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Publishing the Works of Jesuit Missionaries in Europe: the First Edition of the ›Chou king‹ and the Validation of Knowledge on China During the Enlightenment

Introduction

In a letter from Peking, dated 17 November 1754 and addressed to Deshauterayes in Paris, Father Gaubil noted:

J'ay traduit l'›Y king‹, mais je n'ay pas envoyé cette traduction; il faut la ›récrire‹, de même que celle du ›Ly ki‹, d'ailleurs je n'ay rien qui me presse d'envoyer ces sortes d'ouvrages, ils auroient le sort de la traduction du ›Chou king‹, c'est-à-dire qu'ils seroient dans quelque coin de chambre fort inconnu, ou méprisé.¹

Antoine Gaubil (1689-1759), a French Jesuit missionary who arrived in China in 1722, served as superior of the Jesuits in Peking from 1742 to 1748. Since missionaries were only tolerated in Peking on the basis of the scientific services they rendered to the Manchu emperors, Gaubil excelled in his work on astronomy and geography. Additionally, he possessed extensive knowledge of Chinese classics and historiography, producing significant works on Chinese chronology and history. The recipient of this letter, Michel-Ange-André Le Roux Deshauterayes (1724-1795), a French Orientalist, interpreter at the Royal Library (1745) and professor of Arabic at the *Collège Royal* (1752), was one of Gaubil's many correspondents in Europe. The works mentioned in this excerpt are three of the Chinese classics, representing texts from ancient Chinese civilisation. In his exchanges with Parisian scholars, Father Gaubil frequently lamented their indifference towards his work and the lack of publishing initiatives for the Jesuit writings sent to Europe.

In this paper, I aim to explore the circulation of knowledge between missionaries in China and scholars in Europe, particularly in France, and the impediments encountered. To what extent were Gaubil's complaints justified? Was this an isolated case? What factors made the publication of Jesuit works in Europe challenging for decades? The paper examines the first printed translation of the ›Chou king‹ (Book of Documents) in Europe – a publication which also marked the first instance of one of the

1 »I have translated the ›Y king‹, but I have not sent this translation; it needs to be ›rewritten‹, as does that of the ›Ly ki‹; besides I am not in a hurry to send these kinds of works, they would suffer the fate of the translation of the ›Chou king‹, that is to say, they would languish in some obscure corner of a room, unnoticed or despised.« Letter from Antoine Gaubil to Deshauterayes, 17 November 1754, Mantes. Collect. Landresse 1616-1630. Autographe, in: Antoine Gaubil, *Correspondance de Pékin, 1722-1759*, ed. by Renée Simon, Genève: Droz 1970. Cf. Joseph Dehergne, *Le Père Gaubil et ses correspondants (1689-1759)*, in: *Bulletin de l'Université l'Aurore* 5, 1944, pp. 354-392. Cf. Jacques Gernet, *À propos du Père Gaubil, S. J. à Pékin de 1722 à 1759*, in: *L'œuvre scientifique des missionnaires en Asie*, ed. by P.-S. Filliozat and J. Leclant, Paris: De Boccard 2012.

Five Classics of Confucianism being translated into a European language. Initially made by Gaubil in China and sent to Paris in 1740, this translation was published three decades later by the academician Joseph Deguignes (1721-1800). This example serves to illustrate how the study of editorial practices and publishing methods can shed light on the complexities and stakes in validating knowledge about China in Enlightened Europe, and seeks to contribute to the history of Orientalist philology, print, and publishing.

1. The circulation of knowledge about China between missionaries and European scholars

Since the sixteenth century, ecclesiastical institutions had established networks for the production of knowledge about distant lands. In the post-Tridentine period, as the Catholic Church redefined its missionary enterprise and grappled with encountering diverse civilisations, Rome emerged as a pivotal centre for collecting and analysing global information and accumulating cultural assets.² Recent research has established that missionaries, through their observations, scholarly productions, and engagement with local cultures, significantly influenced the production and circulation of knowledge in the modern era, contributing to the emergence of new disciplines, such as history, archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, and orientalism.³ The Jesuits, in particular, served as the primary source of information for Europeans about newly discovered lands.⁴ Missionaries of the Society of Jesus benefited from extensive training within the order that placed a strong emphasis on scientific education, especially in geography, and language studies.⁵ As in the case of China, Jesuit missionaries often possessed scientific expertise that they used as a means of apostolic contact and penetration. In addition, their prolonged stays in the various countries they visited facilitated their

- 2 Antonella Romano, Rome, un chantier pour les savoirs de la catholicité post-tridentine, in: *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 55, 2008, no. 2 (Sciences et villes-mondes, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle), pp. 101-120. Cf. idem (ed.), *Rome et la science moderne entre Renaissance et Lumières*, Rome: École française de Rome 2008; Maria Pia Donato, Jill Kraye (ed.), *Conflicting Duties. Science, Medicine and Religion in Rome (1550-1750)*, London, Turin: The Warburg Institute/N. Aragno 2009.
- 3 The study of »missionary knowledge« has been the focus of numerous recent studies. See, for instance: Aliocha Maldavsky, Charlotte de Castelnau-l'Estoire, Inez Zupanov, Marie-Lucie Copete (ed.), *Missions d'évangélisation et circulation des savoirs, XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle*, Madrid: Casa de Velásquez 2011. On the relationship between science and religion, see Steven J. Harris, Confession-building, long distance networks, and the organization of Jesuit science, in: *Early Science and Medicine. A Journal of the Study of Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Pre-Modern Period* 1, 1996, H. 3 (Oct.) (Jesuits and the Knowledge of Nature), pp. 287-318, p. 290.
- 4 Harris (n. 3). Mordechai Feingold, *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*, Cambridge, Mass., Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2003. Cf. S. Rabin, *Early-Modern Jesuit Science: A Historiographical Essay*, in: *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, 2015, no. 1, pp. 88-104.
- 5 François de Dainville, *L'éducation des Jésuites, XVIe-XVIIIe siècles*, ed. by Marie-Madeleine Compère, Paris: Éd. de Minuit 1978.

integration into local societies, enabling them to acquire in-depth knowledge of the country, its geography, languages, history, religions, and customs. The order also established a highly developed communication system, relying on the exchange of letters and regular reports, which began to be published in Rome as early as 1581.⁶ Notably, the French Jesuits made a major contribution to disseminating information to a broader public.⁷ Additionally, information from Jesuit missionaries found its way into publications such as the »Journal de Trévoux«, the Jesuit organ, published since 1701.

Aiming to reconcile the Roman faith with Renaissance knowledge, the Society of Jesus sought to establish ties with the Republic of Letters. Throughout the seventeenth century, Jesuit controversialists attempted to disassociate speculative reason from the content of sacred mysteries, linking theology to the moral proofs of historical analysis and textual transmission.⁸ Jesuits made substantial contributions to scholarly research gaining admission into erudite circles. For instance, distinguished editors of the Church Fathers and scholars of Christian antiquity, such as Jacques Sirmond (1559-1651), Fronton du Duc (1558-1624), and Denis Pétau (1583-1652) frequented the Dupuy cabinet in Paris. After the creation of academies, Jesuits were largely mobilised in collecting materials and data worldwide, sometimes under the coordination of the political authorities. The production of knowledge concerning non-European cultures during the early modern period fostered cooperation among the Republic of Letters, the state and the churches. This confluence of interests was facilitated by the perception that distant and exotic subjects posed less immediate threat to political power structures.⁹ In this context, knowledge production on Chinese geography, politics, religion, language, customs, and science in Europe heavily relied on information and documents conveyed by the Jesuits, who attained important positions at the Chinese court due to their scientific skills, notably in the field of astronomy. Exchanges between missionaries and scholars in Europe concerning the collection and recording of information occurred, in part, through official channels in particular by means of questionnaires (*interrogatoria*) drawn up by scientific academies. For instance, the »king's mathematicians« (*mathématiciens du roi*), sent to China by Louis XIV in 1685, during the

6 For a description of the information mechanism, see François de Dainville, *Les Jésuites et l'éducation de la société française. La naissance de l'humanisme moderne*, Paris: Beauchesne 1940, p. 123 and sqq.; Ines G. Županov, *Disputed Mission. Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-century India*, New Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press 1999, p. 9-16.

7 *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des Missions étrangères, par quelques missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 34 vols., Paris: Nicolas Le Clerc 1703-1776 (modern ed.: *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses des Jésuites de Chine: 1702-1776*, ed. by Isabelle et Jean-Louis Vissière, Paris: Desjonquères 2001). On the various reprints, cf. Henri Cordier, *Bibliotheca Sinica. Dictionnaire bibliographique des ouvrages relatifs à l'Empire chinois*, 3 vols., Paris: E. Leroux 1888-1895, t. 1, p. 414 and sqq.

8 On the French Jesuit participation in the Enlightenment, see Jeffrey D. Burson, *Between power and Enlightenment. The cultural and intellectual context for the Jesuit Suppression in France*, in: *Jesuit suppression in global context*, ed. by Jeffrey D. Burson and Jonathan Wright, New York, N. Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press 2015, pp. 40-64.

9 Justin Stagl, *A history of curiosity. The theory of travel, 1550-1800*, Chur: Harwood 1995, p. 151.

reign of Kangxi, were given a questionnaire drawn up by academicians on the orders of the minister François Michel Le Tellier de Louvois (1641-1691).¹⁰ Father du Halde's >Description de la Chine<, composed from Jesuit Letters and reports and containing translations of Chinese texts from very diverse sources, largely sought to address these questions, mostly related to Chinese history and chronology, and additionally to astronomical observations.¹¹ The French case exemplifies the pivotal role played by central governments in building oriental collections.¹² The acquisition of Chinese books by the *Bibliothèque du roi* in Paris began in the 1680s¹³ and intensified after 1720, under the administration of Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon (1662-1743), who served as Librarian to the King (1718-1739), and his successor, his brother Armand-Jérôme Bignon (in office from 1743 to 1770).¹⁴ Shipments from China to France frequently followed the instructions of scholars in France.¹⁵ Missionary scholars readily collaborated with academic institutions, leveraging the opportunity to secure political and financial support, foster correspondence networks, and gain an audience by publishing the research results in the proceedings of academies – the first scientific journal.¹⁶

