of Pordenone (1286–1331) passed close to Tibet on his return voyage from Cathay, but never traversed Tibet or visited Lhasa, a feat with which — according to Berthold Laufer — he had been inordinately credited for so long. The first Europeans to have

10 Schaeffer, Kapstein and Tuttle, eds, *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, 29.

11 Pian di Carpine, *Storia dei Mongoli*, 355.

12 Brazão, *Em Demanda do Cataio*, 24.

13 William of Rubruck, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, 157–58; 158, n. 4.

14 Marco Polo's *Mangi* uses the Latin transcription of the Chinese term, *manzi* 蠻子, referring to southern China — usually translated into English as “Southern barbarians”. Cf. Marco Polo, *Il Manoscritto*, 118.

reached Lhasa were Johann Grueber SJ<sup>15</sup> and Albert d'Orville,<sup>16</sup> who spent two months there in 1661.<sup>17</sup> Pordenone also introduces Tibet as a province subject to the Great Khan and his kingdom, the Great Cathay, on the confines of India Proper.

The European travellers thus had left their imprint with relatively unreliable knowledge of Tibet, while the European presence in central Asia decreased in parallel with the decline of the Mongolian empire. The next significant period of European engagement with the region came with the Jesuits at the Mughal court in the late sixteenth century. Soon after their arrival in February 1580, an expedition beyond the Himalayas was initially suggested by the missionaries in 1581. On 15 April 1582, Rodolfo Acquaviva SJ<sup>18</sup> urged the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Claudio Acquaviva SJ,<sup>19</sup> to send some missionaries to those regions, but an unsuccessful mission to the Great Mughal brought everything to a halt. Akbar's Mughal Empire was seen by the Jesuits as a possible frontier for conversion, a hope that encouraged a second Jesuit mission to the Mughal court between 1591 and 1593, and a third one in 1595.<sup>20</sup> After the arrival of this third mission, the issue of an expedition beyond the Himalayas was again raised. The proposal this time was no longer to send a mission to Tibet, but to the vague and vast region called Cathay.<sup>21</sup>

The Jesuits were still disoriented on a number of counts: regarding Tibet and, more generally, the lands beyond the Himalayas; the relation that Tibet bore to Cathay; and where Cathay might be

15 Johann Grueber, \*28.X.1623, Linz (Austria), SJ 13.X.1641, + 30.IX.1680, Sárospatak (Hungary) (*DHCJ* II, 1827).

16 Albert d'Orville \*12.VIII.1621, Brussels, SJ 1646, Landsberg (Baviera), + 8.IV.1662 Agra, India (*DHCJ* II, 1141).

17 Laufer, "Was Odoric of Pordenone ever in Tibet?", 405–18.

18 Rodolfo Acquaviva, \*25.X.1550 Atri (Italy), SJ 2.IV.1568, Rome, + 25.VII.1583 Cumcolin (India), (*DHCJ* I, 12–13).

19 Claudio Acquaviva \*14.IX.1543 Atri, Italy, SJ 22.VII.1567, + 31.1.1615, Rome (*DHCJ* II, 1614–15).

20 These Jesuit encounters with the Mughal court have been thoroughly researched by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, in turn inspiring his methodology of the "connected histories". See, for instance, Jesuit Antonio Montserrat's and King Akbar's conversations on Messianism (as a backdrop to the legacy of Chinggis Khan and Timur), as Subrahmanyam examines mental constructs to introduce the "connected histories" approach. Cf. Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories", 749–55. See also Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters*.

21 Ricci, *Storia dell'Introduzione*, II, 393, n. 1.

located. The fact that the medieval records mentioned the presence of considerable numbers of Christians was the main reason why the Jesuits at the Mughal court insisted on an expedition beyond the Himalayas: in Kashmir, Antonio de Montserrate SJ<sup>22</sup> — selected for the first mission to the Mughal court — had heard that, in certain temples in Tibet, people were receiving communion from the hands of a priest<sup>23</sup> Some scholars have interpreted this ambiguous relationship as leading to the confusion regarding Tibet and Cathay. In fact, Giuseppe Toscano claims that the geographical mistakes made in those years had their origin in the identification circulating among the Jesuits in the Mughal court of — alleged — Christians in both Cathay and Tibet, leading to an identification of Cathay with Tibet.<sup>24</sup> Donald Lach also points out that the Jesuits in the Mughal Empire still identified Tibet with Marco Polo's Cathay, claiming that it was to clarify this confusion that the expedition from India to China led by Brother Bento de Goes was organized in 1603.<sup>25</sup> However, rather than geographical clarifications, it was probably the belief in the existence of Christian communities beyond the Himalayas that helped blur the (so far imaginary) limits between Tibet and Cathay — as suggested by Toscano — becoming the major source of encouragement for this expedition.

Europeans' uncertainty about Tibet's location was fuelled by the different names given to it in different languages. European medieval travellers named it *Tebet*, or *Thebet*, both phonetic adaptations of the Tibetan name for Tibet, *Bod*, from the Arabic or Persian — *Tūbbāt* — or the Turkic — *Tüppüt* or *Töpöt*. However, Europeans in central Asia in the late sixteenth century picked up other names for Tibet in languages such as Mongolian, Chinese, and Sanskrit, among others. *Botthan*, the Sanskrit transcription of *Bod* (the name for Tibet in Tibetan), or *Bhotànta* in Hindi, also derived from *Bod*, were all names heard by the Jesuits sent to Mughal India, especially as they travelled around other destinations nearby, such as Kashmir and Lahore.<sup>26</sup> Travellers in central Asia freely adapted the phonetics,

22 Antonio de Monserrate, \*c.1536, Vic (Barcelona), Spain, SJ 10.I.1556, Barcelona, +5.III.1600, Goa, India (DHCJ III, 2725).

23 Brazão, *Em Demanda do Cataio*, 63.

24 Toscano, *Alla scoperta del Tibet*, 52–53.

25 Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, III, 1773.

26 On the names of Tibet in different languages circulating in central Asia, see Norwick, "Why Tibet Disappeared", 637.

thus changing these names in a variety of forms reflected in diverse European sources, as shown below.

The first information to reach Europe was in a letter from the Superior of the mission, Rodolfo Acquaviva to the General Superior of the Society, Claudio Acquaviva, on the discovery of a new “nation” — *nuova nation* — called Bottan, beyond Lahore towards the Indu river, whose people were white-skinned, of good disposition, and pious, with no Muslims among them.<sup>27</sup> All these discoveries were registered by Montserrat, in a *Commentario della legazione presso il Moghul* — translated by H. Hosten SJ as “Account of Akbar”.<sup>28</sup> There Montserrat offered a description of the Tibetans as gentiles in a mountainous region called “Botthant”.<sup>29</sup> The *Commentario* featured the first information on Tibet by Jesuit missionaries.<sup>30</sup> Montserrat’s writings were included in the “Notices of the Kingdom of the Great King of Mughal” [*Informatione del regno et stato del Gran Rè di Mogor*] (1597) by the Italian Giovanni Battista Peruschi SJ (1525–98), which featured “Bottanti” as a kingdom near to the Mughal, although not its subject, and stated that Tibetans also dwelt in the kingdom of Lahore and were very inclined to pious work.<sup>31</sup> Montserrat spent six months in Kashmir — from May to November 1597 — without mistaking Tibet for Cathay, as D’Elia clarifies, and made references to the followers of the Yoga, the Christians among the Tibetans.<sup>32</sup>

The idea of sending a mission to Tibet lost momentum when the first mission to the Mughal court came to an end in 1583. It was with the arrival of a third Jesuit mission to the Mughal court in 1595 that the issue of an expedition was raised again, although this time not only to Tibet but also to the vague area known as Cathay, allegedly the vast kingdom next to China. Jerome Xavier, Superior of the Mughal Mission, took a special interest in this matter, especially after his visit to Kashmir in 1597 to accompany Akbar

27 Bartoli, *Missione al gran Mogor*, 70–71; Toscano, *Alla scoperta del Tibet*, 26.

28 This manuscript, translated and edited by Rev. H. Hosten, SJ, was never sent to Europe. As Hosten explains, the manuscript copy found its way to Calcutta, and it was discovered in the Library of St Paul’s Cathedral Library, Calcutta, in 1906. Gio Battista Peruschi SJ reproduced part of this document. Cf. Montserrat, “Fr. A. Montserrat’s Account of Akbar”, 185–86.

29 Montserrat, “Fr. A. Montserrat’s Account of Akbar”, 218.

30 Toscano, *Alla scoperta del Tibet*, 27.

31 Peruschi, *Historica relatio de potentissimi regis Mogor*, f. 4.

32 Ricci, *Storia dell’Introduzione*, II, 393, n.1.



on a trip in which he heard Muslim travellers speak of a country called "Tebat", with churches and monks. In his correspondence, Xavier located Tebat "in the eastern part of *Scetaio* or *Cataio*..."<sup>33</sup> The following year, in two letters dispatched from Lahore — on 26 July and 2 August 1598 — Xavier claimed to have obtained information from an old Muslim merchant who had spent thirty years in Kambalù — the capital city of Cathay — who had in turn provided information to Prince Salim (Jahangir) about Cathay.<sup>34</sup> Xavier mentioned that this merchant said he came from Cambalù, capital of the kingdom of "Xitai", which to many seems to be the same as "our Cathay". This same merchant told Xavier that he had dealt with the Christians there, and that there were many churches.<sup>35</sup> This information provided by the Muslim merchant, "confirming" the existence of Christians in Cathay, helped speed up the organization of an expedition to those lands.

