

# **The story of the first Dutch embassy to the emperor of China**

**An analysis of the different influences on the representation  
of China in *Het Gezantschap* (1665)**

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**Figure 1.** The route of the Dutch embassy (1655-1657) as given in the map in *Het Gezantschap*.

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## Introduction

We were looking out for the emperor, and awaited with great desire to witness this great Ruler personally and in his all his greatness ; however he was so vastly surrounded by his subordinates, that we could not get the slightest vision of him.<sup>1</sup>

These are the words of Johan Nieuhof (1618-1672), steward of the first embassy of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) regarding his visit to the court of the Qing emperor Shunzi (1638-1661) in Beijing, quoted from the book *Het Gezantschap*. These words are exemplary for the seventeenth-century Dutch-Chinese relations. For the Chinese, the Dutch were of no importance, people from a country far away that was of no interest to them, while the Dutch marveled about the great Chinese empire and all its riches, wanted to establish a lasting trade relationship with it.

In July 1655, after decades of trying to set up trade contracts with China, the first Dutch embassy left Batavia, capital city to the VOC in Asia, with the objective of getting permission from the Qing court for free trade. In Beijing the ambassadors were granted an audience with the Shunzi emperor, who eventually refused their request for free trade. The envoys left Beijing again in October 1656 to return to Batavia in March of 1657, having travelled for almost two years.

The embassy failed to achieve their main goals, but Johan Nieuhof, on the other hand, managed to complete his mission. He had been appointed by the VOC to make realistic drawings of China and to document the journey correctly and extensively.<sup>2</sup> When he returned to the Dutch Republic in 1658 he was commissioned by the board of the VOC to write a report about his experiences. He based this report on the notes and drawings that he had made during his journey and handed it in on August third 1658 during a plenary board meeting.<sup>3</sup> After three months Johan left the Republic again, but not before he had asked his brother Hendrik Nieuhof<sup>4</sup> to publish his writings on China.<sup>5</sup>

This resulted in the publication of the book *Het Gezantschap*. It became one of the crucial Western texts on China in the early modern period. It was reprinted fourteen times and translated into four languages: German, French, English and Latin.<sup>6</sup> The book was lavishly illustrated, containing 149 prints from copper engravings, which were claimed to be based on Nieuhof's own drawings, and described the Chinese empire in

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<sup>1</sup> 'Wy zagen vast om en om na den Keizer, en wachtten met groot verlangen om deze grooten Vorst eens perzoonlijk in zijne grootste staat t'aanschouwen ; maar hy was zoodanigh met zijn Volk omringt en bestuwt, datwe het minste niet van hem te zien konden krijgen.' Johan Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham, den tegenwoordigen Keizer van China: Waarin de gedenkwaerdigste Geschiedenissen, die onder het reizen door de Sineesche landtschappen, Quantung, Kiangsi, Nanking, Xantung en Beijing, en aan het Keizerlijke Hof te Beijing, sedert den jaren 1655 tot 1657 zijn voorgevallen, op het bondigste verhandelt worden. Beneffens een Naukeurige Beschrijvinge der Sineesche Steden, Dorpen, Regeering, Weetenschappen, Hantwerken, Zeden, Godsdiensten, Gebouwen, Drachten, Schepen, Bergen, Gewassen, Dieren, et cetera en oorlogen tegen de Tartars* (Franeker 1991) 175.

<sup>2</sup> Leonard Blussé and Floris-Jan van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders: Geschiedenis van de Nederlands-Chinese betrekkingen 1600-2008* (Zutphen 2008) 89.

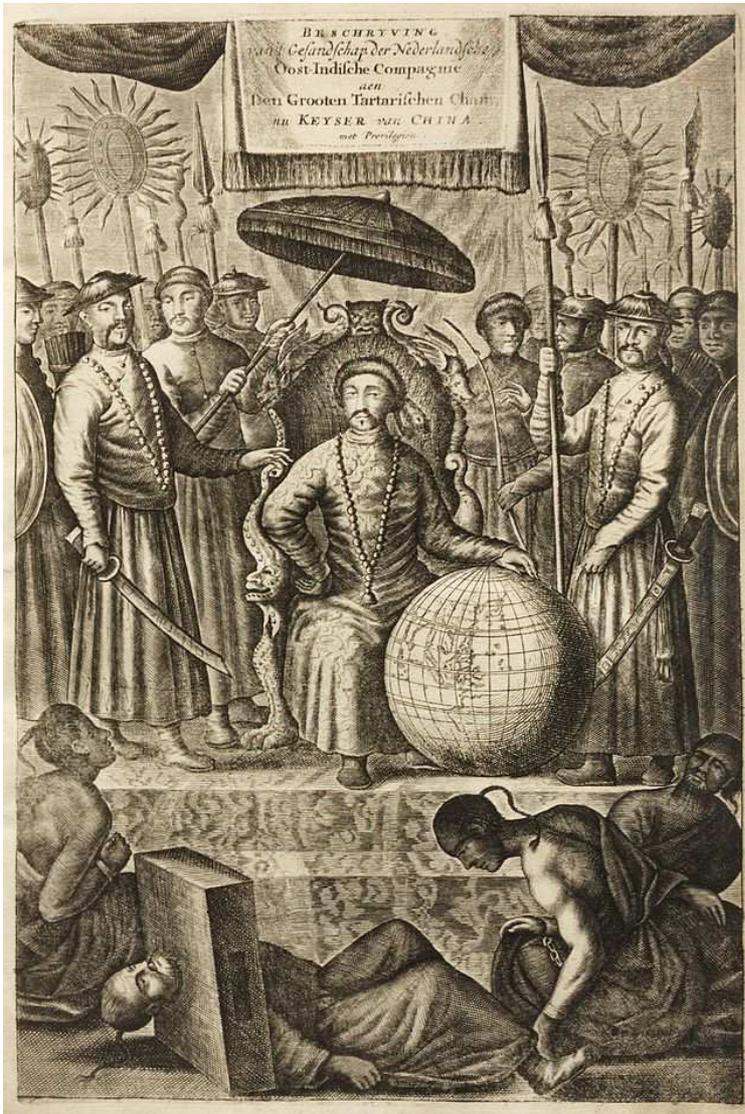
<sup>3</sup> Jing Sun, *The Illusion of verisimilitude : Johan Nieuhof's images of China* (Dissertation Leiden 2013) 81-84.

<sup>4</sup> I use the first names of the brothers to refer to them, because the use of their surnames would only lead to confusion.

<sup>5</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Dawn Odell, 'The Soul of transactions, Illustrations and Johan Nieuhof's Travels in China', *Zeventiende eeuw* 17 (2001) 225-242, 226.

great detail.<sup>7</sup> The images in the book greatly influenced the eighteenth-century view on China and the *Chinoiserie* movement.<sup>8</sup> The book was divided in two large sections: one section covered the journey of the embassy, while the other was a nineteen chapters long encyclopedic description of China. The second part was based on other works, while the travel story was presented as an authentic eyewitness account, claiming to represent the real China in word and image.<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 2.** The frontispiece of *Het Gezantschap*

fluence *Het Gezantschap*. Secondly, the experiences of Johan – displayed in his report – and how they were transmitted to the publication are studied. Thirdly, the reactions of the Chinese towards the embassy are distilled from Johan’s report and the role that the changing circumstances in China played in these reactions is analyzed. Finally, conclusions are being drawn how all these different influences are reflected in the portrayal of China in *Het Gezantschap*.

This thesis researches the different influences on the portrayal of China in the first section - the travel story - of *Het Gezantschap*. The research question of this thesis is: Which different factors influenced the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap* and how were these factors intertwined, connected and overlapping with one another? To answer this question, Johan’s representation of China in his report and previous writings appertaining to the Chinese empire and its accompanying seventeenth-century literary tradition are compared and analyzed with *Het Gezantschap*. The influences of the social, cultural and political circumstances in China and the treatment and reception of foreigners on *Het Gezantschap* are scrutinized as well. To study these different influences, several steps are to be taken. Firstly, the writings about China published before *Het Gezantschap* are analyzed on their representation of Chinese empire and how they could influence

<sup>7</sup> Guido van Meersbergen, ‘De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht: De Amsterdamse en ‘Antwerpse’ edities van Johan Nieuwof’s *Gezantschap*’, *De zeventiende eeuw* 26 (2010) 73-90, 74-75.

<sup>8</sup> Sun, *The Illusion of verisimilitude*, 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> Odell, ‘The Soul of transactions’, 226.

By analyzing the different influences on the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap* the different factors that were important in the seventeenth-century European portrayal of China are revealed. Moreover, the intertwinement of these factors and how they influenced each other are pointed out. As the seventeenth-century representation of China was part of the European intellectual dissemination and assimilation of China, new important elements of this erudition that are usually neglected in contemporary studies are revealed and brought to attention. More will be said about this in the last paragraph of the introduction. First, two fields of study- and their accompanying subfields- used in this thesis are introduced: book history and Orientalism.

### ***Book history and Orientalism***

Over the last decades book history has taken up a prominent position in the field of history. Recently, a subfield has evolved in which the focus is placed on the representation of the overseas world in books.<sup>10</sup> This subfield draws attention to the representation of 'the other' and to the alterations occurring during the process of editing and publishing stories, which are intended to make these stories more appealing to the public. This kind of research mostly executes analysis on different editions and translations of the same stories and not on the translation from primary source to publication.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, these studies neglect the potential role the orientals play in their own representation in Western books. This thesis focuses on these demerits in book history and Orientalism by comparing a primary source with its publication and by employing a different perspective on the concept of Orientalism, as described in the following paragraph.

#### *Orientalism: the orientalist and the oriental*

In 1978 Edward Said published his book *Orientalism* which instigated a lively discussion within the academic world. The main claim represented in this book was that the West created an inferior, opposite and static representation of the Orient. Orientalism is defined by Said as: 'a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience.' With the publication of his book he wanted to show that 'European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.'<sup>12</sup> Thus 'Orientalizing' the Orient.<sup>13</sup> To argue for his analysis Said used the concept of 'discourse' as presented by Foucault, meaning that: 'Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in

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<sup>10</sup> See for example Michiel van Groessen, *The De Bry collection of voyages (1590-1634): editorial strategy and The representation of the overseas world* (Dissertation, Amsterdam, 2007); Michiel van Groesen, 'Interchanging representations: Dutch publishers and the De Bry collection of voyages (1596-1610)', *Dutch Crossing* 30 (2006) 229-242; Ernst van Boogaart, *Het Verdorven Azië, Woord en beeld in het Itinerario en de Icones van Jan Huygen van Linschoten* (Amsterdam 2000); Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob and Wijnand Mijnhardt (ed.), *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion* (Los Angeles 2010); Marijke Barend-van Haefen, *Oost-Indie gespiegeld, Nicolaas de Graaf, een schrijvend chirurgijn in dienst van de VOC* (Zutphen 1992).

<sup>11</sup> Exceptions are for example Barend-van Haefen, *Oost-Indie gespiegeld*; Roelof van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur, Duitsers in dienst van de VOC* (Nijmegen 1997); Leo Akveld, *Machtstrijd om Malakka, de reis van VOC-admiraal Cornelis Cornelisz. Matelief naar Oost-Azie (1605-1608)* (Zutphen 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London 2003) 4.

<sup>13</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 1-4.

short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.<sup>14</sup>

Although Said's book continues to be influential to the present day, it has been criticized to a great extent. It is unnecessary to mention all these different responses, so the focus here is on the ones that are of importance for this study. I also include some of my own critiques, to eventually conclude on the interpretation of Orientalism that is employed in this thesis.