- 10 Virgile Pinot, Documents inédits relatifs à la connaissance de la Chine en France de 1685 à 1740, Paris: Paul Geuthner 1932, p. 7-9.
- 11 Jean-Baptiste Du Halde (ed.), Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique de l'Empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise, 4 vols., Paris: P. G. Lemercier 1735.
- 12 For the integration of the Jesuits into the scientific program of the French monarchy, see Catherine Jami, Pékin au début de la dynastie Qing: capitale des savoirs impériaux et relais de l'Académie royale des sciences de Paris, in: Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine (Sciences et villes-mondes, XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle) 255, 2008, no. 2, pp. 43-69; Isabelle Landry-Deron, Pour la perfection des sciences et des arts: La mission jésuite française en Chine sous le patronage de l'Académie royale, in: Filliozat and Leclant (n. 1); Cf. John O'Malley (ed.), The Jesuits. Cultures, Sciences and the Arts, 1540-1773, 2 vols., Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press 1999-2006; Agustin Udias, Searching the Heavens and the Earth: The History of Jesuit Observatories, Berlin: Springer 2003 (Astrophysics and Space Science Library).
- 13 See Henri Cordier, Notes pour servir à l'histoire des études chinoises en Europe, jusqu'à l'époque de Fourmont l'ainé, Paris: E. Leroux 1886, pp. 399-429; Monique Cohen, A point of history: The Chinese books presented to the National Library in Paris by Joachim Bouvet, S.J., in 1697, in: Chinese Culture 31, 1990, no. 4 (Dec.), pp. 39-48; Nicolas Standaert, Jean-François Fouquet's contribution to the establishment of Chinese book collections in European libraries. Circulation of Chinese Books, in: Monumenta Serica 63, 2015, no. 2 (Dec.), pp. 361-424.
- 14 Françoise Bléchet, La création des départements et la politique d'acquisition à la Bibliothèque Royale, 1718-1741, in: Revue française d'histoire du livre 56, 1987, no. 55, pp. 167-186; idem, L'abbé Jean-Paul Bignon (1662-1743), in: Les grands intermédiaires culturels de la République des Lettres. Études de réseaux de correspondances du XVI^e au XVIII^e siècles, ed. by Christiane Berkvens-Stevelinck, Hans Bots, and Jens Häselser, Paris: Honoré Champion 2005, pp. 339-360.
- 15 For instance, in 1720, the Orientalist Étienne Fourmont (1683-1745) was commissioned to draft a memorandum guiding missionaries in their book purchases in China. Henri Omont, Missions archéologiques françaises en Orient aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, 2 vols., Paris: Imprimerie nationale 1902, vol. 1, p. 809-816.
- 16 In a letter to Fréret, dated 19 October, 1736, Gaubil discusses the political aspects of this collaboration: »Comme vous me paraissés être fort zélé pour le bien public et l'honneur d'une mission fondée par le Roy Louis le Grand, j'espère que vous vous servirez de ce zèle pour nous procurer ce qui dépendra de vous, je veux dire de la protection de la part des ministres, et une disposition dans les autres savans semblable à celle

Nonetheless, the exchanges were not limited to France: the French mission maintained extensive contacts with the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg and the Royal Society, and in recognition of their services, some missionaries were admitted members of these academies. For instance, Father Gaubil maintained correspondence with the physician Cromwell Mortimer (1702-1752) and the historian Thomas Birch (1705-1766), who served as secretaries of the Royal Society in London, as well as with count Kirill Razumovski (1728-1803), president of the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg from 1746 to 1798. Gaubil was appointed a member of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg (1739), a corresponding member of the *Académie des Sciences* in Paris (1750), a member of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* [AIBL] (1751), and a member of the Royal Society in London (1754).

In parallel with the official circuits, personal networks were fostered through which information and materials circulated. Certain European scholars interested in China, including the first lay sinologists, directly engaged with the missionaries in China, establishing various forms of collaboration.¹⁷ Father Gaubil maintained an extensive correspondence with various scholars, including sinologists Étienne Fourmont, Nicolas Fréret (1688-1749), Deshauterayes, and Deguignes, in France, or the Prussian Orientalist Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer (1694-1738) and the French astronomer Joseph-Nicolas Delisle in Russia.¹⁸ It is worth noting the significant role played by Delisle, who resided in Saint Petersburg from 1725 to 1747, serving as the director of the city's Observatory, an institution he helped establish. Delisle corresponded with the Jesuit Étienne Souciet (1671-1744) in Paris and with Jesuits in China for over forty years (1726-1766). Alongside his personal letters, Delisle's collection comprises a significant body of correspondence exchanged between missionaries and European scholars.¹⁹ For instance,

que vous avés. [...] Par plusieurs lettres des nôtres et de plusieurs séculiers bien instruits, je vois qu'en Europe et surtout en France et dans les Pays-Bas il se fait comme de nouvelles associations contre les Jésuites en général, et contre nous en particulier; il est difficile que tous ces efforts ne nous nuisent, et n'empêchent bien des gens de nous faire le bien qu'ils nous seroient sans cela« (»As you appear to me to be very zealous for the public good and the honor of a mission founded by King Louis the Great, I hope that you will use this zeal to provide us with what depends on you, I mean protection from ministers, and a disposition among other scholars similar to that which you have. [...] Through several letters from ours and from several well-educated seculars, I see that in Europe and especially in France and the Netherlands there are new associations being formed against the Jesuits in general, and against us in particular; It is difficult for all these efforts not to harm us, and prevent many people from doing us good that they would otherwise do to us«). Gaubil (n.1).

17 Extracts of the correspondence between Fourmont and Father de Prémare were published in Fourmont's >Grammaire chinoise<. Cf. Jean-Jacques Dortous de Mairan, *Lettres de M. de Mairan au R. P. Parrenin, Missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jésus à Pékin, contenant diverses questions sur la Chine*, Paris: Desaint et Saillant 1759; Claudia von Collani, *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and the China Mission of the Jesuits*, in: *Das Neueste über China. G. W. Leibnizens Novissima Sinica von 1697*, ed. by Wen-chao Li and Hans Poser, Stuttgart: Steiner 2000, pp. 89-103.

18 Gaubil (n. 1).

19 In a letter to Delisle, Gaubil acknowledges that he was informed that >vous vous intéressiés plus que les autres à conserver ce qu'on vous envoyoit de Chine« (»you were more interested than others in keeping what was sent to you from China«). À Delisle, Note non datée (août 1752?). Gaubil (n. 1). Delisle's

Delisle acquired from Fréret's heirs the scholar's correspondence with various missionaries in China, such as Gaubil, Parrenin (1735-1737), de Maila (1735-1739), de Prémare (1733-1735), Régis (1735-1737), and Gollet (1731-1739). Additionally, Delisle obtained many letters that Father Étienne Souciet received from missions, particularly those from China (years 1729-1736), along with accompanying memoirs.

As part of these exchanges, copies of Jesuits works were sent directly to Parisian scholars, or indirectly through Souciet, who succeeded Father Berthier as director of *»Mémoires de Trévoux«*.²⁰ Father Gaubil, who translated portions of several Chinese canonical books and historical works and wrote treatises on astronomy, chronology, geography, and history, sent his copies to Souciet, but also shared his writings especially with Fréret. Among other missionary manuscripts, Fréret received a copy of a work by Father Régis, a critical history of the Chinese classics, and he offered to have it printed at his own expense.²¹ However, this never occurred, despite Gaubil's insistence that *»this work by Father Régis should definitely be printed for those who want to know something real about China«*.²² Besides Gaubil's translation of the *»Chou king«*, other manuscripts sent to Paris include a translation of the *»Y king«* by Fathers Du Tartre, Régis, de Mailla, and of the *»Chi king«* by Father De la Charme. These writings have been recuperated by Delisle following Souciet's death, and Gaubil hoped that Delisle could help publishing these texts.²³ He often expressed his dismay at the fact that there was such a delay in publishing the translation of the Chinese classics in Europe, arguing that *»It's something else to see a few truncated fragments of King and history, and to see the whole thing in its entirety.«*²⁴ In a letter to Delisle from Peking, dated 28 August 1752, Father Gaubil once again expressed his disappointment:

Après que vous aurés vu ce que M. Fréret avoit ramassé, ce que le P. Souciet a laissé, ce que le P. Patouillet a ramassé, vous conclurés que la plupart de nos P.P. ont bien perdu leur temps et leur peine en envoyant à Paris quantité de mémoires et écrits, dont quelques-uns ont été rejettés comme ridicules, d'autres mis en lambeaux par-ci par-là, sans faire un tout, d'autres abandonnés: voilà à quoi a abouti tant de peine prise; et l'exemple du passé instruit pour l'avenir.²⁵

collection comprises 17 portfolios, with a portion housed at the Paris Observatory and the remainder at the Depot of the Navy.

20 Father Etienne Souciet was also the editor of the collective work *»Observations mathématiques, astronomiques, géographiques, chronologiques et physiques, tirées de anciens livres chinois ou faites nouvellement aux Indes et à la Chine, par les Peres de la Compagnie de Jésus«*, 3 t. in 2 vols., Paris: Rollin 1729-1732.

21 À Delisle, 31 Oct. 1750. Gaubil (n. 1). This work had been used by Father Du Halde in his collection *»Description de la Chine«*. Cf. À Deshauterayes, 17 Nov. 1754. Gaubil (n. 1).

22 À Deshauterayes, 17 Nov. 1754, *ibid*.

23 À Delisle, 31 Oct. 1750, *ibid*.

24 À Delisle, 28 Aug. 1752, *ibid*.

25 *»After you have seen what Mr. Fréret had collected, what Father Souciet left behind, what Father Patouillet had gathered, you will conclude that most of our Fathers have wasted their time and effort in sending to Paris a quantity of memoranda and writings, some of which have been rejected as*

2. Blockages

The Jesuit missionaries in China maintained contact with the academic community in France, sharing their works, and evidence suggests that their manuscripts were frequently circulated and exchanged between scholars. Nonetheless, aside from the collective publishing efforts of the Society of Jesus, the works of Jesuit missionaries encountered challenges in finding the way to the print in Europe.²⁶ For instance, two major works by Gaubil have only been published in 1814, by the Orientalist Antoine-Isaac Sylvestre de Sacy (1758-1838), after being discovered by the astronomer Laplace in the archives of the Observatory. The original manuscript of Gaubil's ›Traité de la chronologie chinoise‹, on which he worked for over 22 years, arrived in Paris in 1749, just after Fréret's death, and eventually reached Bougainville, Fréret's executor.²⁷ The manuscript of ›Abrégé de l'histoire chinoise de la grande dynastie Tang‹, sent to Paris in 1753,²⁸ was handed by Bougainville to Deguignes. A small portion of this text was published in 1791, in the collection ›Mémoires concernant les Chinois‹, but the major part was only published in the same collection in 1814.²⁹ Similarly, the manuscripts of another Jesuit in China, Claude Visdelou, though having circulated outside Jesuit circles, only saw publication four decades after his death, in 1777-79, in a new edition of Barthélemy d'Herbelot's ›Bibliothèque orientale‹.³⁰ The reception of Jesuit missionary writings in Europe followed a similar pattern, with only a small number of these memoirs and translations being published,³¹ while the majority remained unpublished, overlooked, forgotten, or even lost. This sentiment was echoed in a 1777 review, published in the ›Journal

ridiculous, others torn to shreds here and there, without forming a coherent whole, and others abandoned: this is the result of so much effort taken; and the example of the past instructs for the future.« Gaubil (n. 1).