In Xavier's view, a mission to Cathay could best travel by way of the Kashmir region, but he later changed his mind and suggested a route through Lahore and Kabul, as it lay largely in Akbar's dominions, a fact that proved to be crucial to the success of the expedition. Xavier asked Akbar about the possibility of sending three or four missionaries to Cathay with the main purpose of gaining the favour of the Christian communities there.<sup>36</sup> Akbar responded positively to Xavier's request, which was also strongly supported by the Visitor to the East Indies, Nicolau Pimenta,<sup>37</sup> in Goa. Last but not least, the request received the approval of King Philip III of Spain, and so in 1601 it was decided to dispatch an expedition with two main purposes: to survey the lands of Cathay and to reclaim the potential Christian communities between India and that country.<sup>38</sup> Jerome Xavier sent the letters-patent containing Akbar's permission to "those of the Society to travel to Agra,

33 Xavier, *Copia d'una breve relation della christianità*, 4.

34 See also Brazão, *Em Demanda do Cataio*, 65. Xavier's and Pimenta's letters are partially reproduced in Hay, *De Rebus Japonicis*, 691–726. See also Didier, *Fantômes d'Islam*, 40–41.

35 Ricci, *Storia dell'Introduzione*, II, 393, n.1. Cf. Hay, *De Rebus Japonicis*, 796–98.

36 Guerreiro, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, 123–24; as for the change of routes, cf. Ricci, *Storia dell'Introduzione*, II, 393, n. 1.

37 Nicolau Pimenta, \*6.XII.1546, Santarém, Portugal, SJ 2.V.1662, Coimbra, † 6.III.1613, Goa, India (DHCJ IV, 3135).

38 MacLagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 338–39.



Lahore, and Cathay — *Catai* — with orders to the various governors to supply funds for their journeys” to one of his confreres, the Florentine Francesco Corsi,<sup>39</sup> then in Lahore. Akbar also provided them with guards.<sup>40</sup> After obtaining these indispensable documents from Emperor Akbar, the Jesuits in Goa entrusted an assistant brother named Bento de Goes<sup>41</sup> — a member of the third mission to the Mughal court — with the mission. This was exactly the same moment at which Matteo Ricci<sup>42</sup> was working on calculations to discover the true identity of Cathay, already suspecting that it could be China.

The information the Jesuits obtained from Muslims was based on the latter confusing Tibetan Buddhism for Christianity. The idea of Christian communities beyond the Himalayas had to do with the superficial similarities between Tibetan Buddhism and Christianity.<sup>43</sup> The same error was made by Portuguese merchant Diogo de Almeida, the first European to go to Ladakh, where he lived for two years at the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>44</sup> The information he provided to the archbishop in Goa was used by humanist Antonio de Gouvea (1575–1628) in his *Histoire Orientale*, in which he proposes Cathay as a possible next destination for St Thomas from Madras, India. Based on the information provided by Almeida, Gouvea distinguishes between a “well-established” Christianity in the kingdoms near the Mughal, like Tibet, and that of Cathay. He claims that the king of Tibet did not tolerate infidels other than merchants passing through, and it harboured churches with images of Christ. Gouvea acknowledges that Diego d’Almeida was a layman and so not knowledgeable about ecclesiastical matters. This was the reason why he could not provide further information on the Tibetans’ ceremonies and errors, a task put in the hands of the brother Bento de Goes. Gouvea clarifies that

39 Francesco Corsi, \*1568, Florence, SJ 2.VI.1587, Rome, † 1.VIII.1633, Agra, India (DHCJ I, 969).

40 Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 99.

41 Bento de Góis, \*1562, Azores, Portugal, SJ, 1584, Goa, India; 1588, Goa, India (second time), † 10.IV.1607, Suzhou, China (DHCJ II, 1765–66).

42 Matteo Ricci, \*6.X.1552, Macerata, Italy, SJ 15.VIII.1571, Rome, † 11.V.1610, Peking, China (DHCJ IV, 3351–53).

43 Petech, *I Missionari italiani*, xvii–xviii; Bernard, *Le Frère Bento de Goes*, 44–45.

44 According to Petech, Almeida arrived in Ladakh shortly before 1603. Cf. Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*, 36–37.

the Tibet Almeida was referring to was “the kingdom of *Tibete*”, which was different from another one called “little *Thibete*” under the might and domination of the Persians. Gouvea speculates that the latter might be the one that Marco Polo mentioned in his book.<sup>45</sup> In sum, the possible existence of Christian communities in Cathay which had not been overrun by the forces of Islam became a compelling reason for the missionaries to request the organization of an expedition. However, the expedition also catered to interests other than the Jesuits’. For Akbar, it would entail an investigation of the unknown populations in central Asia, some of them under his domain. At the time when his empire was expanding amidst wars and conquests, Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, claimed not to have the time to send personnel for administrative organization to different parts of his dominions, including the north and south of the Himalayas.<sup>46</sup> But Akbar would. For Philip III, this could be a timely search for alternative routes, especially overland ones, given the growing presence of the Dutch and the English in the sea routes.<sup>47</sup>

*From Bento de Goes’ Expedition to Antonio Andrade’s Mission to Tibet*  
Let us now briefly examine Goes’ journey and how it unfolded in the lands beyond the Himalayas. Bento de Goes met Jerome Xavier, Superior of the Mughal Mission, in Agra on 29 October 1602, and from there he went to Lahore, the point of departure for the Cathay expedition.<sup>48</sup> Goes retraced some sections of the itinerary that Marco Polo had followed to go to China in the early 1270s.<sup>49</sup> To avoid being recognized as a European, Goes travelled in the guise of an Armenian merchant-diplomat, carrying a bow and arrows, and wearing a beard and long hair. He took with him a Greek man, named Leam Grimam, and a merchant, also Greek, named Demetrios. However, it was Isaac, an Armenian Christian, who

45 Gouvea, *Histoire Orientale*, 10–13. “Little Tibet” must refer to Baloristan, a historical region in northern Pakistan, which comprised Baltistan, Ladakh, Gilgit, Chitral, and Kohistan. Cf. Toscano, *Alla scoperta del Tibet*, 69, n. 110.

46 Sharma, *Mughal Empire in India*, I, 49.

47 Oliveira, “Seventeenth-century Jesuit surveys”, 474–75. See also Didier, “As Fontes e o Tibete”, 454–57.

48 Didier, *Fantômes de Islam*, 56–57. For a detailed account of Goes’ journey, see Bernard, *Le Frère Bento de Goes*, especially pp. 57–162.

49 Oliveira, “Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Surveys”, 475.

became Goes' companion throughout the entire journey, until his death. It took Goes and his fellow travellers five months to reach Kabul — a strategic location along the Silk Road — where they stayed for eight months. Goes then travelled through different cities along the Silk Road, until he reached China, from Karasahr, in late 1605. The travellers were then obliged to wait outside the walls of the Middle Kingdom for twenty-five days until they obtained permission to enter. Goes was allowed to proceed at the end of 1605, and he arrived in Suzhou. He stayed there for around fifteen months waiting for the safe-conduct, which he had asked his confreres to obtain for him together with the documents required for foreigners to pass through China, to finally reach the imperial court in Peking. He was then approached by a brother of the Society named Ioam Fernandez, a native of China, who had been sent by Matteo Ricci — in Peking in those days — to take Goes to the capital. However, the plan was thwarted because Goes died after an illness of a few weeks on 11 April 1607. Fernandes and Isaac set out with their servants and travelled for three months before reaching Peking, where they were received by Matteo Ricci.<sup>50</sup>

Matteo Ricci was absolutely certain of his identification of Cathay as China even before Goes' departure in late September 1602.<sup>51</sup> His first geographical concerns involved China and its provinces, but over the years it was what lay beyond the Great Wall that seemed to deserve further investigation, as those lands had been neglected by European cartographers. In a letter to Superior General Acquaviva dated August 1608, Ricci mentions the journey of Bento Goes, who had travelled "from India and the lands that belonged to the Mughal Kingdom to these parts, to discover the Great Cathay..." also underlining his — Ricci's — own merits. It was Goes' expedition that...

...had put an end to the doubts posed by the fathers in the Mughal court regarding what he [Ricci — always in the third person] had

50 Guerreiro, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, 128–29, 144–55.

51 During his sojourn in the city of Nanchang in 1595, Ricci considered two hypotheses: first, that China was Marco Polo's Cathay and, second, that Kambalù was Nanjing. He would correct the second — the identification of Nanjing with Kambalù, on a first visit to Peking in 1598, when he learnt from Muslims in that city that Persians called China "Cataio" and Peking "Cambalù". Ricci, *Storia dell'Introduzione*, I, 26; 26, n. 2. Throughout successive footnotes, Pasquale D'Elia, the editor of Ricci's account, marks the different stages of Ricci's identification of Marco Polo's Cathay as China.

so clearly discovered, China being the Great Cathay and this city [Peking] Kambaluk, the court of the Great Khan of Cathay.<sup>52</sup>

Ricci's revelation of Cathay's true identity and his report of Goes' expedition were included in his account of the Jesuit mission to China. Ricci died before finishing it, but it reached Rome in 1614 in the hands of Nicolas Trigault, who translated Ricci's manuscript into Latin. In 1615, the Latin edition appeared with the name of Trigault as its author. It was subsequently translated into French, German, Spanish, and Italian. Bento de Goes was the last pre-nineteenth-century European to traverse a significant stretch of what had once been the great caravan route that crossed central Asia.<sup>53</sup> It was very dangerous, and so Ricci echoed Goes' last recommendation before his death in Suzhou: "this overland journey is very long, difficult and dangerous and thus ought never again to be attempted".<sup>54</sup> Until Ricci's findings were published in 1615, the results of Goes' expedition remained unknown, and both Jesuit missionaries and non-Jesuit travellers and cartographers were left unaware of this geographical progress.<sup>55</sup> In a letter of 1609, a few years before his departure to China, Nicolas Trigault SJ described all the missions established by the Society in the India Province in those times, starting with the Mughal mission:

One of our Brothers, named Bento Goes, was sent to the *terra ferma* of these great kingdoms. The Fathers who are in the Royal Court — the Mughal court — had heard many times from merchants that in the northern lands there was a certain kingdom, with the name of

52 Tacchi Venturi, *Opere Storiche*, II, 355–56.

53 Oliveira, "Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Surveys", 441.

54 Ricci, *Storia dell'Introduzione*, II, 441. It seems from Kircher's *China Illustrata* that a feeble attempt to repeat Goes' journey (but apparently in ignorance of that enterprise) was made some years later by Aimé Chezaud SJ (\*1604, Lyon, SJ 22.IX.1627, Lyon, † 7.VI.1637, Marseille, France, *DHCJ* I, 768) starting from Ispahan. Chezaud speaks of travelling to Cathay, and thence to China. See Kircher, *China Illustrata*, 86–87. Cited in Yule, *Cathay*, 182, n. 1.