In his book, Said mostly focused on the French and British dealings with the Orient, which for these countries meant the Middle East and India. He has been criticized for this; some even mentioned that if he had incorporated German Orientalism or European perspectives on Asia, his conclusion would have been quite different.<sup>15</sup> Despite this, Said does acknowledge that Asia is also part of the Orient, and has been represented by the West in stereotypical and inferior ways, however he just not pay attention to this region in his book.<sup>16</sup> In the last decades other scholars have used Said's concept of Orientalism for the areas he left out, for example for China. The field of research that focuses on the Orientalist representation of China is called Sinologism.

Ming Dong Gu described Sinologism as 'the motivation, logic, rationale, epistemology, methodology and the characteristic features of the long-term endeavor to incorporate China into the Western-centered global world-system and as the ideological dominance of Western intellectual habits vis-à-vis China.'<sup>17</sup> According to Gu, Sinologism started at the moment that the seventeenth-century 'accommodationist policy'<sup>18</sup> of the Jesuits in China declined in the second half of the eighteenth century. The accommodationist view of China was 'relatively free from hegemonic motives, because China was then perceived to be the West's equal, superior in many aspects of life.'<sup>19</sup> Despite the fact that the accommodationist view produced a positive perception of the Chinese empire, it was not entirely free of the western-centric epistemology and it also gave a distorted view of China. From the eighteenth century onwards a negative, inferior and increasingly Orientalist portrayal of China was developed.<sup>20</sup>

Ho-Fung Hung argued differently and thus produced a critique or different perspective on Orientalism. Hung showed that in the orientalist portrayal of China – which he explicitly calls Orientalism and not Sinologism - from the seventeenth century to the present time a clear reoccurring cycle can be distinguished. Throughout the centuries it changed several times from a naïve and positive view to a strongly negative portrayal. Building on these finding, Hung claimed that the most fundamental fallacy of Orientalism does not lie in its inferior representation of the Orient, but in its fundamental reductionism.<sup>21</sup> From this argument one can derive that Orientalism's, and for that matter Sinologism's main issue is its reductionism. Meaning that also a positive, but reductionist por-

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<sup>14</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

<sup>15</sup> Edward Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', *Cultural Critique* 1 (1985) 89-107, 90.

<sup>16</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Ming Dong Gu, 'Sinologism, the Western World View, and the Chinese perspective', *Comparative Literature and Culture* 15 (2013) 1-9. 1.

<sup>18</sup> The term 'Jesuit accommodation' can be explained as: 'the setting in China where Jesuit missionaries accommodated Western learning to the Chinese cultural scene and attempted to achieve the acceptance of Chinese literati through the Confucian-Christian synthesis.' David E. Mungello, *Curious Land, Jesuit accommodation and the origins of Sinology* (Wiesbaden 1989) 14-15.

<sup>19</sup> Gu, 'Sinologism,' 1.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ho-Fung Hung, 'Orientalist Knowledge and Social Theories: China and the European Conceptions of East-West Differences from 1600 to 1900', *Sociological Theory* 21 (2003) 254-280, 274-276.

trayal can be considered Orientalism and Sinologism. This is explained in further detail later on in this paragraph.

What is of importance now is that Hung came to this claim by arguing that political and economic changes directly or indirectly influenced the European intellectual field and the knowledge it produced, and that these changes created the reoccurring cycle of the positive and negative portrayal of China. Although he provided an interesting perspective on the matter, a demerit in his argument is that he only focused on the political and economic changes in the West. Political and economic changes in China itself were left out in his analysis completely, thus neglecting a potential Chinese influence on its own representation in the West.

The possible influence the oriental can wield on his own representation is exactly the critique that Arif Dirlik uttered towards Said's views on Orientalism. Dirlik wondered; '...whether Orientalism was just the autonomous creation of Europeans, or whether its emergence presupposed the complicity of 'orientals?'"<sup>22</sup> In this manner Dirlik portrayed Orientalism more as a relationship, in which exchanges take place, than as a one-dimensional Western product.<sup>23</sup> Dirlik mentioned that Said's own view of the process of depicting an alien culture, was that the Orientalist had to identify himself with his culture, described as 'sympathetic identification'.<sup>24</sup> Dirlik argued that the orientalist needed to be 'orientalised' himself up to a certain degree, which brought him closer to the other, while distancing himself from his own society. Moreover, his orientalization was what qualified him to speak about the other. On top of this, Dirlik claimed that Orientalists were accepted in the other culture to the extent they were orientalised.<sup>25</sup>

To substantiate these claims Dirlik used the notion of the 'contact zone' as coined by Mary Louis Pratt: 'The space of colonial encounters, the space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercing, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.'<sup>26</sup> But this zone was not merely the zone of domination of one party over the other, it was also a place of exchange, even if this exchange occurred in an unequal setting. Pratt defined this exchange as 'transculturation.' She elaborated on this by stating that oriental cultures can determine to various degrees which aspects of the dominant cultures they absorb into their own.<sup>27</sup> I want to add to this that the Orient can also, to various extents, influence the way that it presents and projects itself towards the dominant culture. This is a claim I share with Dirlik who says that: 'Orientalism, (...) in some basic ways required the participation of Orientals for its legitimation. And in its practice, Orientalism, from the beginning took shape as an exchange of images and representations.'<sup>28</sup>

This thesis argues and exemplifies that Orientalism was indeed a relationship of power and mutual exchange and not a one-dimensional representation of one culture imposes on the other. Visitors and travelers with differences in cultural backgrounds, class, positions or intentions produced different representations of China. Besides their own interpretation of the cultures, the different depictions can be explained by the level of acceptance they encountered from the Chinese in answer to their willingness to adapt themselves to Chinese customs and ways of life. The Westerners that were more willing

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<sup>22</sup> Arif Dirlik, 'Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism', *History and Theory* 4 (1996) 96-118, 100.

<sup>23</sup> Dirlik, 'Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism', 100.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, 101.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, 100-103

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, 112.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, 112.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, 112

to adapt themselves to Chinese culture were given more possibilities to enter and settle in the empire. They, therefore, were able to witness Chinese culture more directly and intensely and thus gave a different portrayal of China than Westerners who did not receive the same reception. As such, this shows that the Chinese could influence their later Western representation by the level of acceptance they allowed their visitor. Moreover, to return to Hung's argument that political and economic changes directly and indirectly influenced the intellectual field, the same kinds of changes also influenced the reception of foreigners in China. Meaning, the social and cultural context in China that affected the acceptance or denial of foreign visitors into the Chinese culture also inherently influenced the Western representation of China.

As such, this study brings a new perspective on the circulation of knowledge. Some recent studies have given a more nuanced perspective on the orientalist idea of knowledge production. Michiel Leezenberg showed how Dimitrie Cantemir, a seventeenth-century Western scholar working on the Ottoman empire and its history and language used several local sources when writing his influential works. Although this indeed sheds light on the use of native sources by Westerners, possible influences of the indigenous people are left out of the equation.<sup>29</sup> Kapil Raj proposed a different perspective. He emphasized that orientals also had an effect on the creation of 'colonial knowledge' by all the things they absorbed from Western science and learning and how this tangle of colonial and Western knowledge over time influenced the sciences in Europe. The importance is that this developed over a certain time span and not instantly. This means that the direct influence of the Orient on Western sciences or the orientals' influence on its own western representation are not accounted for in Raj's studies.<sup>30</sup> The objective of this thesis is to demonstrate that orientals could have a direct influence in the encounter between oriental and orientalist, and thus could directly affect the knowledge that was transported to and disseminated in the West.

Although I analyze how China influenced its representation in *Het Gezantschap*, it is not the aim of this study to research the image that China intended to emanate towards Westerners. My inability to read Chinese and the lack of available translated Chinese sources makes this objective unfeasible. Moreover, it would be a too extensive field of research to produce valid conclusion in the time that is given for this study.

The notion 'Chinese influence' is used in this thesis and not the terms 'actor' and 'agency'. In my opinion, the notion 'agency' implies a deliberate act and so does the term 'actor.' This excludes the possibility of the subject beings passive or indifferent. As I do not scrutinize or analyze the Chinese perception of the Dutch and their trade mission, I cannot claim that the Chinese were deliberately and actively producing a certain image of their own culture for the Western audience to see. As the term 'influence' implies an effect, deliberate or not, passive or active, I do have the possibility to analyze whether or not the Chinese influenced the Western portrayal of their culture. I research this by studying the reactions of the Chinese towards foreigners. One can wonder if the difference in reception of different Westerners did not imply an active or deliberate action from the side of the Chinese? To answer this question, first it needs to be explained what the notion of 'the influence of China' entails in this study.

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<sup>29</sup> Michiel Leezenberg, 'The Oriental Origins of Orientalism, The Case of Dimitrie Cantemir', in: Rens Bod, Jaap Maat and Thijs Weststeijn (ed.), *The Making of the Humanities, Volume II, From Early Modern to Modern Disciplines* (Amsterdam 2012) 243-266.

<sup>30</sup> Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science, Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1990* (New York 2007). ; Kapil Raj, 'The Historical anatomy of a contact zone: Calcutta in the eighteenth century', *Indian Economic Social History Review* 48 (2011) 55-82.

As explained earlier on, the reaction of the Chinese were in direct correlation to the intensity of the adaptation of foreigners and the changing social and political affairs in China. In the Chinese state of affairs, traditions and individual actions that were connected to the dealing with foreigners were most formative in the way foreigners were received. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the tradition of the tribute system<sup>31</sup> provided the official framework in which the interaction between the Chinese and Westerners took place. It was within this framework that the Dutch gained restricted access into the empire. Simultaneously, the individual actions of local Chinese officials, although restricted for the most part by the tribute system, could allow foreigners into parts of the empire that were prohibited by the conducts of the tribute system. Thus, as the tribute system affected the level of acceptance the foreigners received from the Chinese, so did individual actions, while at the same time, both influenced each other. On top of this, the social and political circumstances, that had no specific connection with foreign affairs, also influenced both aspects. This intricate tangle of influences all resided in the Chinese sphere and affected through the response towards foreigners the influence of China on the foreigners' view of China. As such, the Westerners had relatively little power in the interaction with the Chinese and could only commit to their level of adaptation to the foreign culture in order to get anywhere, while the Chinese response was influenced by a strong social context. This shows the importance of the Chinese context in Western representations of China.

Although there were indeed many instances in which individual Chinese deliberately acted, this was mainly done to profit from trade or out of interest for Western knowledge, not with the deliberate aim of portraying China in a certain way for a Western audience. In case of the tribute system, a certain portrayal of the empire was given, but this was by no means meant specifically for Westerners or directed towards how foreigners in general would perceive and experience China. It was of importance for the Chinese themselves that other countries and empires acknowledged China's cultural superiority and acted accordingly. Once this was affirmed by their paying of tribute to the emperor, the Chinese cared little about foreign affairs anymore. On top of this, the main interest of the Chinese was in their neighboring countries and not in the European powers about which they knew and cared little.

Nonetheless, despite the Chinese indifference towards Westerners and their view of China, in Western representations of the Chinese empire it is exactly from the reactions towards foreigners that one can deduce the complex network of Chinese influences. Hence, this is where I will look for China's influence on its own representation in the West. As such, this study employs the concept of the *influence* of China on its Western representation and not the concepts of 'agency' and 'actor.'

Concluding, in this paper Orientalism is seen as a relationship of power between two entities that both influence to a various extent what is exchanged and what is not. As such, the Orient, in this case, can have an influence on its own representation by controlling what is shown of its culture. Another importance factor is the influence of the social and political situation on the reception of the foreigner. This is exemplified in the case study of the representation of China in the book *Het Gezantschap*. As the perspective on Orientalism and its relation to *Het Gezantschap* have been explained, the next paragraph

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<sup>31</sup> This concept will be defined in the first chapter. For now it suffices to stay that the tribute system entailed the paying of tribute by a foreign state to the Chinese emperor in the capital Beijing. In this system the Chinese had full-control over what was shown of the empire to the envoys. The approval to pay tribute, the route the embassy took through the empire and the ceremonies that were obligatory to be performed all were decided and controlled by the Chinese.

provides context on the book historical aspect of *Het Gezantschap*: the debate on its primary sources.