- 26 Cf. Virgile Pinot, *La Chine et la formation de l'esprit philosophique en France: 1640-1740*, Paris: Paul Geuthner 1932 (Slatkine reprints, Geneva 1971), p. 213 et sqq.
- 27 Antoine Gaubil, *Traité de la chronologie chinoise, divisée en trois parties, composé par le père Gaubil, missionnaire à la Chine, et publié pour servir de suite aux Mémoires concernant les Chinois*, Paris: Treuttel et Würtz 1814. The manuscript of Father Gaubil in French is preserved in the library of the *Observatoire de Paris*: *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de l'astronomie et de la chronologie chinoises*. Recueil II, cor. Delisle, B 1/12 (cote Delisle 152), 1 portefeuille, in-fol.
- 28 Au P. Berthier, 14 Nov. 1753, Gaubil (n. 1); À Deshauterayes, 17 Nov. 1754, *ibid.*
- 29 Antoine Gaubil, *Abrégé de l'Histoire chinoise de la grande Dynastie T'ang*, in: *Mémoires concernant les Chinois*, 16 vols., Paris: Nyon 1776-1814, t. 15 (1791), pp. 399-516; t. 16 (1814), pp. 1-596. See ›Avertissement‹, *ibid.*, t. 15 (1791), p. ij. The manuscript passed into Abel-Rémusat's and then Etienne Quatremère's collection, and was acquired, along with a portion of his collection, by the royal library of Munich. Cf. Henri Cordier, *Bibliotheca Sinica. Dictionnaire bibliographique des ouvrages relatifs à l'Empire chinois*, 3 vols., Paris: E. Leroux 1888-1895, t. III-supplément (1895), p. 1592.
- 30 Barthélemy d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque orientale*, 4 vols., The Hague: J. Neaulme and N. van Daalen 1777-79 [suppl. 1782].
- 31 For example, another writing by Father Gaubil, the *Histoire de Gentchiscan et de toute la dinastie des Mongous*, Paris: Briasson 1739. Gaubil mentions that several parts have been suppressed by censorship (Gaubil (n. 1), p. 820).

des Sçavans«, regarding the joint edition of Father de Mailla's book on the history of China, undertaken by Deshauterayes and Abbé Jean-Baptiste Grosier (1743-1823):³²

On désirait depuis long-temps la publication de cet Ouvrage du P. de Mailla. *Les Missionnaires de la Chine ont souvent envoyé en France, ou des Traductions ou des Observations; la plupart ont été d'abord négligées, & ensuite perdues. Il étoit à craindre que cette Traduction des Annales, intitulées: Tong-kien-kang-mou, n'éprouvât le même sort;* mais, grâce aux soins des Editeurs, M. l'Abbé Grosier & M. Deshauterayes, nous allons en jouir; & le Public pourra connoître d'une manière plus satisfaisante, l'Histoire de cet Empire, qui a, depuis un temps immémorial, des Historiens, dont la chronologie va perdre dans les temps les plus reculés.³³

The work mentioned in this extract was a translation of the >T'ung-chien kang-mu< (>Tongjian gangmu<), an abridged version by the Chinese philosopher Chu Hsi (Zhu Xi, 1130-1200) of the work by Ssu-ma-Kuang (Sima Guang) entitled >Tze-ehin t'ung-chien< (>Zizhi tongjia<, Complete mirror on the illustration of government), the most famous historical work of the eleventh century in China. This is a general history of China from 403 BCE to 959, which stands out for its exhaustive research of various kinds of sources (including literary works and inscriptions) and an in-depth criticism of the documents. Having received this translation already in 1736,³⁴ Fréret planned to publish it, but this finally occurred only several decades after his death.

How can we explain the indifference that European lay scholars seem to have shown towards the output of Jesuit missionaries in China until the last decades of the eighteenth century? A relatively harmless explanation lies in the priorities of European scholars.³⁵ During this period, there were very few lay sinologists, and the considerable investment required to learn the language, especially for someone who was not in the field, left little leisure time. These scholars had their own interests and research agendas, as evidenced by the case of Deguignes, which will be discussed here. However, a closer study of the relationship between the two circles reveals flaws in the collaborative attempt and underscores that the stakes involved in the production of knowledge extend beyond the strictly scientific field.

32 Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla, *Histoire générale de la Chine ou Annales de cet Empire* traduites du Tong-Kien-Kang-mou, 13 vols., Paris: Ph. D. Pierres/Clousier 1777-1785.

33 »The publication of this work by Father de Mailla has long been desired. *The Missionaries of China have often sent either Translations or Observations to France; most of them were neglected at first and then lost. It was to be feared that this Translation of the Annals, entitled Tong-kien-kang-mou, would suffer the same fate;* but, thanks to the care of the Editors, M. l'Abbé Grosier & M. Deshauterayes, we are going to enjoy it; & the Public will be able to know in a more satisfactory way, the History of this Empire, which has, since time immemorial, Historians, whose chronology will lose in the most remote times«, in: *Journal des Sçavans*, Aug. 1777, pp. 527-536, p. 527 (emphasis added).

34 À Fréret, 29 Oct. 1736. Gaubil (n. 1).

35 Other explanations, that seem less relevant, were proposed by Pinot, such as the public's disinterest in this type of publications, or the modesty of the Jesuits. Pinot (n. 26), p. 218-219.

Relations between the two milieus were often marked by antagonism. On one hand, while recognising the importance of aligning with the scholarly world of the royal academies, which not only provided financial support, but also validated their expertise on China, Jesuits were suspicious about the intentions of academics and often sought to monopolise the dissemination of information about China.³⁶ On the other hand, scholars in Europe hesitated to endorse knowledge produced by Jesuit missionaries, often criticizing their works for perceived shortcomings in meeting scientific criteria, disputing evidences, and expressing doubts about the credibility of their sources.³⁷ Gaubil mentions this in a letter to Mortimer, in 1752, while in a letter to Fréret in 1741, commenting on Fourmont's work, he openly shares his doubts about the efficacy of state policy investing on metropolitan scholars rather than on missionaries.³⁸

The Jesuit educational system and their relationships with elites and political leaders had assured cultural hegemony of the Jesuits in Europe. However, in the early decades of the eighteenth century, the Jesuits' relationship with political power in France soured due to their stance in the confrontation between Gallicanism and Rome.³⁹ Unlike other orders, such as the Benedictines and the Oratorians, the Jesuits refused Gallican ideas, treating the Jansenists as heretics.⁴⁰ The Society retained an influence on intellectual life, even at the height of the Age of Enlightenment, but this controversy not only damaged the credibility of the Jesuits, who were blamed for supporting religious and political despotism, but also impacted their involvement in knowledge production. Assuming the role of staunch guardians of Roman orthodoxy, Jesuits sought to tighten their hold on censorship, adopting a defensive posture against Enlightenment innovations, at cross-purposes to their scientific and literary pursuits.⁴¹ While the Maurists of the Saint-Germain-des-Prés circle gained popularity, their

- 36 In his letters to Fathers Souciet and Berthier, Gaubil asked for information about Parisian scholars that had contacted him and approval of this exchanges. Au P. Berthier, 14 Nov. 1753. Gaubil (n. 1); Au P. Souciet, 4 Oct. 1736, *ibid.*
- 37 For instance, the debate around the Nestorian stele of Si-ngan-fou, discovered in 1625 or the authenticity of texts included in Du Halde's *Description de la Chine*. Cf. Isabelle Landry-Deron, *La preuve par la Chine. La »Description« de J.-B. Du Halde, jésuite, 1735*, Paris: Éd. de l'EHESS 2002, p. 20. Subsequently, the articles featured in the *Memoires concernant les Chinois* triggered debates at the AIBL.
- 38 »M. Costard n'est pas le seul qui aye des douttes sur ce que les missionnaires ont envoyé et envoient.« À Mortimer, 12 Nov. 1752. Gaubil (n. 1); à Fréret, 2 Oct. 1741, *ibid.* In another letter, to abbé Sallier, Gaubil expresses his doubts regarding the efficiency of Fréret's works about Chinese literature. Abbé Sallier, 16 Oct. 1753, *ibid.*
- 39 On Gallicanism, see André Morel, *L'idée gallicane au temps des guerres de religion*, Aix-en-Provence: Presses Univ. d'Aix-Marseille 2003. Cf. Aimé Georges Martimor, *Le gallicanisme de Bossuet*, Paris: Cerf 1953.
- 40 J. Gres-Gayer, *The Unigenitus of Clement XI: A French Look at the Issues*, in: *Theological Studies* 49, 1988, pp. 259-282; C. Maire, *De la cause de Dieu à la cause de la nation: le jansénisme au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Editions Gallimard 1998.
- 41 John McManners, *Church and Society in eighteenth century France*, 2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press 1998, vol. 2, p. 518.

account of the Gallican past earning them favour from authorities and public sympathy, the Jesuits increasingly found themselves isolated.⁴² At the same time, the reputation of the Society was eroded due to debates surrounding missionary methods and the dispute over rites, the Jesuits being blamed for their policy of accommodation.⁴³

The suppression of the Society of Jesus across the kingdoms of Europe significantly influenced scholars' perspectives on missionary works. Following their expulsion from Portugal in 1759, the Society faced suppression in France in 1764, leading to the confiscation of the Jesuits' house of profession (now the Lycée Charlemagne).⁴⁴ Jesuit manuscripts were then entrusted to the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and, ultimately, in 1795, to the *Bibliothèque nationale* under the supervision of Silvestre de Sacy.⁴⁵ The dissolution of the Society of Jesus in France triggered a systematic effort to publish the works produced by Jesuit missionaries in preceding years. Metropolitan scholars, who already possessed a substantial body of work and were no longer apprehensive about contributing to the Society's popularity, now undertook the publication of Jesuit manuscripts. In addition, the political context in China and the associated difficulties in accessing information and obtaining Chinese manuscripts and books enhanced the value to the works produced by missionaries in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.⁴⁶ Lastly, information and materials on science and technology in China, being more practical and less likely to fuel politico-religious quarrels, garnered particular attention by the political authorities during this period.⁴⁷ Aligning with the physiocratic movement's fascination with China, Henri Léonard Jean Baptiste Bertin (1720-1792) strongly supported this new direction by fostering literary correspondence with China and sponsoring the most important publication of the latter half of the eighteenth century, the *Mémoires concernant l'Histoire, les Sciences, les*

42 Bruno Neveu, *Érudition et religion aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, Paris: Albin Michel 1994, p. 179.

43 René Étiemble (ed.), *Les Jésuites en Chine. La Querelle des rites, 1552-1773*, Paris: R. Julliard 1966; David E. Mungello (ed.), *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, Nettetal: Steyler Verlag 1994.

44 In 1767, Spain banned the Society, and Pope Clement XIV officially suppressed it in 1773. In France the dissolution of the Society was due to a decision of the courts (in particular of the Parlement of Paris, chief champion of the Gallican liberties) in 1762, on the grounds of its legally precarious position, and not to a royal initiative. Cf. Dale K. Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits from France, 1757-1765*, New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press 1975.