55 Such is the case of Manuel Godinho de Éredia's (1563–1623), *Description of Malaca, Meridional India, and Cathay* (1613), which indicates Cathay or *Cattà* — in former times Pliny's Attay — and other suffragan provinces such as Tenduc, Tangut, Tebet, Cottam, Síin, and Mansim, as having *Cambalo* — Peking — as their metropolis. Cf. Éredia, *Description of Malaca*, 76. This was before Trigault published Ricci's manuscript. However, despite all the efforts to shed light on the fictions of Cathay, confusion and misunderstandings persisted, as is shown in the following paragraphs.

Cathay, and it is not known whether this kingdom is in the Tartar country or in China.<sup>56</sup> And Father Ricci has written to us from China, as he heard something similar, of certain Christians who are in the north . . . There are many signs of Christianity in those lands...<sup>57</sup>

At this point, Ricci in the China mission was keen to find Cathay's "true" identity — a geographical conundrum that until then had challenged Europeans. This quest became somewhat detached from the belief in the existence of Christian communities, which still persisted in the case of Tibet, encouraging another expedition there in 1624 by António de Andrade to make contact with its Christian inhabitants and eventually establish a mission.<sup>58</sup>

*António de Andrade's Expedition to Tibet*

António de Andrade travelled across the Himalayas until he reached Tsaparang, in western Tibet, in August 1624. He was well received by the local ruler, who gave him permission to establish a mission, which lasted until 1635. Andrade quickly became knowledgeable about the region. Thanks to information provided by merchants coming from China with porcelain, tea, and other goods, Andrade found out that Tsaparang lay at one and a half months' distance from the dual province of Ü-Tsang, and that Ü-Tsang was around twenty days' distance from China.<sup>59</sup> This gave him hope of a new mission destination, and he wrote to India suggesting that an attempt to reach these eastern territories should be made from Bengal. There are a few published records proving that this was realized, when two missionaries, Estêvão Cacella<sup>60</sup> and João Cabral<sup>61</sup> ventured upon a journey to Ü-Tsang.<sup>62</sup>

56 Broadly speaking, the *Tartaria Magna* — in Trigault's French, *Tartarie* — was the name that had been used in Europe since the Middle Ages to refer to the vast lands in central and north-east Asia, from the Caspian Sea and the Ural Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, inhabited by Turks and Mongols.

57 Trigault, *Lettre du R. P. Nicolas Trigault*, ff. D5 and ss (numbered A-F); online.

58 Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, III, Book I, 147.

59 Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*, 63, 70.

60 Estêvão Cacella, \*1585, Aviz, Portugal, SJ 1604, Évora, Portugal, † 6.III.1630, Shigatse, Tibet (DHCJ I, 593–94).

61 João Cabral, \*1599, Celorico, Portugal, SJ 1615, Coimbra, Portugal, † 4.VII.1669, Goa, India (DHCJ I, 591).

62 According to Wessels, the meagre details of these records and a lack of first-hand

Andrade wrote a letter entitled “*Novo descobrimento do Gram Cathayo, ou Reinos de Tibet, pello Padre Antonio Andrade . . . no anno de 1624*” [An Account of the new discovery of the Great Cathay or Kingdoms of Tibet. Made by F. António de Andrade in the year 1624]. The first edition came out in Portuguese in Lisbon in 1626, with subsequent translations in the next years into Italian, Spanish, and French.<sup>63</sup> In his correspondence, Andrade aims to provide a more accurate description of Tibet than his predecessors in the Mughal mission. He refers to the kingdoms of Tibet — also called *Potente* — which comprises the Kingdom of Guge — where they were staying — those of Ladak (Ladakh), Moriul (Maryul), Rudoc (Rutog), Utsana (Ü-Tsang), and “two others towards the East that, together with the large Kingdom of Sopo (Mongolia), bordering one side of China, and Moscovie, which all make up the great Tartary”.<sup>64</sup> Thus he does not equate Tibet with Cathay, but uses what seems to be a derivative of the Sanskrit *Botthan* — *Potente* — adapted according to the translations of his letter into different European languages. As for Cathay, he claimed that the “so renowned Cathay — *Cataio*” is not a particular kingdom, but a large city and metropolis of a certain province neighbouring China, of which the Great monarch of Sopo is the ruler. Andrade was ignorant of the fact that some centuries previously under the Mongols, Tibet did not become one of the administrative provinces of Kubilai’s empire. The Mongols appointed loyal local rulers, while Tibet paid tribute to be passed on to the Mongolian court. The victory of the Ming over the Mongols in the fourteenth century did not turn Tibet into an administrative province either. Apart from securing the Sino-Tibetan borders, the Ming played no military role in Tibet.<sup>65</sup>

In any case, for some Europeans the conundrum of the Tibet-

information have not allowed a full description of their expedition. See Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*, 119.

63 Andrade, *Novo descobrimento*. Despite the misleading title of this letter, Donald Lach and Edwin Van Kley state that Andrade did not mistake Cathay for Tibet but thought, instead, that Cathay was a city near the Chinese border. Cf. Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, III, Book IV, 1774–75.

64 “Potente” as the alternative name for Tibet mentioned by Andrade is found in the original letter in Portuguese, and in its Italian translation. Cf. Andrade, *Lettere Annue del Tibet*, f. A3. In the French translation of the same letter we find a literal translation of *Potente* (powerful, in Italian), then translated as “Royaume du Puyssant”. Cf. *Histoire de ce que s’est passé au Royaume du Tibet*, 1626, f.2.

65 Van Schaik, *Tibet*, 75–81.

Cathay identity continued. In his work *Disquisitio Geographica & Historica, De Chataja* (1670), the so-called Orientalist Andreas Mueller (1630–94) cited the many treatises on Cathay by lettered men, which were all in disagreement over “Cathay”, in a section dedicated to the state of the controversy, *Disquisitio, Status Controversiae*. Mueller cites pages 96 and 121, the latter on “Tartary and Cathay”, of Athanasius Kircher’s *Prodromus Coptus*, in which Cathay could be identified with the region that the Arabs call Gog and Magog. However, in a different part of this work, Mueller states that what Kircher called “minor Cathay” was located within the kingdom of Tibet. Then Mueller cites the Flemish Jacobus Dickyum, who wrote on Tibet based on António de Andrade, claiming that the kingdom of Tibet was one of the kingdoms of the Great Cathay. However, Mueller proceeds to contradict this statement, stating that Cathay comprised that part of Asia that Ptolemy located beyond the Himalayas — *Imao* — in ancient times called Serica.<sup>66</sup> As can be observed from these works, in Europe, the Tibet–Cathay confusion persisted, for missionaries from other religious orders too. In his *Itinerario de las misiones del India Oriental*, the Portuguese Augustinian friar Sebastião Manrique (1590–1669) located China according to the four cardinal points, claiming that in the west (*Ponente*), China bordered with the “kingdoms of Botente — Tibet — or Catay, as some want to call it”.<sup>67</sup>

*Tibet’s Own Reasons: The End of the Jesuit Mission*

The year 1627 posed some challenges to the young Tibet mission, starting with one from the Mughal mission. Like Akbar and Jahangir, who did not subscribe to a strict Islamist ideology, their successor Shah Jahan (1592–1666) followed a Sunni orthodoxy. The Jesuit activities of Christianization and conversion were suppressed, generating different reactions among the members of the Society in the Asia missions. Some tried to reinforce the Tibet mission as a reaction against Islam; others argued that the kingdoms in Tibet were too distant to justify investing many resources, when it was more important to strengthen their presence in northern India. It was at that time, according to Hughes Didier, that the Provincialate of António de Andrade in Goa (1630) opted for a concentration of

<sup>66</sup> Müller, *Disquisitio geographica*, 3–4. Online.

<sup>67</sup> Manrique, *Itinerário*, I, 147. Two editions were published of this work, one in 1649 and the other in 1653. See Luard and Hosten, eds., *Travels of Fray Sebastien Manrique 1629–1643*, I, 24.



resources in favour of the Mughal mission, at the expense of the one in Tibet.<sup>68</sup> However, there were more actors involved in the fate of the Jesuit mission in Tibet. Its brevity can also be explained by the political motivations of the rulers of the kingdoms in Tibet in allowing missionaries to introduce the Christian faith into their domains. Different Buddhist schools in open conflict dominated the local political scene. Having been introduced in Tibet in the seventh century during the reign of Songsten Gampo (604–50) and fostered by royal patronage, Buddhism gained astounding momentum in its propagation. However, its rapid success was interrupted by a major religious persecution in the ninth century, allegedly championed by the King Lang Darma. During the following centuries, a cluster of different schools of Tibetan Buddhism emerged, and conflicts among them were frequent. After the collapse of the Tibetan empire, the lack of a centralized political structure in Tibet aided this multi-centre state of religion, prompting the competing sects to align themselves with local powers. When the Mongols founded the Yuan dynasty in China in 1264, they chose to bestow their support upon one of the Buddhist traditions in Tibet, the Sakya School. When the Yuan fell, Sakya also lost its privileged position. Division and contention prevailed in the world of Tibetan Buddhism until the rise of another school, Gelugpa. The king of Guge in the Garuda Valley in western Tibet, who had welcomed Andrade, eagerly accepted Christianity as it could help squash the thriving Gelugpa, which ran one of the largest and most powerful monasteries, gathering the wealthiest groups within the kingdom. As the various factions contended for political control of the country, Tibet became embroiled in war. The king's support for the Jesuits, including financial help, caused growing resentment among dissatisfied lamas. Inevitably, the royal favours shown to the foreign missionaries inflamed the monastic communities and led to a clash with the Jesuits.<sup>69</sup> In his correspondence, Andrade referred to the lamas' resistance to supporting the Jesuit missionaries. However, of course, the missionary stressed the king's conviction to become a Christian as the main argument against the discontented lamas.<sup>70</sup>