### *The debate about the primary sources of Het Gezantschap*

To analyze the influence of China on its representation in *Het Gezantschap* the primary source of this book needs to be pointed out. This has been a topic of discussion for centuries. The most recent and important claims on this matter are laid out in this paragraph, after which my own position in this discussion is presented.

Starting with the basic facts, Johan Nieuhof, the steward of the embassy, wrote a report for the board of the VOC based on his notes about his experiences on the journey through China. He completed this report during his three-month-stay in the Netherlands in 1658. This report and Johan's notes went missing for centuries but the report was rediscovered in the 1980's in the Société de Géographie in the Bibliothèque Nationale by Professor Leonard Blussé.<sup>32</sup>

A transcription of the report was published in *Johan Nieuhofs beelden van een Chinareis 1655-1657* (1987). After careful analysis, it turned out that the report did not correspond with any of the published works on the embassy. Blussé concluded that Johan Nieuhof had a collection of 'Chinese writings and drawings' ('Sineesche schriften en teekeningen') based on which he wrote a report to the VOC board which he sent them before he left the Republic again. His brother, Hendrik Nieuhof, used his notes, the travel report and additional information about China from other authors for the publication of *Het Gezantschap*.<sup>33</sup>

Van Meersbergen elaborated on this discussion in the article: 'De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht: De Amsterdamse en 'Antwerpse' edities van Johan Nieuhofs Gezantschap (1665-1666)'. In his analysis he discussed another source that also reported on the embassy: *Relations des Divers Voyages Curieux qui n'ont point esté publiées* by Melchisedech Thévenot and reacted to an earlier study on *Het Gezantschap*.<sup>34</sup> In 1986, the historian Rietbergen argued in the article: 'Zover de Aarde reikt. De werken van Johan Nieuhof (1618-1672) als illustratie van het probleem der cultuur- en mentaliteitsgeschiedenis tussen specialisatie en integratie' that Thévenot's story was based on Johan's report. He came to this conclusion because Thévenot mentioned in the foreword of his publication that the account was completely similar to two Dutch copies he had obtained concerning the embassy, of which one was signed by Johan Nieuhof.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Thévenot's edition was much shorter and contained fewer images than the publication of 1665. As such, Thévenot had added nothing or at least much less to his account of the embassy than the editor of *Het Gezantschap*.<sup>36</sup> Rietbergen came to this conclusion before the publication of Blussé, who showed that the report in general did not correspond with Thévenot's publication. As such, Van Meersbergen who could study Johan's report and Thévenot's publication claimed the complete opposite of Rietbergen, namely that Thévenot's chapter on the embassy was not based on original writings of Johan Nieuhof, but on the Dutch edition of 1665. He reached this conclusion because certain textual parts in Thevenot's work were identical to this edition, while these were not

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<sup>32</sup> Leonard Blussé and R. Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis* (Middelburg 1987) 19-20.

<sup>33</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 19-20.

<sup>34</sup> Van Meersbergen, 'De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht', 74-79.

<sup>35</sup> Sun, *The Illusion of verisimilitude*, 21-22.

<sup>36</sup> Peter J.A.N. Rietbergen, 'Zover de Aarde reikt. De werken van Johan Nieuhof (1618-1672) als illustratie van het probleem der cultuur- en mentaliteitsgeschiedenis tussen specialisatie en integratie', *De zeventiende eeuw* 2 (1986) 17-40.

found in Johan's report. Moreover, he argued that Johan's travel report and the Amsterdam edition both remain faithful to the navigational literary structure<sup>37</sup> while this was not the case for Thévenot's. Hence, Thévenot's edition could not be a publication based on an original source and was a shorter rewriting of *Het Gezantschap*.<sup>38</sup>

Recently, while the writing of this study was in progress, the dissertation: 'The Illusion of verisimilitude: Johan Nieuhof's images of China' by Jing Sun appeared. The primary focus of this study is the analysis of the claim made in *Het Gezantschap* that the etchings it portrays were made 'from life' (na het leven).<sup>39</sup> Beside this, Sun also paid attention to the sources on which *Het Gezantschap* was based. She did not agree with Van Meersbergen's arguments that Thévenot's chapter was based on the 1665 edition. It seems that she has misunderstood Van Meersbergen, claiming that he said that there was no original other text besides the report on which the first Dutch edition and Thévenot's story could have been based.<sup>40</sup> This is actually not what he stated in his work, he even mentioned that Johan left his notes and a copy of the report with his brother, showing that he knew there were more primary sources besides the report.<sup>41</sup>

Because Sun seemed to assume that Van Meersbergen said there were no other sources next to the report, she gave several arguments to show that Johan Nieuhof did make notes and drawings during his journey through China and that the report was based on these notes. To strengthen her claim, she even mentioned that the edition of 1665 was only based on these notes of Johan and not on his report, emphasizing that there had to be some original text next to the report.<sup>42</sup>

She provided several arguments to substantiate this claim. Firstly, Johan Nieuhof arrived in the Republic on the sixth of July 1658, while the report states the date as the third of August. From this she derived that the report was written in a month and handed in on the third of August, claiming that this did not allow Hendrik Nieuhof enough time to copy it. Secondly, much more information is found in the publication of 1665, which was not present in the initial report, but could be present in Johan's missing notes. From this she concluded that the book was based on the notes and not on the report.<sup>43</sup>

I do not agree with this argument. It appears that in Sun's attempt to prove Van Meersbergen wrong she perhaps went too far with claiming that the report was not used for the book. Johan wrote the manuscript while he was staying with his brother Hendrik in Amsterdam. During this time they were visited by several persons who prompted Johan to publish his experiences. It seems unlikely that while Johan and Hendrik came up with the idea of publishing Johan's story, they would not have used the summary that Johan was writing right at that moment. Additionally, if Johan had the time to compile a report from his notes, Hendrik could also have had the time to copy it. Moreover, Sun

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<sup>37</sup> Van Meersbergen based this argument on Odell. She argued that the appearance of landscape prints every several pages within the texts of *Het Gezantschap* parallels the structure of ships' journals, in particular the format of the rutter. A rutter was a written instruction for how to navigate the described coast and in several instances also contained coastal profile views. The drawings of Johan contained compositional similarities, and with the accompanying texts could be used as a guide to navigate through the lands. Odell and Van Meersbergen, therefore, see in Johan's report and *Het Gezantschap* a navigational structure. Van Meersbergen, 'De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht', 77-78; Odell, 'The Soul of transactions', 236-238.

<sup>38</sup> Van Meersbergen, 'De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht', 77-78.

<sup>39</sup> Sun, *The Illusion of verisimilitude*, 282-290.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, 38-40.

<sup>41</sup> Van Meersbergen, 'De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht', 77

<sup>42</sup> Sun, *The Illusion of verisimilitude*, 38-40.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, 39, 85-86.

was not consistent in her argumentation. She mentioned later that the report of Johan might be seen as a preparation for the publication of the travel journal. By saying so she weakened her own argument, because if this was the case, it gave all the more reason to hand the report over to his brother. Additionally, in her analysis of the differences between the drawings in the edition of 1665 and those of Thévenot she kept the option that the etchings in the edition of 1665 were based on drawings from the report. Hence, assuming that Hendrik did have the report in his possession.<sup>44</sup>

Based on my own analysis the report of Johan appears to be a blueprint of the publication. Many sentences in the report were quoted in the publication and the chronological order of the narrative and the way in which the information was structured was for the most part identical. For example, in the report Johan always first described the city before the experiences of the delegation were reported. He only deviated from this order in his account of Beijing, when the description of the city was given when the Dutch left again. In *Het Gezantschap* this same deviation is found. My analysis of the report and the publication provides strong indications that Hendrik wielded a large influence on the writing of the report and helped Johan compile it. I will elaborate on this in the last chapter. Overall, the evidence strongly suggests that Hendrik had a copy of the report in his possession and used this and Johan's notes for writing *Het Gezantschap*.

Beside Johan's notes and manuscript, a third account was written on the experiences of the embassy. Jacob de Keijser, one of the ambassadors also made notes during the journey and left a report to the board of the VOC. Unlike the writings of Johan Nieuwhof, there are no archival sources that indicate that De Keijser's writings were used for the publication. Despite this, I have analyzed the writings of De Keijser to exclude the possibility that these were used in the compilation of *Het Gezantschap*. After comparing De Keijser's sources it became clear that his account does not correspond with the travel story in *Het Gezantschap*. Although there is some information in the writings of De Keijser which is found in the publication of 1665 and not in Johan's report, this could be explained easily by the possibility that this information was in Johan's notes, which were also used for the publication. Because the writings of the De Keijser and the publication do not correspond on any other the level, it can be concluded that the ambassador's writings were not used for *Het Gezantschap*. Moreover, Sun has also studied this source and reached the same conclusion.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, only the report of Johan will be used and studied as the primary source for *Het Gezantschap*.

### ***The contemporary study of proto-sinology***

Whereas this study employs the fields of Orientalism and book history, it also brings a new perspective to the assimilation and dissemination of the seventeenth-century writings referring to China. In the seventeenth century the Jesuits<sup>46</sup> were considered the prime suppliers of information on China in Europe. The Jesuits' literature appertaining to China was studied by European savants. In contemporary studies this endeavor is called 'proto-sinology'. Mungello, the inventor of the term distinguished the proto-sinologists from later sinologists by their lesser degree of knowledge and focus in their study of China.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Sun, *The Illusion of verisimilitude*, 86, 234-235.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, 98-111; NA: 1.04.02 (VOC) inv.nrs. 1218-1220.

<sup>46</sup> More information will be provided on this group and its relation with China in the first chapter.

<sup>47</sup> Mungello, *Curious Land*, 14.

In contemporary studies the seventeenth-century European writings on China are arranged in two kinds of sources: those of the Jesuits and those of the merchants.<sup>48</sup> The writings of the Jesuits are analyzed on their intellectual knowledge of China and how these writings were assimilated to the European framework by the savants in Europe, the proto-sinologists.<sup>49</sup> The writings of the merchants were regarded as travel stories and in the context of the new developments in book history are being analyzed on their representations of foreign lands.<sup>50</sup> It is significant that the Jesuits' writings are not analyzed on their representation of China,<sup>51</sup> while the travel stories appertaining to China are not studied on the influence they had on the European's intellectual views and ideas of the Chinese empire. There appears to be a strong demarcation between the two sources and on which grounds they are studied. This strong differentiation seems arbitrary when taking into consideration that several travel stories made use of the information provided by Jesuits' writings. Thus, the same writings that in Jesuits books are not analyzed on their descriptive information and representation of the Middle Kingdom, suddenly are analyzed when they are found in travel stories. As such, there is never a complete account of the assimilation of knowledge about China or on the depiction of China, from merchants and Jesuits alike.

Adding to this, I have noticed that researchers tend to focus on one aspect – for example medicine – in the knowledge exchange between Europe and China. As a consequence, the wider cultural context in which this knowledge was transmitted is disregarded, thus giving a rather selective representation of the topic addressed.<sup>52</sup> It seems that the tendency to study only one subject can be connected to the selective study of the intellectual knowledge that the Jesuits provided. In the same manner that these studies left out the descriptive elements of the writings of the Jesuits, others selected only one topic from the intellectual knowledge of the Jesuits. As such, an even less complete image of the dissemination of information about China is constructed. Consequently, there is never a complete account of proto-sinology or the beginning of sinology for that matter.