45 Cf. Joseph Brucker, *Episodes d'une confiscation, 1762. Les manuscrits jésuites de Paris*, in: *Études* 88, 1901, pp. 497-519. During the French Revolution, the confiscation of private libraries led to the National Library acquiring 100.000 printed books and 70.000 manuscripts.

46 The political and administrative restrictions imposed on foreigners included the prohibition of residing within the empire, the ban on teaching Chinese to foreigners, and the restriction on exporting Chinese books.

47 Harold Lopparelli, *Penser la production de connaissances sur la Chine entre Pékin et Paris à la fin du XVIII^e siècle: pratiques administratives et politiques des savoirs*, in: *Entre Mer de Chine et Europe. Migration des savoirs, transfert des connaissances, transmission des sagesse du 17^e au 21^e siècle*, ed. by Paul Servais, Louvain-la-Neuve: L'Harmattan academia 2011, pp. 59-76. Cf. Henri Bernard-Maitre, *Le >petit Ministre< Henri Bertin et la correspondance littéraire de la Chine à la fin du XVIII^e siècle*, in: *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 92, 1948, no. 4, pp. 449-451.

Arts, les Mœurs, les Usages, etc, des Chinois<.⁴⁸ Initially intended to respond to a questionnaire drawn up by Turgot on various aspects of Chinese civilisation, this collection comprised several memoirs on mechanical and technical processes, agriculture, porcelain manufacture and architecture, often accompanied by illustrations from printed books, drawings and albums of paintings. These memoirs were authored by the last survivors of the French mission at the court of the Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736-1795), primarily Fathers Joseph-Marie Amiot (1718-1793) and Pierre-Martial Cibot (1727-1780), and two Chinese converts, Ko and Yang, who had spent a year in France studying textile technology and chemistry before returning to China. The publication was overseen by Abbé Charles Batteux (1713-1780) and, after Batteux's death, by Louis-Georges de Bréquigny (1714-1795), both members of the AIBL and the *Académie française*. However, as these two scholars lacked command of Chinese and expertise in China, the sinologist Joseph Deguignes (1720-1800) became heavily involved.⁴⁹

In the context of rediscovery of Jesuit works, Gaubil's translation of the >Chou king< was published during this period. The publication initiatives continued well into the nineteenth century,⁵⁰ with subsequent generations of sinologists acclaiming the contribution of Jesuit missionaries to the development of Chinese studies and often blaming their predecessors, the first lay sinologists, for their prejudices against them.⁵¹ How, then, did the scholars of Deguignes's generation, overseeing these early editions of missionary texts, proceed? To answer this question, we will take a closer look at the example of Father Gaubil's translation of the >Chou king<, edited by Deguignes.

3. *The edition of the >Chou king<*

In 1752, Father Gaubil wrote to Delisle that he was not counting too much on any real use of his translation of the >Chou king<, which had been left dormant for many years, predicting that the scholarly world would wait a long time for a complete translation

48 Cf. supra; Joseph Dehergne, *Une grande collection: Mémoires concernant les Chinois (1776-1814)*, in: *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 72, 1983, pp. 267-298. Cf. Pierre Huard, *Ming Wong, Les enquêtes françaises sur la science et la technologie chinoises au XVIII^e siècle*, in: *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 53, 1966, no. 1, pp. 137-226.

49 For instance, vol. 7 (1780) was edited by Deguignes, who meticulously crafted a comprehensive table of contents and provided an editor's note (pages iii-vii).

50 It is worth noting the following works by Joseph-Henri de Prémare: *Notitia linguae sinicae*, Malacca: *Academiae anglo-sinensis* 1831 (for technical reasons the edition could not be done in Paris. The manuscript was transmitted by Rémusat to the English sinologist Reverend Morrison); *Lettre inédite sur le monothéisme des Chinois*, 1861 (manuscript preserved at the National Library and published, under this title, by Guillaume Pauthier); *Vestiges des principaux dogmes chrétiens tirés des anciens livres chinois*, transl. from Latin by A. Bonnetty and P. Perny, Paris: Bureau des Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne 1878.

51 On the relationship between nineteenth century sinology and the Jesuit heritage, see Paul Demiéville, *La sinologie*, Paris: Librairie Larousse 1934 (>La Science française<, pp. 105-114).

of the Chinese classics.⁵² In his preface to the edition of Father Gaubil's translation of the >Chou king<, Joseph Deguignes acknowledges:

Le P. Gaubil s'est plaint quelquefois, dans les Lettres qu'il m'a écrites, de ce qu'on ne faisoit aucun usage des Mémoires & des Traductions qu'il envoyait en Europe, & de ce qu'elles restoient ensevelies dans l'oubli. J'ai donc cru pouvoir faire imprimer la traduction du >Chou-king<, qu'il avoit envoyée autrefois de Pe-king.⁵³

A pupil of Étienne Fourmont, Joseph Deguignes (1721-1800) belonged to the second generation of French lay sinologists.⁵⁴ He embodied the academic spirit of the Age of Enlightenment and enjoyed a highly successful career. In 1745, Deguignes was appointed interpreter at the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, and by 1753 he became an associate member of the AIBL. Four years later, in 1757, he secured the chair of Syriac at the *Collège royal*. Additionally, Deguignes was attached to the >Journal des savants<, held the position of a royal censor, and a guardian of antiques at the Louvre, and he actively participated in various committees of the AIBL. Deguignes played a key role in the transnational network forming around Chinese studies and significantly contributed to the publication of Jesuit works in the late decades of the eighteenth century.⁵⁵ The aforementioned Father Gaubil's translation of the >Chou king<, received in Paris around 1740, remained unpublished for decades.⁵⁶ Its publication by Deguignes in 1770 marked the first printed translation of the >Chou King<, and also the first translation of one of the Five Classics on Confucianism into an European language. This was an in-quarto edition by the publisher Nicolas-Martin Tillard (1723?-1773), comprising 635 pages of text and 4 pages of engraved plates in intaglio. <Fig. 1> Both the format and the plates, as well as other technical details indicate a rather prestigious publication, which also aimed to provide visual information on China.

52 À Delisle, 28 Aug. 1752. Gaubil (n. 1).

53 »Father Gaubil sometimes complained, in the letters he wrote to me, that no use was made of the Memoirs and Translations he sent to Europe, and that they remained buried in oblivion. I therefore thought I could print the translation of the >Chou-king<, which he had once sent from Pe-king.« Joseph Deguignes, Préface, in: Antoine Gaubil, *Le Chou-King, un des livres sacrés des Chinois*, ed. by Joseph Deguignes, Paris: N. M. Tillard 1770, p. i.

54 Though frequently written as »De Guignes«, I prefer to use the spelling as it appears in the letters he signed. For biographical information, see: Notice sur sa vie et ses ouvrages, in: *Hist. AIBL*, t. 47 (1784-1793, publ. 1808) p. 770 et sqq.

55 Qing Gaozong (Kien-Long, emperor of China), *Éloge de la ville de Moukden et de ses environs*, transl. by J.-M. Amiot, Paris: N. M. Tillard 1770; Joseph-Marie Amiot, *Art militaire des Chinois*, Paris: Didot 1772; idem, *Mémoire sur la musique des Chinois tant anciens que modernes*, in: *Mémoires concernant les Chinois*, t. 6 (1780).

56 À Fréret, 2 Oct. 1741: »La version du >Chou king< doit être arrivée à Paris, avec celle du >Chi king< par le P. Lacharme. J'ai presque prête celle du livre >Y king<, mais je vois que ces sortes de versions sont peu du goût de la plupart de gens« (»The version of the >Chou king< must have arrived in Paris, with that of the >Chi king< by Father Lacharme. I almost have the one from the book >Y king< ready, but I see that these kinds of versions are not to the taste of most people«). Gaubil (n. 1).

Shu-ching
LE CHOU-KING,
UN DES LIVRES SACRÉS
DES CHINOIS,

QUI renferme les Fondemens de leur ancienne Histoire, les Principes
de leur Gouvernement & de leur Morale ;

OUVRAGE RECUEILLI PAR CONFUCIUS.

Traduit & enrichi de Notes, par Feu LE P. GAUBIL, Missionnaire à la Chine.

Revu & corrigé sur le Texte Chinois, accompagné de nouvelles Notes, de Planches gravées en
Taille-douce & d'Additions tirées des Historiens Originaux, dans lesquelles on donne
l'Histoire des Princes omis dans le Chou-king.

PAR M. DE GUIGNES,

*Professeur de la Langue Syriaque au College Royal de France, de l'Académie
Royale des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres, Interprete du Roi pour les Langues
Orientales, Garde de la Salle des Antiques du Louvre, Censeur Royal, &
Membre des Sociétés Royales de Londres & de Gouttingue.*

On y a joint un Discours Préliminaire, qui contient des Recherches sur les tems antérieurs à ceux
dont parle le Chou-king, & une Notice de l'Y-king, autre Livre Sacré des Chinois.



A PARIS;

Chez N. M. TILLIARD, Libraire, Quai des Augustins, à S. Benoît.

M. DCC. LXX.

AVEC APPROBATION, ET PRIVILEGE DU ROI.

Figure 1

**Pagination of Antoine Gaubil, *Le Chou-King, un des livres sacrés des Chinois*,
Joseph Deguignes (ed.), Paris: N. M. Tillard, 1770**

Title	Author/Translator	Pagination	Number of pages
Préface	Joseph Deguignes	pp. i-xliij	43
Discours préliminaire ou Recherches sur les tems antérieurs à ceux dont parle le Chou-king, & sur la Mythologie Chinoise	Père de Prémare	pp. xlv-cxxxviiij	95
Table des chapitres du Chou-king	Joseph Deguignes	pp. cxxxiiij-cxlv	6
Chou-king (includes additions)	(tr.) Antoine Gaubil (ad.) Joseph Deguignes	pp. 1-318	318
Explication des planches Planche I: instruments chinois Planche II: étendards et armes Planche III: chars, habits, symboles, ornements des anciens souverains Planche IV: symboles	Joseph Deguignes	pp. 319-355 p. 319 p. 327 p. 336 p. 352	41
Différentes observations sur le Chou-king (includes Recherches sur les Caractères Chinois)	Antoine Gaubil (P. de Mailla)	pp. 356-398 (pp. 380-398)	43 (19)
Notice du livre chinois nommé Y-king ou Livre canonique des changemens, avec des notes (includes préface) (includes Lettre de M. Visdelou aux Cardinaux de la Congrégation de Propaganda Fide) (includes Remarques de M. Visdelou, pour servir de supplément & d'explication à l'Ouvrage précédent)	Claude Visdelou (Joseph Deguignes) (Claude Visdelou) (Claude Visdelou)	pp. 401-436 (pp. 401-403) (pp. 404-406) (pp. 428-436)	36 (3) (9) (3)
Table des matières (= Index)	Joseph Deguignes	pp. 437-474	38

Table 1

Deguignes enriched his edition by incorporating several additional texts, in particular two writings by Jesuit missionaries. (Table 1) The first text, authored by Father de Prémare (Joseph-Henry de Prémare, 1666-1736), focused on Chinese mythology, and was titled by Deguignes ›Recherches sur les tems antérieurs written à ceux dont parle le Chou-king, & sur la Mythologie Chinoise‹.⁵⁷ It was presented as a ›Discours préliminaire‹ and placed before Gaubil's translation to more effectively convey that it concerns the epochs preceding the period covered by the ›Chou king‹. Although a copy of this manuscript was likely sent to Paris earlier, either to Fréret or to Father Souciet, Deguignes accessed this work through another source, Joseph Julien Duvelaër (1709-1785), a member of the *Compagnie des Indes*.⁵⁸ Born into a family of Dutch privateers based in Saint-Malo, Duvelaër had amassed his fortune in China, married a Chinese woman from Canton, and upon returning to Europe with her, he became Count of Lude after acquiring the castle and lands of Le Lude in 1751. This case underscores the diverse networking and circulations less commonly known between scholarly circles and other milieus.