In 1630, when Andrade left to take up new duties as Provincial

68 Didier, "As Fontes e o Tibete", 457.

69 Wolff, *Tibet Unconquered*, 76–77.

70 Andrade, *Segunda carta*, Tsparang, 15 August, 1626, no page numbers.

in Goa, India, the king of Guge fell ill, and the dissident Yellow Hat lamas, incited by the king's brother, rose against the throne with the help and encouragement of the neighbouring Ladakh. From Goa, Andrade reacted to this political crisis by sending his confrere and former companion in Tsaparang, Francisco de Azevedo,<sup>71</sup> to try to obtain toleration by the king for the small Christian community in Tsaparang. On his arrival there in August 1631, he found that the situation was very critical: what remained of the Jesuit mission was unable to serve the small community of converts. Azevedo then decided to approach the ruler of Ladakh for permission to continue the Society's proselytizing mission. Despite the ruler's agreement to allow more missionaries to be sent to Tsaparang from Goa, the Jesuits were never able to re-establish their mission in Guge. A last attempt failed in 1640, when a group of three priests en route to Tsaparang were attacked even before they reached the city and forced to retreat to India.<sup>72</sup> Relieved of his duties as Superior in Goa in 1634, Andrade was determined to return to Tibet, but was poisoned on 19 March 1634.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, as the third part of this article shows, Tibet's strategic importance as the link between China, one of the most important missions in east Asia, and south Asia — India — continued to encourage further explorations, although probably not motivated by the aim of re-establishing the mission.

All these explorations were not immediately reflected in a fresh European cartography of central Asia that included Tibet. In fact, some scholars have also noted the disappearance of Tibet in European cartography from the mid sixteenth to the mid

71 Francisco de Azevedo,\* 1578, Lisbon, SJ 1597, Goa, + 12.VIII.1660, Goa, India (DHCJ I, 312).

72 Lin, "When Christianity and Lamaism Met", 3–4. Cf. Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh*, 54.

73 Regarding António de Andrade's death, Michael Sweet contests the long-surviving narrative ascribing Andrade's poisoning to a crypto-Jewish assassin employed by a New Christian merchant. It is worth mentioning that there are some slight variations of this version. For instance, according to the *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, the culprit of the crime was a servant at St Paul College, who was complicit with the Jews in Goa, murdering Andrade just before he executed an *auto-da-fé*. Cf. DHJC I, 161. However, Sweet's research shows that the crime was committed by some dissatisfied Jesuits who had been punished by Andrade for their infractions of Jesuit rules of conduct. See Sweet, "Murder in the Refectory", 26–45.

seventeenth century.<sup>74</sup> However, the Jesuits in the China mission provided a place for Tibet in a cartography that would later be reproduced in Europe in the mid seventeenth century, as shown in the next section.

### Mapping Tibet

It is well known that Ricci started to produce world maps as soon as he arrived in China, and he successively improved them through different editions. His aims, among other things, were to show the Chinese the exact location of Europe in relation to their own country, which he placed at the centre, to indicate the location of places by means of circles of latitude and longitude, to provide descriptions of the five terrestrial continents surrounded by oceans, and to demonstrate the sphericity of the earth.<sup>75</sup> Ricci's world map went through four editions: Zhaoqing (1584); Nanjing (1600), Peking (1602), and Peking (1603). The title of the first two editions was *Shanhai Yudi Quantu*, 山海輿地全圖 ["A complete geographical map of mountains and seas"]. This was changed in the 1602 edition to *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu* 坤輿萬國全圖, which literally translates as "Map of the Myriad Kingdoms of the World". The other maps he produced were reprints, not real editions. Most of these maps are now lost, although several original copies of the Peking editions

74 Swedish geographer and explorer Sven Hedin has claimed that Tibet did not play a significant role in European cartography before the turn of the eighteenth century. It is his contention that Tibet disappeared from European maps from the mid sixteenth to mid seventeenth centuries. For instance, reprints of the most renowned examples of sixteenth-century European cartography, such as Gerardus Mercator's (1512–94) world map (1569), Giacomo Gastaldi's (1500–66) map of Asia, directly copied in Abraham Ortelius's (1527–98) *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570), among others, based on the scant information provided by Polo's accounts, did not include Tibet. Cf. Hedin, *Southern Tibet*, especially 173–82. Contesting Hedin's hypothesis, Braham Norwick believes that the disappearance of Tibet from European maps including central Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was due to reasons of "geohistorical phoneticism", since European travellers who left records in the late sixteenth century did not mention Tibet according to its Arabic and Persian phonetic adaptation — e.g. *Tebet* or *Thebet* — unlike their European predecessors. He makes reference to Chinese maps circulating in Europe in the sixteenth century — for instance, those brought by João de Barros and Francesco Carletti — and the subsequent transcription of names into the Latin alphabet, which did not include the name "Tibet" as such. Cf. Norwick, "Why Tibet Disappeared", 635–37.

75 Elman, *On their Own Terms*, 127.

(1602 and 1603) survive.<sup>76</sup> Ricci sent copies of the first edition of his world map to Europe. They were made “in our own way” — *al nostro modo* — but the writing on them — *lettere* — measures of miles and names, was theirs.<sup>77</sup>

When starting to prepare his world map, Ricci might have encountered the usual names for Tibet in Chinese, i.e. *Tufan* 吐蕃 or *xifan* 西番.<sup>78</sup> Chinese sources on Tibet often include explanations of its different names. In the Old Book of Tang (*Jiu Tangshu*, 舊唐書) it is explained how the name “Tufan” was a mispronunciation of *Tufa* 禿發, the ruling kingdom that harboured the ethnic group Qiang 羌, which prevailed in the Tibetan region.<sup>79</sup> This clarification was replicated in the General Description of the World in the Tai Ping

76 D’Elia, *Il mappamondo cinese*, 70–71, n. 4. Some years later, D’Elia published another work, “Recent Discoveries and New Studies (1938–1960) on the World Map in Chinese of Father Matteo Ricci SJ”, in which he mentioned two other authentic copies of this third edition that he did not know of before. One of these copies is in the Library of the Prefecture of Miyagi. And a fourth copy, unknown until then, similar to the one in the Vatican, has been in the possession of a London antiquarian and collector, Mr Philip Robinson, since 1946. Another authentic copy of the third edition of Ricci’s world map is in the astronomical observatory of Bologna university. However, this is not a complete copy, containing only two of the six panels which made up Ricci’s work, the first and the sixth. These two are altogether identical to the same panels in the authentic copies, both that of the Vatican and that of Mr Robinson. As for the fourth edition, D’Elia states he did not know of any copy other than the Vatican one. However, there was a copy of this fourth edition, which was at the time in the possession of the Korean Mr Hwang Piong. This copy had been brought to Korea by one of the ancestors of the original owner who had taken part in an embassy from Korea to Peking a short time after 1603. After the last Korean war, there is no way of knowing where this copy is today, nor even whether it still exists or has been lost. However, Professor Nakamura Hiroshi took photographs of this relic, and it is these photographs that revealed the existence of this fourth edition of Ricci’s World Map. Cf. D’Elia, “Recent discoveries and New Studies”, 109–23. As for manuscript copies, they are difficult to reconstruct as they are scattered across a number of archives worldwide, and partly because there is a very little internal or external evidence to suggest when and under which circumstances they were drawn, see Ptak, “The Sino-European Map”, 192. See also Day, “The Search for the Origins”, 94–117.

77 D’Elia, *Il mappamondo cinese*, 36.

78 According to Paul Pelliot, Tufan was the official orthography of the name of Tibet during the Tang, instead of the alternative phonetic adaptation often found, *Tu bo*. The name under which Tibet was known by in the Turkic world, i.e. *Tüpiüt* (or *Tupot*, *T’püt*, *Töpöt*), is similar to the Chinese “Tufan”, making it unnecessary to read it as *Tu bo*. See Pelliot, “Quelques Transcriptions chinoises de noms tibétains”, 18–20.

79 舊唐書, 卷二百七, online. The Old Book of Tang was the first classic historical work about the Tang dynasty (618–907 AD), comprising 200 chapters.

Reign Period (*Taiping Huanyu Ji* 太平寰宇記) by geographer Yue Shi 樂史 (930–1007), which appeared shortly after the beginning of the Song Dynasty, between 976 and 983.<sup>80</sup>

In the Ming period, when the Jesuits arrived in China, the name of *xifan* 西番 for Tibet was also in use, denoting foreign western populations. This should be understood in the larger context of the Middle Kingdom — the present name for China, *Zhongguo*, which literally translates as the “central states”, and which came into use during the Eastern Zhou period (770–221 BC).<sup>81</sup> A term often found in the Chinese classics is *Siyi* 四夷, which has the usual — and biased — translation of “four barbarians”. It refers to the ethnically non-Han/Chinese peoples or foreigners bordering the Middle Kingdom, i.e. the *Dongyi* 東夷, the *Nanman* 南蠻, the *Xirong* 西戎, and the *Beidi* 北狄, frequently translated as the Eastern, Southern, Western, and Northern “barbarians” respectively.

In the literature of the time, such as the Extensive Records of the Four Barbarians (*Siyi guangji* 四夷廣記) by Shen Maoshang,<sup>82</sup> which was published in the early years of the seventeenth century, we find a description of the Tibetans in the section on “Western foreigners” (*xiyi* 西夷). It starts by clarifying their interchangeable names, *tufan* 吐蕃 or *xifan* 西番, as they referred to the same ethnic group, the qiang people, *qiangzu* 羌族. It includes a geographical description of Tibet’s mountains and rivers, an explanation of the nature of the historical relationships between Tibet and China, and an account of

80 Yue Shi 樂史, *Taiping Huanyu Ji* 太平寰宇記 Online. Cf. Needham, *Science and Civilisation*, III, 521.

81 Briefly, “Middle Kingdom” referred to a group of vassal states of the Zhou king which participated in the Zhou political and ritual system, marking a hierarchical distance from the polities beyond this Zhou-centred cultural universe. Ethnic centrality consolidated with the Han dynasty (206 BC–8 AD), as the Han became the dominant ethnic group when China’s imperial power and influence were projected over a great part of East Asia. It was also with the Han that Confucianism was adopted as a state doctrine. Both of these were set at the core of this imagined centrality, which was surrounded by vassal states that could be within or outside the dynasty’s direct administrative control.