Whereas portraying the different influences on the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap* is the prime objective of this paper, alongside this endeavor the importance of travel literature for proto-sinology will also be touched upon. *Het Gezantschap* is the perfect travel account for this objective. It is a combination of Jesuits' and merchants' writings and therefore a perfect topic for analysis to show the commixture of merchants' and Jesuit' representation of China, as well as to highlight the importance of travel stories for the European dissemination of information about China. At the same time, as the influence of China on its representation in *Het Gezantschap* is accounted for, this study also intends to point to the Oriental influence on proto-sinology.

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<sup>48</sup> An exception of this is the article by Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Travel writing and humanistic culture: a blunted impact?* Rubiés did not distinguish between travel stories and Jesuits' writings, he counted them both as travel stories that were influenced by Humanism and at the same time, influenced Humanism itself. Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Travel writing and humanistic culture: a blunted impact?', *Journal of Early Modern History: Contacts, Comparisons, Contrasts*, 10 (2006) 131-168.

<sup>49</sup> See for example, Mungello, *Curious Land*; Thijs Weststeijn, 'The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries: Sinology in the Seventeenth-century Netherlands', in: Rens Bod, Jaap Maat and Thijs Weststeijn (ed.), *The Making of the Humanities, Volume II, From Early Modern to Modern Disciplines* (Amsterdam 2012) 209-242.

<sup>50</sup> See footnote 10 for examples.

<sup>51</sup> The only exceptions on the selective analysis of Jesuits' writings I encountered were the books *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III: A Century of Advance, book four: East Asia* (Chicago 1993) of Lach and Van Kley who gave elaborate descriptions of all the topics the padres described.

<sup>52</sup> See for example Roberta Bivins, *Acupuncture, Expertise and Cross-Cultural Medicine* (Hampshire 2000).

Thus, this study researches the influences on the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap* by asking the question: which different factors influenced the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap* and how were these factors intertwined, connected and overlapping with one another? To be able to answer this question, the first chapter provides some insights in the social and cultural changes in China that led to the approval for a Dutch embassy in 1655-57. It demonstrates that several developments in China led to this possibility, highlighting China's powerful position. Moreover, the activities of other Western powers in the Empire were also important. As such, the first chapter gives an overall view of the intercultural relations between China and European powers until the end of the journey of the embassy. The second chapter puts the emphasis on previous literature on China and how these different sources influenced each other and later *Het Gezantschap*. In the third chapter multiple arguments are made and provide the bulk of this thesis. This chapter argues how Johan's report influenced Hendrik in the compilation of *Het Gezantschap*. This comparison also introduces some new insights on the compilation of the *Het Gezantschap*. In addition, the third chapter provides an argument how China affected its own representation in the publication. When all the different factors of influence are named, it is analyzed through a thematic, comparative lens how they affected the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*. Lastly, a conclusion is formed in which the research question is answered and an overview is provided of the new insights that this paper could bring to the study of proto-sinology and Orientalism.

## Chapter one: The Gateway(s) into China

To come to an understanding of the power balance between the Dutch and the Chinese in the embassy of 1655-1657, the exchanges between China and Westerners and domestic social ruptures in China and Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth century are important. In the following section the focus will shift multiple times from internal affairs in China and Europe and the effects these had on the international contacts. The narrative below will show time after time that in the exchange between China and the West, China was the gate-keeper, deciding who was allowed and who was refused to enter. Europeans could better obey to the Chinese legislations if they wished their endeavors to be successful.

The official entry into the empire was through the institute of paying tribute to the Chinese emperor. The tribute payment can be described as a 'set of institutional structures that provided an overarching framework for organizing external relations among political actors in early Modern East Asia.'<sup>53</sup> However, due to social and political changes, the paying of tribute changed over the centuries, but in the sixteenth and seventeenth century it was the only official way to enter the Chinese empire and conduct trade with it. As such, the Dutch were confronted with this custom when they reached the shores of the empire in the beginning of the seventeenth century. To place the Chinese response towards foreigners into context, I will first provide an overview of the Chinese tribute history.

### *Tribute in Chinese history*

The basic notions of the Chinese worldview are needed to understand the role of tribute in Chinese history. The Chinese regarded their country as the center of the world and named it the 'Zhongguo' (Middle Kingdom). The emperor was regarded as the 'Son of Heaven,' and believed to rule with the mandate and authority of heaven. As the mandate of heaven was admitted to the Chinese emperor, he was regarded as the ruler of mankind and China as the center of civilization.<sup>54</sup> Foreigners were all regarded as barbarians: people who could not read or write Chinese and whose culture was not based on Confucianism and its ancient canonical texts.<sup>55</sup> Although all foreigners were inferior, different levels of barbarity were ascribed to them. The more Sinicized<sup>56</sup> cultures were the less inferior, the less Sinicized cultures were more inferior. As example, the nomadic tribes of the North of China were regarded more inferior than the Korean people. Despite this strong notion of China as hegemon and superior to any other, the empire did not show strong expansionistic tendencies and did not look for military control over other states. The acknowledgment of the superiority of Chinese culture was the most important aspect of the Chinese worldview.<sup>57</sup> An important aspect of this policy towards

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<sup>53</sup> However, Kang based his argument on the tributary relations between China and the other 'Sinic' states: Korea, Vietnam, Japan. Therefore, his conclusion does not always fit the experiences and viewpoints of Western embassies, and especially not Western states. David C. Kang, *East Asia before the West, Five centuries of Trade and Tribute* (New York 2010) 81.

<sup>54</sup> D.E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West* (Plymouth 2009) 4-5.

<sup>55</sup> The notions of barbarians and civilization changed over time and a fixed definition was never established. Despite this, the view of Confucian culture as dominant and superior remained eminent in the difference between Chinese and non-Chinese over the centuries. Kang, *East Asia before the West*, 30.

<sup>56</sup> Closer to Chinese culture.

<sup>57</sup> Kang, *East Asia before the West*, 29-33, 83- 90.

the outside world was the paying of tribute to the Chinese emperor, an institution that is of high importance for this study.

The first documents that shows tributary rituals dates from 568 B.C. Over the many centuries these documents continued to be a part of Chinese foreign relations and policies. The ceremonies, conducts and rules accompanying the paying of tribute to the Chinese emperor were altered many times during Chinese history, due to social, cultural and political changes on a national and international level. Despite this flexibility, on many occasions the rituals and rules of the tribute system were also indebted to past traditions. Especially new dynasties based their treatment of tribute bearers on previous customs.<sup>58</sup>

The tributary framework was of importance in general foreign relations and diplomacy. Afresh, the importance differed over time, in many cases international policies were no part of the tribute system, only from 1425 to 1550 during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) were all forms of international contact restricted to a tributary framework. Despite these changing roles, the paying of tribute to the emperor was a means to confirm the international relationships in East-Asia.<sup>59</sup> Although international politics were subject to change, the Chinese decided how they responded to these changes and consequently controlled the entry of foreigners into the empire and their access to Chinese goods and trade.<sup>60</sup>

In general, a tributary mission went as follows. The assigned embassy provided an official letter in which they proclaimed themselves as tributaries - or were given this role by the Chinese themselves because of earlier embassies - and asked to travel to the capital to pay tribute to the emperor. The embassies would start their tributary journey from assigned ports or border cities. In some instances foreigners were allowed to trade in the assigned port upon their arrival, during the time their embassy travelled to the capital or after its return. The Chinese court paid for the journey of the delegates, the transport of their goods and even ascribed them with a Chinese entourage of soldiers, officials and servants. The delegation would travel a standard route, on which they would be awaited and welcomed by several local officials of assigned cities. The lodges of the envoys would be appointed to them, which they were not allowed to leave without permission. Upon their arrival in the capital the delegation had to take part in several ceremonies and was obliged to many conducts. The most important one was the audience with the emperor. After the party had delivered their gifts to the Son of Heaven, the Chinese court would repay them with more valued gifts and inform them on when they were allowed and expected to pay tribute again.<sup>61</sup>

The Asian states understood this structure and generally obliged to it. When the Europeans arrived at the Asian seas and tried to establish trade relations with the Chinese empire, they were confronted with a century-old legacy of handling international relations through tribute missions. A legacy in which the Chinese were the gatekeeper and had full control of foreign trade and the entry into the empire. To emphasize Chinese control and how that changed through time, the next section will focus on the history of the interchanges between China and the Portuguese and Jesuits, the first West-

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<sup>58</sup> John E. Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions, Dutch and Portuguese Envoys to K'ang-hsi, 1666-1687* (Cambridge 1984) 5-21; Kang, *East Asia before the West*, 53-81.

<sup>59</sup> Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions*, 53-81; Kang, *East Asia before the West*, 53-81.

<sup>60</sup> Excluding the conquests of nomadic tribes which pillaged the northern borders of the Chinese empire. Kang, *East Asia before the West*, 10-11, 139-153.

<sup>61</sup> This is a generalized portrayal of the tribute system, for a more nuanced version and a depiction of its many alterations I refer to the books of Kang, *East Asia before the West*, 11-14, 54-81; Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions*, 25-39.

erners who tried to gain a foothold in the Middle Kingdom. These endeavors were of great influence of the later communication between China and the Dutch and the eventual embassy of 1655-1657.

### ***The Portuguese and the Jesuits' entry into the Middle Kingdom***

In the years 1425 to 1550 the strictness of the paying of tribute was at its height in Chinese history. It was strongly bureaucratized and the ceremonial supremacy of the emperor, the Son of Heaven was strongly enforced and guarded. Foreign relations and diplomacy were reduced to only tributary forms, all rulers who wished to communicate formally with the imperial court had to acknowledge that they were subordinates of the Son of Heaven. Trade was only allowed in connection with embassies and strict rules on the frequency of embassies, the size of their suites, and the presents they were to bring and would receive, were enforced. Although it differed per emperor how strict these rules were followed, international trade that was not connected to an embassy was officially not allowed.<sup>62</sup>

The trade restrictions caused many problems in the province Fujian in the south-east of China. This province had been responsible for a large amount of the South-Asian trade and many of its inhabitants depended on the maritime trade for their income and survival. After the stricter trade regulations of 1425 the Fujianese were only allowed to handle the trade overseas between South and North China.<sup>63</sup> This led to a sharp decline of the local economy and resulted in much poverty.<sup>64</sup> As a consequence, privateering and illegal trade, in which the inhabitants cooperated with Japanese, became a lucrative business.

This was the state of affairs in which Portugal first came into contact with the Middle Kingdom. Portugal had started to explore the New World and the Asian seas at the end of the fourteenth century and arrived in China in 1514 for the first time. From 1514 to 1522 the Portuguese tried to establish trade relations with China. An embassy even reached the capital Beijing in 1522, only to be sent away with a trade prohibition.<sup>65</sup> Despite the failure of commencing trade with China, in 1542 the Portuguese arrived in Japan, which was trading illegally with Fujianese merchants. The Portuguese managed to find a small, but lucrative role in this illegal endeavor and in this way stayed close to China to await a new possibility to establish trade relations.<sup>66</sup>

In the first decades that the Portuguese roamed the Asian seas, Chinese court officials realized that the strong trade embargo was responsible for all the privateering in the Fujian province. Therefore, in the 1540's- 1550's regulations were softened and in 1567 a carefully limited and controlled maritime trade of Chinese ships in Fujian was legalized.<sup>67</sup> Ships were allowed to trade with other South-Eastern Asian countries – with the exception of Japan – by means of trade passes provided by the court.<sup>68</sup> It was in

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<sup>62</sup> John E. Wills, Jr., 'Maritime Europe and the Ming', in: John E. Wills Jr. (ed.), *China and Maritime Europe, 1500-1800, Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy and Missions* (Cambridge 2011) 24-77, 24-25; John E. Wills Jr., 'Introduction', in: John E. Wills Jr. (ed.), *China and Maritime Europe, 1500-1800, Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy and Missions* (Cambridge 2011) 1-23, 7.