The second text that Deguignes decided to include in his edition was a treatise on another Chinese classic, the ›Yijing‹ (Book of Changes), titled ›Notice du Livre chinois nommé Y-king, ou Livre canonique des Changemens Y-king‹, written by Claude Visdelou (1656-1737), one of the six ›King's mathematicians‹ sent to China by Louis XIV.⁵⁹ Deeply involved in the dispute over rites, Visdelou opposed the accommodation policy of the Chinese mission and contested the idea that Confucianism was a precursor to Christianity, asserting instead that the Chinese had always been atheists or idolaters. In 1708, Visdelou, along with the other Jesuits opposing the rites, was exiled by the Chinese emperor and settled in Pondicherry, where he spent the remainder of his life in the house of the French Capuchins. Maintaining close contact with Rome through correspondence initiated in 1712, Visdelou, at the Pope's invitation, submitted his writings about China to the the *Propaganda Fide*, in 1728.⁶⁰ The treatise on ›Y-king‹ was part of this shipment. Visdelou had also translated the ›Chou

57 The title of the Latin manuscript found in the Brotier collection of the Archives of the Jesuits in Paris (Vanves) is: ›*Antiquae traditionis Selecta Vestigia ex Sinarum monumentis eruta*‹.

58 Deguignes, Préface, in Gaubil (n. 53), p. xliij.

59 Visdelou's ›Notice‹ will later be reproduced in Guillaume Pauthier, *Les Livres sacrés de l'Orient*, Paris: Firmin Didot/Aug. Desrez 1840, pp. 137-149. The ›Yijing‹, the oldest written monument of the Chinese, is a manual of divinatory interpretation used at the Zhou court. The first edition of the ›Y-king‹ in Europe was a Latin translation by Father Régis: Jules Mohl, *Y-king, antiquissimus Sinarum liber, quem ex latina interpretatione P. Regis aliorumque ex sac. Jesu P.P., 2 t. in 1 vol.*, Stuttgart, Tübingen: J. G. Cotta 1834-1839. Cf. Claudia von Collani, *The First Encounter of the West with the Yi-jing*, Introduction to and edition of letters and Latin translations by French Jesuits from the 18th Century, in: *Monumenta Serica* 55, 2007, pp. 277-387.

60 See Lettre de M. Visdelou aux Cardinaux de la Congrégation de Propaganda Fide et Remarques de M. Visdelou, pour servir de supplément & d'explication à l'Ouvrage précédent, in: Gaubil (n. 1), p. 404-406. While these writings were never published, they likely served as documentation for the two papal bulls issued by Pope Benedict XIV (in 1742 and 1744), effectively concluding the dispute over rites.

king<, but Gaubil was unaware of this.⁶¹ Deguignes explains that he decided to publish Visdelou's treatise because he thought that it would probably be difficult to print a work of this kind in Europe. The copy used by Deguignes was part of an in-folio manuscript volume containing various works by Visdelou, along with the complete translation of the >Y-king< by a missionary, likely P. Régis. The volume had been donated to the *Bibliothèque du roi* by Marc-Antoine Léonard Desmalpeines (1700-1768), a councillor at the Châtelet and hospital administrator, shortly before his death.⁶² However, it is still unknown how he acquired it. A passionate devotee of letters and languages, Desmalpeines undertook the translation of Warburton's essay on hieroglyphics into French and also left behind numerous manuscript works.⁶³

Deguignes had previously expressed his esteem for Father Gaubil, whom he described as »... the most learned missionary we have«.⁶⁴ At this time, Deguignes was at the beginning of his career and, since 1752, had corresponded with Father Gaubil – an exchange which lasted until Gaubil's death in 1759.⁶⁵ Gaubil, who had authorised Deguignes to use his writings,⁶⁶ appreciated Deguignes' command of Chinese but expressed doubts about some of his work. For instance, Gaubil dismissed Deguignes' identification of the kingdom Fou-sang, mentioned in >Wenxian tongkao<, a work

61 »Je ne savois pas que M. de Visdelou eût traduit le Chou king; un de nos pères traduisit ici ces années passées le Li ki, mais il y a bien de la critique à employer et bien des précautions à prendre, pour pouvoir rendre utile cette traduction.« À Deshauterayes, 10 Aug. 1752. Gaubil (n. 1).

62 Deguignes, Préface, in Gaubil (n. 53). The other works that this volume comprises are those included in the manuscript sent to Rome in 1728: Quelques observations sur la Bibliothèque Orientale de M. d'Herbelot, en cinq cahiers; la Traduction du Monument Chinois, avec des notes; une Table chronologique des Empereurs de la Chine. Cf. BNF, NAF 22167: Visdelou, Mélanges sur la Chine.

63 William Warburton, Essai sur les hiéroglyphes des Égyptiens, où l'on voit l'origine & le progrès du langage et de l'écriture, l'antiquité des sciences en Égypte, & l'origine du culte des animaux ..., Paris: Hippolyte-Louis Guérin 1744 (original: The Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated on the Principles of a Religious Deist, 2 vols., London: F. Gyles 1738-1741).

64 Joseph Deguignes, Additions II. Lettre à MM. Les Auteurs du Journal des Sçavans, pour servir de réponse à quelques Observations de MM. Les Journalistes de Trévoux sur l'histoire des Huns, dans laquelle on donne une idée de l'Histoire et de la Chronologie Chinoise, in: idem, Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mogols, & des autres Tartares Occidentaux etc., 4 t. in 5 vols., Paris: Desaint et Saillant 1756-58, vol. 4, pp. 345-362, p. 358.

65 Gaubil (n. 1). Cf. Copies de deux lettres écrites au P. Gaubil, par de Guignes, par Deshauterayes, in: Observatoire de Paris, Fonds particuliers, B1/1-8, E1/13, B2/5, Inventaire détaillé de la correspondance de Joseph-Nicolas Delisle. Father Gaubil's letters to Deguignes were published in the >Journal des Sçavans<, along with Deguignes' critical remarks. See: Première lettre du P. Gaubil à M. de Guignes, À Péking, le 4 Dec. 1752, in: Journal des Sçavans, août 1766, pp. 527-529; Seconde lettre, À Péking, le 31 Oct. 1755, in: ibid., août 1766, pp. 529-532.

66 »Je vous laisse entièrement libre sur l'usage que vous voudrés faire, soit de ce que vous avés déjà vu de moi, soit de ce que vous verrés; soyez seur que je ne me formaliseray de rien. Je suppose que vous ne trouverés pas mauvais si je trouve quelques fois des raisons pour n'être pas de votre avis, dans ce que je lirai de vos écrits sur la Chine ou pays voisins« (»I leave you entirely free on the use you wish to make, either of what you have already seen of me, or of what you will see; Rest assured that I will not take offense at anything. I suppose that you will not find it bad if I sometimes find reasons not to be of your opinion, in what I read of your writings on China or a neighboring country«). À Deguignes, 4 Dec. 1752.

by Chinese historian Ma Duanlin (1254-1325), with America, and Deguignes' conclusion that the Chinese had travelled to America (California) in 458 BCE, several centuries before the Europeans discovered the continent.⁶⁷ In this, Deguignes was aligning with some missionaries advocates of the monogenism. Gaubil maintained that this travel was a fable, pointing out that such an element was not corroborated by other sources (in particular the history of the Tang dynasty) and stressed the need for a critical method in examining this work. Gaubil also received some extracts of Deguignes' >Histoire des Huns<, which he judged satisfying but it seems he did not receive the entire work before his death.⁶⁸

In his extensive preface, Deguignes provides information about the >Chou king<, the historical context, and historiography in China, and explains how this work connects with his own research on the origins of Chinese civilisation. He also elaborates on his approach, thus providing insights into the scholarly practices and methods employed in editing Oriental texts in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Despite his esteem, Deguignes made significant changes to Father Gaubil's translation. Emphasizing the ethical aspect of his approach, he explains that he chose to revise Gaubil's translation rather than creating a new one, as a mark of respect for the Jesuit's work, which had »served as a guide« and had been »so useful and so necessary« to him.⁶⁹ It seems that the original manuscript of Gaubil's translation has been lost. Deguignes worked with two copies: one in his possession and the other from the *Bibliothèque du Roi*, both copies derived from a copy of the original manuscript that Delisle had commissioned,⁷⁰ apparently after discovering Gaubil's manuscript along with the translation of other Chinese classics among Father Souciet's documents.⁷¹ Having access to these two copies of Father Gaubil's translation, Deguignes worked towards establishing the definitive text for his edition. However, in the process he opted to compare these copies with the Chinese text in order to restore Chinese names, to make verifications and corrections, aiming to ensure proximity to the original meaning.⁷² He thus used one of the several Chinese editions of the >Chou king< that the *Bibliothèque du roi* had acquired. According to Deguignes, while Gaubil claimed to provide a literal version, the translation deviated considerably from the original, tending to paraphrase or repeat ideas to enhance clarity for the reader.⁷³ Deguignes took this opportunity to

67 À Deguignes, 4 Dec. 1752. Gaubil (n. 1); À Deguignes, 31 Oct. 1755, *ibid.* Gaubil also discussed this question in some letters to Delisle, count Razumowski, and Abbé Sallier. While publishing Gaubil's letters in the >Journal des Sçavans< (1766), Deguignes deleted some sentences that were not favorable to his interpretation.

68 À Delisle, 25 Oct. 1753, Gaubil (n. 1); À Delisle, 3 Nov. 1755, *ibid.*

69 Deguignes, Préface, in: Gaubil (n. 53), p. iij.

70 *Ibid.*, p. i.

71 À Deshauterayes, 10 Août 1752, in: Gaubil (n. 1).