82 Little is known about Shen Maoshang. Elke Pappelitzky provides information obtained from prefaces and colophons found in another work by Shen, *Shenzi Neiwai pian*, the Inner and Outer chapters of the Philosopher Shen, first printed in 1579. He was born in Gui’an in Zhejiang Province. In 1579 he printed his collection and commentary on the work of the philosopher Shen Dao (c.350–275 BC). See Pappelitzky, “An Introduction to Siyi Guangji”, 86.

Tibetan agricultural produce.<sup>83</sup> Another Ming source, the Records of All Guests (*Xian Bin lu* 咸賓錄) by scholar Luo Yuejiong 羅曰褫, completed in 1591, explains that both *Xirong* 西戎 and *Xiqiang* 西羌 are ancient names of *Tufan* 吐蕃.<sup>84</sup>

The term that Matteo Ricci used to represent Tibet was *xifan* 西番. He was addressing a Chinese audience, and so did not include the romanized spelling of *xifan*, but the Jesuit cartographers who succeeded him did. They adopted the phonetic romanization of *xifan*, i.e. *Syfan* or *Sifan*, which gained a place in European cartography, adding this other name for Tibet into European languages, as shown in Martino Martini SJ's<sup>85</sup> and Michal Boym SJ's<sup>86</sup> maps in the mid seventeenth century.

One of the Chinese sources that the Jesuits in China during the Ming period, starting with Ricci, had consulted was the Enlarged Territorial Atlas (*Guang yu tu* 廣輿圖) (1541), by Luo Hongxian (1504–64) which was an adapted version of the scholar Zhu Siben's (1273–1333) *Yu tu* (Terrestrial map), from the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). It was first published in 1561 and was reprinted many times. The one consulted by the Jesuits, from Matteo Ricci onwards was the sixth edition of 1579. And Martino Martini in his *Atlas Novus Sinensis* (1655) is said to have absolutely depended on this cartographical work.<sup>87</sup> As explained in its preface, the *Guang yu tu* provided information about foreign populations; Tibet was represented on one of the maps, with a short description of the inhabitants of that area as "savages".<sup>88</sup>

In Ricci's maps, the geographical location of Tibet seems to be different in the different editions, and also in reproductions of non-extant editions. Among the latter, there is the case of the literatus and convert, Feng Yingjing (1555–1606), who made two globes

83 Shen Maoshang 慎懋賞, *Siyiguangji* 四夷廣記, 648–660, online.

84 Luo Yuejiong 羅曰褫, *Xian Bin lu* 咸賓錄, 西夷志卷之五: 吐蕃, online.

85 Martino Martini, \*20.IX.1614, Trento, Italy, SJ 8.X.1632, Rome, Italy, † 6.VI.1661, Hangzhou, China (DHCJ III, 2528).

86 Michal Piotr Boym, \* 1612, Lvov, Ucraina, SJ 16.VIII.1631, Cracovia, † 22.VIII.1659, Guangxi, China (DHCJ I, 517).

87 Cf. Bernard, "Les sources mongoles", 127–35. He follows Walter Fuchs in this analysis. Pasquale D'Elia also points out that Ricci drew on Chinese dynastic histories, as reflected in many of the annotations on his map regarding China's neighbouring countries. Cf. D'Elia, *Il mappamondo cinese*, 181.

88 Zhu Siben 朱思本, *Guang yu tu* 廣輿圖, online.

displaying Ricci's geographical works, in particular the Nanjing edition (1600), in which *xifan* 西番 was located next to the *Huihui* 回回 — Muslims (Figure 1).<sup>89</sup> Moreover, this representation of Tibet is very similar to that in another work in an encyclopaedia from the Wanli reign (1572–1620) in the Ming period, the *Collected Illustrations of the Three Realms* (*Sancai Tuhui* 三才圖會), which was compiled by Wang Qi and his son Wang Siyi in 1609. This contains a *Complete Terrestrial Map*, the *Shanhai Yudi Quantu* 山海與地全圖, which is known for being one of the Chinese cartographic works with a strong Jesuit influence.<sup>90</sup> In fact, it took the same name as Ricci's 1600 map edition.<sup>91</sup> The resemblance of the location of Tibet — *xifan* — in these two maps is uncanny, and this might tell us something about Tibet in Ricci's world map of 1600.

The literatus Li Zhizao (1565–1630) met Ricci in 1601 and became a close collaborator, engraving and printing numerous copies of Ricci's world maps. He wrote an extensive preface to the 1602 Peking edition, which consisted of six panels — the 1603 edition would be divided into eight.<sup>92</sup> In the detailed topography of the 1602 edition, the location of Tibet changed.

In the early 1620s, between Ricci's world maps and Martino Martini's atlas, Giulio Aleni<sup>93</sup> compiled a book by Diego de Pantoja<sup>94</sup> and Sabatino de Ursis<sup>95</sup> — with several prefaces by Chinese scholars — entitled the *Record of Foreign Lands* (*Zhifang waiji* 職方外記). It provides geographical information of lands not listed in the imperial cartography office, the *Zhifang si*; it divides the world into five continents, i.e. Asia, Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Magellanica. Tibet is briefly mentioned as one of the tributary states of China.<sup>96</sup>

It was mostly with Martino Martini's maps that the term *Sifan*

89 Ricci, *Storia dell'Introduzione*, II, 61, n.1, in reference to Tavola IX.

90 Cf. Zhang, *Making the New World Their Own*, especially 27–87. This map can be accessed on: [http://www.cityu.edu.hk/lib/about/event/cul\\_korea/map-1609-chi.htm](http://www.cityu.edu.hk/lib/about/event/cul_korea/map-1609-chi.htm).

91 Ptak, "The Sino-European Map", 193.

92 D'Elia, *Il Mappamondo cinese*, 166.

93 Giulio Aleni, \*1582, Brescia, Italy, SJ 1.XI.1600 Novellara, Italy, † 10.VI.1649, Fujian, China (DHCJ I, 72).

94 Diego de Pantoja, \*1571, Madrid, España, SJ 6.IV.1589, Cuenca, España, † 9.VII.1618, Macau (DHCJ III, 2966).

95 Sabatino de Ursis, \*1575, Lecce, Italy, SJ 1597, † 1620, Macau (DHCJ II, 1063–64).

96 Ai Rulüe 艾儒略 (Giulio Aleni), *Zhifang waiji* 職方外記, online.





Figure 1

Feng Yingjing's globes displaying Ricci's world map (Nanjing edition, 1600)  
Copyright: Bibliothèque Nationale de France

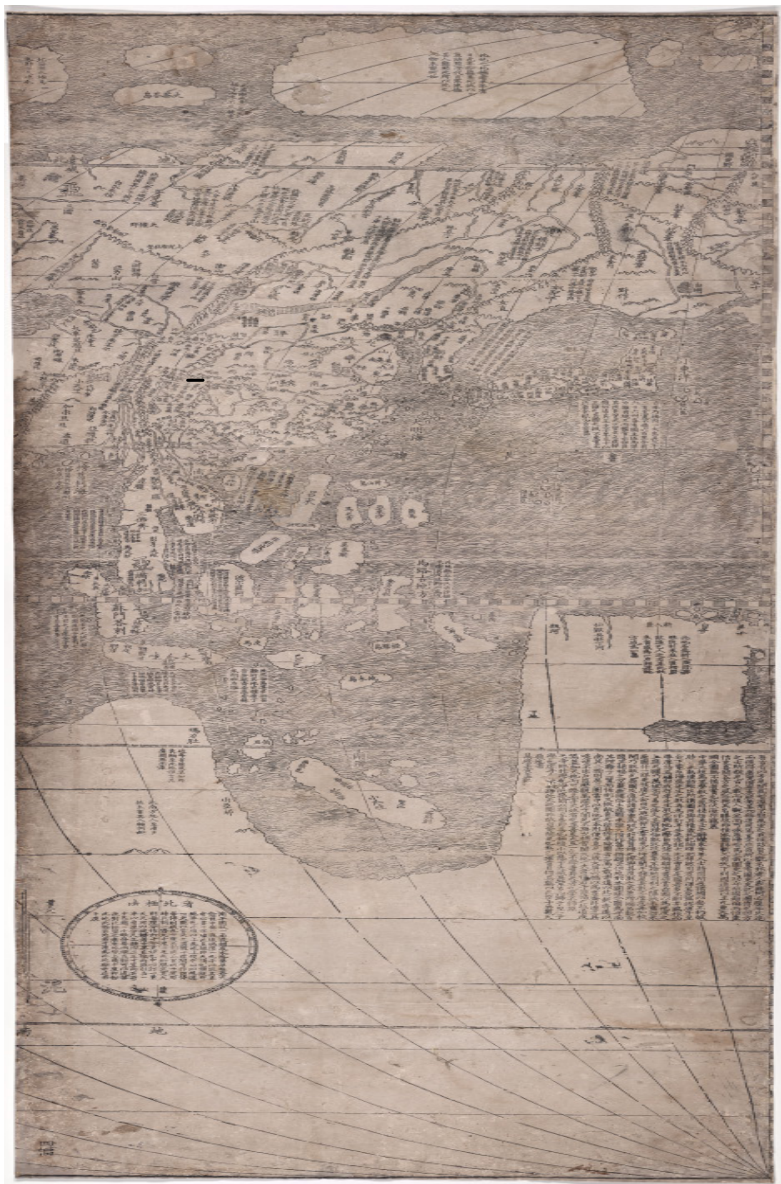


Figure 2

Tibet in Ricci's world map (Peking, 1602), in six panels  
 Courtesy of the James Ford Bell Trust for the benefit of the  
 James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota





Figure 3

Tibet in Ricci's world map (Peking, 1602), (Fragment)  
Courtesy of the James Ford Bell Trust for the benefit of the  
James Ford Bell Library, University of Minnesota

started to circulate in Europe. His *Atlas* starts by mentioning the many names for China at the time, like *Serica*, *Sinam*, *Chinam*, *Tartari Catayum*, and *Mangin* — the latter coming from the language of the “barbarians”.<sup>97</sup> *Cathay* is the name given to China by Turks, Moors, and Saracens travelling in embassies through Lahore and Kashmir, Martini explains.<sup>98</sup> Tibet and *Sifan* seem to be represented in Martini’s maps somewhat unclearly. In the map *Imperii Sinarum. Nova Descriptio*, Tibet is contained within the larger kingdom of *Sifan* — *De Regno Sifan* — on the western borders of China, which in turn comprises three kingdoms: Tibet, Kiang, and Ü-Tsang — *Usucang Regnum* (Figure 4). There are brief references to its ethnicity, geography, and religion.<sup>99</sup> However, in the map of Sichuan province, Tibet is represented on the left with the legend “*Sifan Regnum sive Tibet*” — the kingdom of *Sifan* or Tibet, as equivalent terms. Another of his maps, of the *Shensi* province, shows the *Sifan Regni* on the left with “the Kingdoms of Geo and Cangingu, which M. Paulo Veneto — Marco Polo — calls those of Preste Ioan — Prester John”.<sup>100</sup>

As mentioned above, Jesuit cartography produced in China had no immediate effect on European maps including central Asia between the mid sixteenth and the mid seventeenth centuries. However, European cartographers like the French royal geographer Nicolas Sanson (1600–67) sought to reproduce some of the maps made by the Jesuits in China. Sanson wanted to include the best map of China available when he prepared the second edition of his work *L’Asie* in 1658. In the first edition (1652), he included a general map of China, which he had drawn with some adjustments from the map inserted in Samuel Purchas’s “Purchas His Pilgrimage”.<sup>101</sup> As he explains in the *Considerations* in the 1658 edition, the four Jesuit maps he

97 *Mangin* refers to *Manzi* 蠻子 in Chinese. See note 14.

98 Martini, *Novus Atlas Sinensis*, 1.

99 *Ibid.*, 18.

100 Sven Hedin has analysed the location of Tibet in Martini’s maps, pointing out certain imprecisions, due to the poor information available to him. For instance, there is some inexact information regarding the Kunlun Mountains, especially in relation to the Ganges River — not far from Lahore and the kingdom of Tibet. Cf. Hedin, *Southern Tibet*, I, 193–94. Hedin does not specify which of the maps in Martini’s *Atlas* he is referring to, but the observations on the Kunlun mountains — *Quenlun montes* — might relate to the Sichuan map.

101 Szczesniak, “Matteo Ricci’s Maps of China”, 132. See also Szczesniak, “The Seventeenth Century Maps of China”, 120.



Figure 4

Martino Martini, *Atlas Novus Sinensis* (1655). *Imperii Sinarum. Nova Descriptio*  
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considered including in his work, by Michele Ruggieri<sup>102</sup> (Ricci, in fact<sup>103</sup>), Michal Boym, Martino Martini, and Alvarez Semedo,<sup>104</sup> all showed different measurements of China, something that Sanson found disappointing. However, he published Ricci's (Ruggieri's, in his opinion) map as a single-coloured map of China issued in 1656.<sup>105</sup>

Interestingly, Sanson used Cathay as a means to question the Jesuits' discoveries, claiming that it still needed to be proved whether Cathay corresponded to China, as the Jesuits believed. According to Sanson, there were other mathematicians and geographers of Persian origin who were more knowledgeable of the Orient and whose findings lead us to believe that Cathay and China are two different "countries" — *pays*. Moreover, there were reasons to consider that Cathay might correspond to the ancient *Serica Regio*, while China corresponded to the ancient *Sinarum Regio*.<sup>106</sup> In

102 Michele Ruggieri,\* 1543, Spinazzola, Italy, SJ 27.X.1562, + 11.VI.1607, Salerno, Italy (*DHCJ* IV, 3433–34).

103 According to B. Szczesniak, from Sanson's observations on a single-coloured map of China by Ruggieri-Ricci, it can be inferred that the map ascribed to Ruggieri was really made by Matteo Neroni. Moreover, in his opinion, Matteo Neroni is actually Matteo Ricci, and the map was drawn in Rome in 1590 by Ruggieri from Ricci's maps based on the *Guang yu tu* (1579). See Szczesniak, "The Seventeenth Century Maps of China", 118–20. In another article, Szczesniak makes reference to the maps Ruggieri had brought with him to Rome; they were four copies that Ricci had given him before leaving China. Cf. Szczesniak, "Matteo Ricci's Maps of China", 131–33. Unlike Szczesniak, Marcel Destombes has no suspicions regarding Neroni's identity. Destombes explains that Ruggieri brought with him the *Guangyu tu* with him to Rome, where he arrived from China in July 1590. He translated the nomenclature. And it was the Florentine Matteo Neroni who drew the map of Asia that same year. For unknown reasons, the map is in the collection of the Duke Gaston D'Orleans in Paris. Some years later, Nicolas Sanson published it with an explicative legend. Cf. Destombes, "Wang P'an, Liang Chou et Matteo Ricci", 59.

104 Álvaro Semedo, \*1585, Nisa, Portugal, SJ 30.IV.1602, Évora, Portugal, + 18.VII.1658, Guangzhou, China (*DHCJ* IV, 3552). Cf. Szczesniak, "The seventeenth Century Maps of China", 116.

105 Szczesniak, "The Seventeenth Century Maps of China", 118. In this article, Szczesniak claims that the Ricci–Ruggieri map was included by Nicolas Sanson in his *Cartes generales de toutes parties du monde*, published in collaboration with Pierre Mariette in 1658. However, regarding the maps for Sanson's *L'Asie*, Szczesniak states that Sanson printed Purchas's map in the 1652 and 1658 editions. Nevertheless, somewhat contradictorily, in his article "A Manuscript of Michael Boym", Szczesniak claims that "... In the 1658 edition of *L'Asie*, Sanson inserted the map by Ruggieri, which is, in general, a far less accurate map than Boym's". See Szczesniak, "A Manuscript of Michael Boym", 67.

106 Sanson, *L'Asie*, 76–77, online.

successive editions of Sanson's *L'Asie*, Cathay would keep its place. Even in the 1683 edition, Sanson claimed that "Cathay corresponds to the ancient Serica Regio", placing it in southern Tartary.<sup>107</sup> Finally, in the 1683 edition of *L'Asie*, Sanson replaced Ruggieri's map with Boym's mappa.<sup>108</sup> He added to it the western territories bordering China proper and roughly corresponding to south-eastern Tibet, as one of the bordering territories.<sup>109</sup>

Martini was working on his China atlas at the same time that Michal Boym finished the manuscript atlas *Magni Cathay* (1652) — in which "Cathay" can be read as the great expanse of China in the mid seventeenth century, to depict the empire's vastness.<sup>110</sup> Martini came directly to Holland, where he gave his *Novus Atlas Sinensis* to Jean Blaeu of Amsterdam for engraving and publication. Boym's efforts were then directed at the French publisher of maps and geographical books, Pierre Mariette, who was the publisher of Nicolas Sanson's atlas. However, Boym's departure for China in 1656, the death of P. Mariette in 1657, and Boym's own death in 1659 meant that it went unpublished. In sum, Michal Boym's Atlas — *Magni Cathay* — might have been overshadowed by Martini's Atlas, published by J. Blaeu, the *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (Amsterdam, 1655), and by Sanson himself, who drew the Ricci-Ruggieri map in 1656 for his large atlas, the *Cartes générales de toutes parties du monde*, published jointly with Pierre Mariette in 1658, and republished in two volumes in 1670 and 1675 in Paris. However, what Sanson published with Pierre Mariette of Paris was an *abbregé* — an abbreviated version — becoming — according to B. Szczesniak — the rare printed copy of Boym's map of China (1670).<sup>111</sup> There we can see the name of "Tibet" with "Syfan" right next to it. Boym had romanized transliterations for all the Chinese names in his cartography.<sup>112</sup>

107 Ibid., 76, online. It was included in the edition entitled "*L'Europe en plusieurs cartes et en divers Traittés de Geographie et d'Histoire*".

108 Boym's map full title is: *Mappa Imperii Sinarum, quod olim vocabatur Serica, et magnum Catay cum summaria delucidatione earum rerum quae spectant ad Regna Sinarum, sinicis ac Europaeis characteribus impressa*.

109 Szczesniak, "The Atlas and Geographic Description of China", 67.

110 Rujivacharakul, "Asia in World Architecture", 24.

111 Szczesniak, "The Seventeenth Century Maps of China", 118, 127.

112 Reproduced in *ibid.*, 122, 126.



### Seventeenth-century Tibet: Beyond (?) the Shadow of Cathay

As the first part of this article showed, a varied nomenclature, vague geographical references, and a belief in the existence of traces of Christianity not taken by the forces of Islam became leitmotifs regarding the first information about Tibet produced by the Jesuits in the Mughal mission. After the closure of the Tibet mission in 1635, other expeditions in central Asia continued to provide information about Tibet, for example, those of Johann Grueber SJ and Albert d'Orville SJ.<sup>113</sup> Grueber and his companion after d'Orville's death, Heinrich Roth SJ, provided Athanasius Kircher with fresh first-hand information on Tibet and other places in central Asia, which were included in his *China Illustrata*.<sup>114</sup>

Bernard Diestel SJ<sup>115</sup> invited Grueber to join the China mission, and on his acceptance they set out for Rome in 1656. Before leaving, Grueber was urgently pressed by Athanasius Kircher to report to him everything worthy of note that he might come across on his long journey. This request was strongly motivated by the fact that Grueber was about to try a new overland route instead of the Lisbon-Goa ocean route taken by all his predecessors.<sup>116</sup> In 1656 Grueber and Diestel sailed from Venice to Smyrna; after travelling through Anatolia and Armenia, they reached the island of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf. From Hormuz, they travelled to Bombay by sea, where they spent ten months. An English vessel then took them directly to Macau, where they arrived in late July that same year, 1658.<sup>117</sup> Grueber's stay in Macau must have been very short, for his

113 Desideri, *Mission to Tibet*, 21.

114 Among the main sources — rather scant — on Grueber's voyages, are Lorenzo Magalotti's (1637–1712) *Viaggio del P. Giovanni Grueber* (1672) and Melchisédech Thévenot's (1620–92), who translated the information into French, and published it along with Grueber's letters in "Relations de divers Voyages" (1696).