<sup>63</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 22-24.

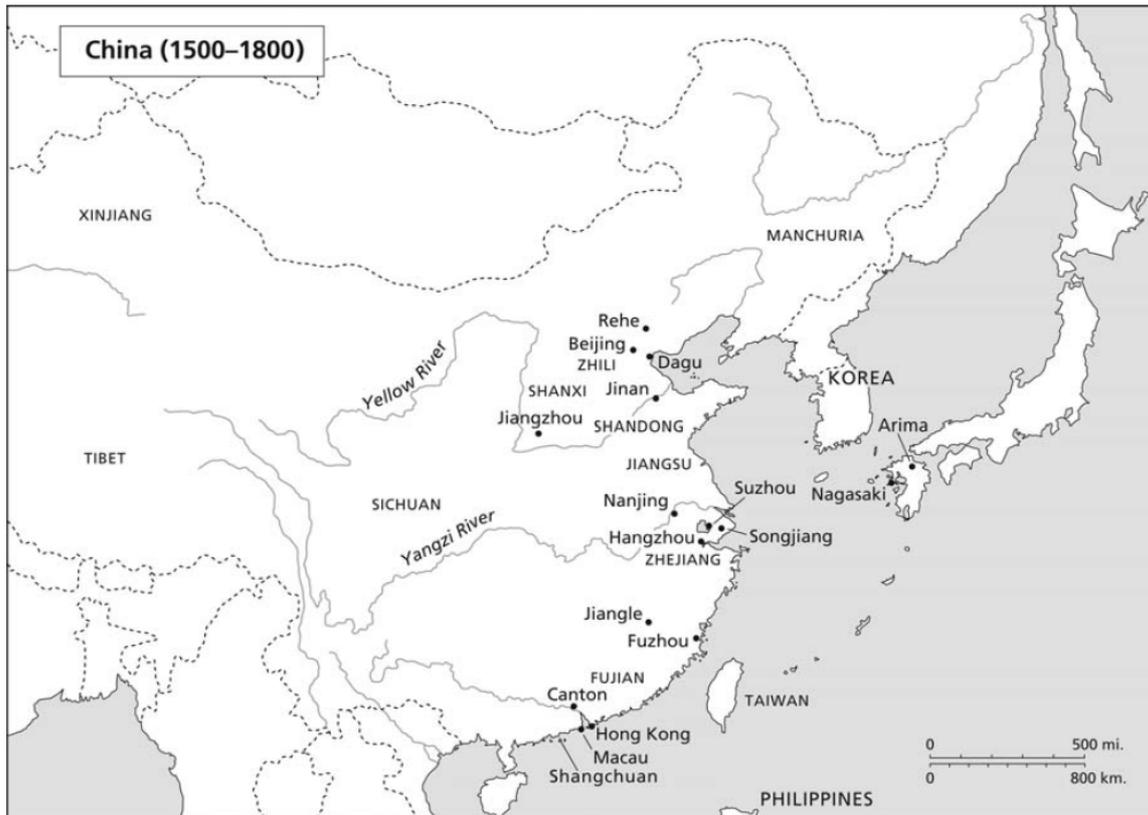
<sup>64</sup> Urs Bitterli, *Cultures in Conflict, Encounters between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492-1800* (Cambridge 1989) 140.

<sup>65</sup> Wills, Jr., 'Maritime Europe and the Ming', 24-31.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem, 32-37.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, 30-40

<sup>68</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 22-24.



**Figure 3.** Map of China (1500-1800) Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West* (Plymouth, 2009)

these changing circumstances that the Portuguese overcame the legacy of their first rupture in the 1520's and worked out an astonishingly useful and durable accommodation of Chinese and Portuguese interests: Macau.<sup>69</sup> In 1557 the Portuguese were allowed to settle on this peninsula, which was about ninety miles from Canton, the capital of the province of Guangdong.<sup>70</sup>

The position of the Portuguese in Macau is a good example of how in the later Ming dynasty the strict enforcement of the tribute system was softened and new ways of cooperating with foreign states were found. Moreover, the Portuguese were given this chance by local officials, who were aware of the profits they could make by trading with the Portuguese, emphasizing the importance of personal actions and favors of local officials.

The Portuguese inhabitants were restricted in their freedom of movement. The inhabitants were not allowed to move beyond the nearby surroundings, which was enforced by a construction of a wall and gate in 1573. This 'Circle gate' (Porta do Cerco) separated the Portuguese settlement from the Chinese mainland. As the Portuguese were not allowed to pass the gate without Chinese permission, China's metaphorical role as gatekeeper became literal. Commercial dealings were limited to Macau or the nearby surroundings. Only high Portuguese officials were sometimes invited to visit Canton to consult with the local elite, but they were only allowed to visit for one day. The decision-making power was almost entirely in the hands of resident merchant oligarchs, who

<sup>69</sup> Wills, Jr., 'Maritime Europe and the Ming', 35.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, 38.

with a vested interest in the long-run survival and prosperity of Macau, knew that the settlement was completely at the mercy of the Chinese state.<sup>71</sup>

Despite the strong restrictions, much profit was made with Chinese trade and the town prospered.<sup>72</sup> Much of the Portuguese revenue came from the trade between China and Japan. Despite the softening of trade restrictions for the Fujianese, it was still forbidden for the Chinese to trade with Japan, but the illegal commercial ties and Portugal's role in it endured. Portugal bought goods – mainly silk – from China and sold this for silver in Japan. Because silver was more highly valued in China, the Portuguese could buy larger amounts of silk with the silver from Japan, which would be sold in Europe again.<sup>73</sup> Besides Portugal, Spain had also entered the seas between China and Japan. Around 1570, Spain had set up a base in Manila on the Philippines and also started to trade with the Chinese. In this period the flow of silver from the America's just started to increase, which enabled Spain to buy much silk from China.<sup>74</sup> As such, Spain and Portugal had found their way into the inter-Asian trade.

Macau was not only the Portuguese access into the inter-Asia trade, it was also the point of departure for the China mission of the Society of Jesus. The Society was founded in 1540 by Ignatius Loyala (1491-1556) and its members received the name 'Jesuits.'<sup>75</sup> The establishment of the society was closely linked with the counter-Reformation. The Order wanted to strengthen Catholicism, but at the same time it broke with some conservative doctrines. The Jesuits did not hold on to a monastic life, but instead chose an active life in the outside world to serve God.<sup>76</sup> When the Portuguese had made successive appeals to the Pope asking for missionaries for the Portuguese East, Francis Xavier – one the founding members- heeded this call. He established missions in India and Japan and died in 1552 on an island nearby the coast of China, with 'the greatest prize just out of reach.'<sup>77</sup>

Next to Xavier's decision to focus on missions outside Europe, another major form of apostolate of the Order was education. An easy target for Protestant anti-Catholicism propaganda was the ignorance of clergy, thus the Order set out to educate their members to the highest levels. Another reason to focus on education was that the mission was completely dependent on patronage and protection of the European elite for the founding of colleges and financial support for the missions around the world. A means to attract the European nobility to the Jesuits' cause was by showing that the Jesuits were intellectually superior to other Orders and teachers. The erudite and intellec-

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<sup>71</sup> For example, in 1617 a full set of regulations was engraved on a stone tablet, which was set up in front of the hall of the Loyal Senate. This engraving mentioned five points: (1) Macau must not harbour Japanese. (2) The buying of Chinese people is forbidden. (3) All ships, including warships, must pay duties and must come into Macau's Inner Harbor; anchoring and trading in the outer islands are strictly forbidden. (4) Trade must be conducted at Canton, not at Macau, and duties on goods must be paid there. (5) New construction in Macau is strictly forbidden; old structures may be repaired or rebuilt to match their previous condition. Wills Jr., 'Maritime Europe and the Ming', 41-44, 48.

<sup>72</sup> Bitterli, *Cultures in Conflict*, 134-136, 140-147.

<sup>73</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York 1999) 19-20.

<sup>74</sup> Wills, Jr., 'Maritime Europe and the Ming', 51-55

<sup>75</sup> Liam Matthew Brockery, *Journey to the East, The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (London 2007) 2.

<sup>76</sup> Peter M. Engelfriet, *Euclid in China, a survey of the historical background of the first Chinese translation of Euclid's Elements (Jihe yuanhen; Beijing, 1607), an analysis of the translation, and a study of its influence to 1723* (Dissertation, Leiden 1997) 22.

<sup>77</sup> Brockery, *Journey to the East*, 2; Gerhard F. Strasser, 'The Impact on the European Humanities of Early Reports from Catholic Missionaries from China, Tibet, Japan between 1600 and 1700', in: Rens Bod, Jaap Maat and Thijs Weststeijn (ed.), *The Making of the Humanities, Volume II, From Early Modern to Modern Disciplines* (Amsterdam 2012) 185-208, 187.

tual superiority of the padres, the emphasis on attracting support from the elite of society and the foreign missions together became the trademarks of the Society of Jesus in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.<sup>78</sup> It also led them to the shores of the Chinese empire.

The Jesuits' involvement with the Portuguese East Indies brought the Order to Macau and them involved in the Portuguese attempts to gain access into the Chinese empire. Some Jesuits quickly understood that in order to be able to enter the Chinese empire, they had to adapt themselves to the Chinese modes of conducts. From 1579 the first Jesuits started to learn to speak and write Chinese. Their efforts proved fruitful, as in 1583 two Jesuits were allowed to take residence in a Buddhist temple in Zhaoging, in the province of Guangdong.<sup>79</sup> A Buddhist temple was ascribed to them because the Jesuits had begun to wear Buddhist-style robes and shaved their heads. Since they appeared as foreign Buddhist monks, they were assigned the 'literal and cultural space' for Buddhists in Chinese society.<sup>80</sup>

Although the Jesuits' Buddhist clothing style had provided access into the empire, in the 1590's on the advice of befriended Chinese literates, the Jesuits started to dress themselves as Confucians. Confucianism was associated with the higher strata of Chinese society: the nobility and high-educated and well-read literati. The Jesuits noticed that by presenting themselves as Confucians their prestige greatly increased.<sup>81</sup> Martino Ricci, the most influential Jesuit of the early China mission even wrote: 'Thus, it was better now to proceed confidently as though we were in fact men of China.'<sup>82</sup> Just as in Europe, the Jesuits sought support from the elite for their mission. The only difference with European nobles was that instead of financial support, they searched for support to take residence in China and of course to Christianize the Chinese. The Jesuits believed that a top-down conversion should facilitate mass baptisms in China.<sup>83</sup> The change of style and attitude gained the Jesuits prestige in Chinese society and opened new possibilities for the mission of the Society. In 1601 Ricci, as the first Jesuit, was allowed to take residence in the capital Beijing.<sup>84</sup>

Ricci experienced that besides presenting himself as Confucian, the Chinese officials and literati were very interested in Western natural sciences, especially mathematics. Already in the 1580's, the Jesuits had brought prisms, clocks and spheres as gifts with them for Chinese officials.<sup>85</sup> Ricci quickly realized that his Western mathematical instruments and clocks aroused curiosity and interest among the Chinese higher classes. In a letter to Rome in 1605 he wrote:

Because of my world-maps, clocks, spheres, astrolabes, and the other things I do and teach, I have gained the reputation of being the greatest mathematician in the world, and without any astrology book (*libro di astrologia*), I am able to predict eclipses with the

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<sup>78</sup> Engelfriet, *Euclid in China*, 22-24.