72 Deguignes, Préface, in: Gaubil (n. 53), p. i

73 »Je me suis alors aperçu que le P. Gaubil, quoiqu'il prétende avoir suivi le plus littéralement qu'il a pu le texte, dans le dessein de se faire mieux entendre, avoit souvent paraphrasé & même répété la même idée en d'autres termes : *par là, en allongeant sa traduction, il a fait perdre le laconisme & la précision qui regnent*

cite another work with a similar approach, the moral works of Confucius, translated by Father Couplet, »drowned in a continual paraphrase«. ⁷⁴ He noted a similar, albeit less pronounced, fault in Gaubil's translation:

Le P. Gaubil n'a pas pris une si grande liberté, il a plus souvent suivi son texte, mais il s'en est encore trop écarté, parce qu'il paroît avoir eu principalement pour guide la Traduction en Tartare Mantchou, qui a été faite à la Chine; souvent encore le texte est noyé dans un long discours. ⁷⁵

Implying that this tendency was a common flaw in translations made by missionaries, Deguignes asserts that such an approach not only resulted in a considerable lengthening of the translated text compared to the original but, more importantly, moved away from the concise style of the ancient texts. Any edition of a Jesuit translation would thus require substantial investment from the scholar who ventured into the field: multiple readings, consultation of Chinese commentators, and efforts to condense the text in order to recapture the vigour and conciseness of the original, the »ancient way of expression« (*Kou-ven*). ⁷⁶ The aim was to restore the text's »original character and its strange air« rather than »dressing it up, so to speak, in our own way«. This attempt to align with the style of the Ancients would produce a more succinct yet clearer version, while making the text suitable for learning the Chinese language. ⁷⁷ Deguignes' commitment to remain close to the style of the original led him to retain repetitions, chapter order, and unique expressions, even reinstating some deleted by Father Gaubil. ⁷⁸ He

par-tout dans ce texte« (»I then realized that Father Gaubil, although he claimed to have followed the text as literally as he could, with the aim of making himself better understood, had often paraphrased and even repeated the same idea in other terms: thereby, by lengthening his translation, he lost the laconicism and precision which reign everywhere in this text«). *Ibid.*, p. ij (emphasis added).

74 *Ibid.*

75 »Father Gaubil has not taken such great liberty, he has more often followed his text, but he has still deviated too much from it, because he seems to have been guided mainly by the Translation into Tartar Mantchou, which was made in China; often the text is still drowned in a long discourse.« Deguignes, Préface, in: Gaubil (n. 53), p. ij.

76 »Je l'ai donc relu à plusieurs reprises; dans les endroits difficiles, j'ai consulté les Commentateurs Chinois, & par ce travail, qui m'a occupé beaucoup plus que je le pensois d'abord, j'ai beaucoup abrégé la traduction du P. Gaubil; & loin que la pensée de l'Auteur en devint obscure, elle m'a paru avoir plus de force, & se ressentir davantage de la manière de s'exprimer des Anciens, toujours sententieuse; ainsi cette traduction est beaucoup plus conforme à l'original qu'elle ne l'étoit auparavant, d'autant plus que j'ai fait en sorte que chaque idée du texte se trouvât à la même place en François« (»So I reread it several times; in difficult places, I consulted the Chinese Commentators, & through this work, which occupied me much more than I initially thought, I greatly shortened Father Gaubil's translation; and far from the thought of the Author becoming obscure, it seemed to me to have more force, and to reflect more of the way of expressing themselves of the Ancients, always sentient; thus this translation is much more in conformity with the original than it was before, especially since I ensured that each idea of the text was in the same place in François«). Deguignes, Préface, in: Gaubil (n. 53), p. ij.

77 *Ibid.*

78 »... mais j'ai pensé qu'il valoit mieux présenter ce Livre avec son caractère original & son air étranger, que de l'habiller, pour ainsi dire, à notre manière: ainsi j'ai conservé le texte tel qu'il est, dans toute sa

translated a few paragraphs missing from both copies of Gaubil's translation from the original Chinese document, and restored the pronunciation of Chinese names throughout. Additionally, Deguignes incorporated a table of contents indicating the chapters lost, drawing from the preface of the Chinese editions of the >Chou king<, and provided chapter summaries.

Beyond the purely philological work of restoration, Deguignes also aimed to illuminate the historical context within which the work was produced and »to provide a more accurate understanding of the ancient History of China«. To achieve this, he incorporated a significant number of additions concerning the history of the sovereigns and events mentioned in the >Chou king<, as well as some that were omitted. These additions, clearly distinguished from the body of the translation, are inserted between the various chapters of the ancient text, under the title >Addition to the Chou-king<. For these additions, Deguignes drew upon two sources.⁷⁹ The first source is the >Tsou-chou< (>Zhushu jinian<, Annals written on bamboo), an ancient chronicle comprising the annals of the Shanxi kingdom, discovered in 279 AD in a tomb belonging to a prince of the Wei dynasty.⁸⁰ The second source, >Kang-mo<, i. e. the >Tong-kien-kang-mo< (>T'ung-chien kang-mu<), is an abridged version of the work by Ssu-ma-Kuang, already mentioned. The remarks that Deguignes inserted primarily aimed to highlight the discrepancies and uncertainties in the chronology of Chinese antiquity, reflecting a major scholarly concern of the period.⁸¹ He chose to maintain Father Gaubil's numerous notes, drawn from Chinese commentators, while adding some of his own, which he enclosed in double square brackets.

Additionally, Deguignes appended a series of remarks forming an essay on Chinese antiquities, discussing elements of the material culture and ceremonies of ancient China. These additions accompany four engraved plates drawn from the Chinese editions of the >Chou king<, which were omitted by Father Gaubil.⁸² (Fig. 2, 3, 4, 5) Deguignes took particular interest in these elements, believing they could contribute to his research on the Egyptian origins of Chinese civilization. The first text deals with the ancient

simplicité & avec toutes ses répétitions ...« (>... but I thought that it was better to present this Book with its original character and its foreign air, than to dress it up, so to speak, in our own way: thus I have preserved the text as it is, in all its simplicity & with all its repetitions ...«). Ibid., p. iij.

79 Ibid., p. xj. Deguignes notes the beginning and end of the reign of each Prince, following the calculation of these two works, relating them to the Christian era.

80 It was later translated and annotated by Biot. Edouard Biot, Tchou-chou-ki-nien, Annales de bambou. Tablettes chronologiques du Livre écrit sur bambou, Journal asiatique, introduction et livre I: série 3, t. 12 (1841), pp. 537-578, et série 3, t. 13 (1842), pp. 203-206; livre II: série 3, t. 13 (1842), pp. 381-431.

81 On the question of Chinese chronology, see: Pinot (n. 26), pp. 189-279; David E. Mungello, Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology, Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press 1989 (1st ed.: Wiesbaden: F. Steiner 1985), pp. 124-133; John Witek, Chinese Chronology: Chance of Sino-European Widening Horizons in the Eighteenth Century, in: *Appréciation par l'Europe de la tradition chinoise à partir du XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1983, pp. 223-252. Cf. Edwin J. Van Kley, Europe's »Discovery« of China and the Writing of World History, in: *The American Historical Review* 76, 1977. no. 2 (Apr.), pp. 358-385.

82 Gaubil (n. 53), p. 319-355.

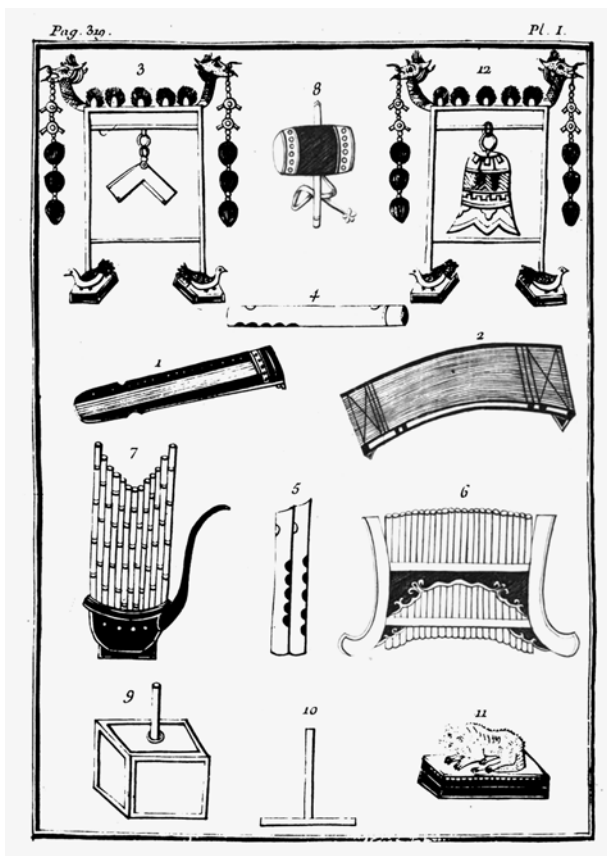


Figure 2

Chinese music and the illustration represents a dozen of Chinese musical instruments. The second text examines mainly ancient Chinese ceremonies and dances, with the corresponding illustration representing standards and weapons. The third text concerns the usages of ancient sovereigns in China, accompanying the illustration of chars, habits, and ornaments of ancient sovereigns and details of the ceremonies mentioned in the >Chou king<, and maps. Finally, the fourth text presented symbols, characters, writing media and an illustration depicting Chinese symbols. These notes were drawn from the dictionary entitled >Tching-tseu-thoung< (>Tching-tsè-thoung<),⁸³ which contains many historical features, and from another book entitled >Lo-king-tou<, (>Lou King thou<, collection of figures found in the King).⁸⁴ It is from the latter book

83 Cf. Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat, *Nouveaux mélanges asiatiques*, 2 vols., Paris: Schubart et Heideloff 1829, t. 2, p. 44.