115 Bernard Distel, \*13.VII.1623 Wippach (Austria), SJ 19.X.1639, Vienna, † 13.IX.1660, Jinan, China (DHCJ II, 1119–20).

116 Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*, 172–73. Wessels found copies of nine unpublished letters from Grueber to Kircher between 1664 and 1671. Although they are of limited value to reconstruct Grueber's journey, they provide details that shed light onto obscure points. Cf. *ibid.*, 166.

117 The instructions regarding the transfer of personnel bound for the Jesuit missions within the geographical limits of the Portuguese *Padroado* obliged the missionaries to embark in Lisbon aboard ships belonging to the Portuguese crown, and to follow the usual Cape route. Likewise, similar instructions were in effect for return voyages to Europe. Lack of compliance with this protocol

confrere Albert d'Orville was expecting him to be sent to Peking to assist Adam Schall<sup>118</sup> at the imperial observatory in the capital city.<sup>119</sup>

D'Orville was Grueber's companion in the adventure of going from Peking to Rome by an overland route. They departed from Peking on 13 April 1661. Apart from the frequent perils of the sea — storms, piracy, sickness, starvation, etc. — the usual sea routes were closed at the time. The Dutch had blockaded every Chinese port and held up every vessel sailing from Macau, especially those of the Portuguese. In a letter written in Latin in 1664, Grueber explains why it was necessary to make his journey by land, as the Dutch had both attacked and seized all the ports previously frequented by the Portuguese.<sup>120</sup> Grueber and d'Orville's adventurous journey from China took them to Tibet. They reached Lhasa — with Grueber using the Mongol name "Barantola" — from Xining, the capital of the Qinhai province in western China, by the Tibetan Plateau. From Lhasa they went to Agra, crossing Nepal, and arriving in mid March.<sup>121</sup> D'Orville died of exhaustion in Agra, and his German confrere Heinrich Roth<sup>122</sup> took his place as Grueber's travel companion on the way back to Europe. Roth had arrived in Agra in 1654, where he spent several years learning Persian, Kannada,

could become a particularly sensitive matter for Lisbon's diplomacy thereafter. As the seventeenth century progressed, some of the emerging powers in Catholic Europe appeared to dispute the rights of the Padroado and the effective power of the Portuguese empire in Asia that sustained these rights. In this direction, the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith — usually known as *Propaganda Fide* — established in 1622, aimed to take over the general guidelines of the overseas missions, with the driving force of its first secretary, Francesco Ingoli (1578–1649). These changes generated clashes between a brand-new Congregation and the Portuguese Asian Empire. C. Wessels indicates the desire to break free from the oppression of the *Padroado* by discovering overland routes as one of the possible purposes of Grueber's and Roth's voyages. Cf. *ibid.*, 173.

118 Johann Adam Schall Von Bell, \* 1.V.1592, Köln, Germany, SJ 21.X.1611, Rome, † 15.VIII. 1666, Peking (DHCJ IV, 3514).

119 Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*, 172–78.

120 Grueber, *Notizie varie dell'Impero*, f. D5. This letter was sent from Rome to P. Johannes Gamans SJ, in Aschaffenburg, shortly before Grueber started his second journey, probably around the beginning of 1664. See "Grueber and Dorville's Journey across Tibet", 664. See also Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*, 176.

121 "Grueber and Dorville's Journey across Tibet", 667–69.

122 Heinrich Roth, \*18.XII.1620, Dillingen, Germany, SJ 25.X.1639, Landsberg, Bavaria † 20.VI.1668 Agra, India (DHCJ IV, 3419).

and Hindustani, besides acquiring a sound knowledge of Sanskrit. Grueber and Roth left Agra at the end of 1662. They travelled on foot to Lahore, reached the Persian Gulf and went by the caravan route to Smyrna, where they embarked for Messina to finally arrive in Rome in February 1664. By that time, Grueber had been on the road three years and, according to his accounts, the overland route that he had tried was much safer than the sea route, although longer.<sup>123</sup>

During the fifteen months they spent in Europe, Roth and Grueber were engaged in meeting different people to provide information on their expeditions, before departing from Venice to India in May 1665. However, due to various impediments, Grueber stayed in Constantinople and then went back to Italy. Roth continued without him with the idea of establishing a mission in Nepal, but he died in June 1668, before any plans could be materialized. Both Roth and Grueber came into contact with Athanasius Kircher SJ, who was then engaged in writing *China Illustrata*. Grueber's conversations with Kircher provided much of the information in the second part of this work, especially regarding Tibet, India, and Mongolia. Moreover, Kircher received detailed information from Roth on the religion and language of the avatars of Vishnu and on the Devanagari alphabet of India and Nepal.<sup>124</sup>

The second part of *China Illustrata*, *De Varis Itineribus in Chinam Susceptis* reunites many of the leitmotifs surrounding central Asia, i.e. the presence of Prester John and possible traces of Christianity in those lands. Of course, Kircher acknowledged the achievements and crucial discernments made by the geographers of the Society, naming Matteo Ricci, Nicolas Trigault, Alvaro Semedo, Michal Boym, Martino Martini, Johann Grueber, and Johannes Adam (Schall). Credit also went to Bento Goes for being the one who actually explored those regions at that time.<sup>125</sup> They all proved that Cathay referred to China. However, Kircher was also interested in analysing all the possible reasons for the confusion regarding Cathay. In past times, he speculated, Cathay might have not only referred to the lands within the Chinese borders, but also those outside the walls — i.e. the Great Wall — in a more expanded

123 Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*, 200. Comparing different sources, Wessels judges the date of arrival of February 1664 as the most accurate.

124 Vogel, "An Old letter from Surat", 610–11.

125 Kircher, *China Illustrata*, 47; online.

region now deserted and uncultivated.<sup>126</sup> In the first chapter, Kircher traces Marco Polo's description of the Cham Empire — in Tartary — which, he clarified, was not Cathay. Its provinces were in mountainous regions comprising other kingdoms, such as Lhasa — which the Tartars call *Barantola* — Necbal, Tibeth, and Maranga. Kircher confirmed the itinerary provided by Marco Polo with Grueber's expeditions in lands in which traces of Christianity could be found. In the region of Gog and Magog, in the highest mountains in the world, according to Marco Polo, was the kingdom of Belore — Bolor. In its surroundings was Thebeth, the main kingdom of Prester John in Cathay, as shown by Arabian geographers and Abraham Pizol. Following Pizol, in the region called Thebet there is a city that — Kircher assumed — might be Tsaparang, whose religious monuments were well described by Andrade.<sup>127</sup> It is worth noting at this point that Kircher's *China Illustrata*'s opening part provides, as its title indicates, an "Explanation of the Sino-Syrian document" (*Daqin jingjiao bei* 大秦景教碑) usually known as the Nestorian Stele. It is divided into six chapters and explains the pronunciation, meaning, and interpretation of the inscription of this stone, which was excavated in Xi'an. It also includes a handwritten facsimile of the words inscribed on the monument. Alvarez de Semedo SJ was the first to report the discovery of this monument in Xi'an in his *History of the Great Monarchy of China*. Kircher eventually met with Boym, whose letter of 1635, which refers to all the remnants of Christianity recently found in China, was included in *China Illustrata*. According to Boym, Christianity was flourishing when the Tartars invaded China. It is not known whether St Thomas or other apostles preached the gospel to the Chinese. However, he claimed, that after so many years the Christians of Prester John were to be found; they came to China with, or shortly before, the Tartars. This was the first time that the complete Chinese text on the monument was published in Europe, and the first time that these characters were transcribed into the Roman alphabet.<sup>128</sup>

126 Ibid., 48. The question of Cathay demanded considerable attention from Kircher, who devoted a third chapter to discussing its true location. On his expedition, Bento de Goes found that the name "Cathay" for China was mainly used by merchants from India, Usbec (Uzbekistan), Camul (Kabul), and the Mediterranean region. Cf. *ibid.*, 63, online.

127 Ibid., 48–49. He refers to Abraham Peritsol, author of *Itinera Mundi*.

128 Zhang, "The Jesuits in China", 364–73.

Reviewing the core themes of the second part of *China Illustrata*, it is clear that this first part, celebrating this evidence of Christianity in China, helped — once again — to bring the figure of Prester John in central Asia to the forefront.