<sup>79</sup> Willard J. Peterson, 'Learning from Heaven: The Introduction of Christianity and Other Western Ideas into Late Mind China in: John E. Wills Jr. (ed.), *China and Maritime Europe, 1500-1800, Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy and Missions* (Cambridge 2011) 135-182, 88.

<sup>80</sup> Engelfriet, *Euclid in China*, 74.

<sup>81</sup> Peterson, 'Learning from Heaven', 88.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, 88.

<sup>83</sup> Strasser, 'The Impact on the European Humanities of Early Reports from Catholic Missionaries from China, Tibet, Japan between 1600 and 1700', 193.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, 90.

<sup>85</sup> Engelfriet, *Euclid in China*, 73.

aid of some Portuguese ephemerides and catalogues more accurately than they (his Chinese hosts).<sup>86</sup>

He continued his letter with an explicit plea that more Jesuits who were proficient astronomers and mathematicians should be sent to Beijing. The Jesuits' astronomy was regarded high by the Chinese and Ricci and later Jesuits were asked several times to assist in a calendar reform.<sup>87</sup> Ricci believed that: '...undertaking the task of correcting the calendar would enhance our reputation, give us freer entry into China, and assure us of greater security and liberty.'<sup>88</sup> The latter also implied the realization that through mathematics Ricci could establish himself and his fellow Jesuits as great men of learning, just as in Europe. The Jesuits were convinced that as the Chinese would esteem their intellect highly, the Chinese would be attracted to Catholicism and it would enhance the opportunities of all Jesuits to propagate it in the Chinese empire.<sup>89</sup>

In addition, the Jesuits saw a close connection between mathematics and Christianity, by means that the first was a way to deduce the second. Armillary spheres, for example were used to demonstrate that the construction of the universe was structured as taught by Ricci. As one could accept thinking in that structure or deduce its factual truths through mathematics, one might also accept the premise that it was made by the creator: the Christian God. From that standpoint, Ricci could expound on other, more spiritual attributes of the Christian God.<sup>90</sup> Or to use Peter M. Engelfriet words: 'A few self-evident first principles allowed the deduction of a more complicated, deeper, theorems, which in turn leads to still deeper and subtler level of reality.'<sup>91</sup> As such, the objective of convincing Europeans and Protestants of the truths of Catholicism by means of advanced studies and high intellectual knowledge had found its way to the Middle Kingdom and proved to find fertile grounds there.

When Ricci died in 1610, several other Jesuits were already present in the empire and were consolidating their position in Chinese society as men of great learning. During the seventeenth century many more padres of which some were proficient mathematicians would follow.<sup>92</sup> One of them was Adam Schall von Bell (1592-1666), who would become the next great Jesuit in the seventeenth-century China mission.<sup>93</sup>

Despite the success of the mission, the Order's connections with Macau was ambivalent throughout the seventeenth century. On the one hand, it distanced itself from the settlement because the Chinese that lived nearby Macau were not always commendable about the Portuguese, on the other, Jesuits were used in trade negotiations and profited from these encounters themselves too. Additionally, Macau was the mission post from which Jesuits and flows of revenue for the missionaries entered the Empire. As such, although it differed per individual Jesuit, occasion and time, the Jesuits and Macau were bound together in their efforts to keep their position in China.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Peterson, 'Learning from Heaven', 100.

<sup>87</sup> Engelfriet, *Euclid in China*, 76-77; Peterson, 'Learning from Heaven', 129-132.

<sup>88</sup> Peterson, 'Learning from Heaven', 100.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*, 100, 105.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*, 99.

<sup>91</sup> Engelfriet, *Euclid in China*, 67.

<sup>92</sup> Peterson, 'Learning from Heaven', 129-132.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, 125-129; Strasser, 'The Impact on the European Humanities of Early Reports from Catholic Missionaries from China, Tibet, Japan between 1600 and 1700', 195-198.

<sup>94</sup> Wills, Jr., 'Maritime Europe and the Ming', 40-65.

## ***The long journey of the Dutch to the emperor of China***

When the Dutch tried to gain a foothold in China they not only had to find their way through the many Chinese customs and traditions and individual efforts and vagarious actions of local elites, they also were thwarted in the cooperation between the Macau merchants and some Jesuits who wanted to stop every means of the Dutch to enter the China trade.

As the Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach Asia by sea, they had the trade monopoly on Asian goods and spices on the European markets in the sixteenth century. Other European states did not have the ability or were forbidden to sail to Asia and trade in its ports. The latter was due to the treaty of Tordesillas (1494). This treaty divided the world in a western and eastern hemisphere, with the demarcation line being placed 370 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands.<sup>95</sup> All undiscovered non-Christian lands in the Western hemisphere were to become Spanish possessions, while the non-Christian lands in the east were ascribed to Portugal.<sup>96</sup> The only exception was Manila, where the Spanish set up a trade base in the sixteenth century.<sup>97</sup> The Netherlands were also bound by the treaty of Tordesillas, because they were a part of the Spanish empire.<sup>98</sup>

In the last decades of the sixteenth century a revolt broke out in the Netherlands, which declared its independence of Spain in 1579 and declared themselves a Republic.<sup>99</sup> As such, the Dutch were no longer bound by a political contract which declared the Asian trade and seas to Portugal. When the Dutch declared their independence from Spain war broke out between the two factions. Antwerp, the staple market of Europe was captured in 1585 by the Spanish, who brutally pillaged the city, putting an end to the important mercantile role it had had in the sixteenth century. Many former residents of Antwerp fled and settled down in Amsterdam, bringing with them much capital and international trade contracts which created the availability of capital to finance maritime expeditions to Asia.<sup>100</sup>

The dependence on others for their supply of pepper and the possible high profits that could be gained because of high prices were the stimulation for Dutch merchants to find their own way into Asia.<sup>101</sup> From 1595 to 1602 several different small companies that were formed found their way to the Asian spice markets. These companies were mostly set up for one expedition and were meant to be dissolved after the return of the fleet and the distribution of the profit.<sup>102</sup> The different companies had military clashes with the Portuguese and also competed with each other for a monopoly in the spice trade. Because of this internal competition and fragmentation the cost prices of the spices increased, while the bidding prices decreased in the Republic because of the high supply. Henceforth, the profits of the different companies decreased over the years.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 26-28.

<sup>96</sup> Strasser, 'The Impact on the European Humanities of Early Reports from Catholic Missionaries from China, Tibet, Japan between 1600 and 1700', 186.

<sup>97</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 26-28.

<sup>98</sup> Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, A century of Advance, book one: trade, mission and literature* (Chicago 1993) 40.

<sup>99</sup> Maarten Prak, *De Gouden Eeuw, het Raadsel van de Republiek* (Amsterdam 2012) 25-29.

<sup>100</sup> Els M. Jacobs, *Varen om Peper en Thee, Korte Geschiedenis van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (Zutphen 1991)

<sup>101</sup> Femme S. Gaastra, *De Geschiedenis van de VOC* (Zutphen 2007) 13-15.

<sup>102</sup> Ibidem, 20.

<sup>103</sup> Jacobs, *Varen om Peper en Thee*, 12.

Because of the decrease of revenues, politics got involved and attempts were made to unite competing companies. In 1600 and 1601, some large companies fused, but other smaller companies were still formed. The problem of internal competition was therefore still not solved. Eventually, in 1602 the States-General, the highest governmental institute of the Republic intervened and unified the last competing companies.<sup>104</sup> In 1602 the United Netherlands Chartered East India Company (VOC) was founded. The VOC got the exclusive right to trade in the East, also including the regions that were suffrage of Spain and Portugal.<sup>105</sup> The company was enforced by the States-General to start settlements, set up contracts, administer justice, build forts and to engage in war.<sup>106</sup> The policy of the company would be decided by the 'Gentlemen Seventeen.' A board consisting of changing representatives of different chambers<sup>107</sup> that would meet three times a year.<sup>108</sup>

### *Reading China's modes of conducts*

The first encounter between Dutch and Chinese occurred in the port of Bantam, Indonesia in 1596, before the formation of the VOC. The Dutch merchants had learned that the Chinese merchants preferred to trade in a port closer to China. They concluded that if they wanted to compete with the Iberians in the Chinese trade they needed to establish a base in or nearby China.<sup>109</sup> The VOC, therefore saw it as one of its goals to pursue trade with the Chinese empire.

In the first decade of the seventeenth century the Dutch made several attempts to trade or set up a contract with the Chinese empire or local merchants and officials. All pursuits failed, due to miscommunication with Chinese representatives or because of threats of the Portuguese.<sup>110</sup> Due to this and other disappointing results in the rest of Asia the Board of the VOC came up with three new objectives. First, to keep an overview of the many expeditions and ventures of the VOC in Asia, a governor-general and an assisting council should be appointed. Secondly, a secure base had to be established that could function as staple market and rendezvous point for the multitude of ships and fleets. Lastly, the VOC should focus even more on establishing a trade monopoly in Asia. The last option had to be obtained by taking maritime control of the flourishing inter-Asian trade.<sup>111</sup>

These objectives affected the Dutch stand towards China in two ways. Firstly, in 1619 the city of Batavia was founded on the island of Java. In 1621 it was declared by the VOC board as the capital, the political power base and the staple market of the Dutch Indies. During the seventeenth century all the efforts of the VOC would be supervised from Batavia, from which its successes and losses would be reported to Gentlemen Seventeen in the Republic.<sup>112</sup> For example, the first contacts between China and the VOC on

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<sup>104</sup> Gaastra, *De Geschiedenis van de VOC*, 19-20.

<sup>105</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 42-43.

<sup>106</sup> This charter was endowed for twenty-two years, and would be reinforced in 1623, 1647, 1672 and 1696. Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, A century of Advance, book one: trade, mission and literature* (Chicago 1993) 64; Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 42

<sup>107</sup> Amsterdam, Zeeland, Rotterdam, Delft, Hoorn and Enkhuizen. Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book one: trade*, 45.

<sup>108</sup> Gaastra, *De Geschiedenis van de VOC*, 21.

<sup>109</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 36-43.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, 45-48.

<sup>111</sup> Gaastra, *De Geschiedenis van de VOC*, 37-39.

<sup>112</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, book one: trade*, 47-49, 54.

a possible embassy were communicated between Canton and Batavia. The embassy itself also set sail for Canton from this port.

Secondly, with the appointment of Jan-Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629) as the Governor-General in 1619 and the foundation of Batavia, the focal point came on the third goal: accomplish a trade monopoly in Asia by taking control of the inter-Asian trade. Coen believed that the VOC missed much profit by being too diplomatic and should aggressively enforce trade relation in Asia and thus also in China.<sup>113</sup> At the moment Coen was appointed, the Iberians were still the middlemen in the silk trade between Japan and China and highly profited from it.<sup>114</sup> Therefore it became the Dutch new goal to hazard this inter-Asian trade by means of piracy and privateering.<sup>115</sup>

In the 1620's-1630's the Dutch tried two times to aggressively enforce trade contracts with the Chinese empire. In 1622-1624, Cornelis van Reijseren was ordered to capture Macau, which failed, after which he pillaged the Fujian coast, captured several Chinese civilians who were forced to build a fort on the Pescadores. After threats of the Chinese the Dutch abandoned their fort, after which they were allowed to settle on the Island of Formosa (Taiwan) which at that moment was not part of the Chinese empire. The governor of Fujian would frequently sent ships packed with silk to Formosa, which the Dutch could trade in Japan. This truce would be kept in force as long as the Dutch would withhold from attacks on the Chinese shores.<sup>116</sup>

The negotiations did give the VOC a place in the China-Japan trade, but they also made them dependent on the provision of Chinese goods to Taiwan, because regular trade was still not allowed. Hence, in the period of 1624-1633 the Dutch tried to force the Chinese again into free trade. Once more, they were defeated, so they finally gave up to violently demand free trade with China and focused on their role as middle men between China and Japan.<sup>117</sup>

### *A new dynasty, a new possibility?*

Meanwhile, during the period the Dutch settled on Formosa, the Chinese Ming-court had been engaged with different issues. From the 1620's the Ming had met opposition from two sides. First, native rebellious groups revolted against the Ming, taking control of several areas and pillaged and looted several cities. Secondly, outside the empire the nomad Manchu tribes were growing in power, taking over Inner Mongolia, subduing Korea and in 1630 arrived near the capital Beijing. The Ming proved incapable of fighting the two enemies and in 1644 the city was taken by a native rebel group causing the Ming emperor to commit suicide which ended the Ming-dynasty. A few months later, with the help of a former Ming-general the Manchu captured Beijing from the rebels and proclaimed the Qing-dynasty with the boy-emperor Shunzi (obedience in rule), formally claiming the Mandate of Heaven. Shunzi ascended the throne, under the regency of his uncle Dorgon (1612-1650).<sup>118</sup>

With the victory of the Manchus and the instalment of the Qing-dynasty the three Western players sought ways to consolidate their position or, in case of the Dutch, im-

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<sup>113</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 49-52.