84 Deguignes assumed that Gaubil was unaware of this book. However, this work is comprised among the books sent from Péking to count Razumowski, president of the Academy of St. Petersburg, in 1755:

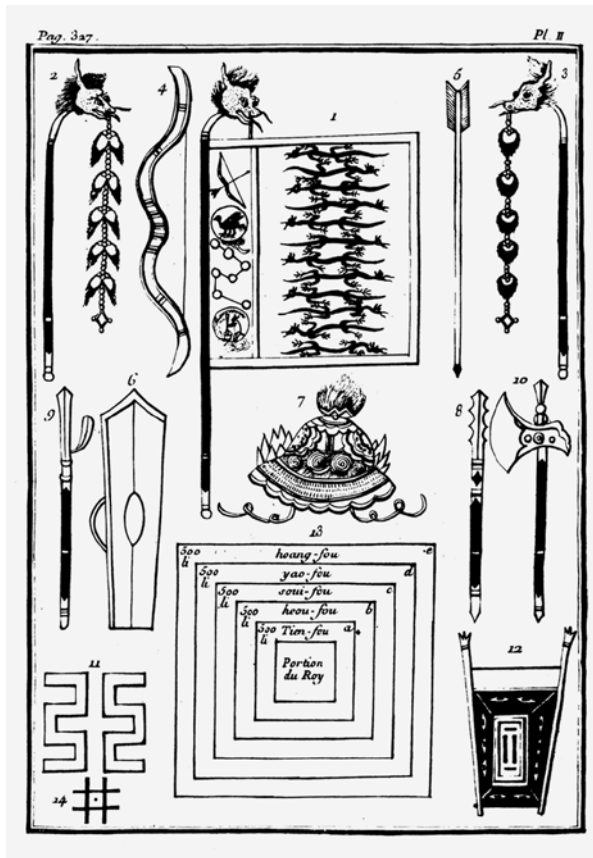


Figure 3

that Deguignes selected the main instruments that he distributed over four plates for his edition. In his view, these additions would not only provide the readers with valuable information, but also make the French edition align with the Chinese editions, » at the head of which one always finds, because these figures are necessary for the understanding of the text«. Finally, Deguignes incorporated a distinct section containing observations on the Chou king by Gaubil. Among these observations were remarks regarding astronomical observations in the Chou king, drawn from another text by Gaubil,⁸⁵ while Deguignes' commentaries were included in the footnotes. Furthermore, he deemed it appropriate to include a document that concluded Father Gaubil's manuscript, namely a letter from Father de Mailla to Father Souciet, which discussed Chinese characters.⁸⁶

Figures chinoises pour l'intelligence des livres classiques chinois. Ces figures s'appellent Lou king tou, in: Catalogue de ce que les Jésuites françois adressent à Mgr le C. de Razoumowski. Gaubil (n. 1), p. 817.

85 Antoine Gaubil, *Observations mathématiques, astronomiques ...*, 3 vols., Paris: Rollin 1729-1732, t. 3.

86 Peking, January 1, 1725. Gaubil (n. 53), p. 380.

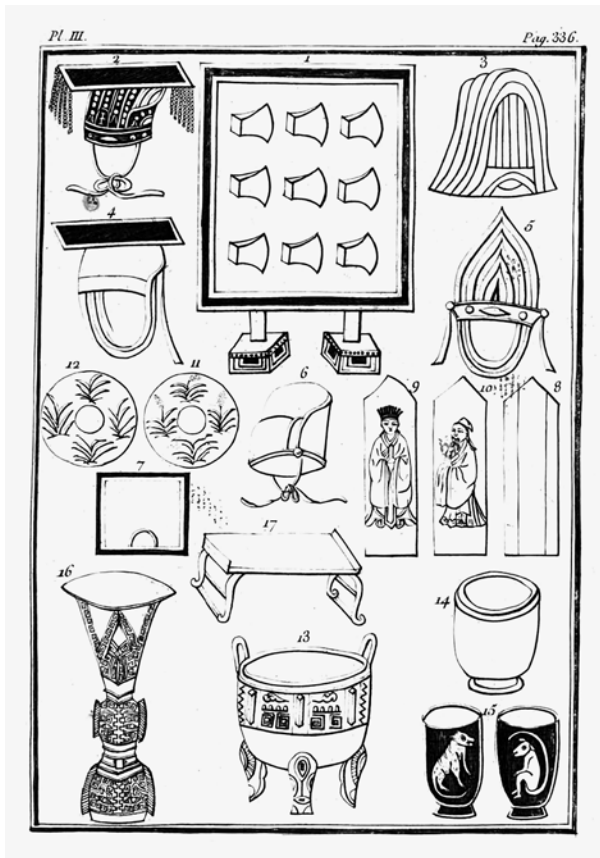


Figure 4

Additionally, Deguignes decided to retain the notes inserted by Father Gaubil in his translation, aimed at refuting accusations of atheism against the Chinese, that is related to religious controversies. His decision is presented as justified by his intention to allow the reader the final judgement. This approach suggests that editing a missionary's text presents a delicate issue for the lay scholar, emphasizing the Jesuit's bias and partisan interpretation of Chinese antiquity, in contrast to his own objectivity. Readers are supposed to benefit from the »objective« mediation of the translator-editor (the scholar himself) to gather positive data and form their own conclusions about this longstanding quarrel, which has traditionally been a matter for the competent authorities.⁸⁷

87 »... mais j'ai eu attention dans la traduction des passages qui concernent cette question, de rendre fidèlement le texte, n'ayant aucune prévention à cet égard, & ne voulant pas entrer dans cette dispute; ainsi le Lecteur pourra juger par lui-même d'après ces textes« (»... but I was careful in translating the passages which concern this question, to faithfully render the text, having no prejudice in this regard, & not wanting to enter into this dispute; so the Reader will be able to judge for himself from these texts«). *Ibid.*, p. iij.

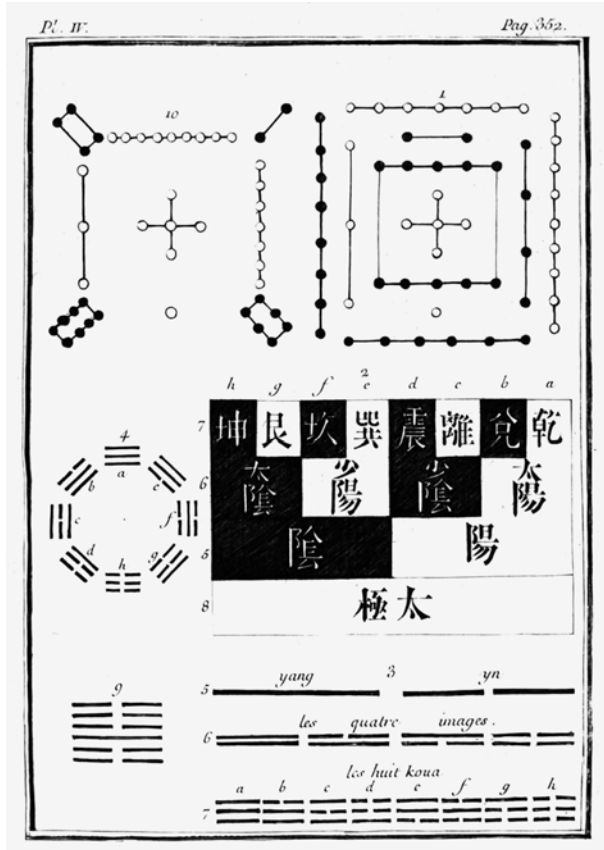


Figure 5

A similar approach was undertaken by Deguignes in Father de Prémare's *Recherches sur les tems antérieurs à ceux dont parle le Chou-king, & sur la Mythologie Chinoise*, also »corrected and completed according to the Chinese text«. Father de Prémare, along with Joachim Bouvet (1655-1730), Jean-François Fouquet (1665-1741), and Jean-Alexis de Gollet (1664-1741), was one of the main proponents of the figurist approach to the Chinese classics.⁸⁸ This interpretation attempted to incorporate ancient Asian civilisations and religions into the biblical framework. While Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) had sought to identify traces of the original monotheism in Confucian texts, figurists extended this research to the Taoist text *Daodjing* (Book of the Way and Virtue) and especially to the *Yijing* (*I-ching*, Classic of Changes), which

88 On Bouvet, see Claudia von Collani, P. Joachim Bouvet S.J. Sein Leben und sein Werk, Nettetal: Steyler, 1985; idem, Joachim Bouvet: Missionnaire entre Orient et Occident, in: *Passeurs de religions entre Orient et Occident*, ed. by Jacques Scheuer and Paul Servais, Louvain-la-Neuve: Bruylant academia 2004, pp. 113-137.

some held to be the world's oldest book.⁸⁹ Although Father de Prémare considered that reliable Chinese history and chronology only began three or four centuries before the Christian era, driven by his figurist approach, he felt these fables should not be excluded from the account of Chinese history.⁹⁰ The interest in the texts of Chinese antiquity shown by these missionaries played a crucial role in the development of Oriental studies, as it necessitated profound knowledge of the Chinese language and literature for translation and reliable analysis. Nonetheless, their interpretations were relatively unknown in Europe, due to censorship and publication difficulties.⁹¹ In his preface, Deguignes presented what is undoubtedly one of the first descriptions of figurism, but issued multiple warnings against fabulous stories, credulity concerning Chinese antiquity, and the fanciful systems of interpretation implemented by the Jesuits figurists.⁹² Deguignes praised the linguistic skills of Father de Prémare, »... one of the Missionaries who best knew the Chinese Language«, while criticising the »singular system« he had adopted. He explained that Father de Prémare used this knowledge of the language to establish this system, studying the fabulous times of the Chinese in search of prophetic traces of the Christian religion. Contrary to Gaubil's text, where references to religious controversies are maintained, in the edition of Father de Prémare's text, Deguignes eliminated all the reflections of figurist connotation formulated by the Jesuit author, considering »... that it was useless to leave all these ideas in a piece full of erudition ...«. ⁹³ The filters applied by a European scholar in this Jesuit writing indicate a practice of >de-Jesuitisation< aiming to separate erudition from ideology in order to produce a work that »... becomes very precious, since it gives us all the ancient Chinese Fables«. ⁹⁴ For Deguignes, the aim of editing Prémare's text was to highlight

89 Until then, the book of Enoch was generally considered to be the oldest book in the world and this idea had stimulated the study of Ethiopian. See Urs App, *The Birth of Orientalism*, Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press 2010, p. 377.

90 Prémare, *Discours préliminaire ou recherches sur les tems antérieurs à ceux dont parle le Chou-king, & sur la Mythologie Chinoise*, in: Gaubil (n. 53), p. xlv.

91 Figurist ideas gained somewhat more recognition in Europe after Fouquet's return from China, in 1723. See John W. Witek, *Controversial ideas in China and in Europe: a biography of Jean-François Fouquet, S. J. (1665-1741)*, Rome: Institutum historicum S. I. 1982, p. 308. In China, a Chinese Christian named Li Tsu-po was executed in 1665 due to his figurist beliefs. However, later on, missionaries were granted permission by the Emperor to conduct research on the classics. See Mungello (n. 81), p. 94.

92 Deguignes, *Préface*, in: Gaubil (n. 53), p. xlij.

93 »On seroit surpris de le voir trouver partout des traces prophétiques de la Religion Chrétienne. L'Ouvrage sur les tems fabuleux des Chinois a été fait sous ce point de vue: j'ai cru qu'il étoit inutile de laisser subsister dans un morceau plein d'erudition toutes ces idées, j'ai retranché toutes les petites réflexions qui pouvoient y avoir rapport, & comme le P. de Premare a mis à la marge les passages en Chinois, je les ai revus, par ce moyen, cet ouvrage devient très précieux, puisqu'il nous donne toutes les anciennes Fables Chinoises« (»One would be surprised to see prophetic traces of the Christian Religion everywhere. The work on the fabulous times of the Chinese was written from this point of view: I believed that it was useless to allow all these ideas to remain in a piece full of erudition, I removed all the little reflections which could be related to it, & as Father de Premare put the passages in Chinese to the margin, I reviewed them, by this means, this work becomes very precious, since it gives us all the ancient Chinese Fables«). *Ibid.*, p. xlij.