By analysing Grueber's correspondence, C. Wessels infers that Grueber regarded Kircher as his official editor. He gave him his notes in Rome, and Kircher was committed to publishing them. However, many incomplete and incorrect points in Kircher's account caused to regret Grueber this decision. He complained about not being consulted about the titles and drawings — the latter being among the most controversial factors in this exchange of information — because they needed corrections.<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, Grueber might not have provided full information in order to avoid these shortcomings in Kircher's work.<sup>130</sup> It is a well-known fact that *China Illustrata* reached a wide audience relatively quickly, especially because the text was promptly translated into different languages: a Dutch edition appeared in 1668, an abridged English edition in 1669, and a French edition in 1670. This French edition was enriched with two new parts: Grueber's answers to a series of ten questions about China asked by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and a forty-four-page Chinese–French dictionary.<sup>131</sup> The answers to the Grand Duke of Tuscany's questions served to elucidate several obscure points in Kircher's *China Illustrata*.<sup>132</sup>

## Conclusion

Kircher's *China Illustrata* is a telling example of the location of Tibet oscillating between the weight of a legendary and imaginary past and the fresh first-hand information provided by the geographers, cartographers, and explorers that the Jesuit missionaries in India, central Asia, and China proved to be. Even in the second half of the seventeenth century, Tibet was described by Kircher as “the main kingdom of Prester John in Cathay”. The confusion Europeans had about Tibet–Cathay made Prester John linger longer in the European

129 Some of these drawings are shown in Kircher's fourth chapter on the travels of Grueber and d'Orville, in “Dress, Mores and Habitants of the Inhabitants of these unknown geographies”. Kircher, *China Illustrata*, 66–77.

130 Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers*, 166–67.

131 Federico Masini, “Notes on the First Chinese Dictionary Published in Europe (1670)”, 283.

132 Wessels includes these ten questions in *Early Jesuit Travellers*, 171–72, n. 3. There is a precise question (number 4) regarding the Great Cham in Tartary.

imagination.<sup>133</sup> In fact, it would seem that some Europeans in Europe were still attached to this idea, especially when compared to figures such as Grueber and d'Orville, who had different assignments to complete, like finding overland routes connecting China and India and responding to strategic needs, rather than the need to feed this imagination.

Through processes of discernment, cartographical clarification, and exploration, Tibet became detached from Cathay, and also from the idea of it being a possible harbour for remnants of Christianity. However, as mentioned above, these processes were still underway in the mid seventeenth century. This can be clearly seen when we analyse the attitudes of missionaries in the eighteenth century regarding Tibet. One such example is the Italian Ippolito Desideri SJ,<sup>134</sup> who tried to reopen the mission in Tibet in the early eighteenth century.<sup>135</sup> In his account *Historical Notices of Tibet*, when he describes the establishment of the Tibet mission by Andrade, he makes no reference to the possibility of finding traces of Christianity, which had inspired the Jesuits who undertook that enterprise before him. He says exactly the opposite: not only did they not find any such thing, but they found “the dark face of idolatry” instead.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, in his preface to the reader, Desideri tells how and why he was encouraged by men of letters to put his experience down in writing, especially because “no one up to now has given any account of Tibet other than in passing, and those briefly and inaccurately”.<sup>137</sup> It is clear that Desideri wants to make up for this scant and imprecise information by providing a thorough description of every possible aspect of Tibet: its provinces, cities, rivers, climate, flora and fauna, dress, food, writing, alphabet, government, customs, religion (the whole third book) and history,

133 Of course, European audiences and readership would also have had access to Grueber's — rather scant — correspondence to learn about his exploration of Tibet, which did not associate it with Cathay.

134 Ippolito Desideri, \*21.XII.1684 Pistoia (Italy); SJ 27.IV.1700, Rome, + 14.IV.1733, Rome (DHCJ II, 1100).

135 However, it was the Capuchins who were to establish a mission there this time, assigned by the Propaganda Fide, which is why Desideri had to leave Tibet in 1721 after spending six years there.

136 Desideri, *Mission to Tibet*, 198.

137 Ibid., 113.

among others.<sup>138</sup> Desideri quotes Kircher's *China Illustrata* quite often throughout his account, but not to portray Tibet as "the main kingdom of Prester John in Cathay". Likewise, accounts of the Capuchin missionaries who arrived in Tibet in the early eighteenth century, such as Francesco Orazio della Penna (1680–1745), make no reference to this mythical figure, or his dwelling in those lands. Indeed, the same search for accuracy regarding information about Tibet — from an explanation of its names in different languages, to its climate, population, government, law, etc. — can be observed in della Penna's account.<sup>139</sup>

In terms of cartography, the eighteenth century also brought new redefinitions. As this article has shown, Jesuit cartography produced in China had provided Tibet–*Sifan* with its own place in it, detached from Cathay. However, in the period analysed here, it seems that even though geographical redefinitions of Tibet fought against imaginary ideas and gained autonomy in relation to Cathay, the latter was still present in European accounts and cartography throughout the seventeenth century. A precise cartography of Tibet would still have to wait. It would only come as a result of the collaboration of Jesuit cartographers and lamas under the auspices of the Kangxi Emperor (r.1662–1722) in the second decade of the eighteenth century.<sup>140</sup> In 1708, the Kangxi Emperor commissioned European Jesuit missionaries in his employ to assist in making surveys of the Qing Empire. On his behalf, Jesuit cartographers conducted systematic surveys of the entire Manchu realm between 1708 and 1718, composing maps of the Qing Empire and its border areas.<sup>141</sup> The Jesuits completed their surveys with the help of native officials trained in Western cartographic methods, Chinese expeditions, and traditional Chinese cartography. However, Europeans were not allowed to visit sensitive border regions like Tibet or Korea.<sup>142</sup> Regarding Tibet, in the second decade of the

138 Desideri provides detailed information about the different names of Tibet in different languages — Persian, Mongolian, Hindustani, etc. — in Asia, as well as the meaning of the names in each language. Cf. Petech, *I missionari italiani*, II, 1.

139 Cf. della Penna, *Breve Notizia del Regno del Thibet*.

140 As Sven Hedin points out, the travels of Andrade and Grueber, which are now so easy to follow, could not be traced on the existing maps, as is clearly proven by Kircher's attempts to include a map with the information provided by Grueber. Cf. Hedin, *Southern Tibet*, I, 207.

141 Elman, "Geographical Research", 3–10.

142 Hostetler, "Contending Cartographic claims?", 100–103.



eighteenth century, the Kangxi Emperor asked two Tibetan lamas who had studied geometry and arithmetic in Beijing to go there to develop a survey of the land. These two lamas carried out their project in Tibet in the mid 1710s and gave their results to the Jesuits in 1717. Based on this data, the Jesuits drew up a map of Tibet–Sifan, which was added to the great map of China presented to the Emperor in 1718. Thus, the first scientific map of Tibet was drawn by lamas with the assistance of Jesuits in Peking.<sup>143</sup> This map of China was engraved in Peking and the Jesuits sent a copy to Paris, where it was published by Jean-Baptiste Du Halde<sup>144</sup> in 1737 as *Nouvel Atlas De la Chine, de la Tartarie Chinoise et du Tibet*. Before the publication process, Du Halde sent it to the French geographer and cartographer Jean Baptiste d’Anville (1697–1782) to reduce it and prepare it for publication.<sup>145</sup>

In sum, the period and literature analysed in this survey show an undecided European attitude when letting go of fictional representations of certain parts of Asia. This is revealed by an ambiguity when embracing the new first-hand information that replaced “the legend” without dismissing it, entailing an extra effort to make the two compatible. To many, expectations of possible Christian communities which could be saved from the forces of Islam in central Asia might have been a major stimulus for such efforts. In this regard, as shown in this study, the Society of Jesus played a crucial role in this double movement generating new knowledge while still embracing an imaginary past in central Asia during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

### Summary

This article surveys European information and other extant sources pertaining to Tibet in the early modern period, when the region was still relatively unknown to Europeans and, like Cathay (with which it tended to be associated), was thought to be home to Christian communities. The article is organized into three major themes that focus on discerning, mapping, and exploring Tibet. The first part

143 Yongdan, “Tibet Charts the World”, 76.

144 Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, \* 1.II.1674, Paris, SJ 8.IX.1692, Paris, † 18.VIII.1743, Paris (DHCJ II, 1152).

145 Hedin, *Southern Tibet*, I, 263. Henri Cordier reproduces the correspondence between Jean Baptiste D’Anville and Jean-Baptiste Du Halde with all the agreements between the two concerning D’Anville’s work on these maps. See Cordier, *Du Halde et D’Anville*, 391–400.

examines the features of what was for Europeans an uncertain association between Tibet and Cathay. The second part of the study, concerned with mapping, analyses the Jesuit cartographical work in China, partly using Chinese sources, that eventually gave Tibet a location independent from Cathay, even though cartographers in Europe continued to depict Cathay as sharing the spotlight with Tibet. Finally, the third section examines mid seventeenth-century Jesuit explorations in central Asia that provided fresh first-hand information for the likes of Athanasius Kircher in his *China Illustrata* (1667), one of the main sources of European knowledge about Tibet in those times. This research shows an undecided European attitude towards the region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: it was expressed in a double movement that generated new knowledge while embracing an imaginary past in central Asia, “dragging” Tibet with it.

### Sumario

Este artículo propone una revisión de la literatura europea y otras fuentes de información existentes sobre Tibet en el período moderno temprano. En el tardío siglo dieciséis, Tibet no sólo era relativamente desconocido para los europeos, sino que era frecuentemente asociado con Cathay, ambos imaginados como hogares de comunidades cristianas. Este estudio se organiza en torno a tres temas principales respecto a la experiencia europea en Tibet: su discernimiento, la producción cartográfica y exploración. La primera parte analiza la relación ambigua entre el Tibet y Catay en la imaginación europea, entre vagas referencias geográficas y una variada nomenclatura del Tibet en Asia central. En cuanto a la producción cartográfica, la segunda parte del artículo se centra en la cartografía elaborada por jesuitas en China en el siglo diecisiete, inspirada en fuentes chinas, que representó al Tibet independientemente de Catay. Sin embargo, cuando cartógrafos en Europa reprodujeron algunos de esos mapas elaborados en China, Catay reapareció en escena. Una tercera y última sección se centra en las exploraciones jesuitas en Asia central a mediados del siglo diecisiete, que proveyeron información de primera mano, utilizada principalmente por Athanasius Kircher en su *China Illustrata* (1667), una de las principales fuentes europeas sobre Tibet en ese entonces. Esta investigación muestra una actitud europea indecisa durante los siglos dieciséis y diecisiete, expresada en un doble movimiento de generar nuevo conocimiento de primera mano, sin dejar atrás un pasado imaginario en Asia central, “arrastrando” al Tibet con él.

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