<sup>114</sup> Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 19-20.

<sup>115</sup> Leonard Blussé, 'De Chinese Nachtmerrie: Een Terugtocht en twee Nederlagen,' in: Gerrit Knaap and Ger Teitler (ed.), *De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, tussen Oorlog en Diplomatie* (Leiden 2002 ) 209-238, 212.

<sup>116</sup> Ibidem, 215-218.

<sup>117</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 56-60.

<sup>118</sup> Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 21-33.

prove it. The Portuguese settlement in Macau was confirmed by the Qing court in 1647 and reconfirmed in 1650, when the Qing army captured Canton from loyal Ming armies. It was hoped that taxes from the Portuguese trade would contribute to the payment of the Qing armies. The Portuguese were not required to send an embassy. The Qing was more occupied with consolidating their regime and there was simply no Ming precedent of a Portuguese embassy.<sup>119</sup>

The Jesuits also easily found their way into the inner circles of the Qing court. The new emperor quickly became convinced of the advances of Western science and technology. After Schall predicted a solar eclipse to the minute in 1644,<sup>120</sup> he was appointed as the head of the Directorate of Astronomy in 1644. His western methods would be unrivalled for the coming twenty years, bringing great prestige to the Jesuits in China.<sup>121</sup> In the meantime, Schall also became a close advisor the Shunzi-emperor.<sup>122</sup> Macau profited greatly from the special relations of Jesuit missionaries with the Shunzhi elite, but equally important – for Jesuits and Portuguese alike – was the interest in Roman Catholicism of high Manchu and Chinese officials and families in Canton.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, the feudatory princes of Canton<sup>124</sup> Shang Kexi and his son Zhixin also were on good terms with the missionaries and the commercial ties with them and their client-merchants brought great profit to Macau in the 1650's.<sup>125</sup>

While the Portuguese and the Jesuits seemed to profit from the new dynasty, the Dutch were not met with so much kindness from the beginning. The new dynasty created the strong Qing-opponent, Zheng Chenggong, also known as Koxinga (1624-1662),<sup>126</sup> who had his power-base in Fujian and maintained his army from the profits he made from trade between China and Japan.<sup>127</sup> In the 1650's he had built up a strong naval force and sometimes attacked Dutch trade ships in order to control the coastal areas and take over Dutch shipping routes and trading profits. This further damaged the Dutch trade in Formosa and the need to establish new trade connections with the mainland became more urgent.<sup>128</sup> When the Jesuit Martino Martini (1614-1661) on his way to Europe arrived in Batavia in 1652, he notified the VOC-officials that the viceroy of Canton had opened trade to the Portuguese and would grant a free entry to any foreigner who

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<sup>119</sup> John E. Wills, Jr., 'Trade and Diplomacy with Maritime Europe, 1644-c.1800', in: John E. Wills Jr. (ed.), *China and Maritime Europe, 1500-1800, Trade, Settlement, Diplomacy and Missions* (Cambridge 2011) 183-255, 186.

<sup>120</sup> Strasser, 'The Impact on the European Humanities of Early Reports from Catholic Missionaries from China, Tibet, Japan between 1600 and 1700', 198.

<sup>121</sup> Peterson, 'Learning from Heaven', 131.

<sup>122</sup> Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 43-44.

<sup>123</sup> John E. Wills, Jr., 'Trade and Diplomacy with Maritime Europe, 1644-c.1800', 186.

<sup>124</sup> They are called 'viceroys' in the European seventeenth-century sources. These viceroys governed their coastal 'estates' with much autonomy from the central government. Especially in stages of the early Qing-regime, the time in which the first Dutch embassy was sent to the emperor. Henriette Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an 'Unpromising Beginning': The First Dutch Trade Embassy to China, 1655-1657', *Modern Asian Studies* 36 (2002) 535-578, 547.

<sup>125</sup> Wills, Jr., 'Trade and Diplomacy with Maritime Europe', 186.

<sup>126</sup> He was the son of Zheng Zhilong, a Ming-general with a strong power base on the Fujian coast from which he controlled the Chinese-Japanese trade. When the Qing had defeated the Ming, he quickly turned sides to the new Qing dynasty. Despite this, he was still executed. His son, Zheng Zhilong refused to join the Qing and because of his loyalty to the Ming dynasty he received the honorary title 'GuoXingye,' he who may wear the imperial surname. In the Fujian dialect this was called 'Koksengya,' which the Dutch degenerated to Koxinga. Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 71

<sup>127</sup> Ibidem, 71.

<sup>128</sup> Sun, *The Illusion of the verisimilitude*, 51-52.

wanted to commence in trade with China.<sup>129</sup> Due to the declining trade profits of Taiwan, it was decided to investigate this claim.<sup>130</sup>

Two Dutch parties were sent to Canton in 1652 and 1653. In the first mission the two feudatory princes, Shang Kexi and Geng Jimao commenced in some trade with the Dutch – which profited both princes - and gave permission for a permanent Dutch residence. But before the Dutch party left in March 1653 this offer was withdrawn, instead they were told they should send an official embassy with gifts for the emperor to request trading privileges. Before a decision about this matter could be made, the authorities in Batavia and the Gentlemen Seventeen had to be consulted. While awaiting this decision, the Dutch on Taiwan sent a new delegation in 1653.<sup>131</sup> Upon their arrival in Canton it became clear that the social atmosphere had changed. One reason for this was that the Portuguese in Canton and Jesuits at the court had been spreading ill rumors about the Dutch since their last arrival in Canton. This had already tempered the possibility of a positive outcome of the new visit of the Dutch.

Additionally, some internal problems in the Qing regency also affected this change in attitude. The Qing had just recovered from near disintegration after the death of the powerful regent Drogon. Drogon had built up a strong power base in the court during his regency and when he died many Manchu nobles were fighting to fill up the power vacuum he had left behind. The Shunzi-emperor managed to consolidate his hold on the throne and saved the young dynasty from collapsing.<sup>132</sup> One political maneuver was to attract the Chinese court officials to him by adjusting more to Chinese culture. For instance, the Qing had revived some Ming attitudes on foreign relations in 1652. This was due to the initial idea of the Shunzi-emperor to go beyond the Great Wall to meet the Dalai Lama of Tibet on his tour through Mongolia. Chinese officials had convinced the emperor that it would be inappropriate for the Son of Heaven to travel to a tributary ruler instead of letting him come pay tribute at the Chinese court. As such, this event led the Qing-dynasty to reach back to the stricter tribute system of the Ming dynasty.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, the second Dutch delegation was sent home because they did not bring tributary gifts to the emperor which had been appointed to them. It appeared that the only possibility to commence trade with China was through the diplomatic means of an official embassy.<sup>134</sup>

### *The first Dutch embassy to the Qing-emperor*

The narrative of the embassy is on the one hand one of strong traditions, ceremonies and obligations and on the other, one of many secretive bribes, negotiations and personal interests of different players in Canton and Beijing. The Dutch had to obey to strict rules, ceremonies and conducts and were in some cities not even allowed to leave their lodge. As such, the Chinese had full control over what was shown of the empire and had arranged the tribute mission fully by coordinating the route that the party travelled and arranging many lavishly warm welcomes by local officials. Underneath these strong conventions, space was created for bribes and assuring the trust and support of local

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<sup>129</sup> Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions*, 40-41.

<sup>130</sup> Wills, Jr., 'Trade and Diplomacy with Maritime Europe', 186.

<sup>131</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 25.

<sup>132</sup> Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 43.

<sup>133</sup> Wills, Jr., 'Trade and Diplomacy with Maritime Europe, 186-187.

<sup>134</sup> Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions*, 40-41.

officials who could benefit from a lucrative trade with the Dutch. The tribute mission proved to be a slippery road for the Dutch to establish a trade position in China.

After the VOC board had approved to send an embassy to the Chinese emperor to request permission for free trade, an embassy group was organized.<sup>135</sup> The group consisted of two ambassadors: Pieter de Goyer and Jacob de Keizer, two junior merchants; Lenard Lenarsen and Hendrik Baron, six soldiers, a steward; Johan Nieuhof, a doctor, two interpreters, a trumpet-player and a tambourine-player.<sup>136</sup> The embassy left Batavia the fourteenth of July 1655 to arrive near the harbor of Canton on the fourth of September 1655. In correspondence with the Ming precedent tribute system, the Dutch were welcomed by the two viceroys of Canton. According to what the two viceroys had ordered the previous Dutch traders, the embassy had letters of their rulers – in this case of the Governor-General Maatsuiker - with them for the Chinese emperor in which their request was formulated. The viceroys sent a letter to the Libu, the Ministry of Ceremonies, the institution that was in command of handling the tributary missions to ask permission for the Dutch to travel to the capital to pay tribute to the emperor.<sup>137</sup>

The historian John E. Wills Jr. remarked that European sources make clear that the events, politics and negotiations in Canton were as important as what happened in Beijing.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, this was also eminent in the embassy of 1655-1657. During the embassies' stay in Canton the delegation was invited and groomed by the local authorities for several banquets and festivities. At the same time, negotiations had started with the local officials who argued that if the Dutch wanted their mission to succeed, they had to pay a great sum of money to bribe the officials at the court. The Cantonese officials were willing to help the Dutch, because they knew they would benefit greatly from the Dutch trade. Eventually, they established an agreement and the viceroys of Canton sent their agents to the capital to rally support for the Dutch mission. The efforts and personal advantages of the Cantonese elite shows that besides the many rituals and rules of conducts, individual actions also influenced the reception of ambassadors.<sup>139</sup>

It took five to six months for an answer returned from the capital. The answer consisted of two letters, one in which was told that the Dutch were allowed with a company of twenty persons and four translators to travel to the capital,<sup>140</sup> the rest of the group had to remain in Canton and was forbidden to trade their goods there. In the other letter the emperor gave permission for regular trade with the Netherlands, but the Dutch were obliged to travel to the capital to thank the emperor. After a grand banquet given by one of the viceroys in honor of the embassy, the envoys left Canton on the seventeenth of March 1656.<sup>141</sup>

The journey would 'go over water, along the rivers till approximately four miles before Beijing, with exception of the land route of the mountains of Namhung.'<sup>142</sup> The embassy group travelled mainly by means of track boats, pulled by Chinese workers.

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<sup>135</sup> For a more elaborate account of the embassy see: Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an 'Unpromising Beginning', 535-578.

<sup>136</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 27.

<sup>137</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis* 24.

<sup>138</sup> Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions*, 37.