94 Deguignes, *Préface*, in: Gaubil (n. 53), p. xlij (emphasis added).

the late and fragmentary nature of Chinese mythological literature, which, he argues, could not stand comparison with Greek mythology.⁹⁵

Finally, Visdelou's translation of the >Y-king< provided Deguignes with an opportunity to underscore the difficulty of forming an opinion on the beliefs of the ancient Chinese civilisation and to point out the pitfalls of anachronistic readings. Deguignes highlighted the divergence of interpretations between Visdelou and Gaubil, particularly regarding the notion of *Chang-ti* (heaven), which was central to the dispute over rites.⁹⁶ While acknowledging the complexity of arriving at a definitive conclusion on this matter, Deguignes stressed the need for a thorough understanding of religious systems in the country and cautioned against the interpretations of contemporary scholars in China.⁹⁷ He thus projected onto China the contemporary debate in France between erudition and philosophy. Continuously positioning himself as an impartial arbiter, he insisted that the primary issue with anachronistic interpretations is that they question the sources for answers that are likely impossible to ascertain:

... Confucius n'a pas voulu expliquer clairement sur certains points dont on lui demandoit l'explication, comment donc pouvoir le pénétrer? Ce que l'on voit dans le >Chou-king<, c'est que les anciens Chinois adoroient un Dieu suprême nommé Ti ou Chang-ti, doué de la plus grande intelligence, qui récompense les bons et punit les méchants; qu'outre cela, il rendoient un culte religieux à plusieurs Esprits nommés Chin, & que les Ancêtres, qu'ils paroissent regarder comme des intercesseurs, s'intéressoient pour les descendants. Voilà, je crois, ce que l'on aperçoit dans le >Chou-king<; au reste, je ne prétens rien décider sur ce sujet ...⁹⁸

95 Ibid., p. xliij.

96 Notice du livre chinois nommé Y-king ou Livre canonique des changements, avec des notes, par M. Claude Visdelou, évêque de Claudiopolis, in Gaubil, (n. 53), pp. 401-436, p. 401.

97 »J'avoue qu'il est fort difficile de se prononcer là-dessus, le >Chou-king< ne fournissant aucun détail sur la nature du Chang-ti; mais on ne doit pas en même temps se décider d'après M. Visdelou, qui a employé les interprétations & les recherches des Philosophes modernes. Ceux-ci, pour soutenir leurs sentiments, ont prétendu en donner des preuves d'après les Anciens, & les ont fait parler conformément aux opinions qu'ils avoient dessein d'établir. *Il ne faut pas juger de la Doctrine ni de la Religion des anciens Chinois par celle des Chinois d'aujourd'hui, ni par les opinions des Philosophes modernes. Les idées nouvelles ont à la Chine, comme par-tout ailleurs, des partisans, & l'amour des systèmes a fait naître dans ce pays des sentiments sur la Divinité, qui ne sont pas universellement adoptés: il faut donc bien connoître ces systèmes* («I admit that it is very difficult to comment on this, the >Chou-king< providing no details on the nature of the Chang-ti; but we must not at the same time decide according to M. Visdelou, who used the interpretations and research of modern Philosophers. These, to support their feelings, claimed to provide proof according to the Ancients, and made them speak in accordance with the opinions they intended to establish. We must not judge the Doctrine or Religion of the ancient Chinese by that of the Chinese today, nor by the opinions of modern Philosophers. New ideas have supporters in China, as everywhere else, and the love of systems has given rise in this country to feelings about the Divinity, which are not universally adopted: it is therefore necessary to know these systems well») (emphasis added). Ibid., p. 401.

98 »Confucius did not want to explain clearly on certain points for which he was asked to explain, how then could we penetrate him? What we see in the >Chou-king< is that the ancient Chinese worshiped a supreme God named Ti or Chang-ti, endowed with the greatest intelligence, who rewards the good and

Deguignes's initiatives proved somewhat intrusive for subsequent generations of Orientalists.⁹⁹ His approach suggested that the translations made by Jesuit missionaries, and more generally, their writings, could not be published as they stood. These works required validation by specialists representing new bodies of scientific production, necessitating a series of operations. Deguignes notably advised those interested in Gaubil's true translation to consult the missionary's manuscript directly.¹⁰⁰ His example illustrates the Parisian scholars' efforts to incorporate their own comments or research results conducted in the decades following the Jesuit missionaries' writings. Their intervention was drastic, aiming to remedy anything detracting from the scientific value of these works. Within the Parisian literary corps, the challenge was to apply novel practices and standards on textual analysis. Examining the same sources and information, metropolitan scholars emphasized questions of method and interpretation, and carried out a filtering process that particularly focused on the religious preoccupations of the authors, in particular the traces of the dispute over rites and figurism. The process of >de-Jesuitisation< of the socio-political field had its counterpart in the intellectual and editorial field, with missionaries' writings being stripped of their Catholic and sectarian exhortations, to better align with scholarly principles, as well as the prevailing mindset at the end of the Enlightenment, reflecting new intellectual uses of China.¹⁰¹ In his preface, Deguignes states his decision to include de Prémare's and Visdelou's texts in his edition for two reasons: to provide to the public with more accurate knowledge on China and to »preserve the Memoirs written by skilful Missionaries«,

punishes the wicked; that in addition to this, they paid religious worship to several Spirits named Chin, and that the Ancestors, whom they seemed to regard as intercessors, were interested in the descendants. This, I believe, is what we see in the >Chou-king<; Besides, I don't pretend to decide anything on this subject.« Ibid., p. 403.

99 See the biographical notice on Gaubil written par Abel Rémusat, in: Louis-Gabriel Michaud (ed.), *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne*, 82 vols. with suppl., Paris: Michaud Frères 1811-1849 (new ed. Desplaces/Bruchhaus, 45 vols., Paris, Leipzig, 1843-1857), 16, 1856. Cf. Guillaume Pauthier (ed.), *Les Livres Sacrés de l'Orient*, Paris: Société de Panthéon littéraire 1842, p. XXVII.

100 Deguignes, Préface, in Gaubil (n. 53), p. iij.

101 For example, in the >Mémoires concernant les Chinois<. This process recalls, *mutatis mutandis*, that implemented by Abbé Dubois (1766-1848), a priest of the Society of Foreign Missions of Paris and author of the book >Description of the character, manners, and customs of the People of India; and of their institutions religious and civil<, translated and published in English in London in 1817. This treatise, which long served as an essential reference on the ethnography of India, was based on a manuscript written in 1777 by Jesuit Father Gaston-Laurent Coeurdoux (d. 1779), who had synthesised Jesuit ethnographic knowledge. An abridgment of this text had already been provided in 1776-1777 by Nicolas-Jacques Desvaulx, a Creole artillery officer from Pondicherry and son of one of the richest merchants of the French East India Company, under the title >Mœurs et Coutumes des Indiens<. However, it is the same text that Dubois took up, carefully stripping it of all sectarian connotations. His presentation, as well as his position advocating respect for Indian social structures, fit perfectly with the ideas prevalent in parts of the British colonial environment. See Sylvia Murr, *L'Inde philosophique entre Bossuet et Voltaire*, 2 vols., Paris: EFEO 1987, vol. 1 (*Mœurs et coutumes des Indiens (1777)*), un inédit du missionnaire jésuite Gaston-Laurent Coeurdoux dans la version de N.-J. Desvaulx). The process of >de-Jesuitization< is mentioned in Lopparelli 2011.

now viewed by the lay scholar as a literary heritage.¹⁰² At the same time, the Academy as an institution defended its authority and the reputation of its peers. Aware that his ›*Traité de la chronologie*‹ would not be published by the Jesuits, since both Souciet and Berthier were defending the Hebrew text, Gaubil hoped for an initiative of the AIBL.¹⁰³ Indeed, the AIBL had tasked de la Caille and Delisle with examining Gaubil's writings on chronology.¹⁰⁴ However, in a letter sent to Gaubil, who inquired about the fate of his writing, Delisle acknowledges that the reason the AIBL did not publish Gaubil's treatise was that his ideas partly contradicted Fréret's system.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

Father Gaubil was actively involved in the official networks fostered by European academic institutions and engaged in personal exchanges with scholars from various European countries, sharing copies of his own works, along with those of other missionaries. These works circulated in scholarly circles, but remained unpublished until the last decades of the eighteenth century. Paradoxically, while the collective publishing efforts of the Society of Jesus were the primary source for European knowledge about China and were utilised by a wide range of eighteenth-century authors, several Jesuit writings on Chinese philosophy, history, and linguistics encountered challenges in finding the way to the print. This paper explores the reasons behind this failure, identifying both politico-religious reasons and a latent antagonism in the validation of knowledge about China. The suppression of the Society of Jesus across European kingdoms, coinciding with a shifting political landscape in China, led to a renewed interest in missionary works in the late eighteenth century. In this context, Gaubil's translation of the ›*Chou king*‹, along with other older works by Jesuit missionaries, were published during this period. The study of this translation, edited by the French Orientalist Joseph Deguignes, provides insight into the methods used by lay scholars in the early editions of missionary. Deguignes made significant alterations to Father Gaubil's translation. Despite his methodological awareness, these additions and remarks rather reveal his own preoccupations (Chinese chronology, the supposed Egyptian

102 Deguignes, *Préface*, in: Gaubil (n. 53), p. i.

103 »On m'a assuré que, de même que le P. Souciet, il (P. Berthier) rejette toutes les chronologies qui ne suivent pas le calcul du texte hébreu, Si cela est, il aura supprimé l'exemplaire que je lui envoyai en son temps de ma chronologie. Puisque vous et l'Académie des Inscriptions avés une copie ou mon original même, on pourra la publier, supposé qu'on la croie de quelque utilité« (»I have been assured that, like Father Souciet, he (Berthier) rejects all chronologies which do not follow the calculation of the Hebrew text. If this is true, he will have deleted the copy that I have send him of my chronology. Since you and the Academy of Inscriptions have a copy or even my original, we can publish it, assuming that you find it to be of some use«). À Delisle, 30 Oct. 1758. Gaubil (n. 1).

104 À Delisle, 30 Oct. 1758. *Ibid.*

105 »Je n'ay jusqu'ici aucune nouvelle de ce qu'on a fait à Paris de ce que j'ai envoyé sur la chronologie.« À Delisle, 14 Nov. 1757. Gaubil (n. 1); Delisle à Gaubil, 24 Dec. 1758, AN, Marine, 2 JJ 66, XIV, 66. Father Gaubil died on July 24, 1759, and did not receive this letter.

origins of Chinese civilization), while reflecting the contemporary debate in France between erudition and philosophy. Deguignes' approach illustrates the >de-Jesuitisation< process within the intellectual and editorial spheres, parallel to shifts in the socio-political landscape. At the same time, by suggesting that Jesuit translations necessitated the intervention of specialists, Deguignes' stance underscores the ambitions of emerging scientific bodies in validating knowledge about China in Enlightenment Europe.

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