<sup>139</sup> Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an 'Unpromising Beginning', 548-550.

<sup>140</sup> The early Qing-rulers were very strict in limits on the size of the embassies in comparison with the flexibility that many Ming-rulers had showed on this issue. This is probably due to trying to reduce the costs of embassies. Wills Jr., *Embassies and Illusions*, 28; Wills Jr., 'Trade and Diplomacy with Maritime Europe', 185-187.

<sup>141</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 48-55.

<sup>142</sup> These mountains are now referred to as the Nangling mountains. Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 54.

Besides the Dutch members of the embassy, three Mandarins, several Manchu soldiers, rowers, towers for the track boat and boat crew, accompanied the Dutch. To transport the delegation and the gifts, the Chinese state supplied them with a veritable fleet of fifty boats.<sup>143</sup>

Although the group travelled along a set route and the Chinese controlled every aspect of the tribute mission, the Dutch saw much of the Chinese landscape, buildings and cities and experienced much of the imperial infrastructure and organization. The route was not without any dangers or casualties; the Dutch experienced several dangerous rapids, sailed past various dangerous cliffs and a fire in one of the boats broke out.<sup>144</sup> The Dutch also encountered many Chinese pagan practices, of which some horrified them, while others sparked their curiosity.

The seventeenth of July 1656, three months after they left Canton, the embassy arrived in the capital Beijing. They were appointed to their lodge which they were not allowed to leave without permission. The time in Beijing was characterized by the high number of visits of Chinese officials, ceremonies, conversations and misunderstandings. During their stay in the capital the Dutch negotiations started with the Board of Rites. It became clear that the bribes of the Cantonese viceroys had influenced some officials, especially the Manchu-president of the Board. He was a son-in-law of one of the Cantonese viceroys and would probably also financially benefit if the Dutch were given permission to trade with the empire. Unfortunately, the ambassadors found a strong opponent in the Jesuit Adam Schall, who was closely associated with the Shunzhi-emperor. On top of this, Schall was appointed as the interpreter between the Dutch ambassadors and the Board of Rites, giving him much power and influence in the negotiations. Schall believed that the Dutch embassy could seriously damage the Catholic mission in China and the privileged position of the Portuguese, thus he did everything in his power to prevent the Dutch from succeeding.<sup>145</sup>

Meanwhile, the tribute bearers had to abide to the ceremonial facets of their mission. First, the ambassadors had to pay tribute to the imperial seal by performing the *kow-tow*, later they would be allowed to perform this honor to the emperor.<sup>146</sup> Unfortunately the brother of the emperor died and because the mourning period lasted a month, the official audience was delayed. Finally, two months after the embassy's arrival in the capital, on the twenty-second of September 1656 the ambassadors were allowed to pay tribute to the emperor. While the ambassadors expected a meeting with the emperor, the ceremony consisted of performing the *kow-tow* for the emperor, without actually consulting – or even – seeing him. After the ceremony, three banquets were organized for the ambassadors. The first banquet was on the same day as the ceremony, while the second and third were on the fourth and fourteenth of October.<sup>147</sup> During the last banquet the members of the embassy all received several gifts from the emperor. Two days later, on the sixteenth of October, the ambassadors were ordered to come to the imperial court to receive the answer of the emperor. The answer was that Dutch were allowed to pay tribute to the emperor every eight years. During the tribute mission they were not allowed to trade any goods in Canton.

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<sup>143</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 54-55.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibidem*, 37-38, 48.

<sup>145</sup> Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an 'Unpromising Beginning'', 554-568.

<sup>146</sup> A ritual in which the person had to kneel three times, every time bowing their head three times to the object or persons that was being honoured. Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 168.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibidem*, 168-174, 179-183.

Two reasons can be given for this outcome. Firstly, during the stay of the Dutch in the capital Schall had worked hard to persuade – and even bribe - the emperor and indirectly, the Board of Rites to decline the Dutch request.<sup>148</sup> Secondly, the internal politics can partly explain the failure of the Dutch embassy. In 1652-1654 the Qing court had negotiated peace settlements with Koxinga, which eventually had led to no agreement. In the beginning of 1655 the Qing increased their attacks on Koxinga's forces. Additionally they had started with closing down the trade between the areas that were under control of the Qing and Koxinga, which was vital for the latter's income to support his armies. A few days after the Dutch had arrived in the capital, an edict was ordered that forbade all maritime trade with Chinese ships. The Qing must have known that the Dutch and Koxinga occasionally traded and thus wanted to restrict the Dutch-Chinese trade to only tributary forms, to enforce their economic blockade of Koxinga.<sup>149</sup> Thus, the Dutch were only allowed to trade in the framework of the tribute system. When the ambassadors had received the official answer of the emperor, they were ordered to leave the city in two hours, otherwise according to the traditions, they would fall into disgrace.<sup>150</sup>

After this order, the party left the city in a hurry and travelled the same route back to Canton. On the twenty-eight of January 1657 they arrived back in Canton. While their arrival initially created much joy among the local officials, this positive feeling soon disappeared when the Dutch had no gifts for them for the celebration of the Chinese New Year. When one of their interpreters was found murdered in his house, the Dutch realized they had warmed out their welcome and it was time to leave. They left the city on the twenty-first of February 1657 to arrive back in Batavia on the thirty-first of March 1657. They had travelled for twenty months and six days to finally return to Batavia and bring the negative news to their officials.<sup>151</sup>

With the result of the first Dutch embassy to the emperor of China, the long journey of the Dutch had come to an end. In the unfolding of this story, the changing dynamics between the first Europeans that arrived on China's shores in the sixteenth and seventeenth century have proved to be crucial. Changing domestic affairs and individual actions of Chinese officials and noblemen were the gatekeepers (or openers) of China and its markets for the Europeans. The Jesuits proved to be the most successful in entering China. Their willingness to adapt to Chinese culture and the use of their intellect, high education and mathematical expertise made them familiar and cultivated enough to be accepted by the Chinese elite, while at the same time they were appreciated because of their novelty. The Portuguese had been in luck that Cantonese officials realized the financial potential of trade with Portugal. It gave them the possibility to avoid the tribute system and settle for a controlled relationship with the Chinese, which was more fruitful than no relationship with the Chinese. The fact that the Dutch were permitted entry into the empire by the conducts of the tribute system, highlights the influence China had on the access of foreigners into their country and, consequently what these foreigners was shown of the Middle Kingdom.

Although the objective of the Dutch mission was not met, it proved to be an interesting story for the Dutch public. As such, the narrative of the embassy, and therefore the image that Chinese had presented them found its way into the flourishing Dutch

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<sup>148</sup> Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an 'Unpromising Beginning', 563-568.

<sup>149</sup> Wills, Jr., *Embassies and Illusions*, 43.

<sup>150</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 182-183.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibidem*, 192-201, 205.

publishing culture of the seventeenth century. Besides the experiences of the embassy, also other factors should be taken into account to fully understand the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*. One of these factors are the books written about China before the publication of *Het Gezantschap*. These writings will be scrutinized in the next chapter.

## Chapter two: the previous writings about China

*Het Gezantschap* was of course not the first Dutch book written on China. Indeed, it relayed on a corpus of texts in which a clear representation of China was already displayed. To understand the different influences on the story of the embassy, it is important to study the different depictions of the Chinese Empire in the European texts that were published before *Het Gezantschap*. Some of these texts were used to supplement the narrative or were seen as examples or precedents of *Het Gezantschap*.

In several contemporary studies the Dutch texts about the Chinese empire are arranged in two kinds of sources: the writings of the Jesuits and the travel stories of the merchants. These sources are depicted as giving an opposite portrayal of China; the Jesuits created a positive image of the empire, while the merchants portrayed the Middle Kingdom negatively.<sup>152</sup> The difference in portrayal is partly due to the different intentions and experiences of both groups. The Jesuits' objective was to Christianize the Chinese empire.<sup>153</sup> To increase their influence in the empire they partially adjusted themselves to the Chinese way of life and portrayed the empire to the European readers as positive and ready to be converted to the true faith. The merchants, on the other hand, only wanted to open free trade with the Chinese.<sup>154</sup> Their efforts proved to be useless during the seventeenth century, hence the emphasis in their stories was on their difficult negotiations with the Chinese and on the splendor and wealth that trade with this empire could bring. However, in the assimilation and dissemination of the stories from both groups to the European readers, these differences were sometimes neglected, causing travel stories to appear in which descriptions of both groups were combined. As such, it seems the differences between the Jesuits' and merchants' experience was overruled to a certain extent by the seventeenth-century literary culture and by the expectations of stories about China.

As *Het Gezantschap* is also a blend of Jesuits'- and merchants' writings, it was influenced by the Jesuits literature, travel literature and blended stories. To understand these different influences, these different 'genres' of texts are looked into in this chapter. First, a nuance is brought to the usual dichotomy between Jesuits and merchants and their literature, revealing that their contrasting relationship was more fluent than usually portrayed. Secondly, some examples are given of the differences between the Jesuits' writings and the travel literature that refers to China. Thereafter the different combinations of the two sources is depicted. The influence hereof on the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap* will be accounted for.

### ***Mission, trade and publishers***

It is evident in many studies of the last decades that the opposition between the Jesuits writings and that of the merchants is not only made in their portrayal of China, but in general as well. Both groups had a different interest: the mission and free trade. These

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<sup>152</sup> See for example Paul Arblaster, 'Piracy and Play: Two Catholic appropriations of Nieuwof's *gezantschap*', in: Siegfried Huigen, Jan L. de Jong and Elmer Kolfin (ed.), *The Dutch Trading Companies as Knowledge Networks* (Leiden 2010) 129-144; Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book four: East-Asia* (Chicago 1993) 1568-1569; Marcia Reed, 'Bernard Picart on China: 'Curious' Discourses and Images Taken Principally from Jesuits Sources', in: Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob and Wijnand Mijnhardt (ed.), *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion* (Los Angeles 2010) 215-234. 218.

<sup>153</sup> Mungello, *Curious Land*, 15.

<sup>154</sup> Lach and Edwin and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book four*, 1568-1569.

were sometimes regarded as opposites. It is claimed that the Jesuits resisted the Dutch merchants because they would harm the privileged position of the Portuguese in Macau and the Jesuits mission in the Chinese empire.<sup>155</sup> Although there are indeed examples of Jesuits who knowingly tried to forestall the Dutch trade endeavors,<sup>156</sup> there are also many examples in which the two groups worked together.

For instance, in 1652 the padre Martino Martini told the Dutch council in Batavia that the Qing empire was more open to trade with foreigners; giving the stimulus for the Dutch embassy of 1655-1657. Moreover, the VOC had established the fastest and most efficient route of communication between Europe and China. This made the ships of the VOC the most convenient way for missionaries and their mail to travel back to Europe.<sup>157</sup> All these collaborations apparently trumped the religious differences.<sup>158</sup>

The most important cooperation or example in which both groups met no resistance from each other was in the publication of the Jesuits' writings in the Dutch Republic. Several Jesuits travelled from China back to Europe to publish intellectual accounts about the history of their mission, their experiences in the empire and to show their academic reflections on the Middle Kingdom.<sup>159</sup> European savants, kings and noble men were interested in the Chinese empire for intellectual and commercial reasons, while the Jesuits were interested in the savants' financial support for the mission. The Jesuits became the prime suppliers of knowledge on the Middle Kingdom through the publication of their accounts.<sup>160</sup> The perfect place to publish their stories was Amsterdam, the capital of the United Provinces and the new book market of Europe.<sup>161</sup>

In the seventeenth century all the right circumstances had presented themselves for Amsterdam to become the new prime supplier of books in Europe.<sup>162</sup> Firstly, the high trade activity created the money and the availability of low-rated loans required to stimulate book publishing, as it was a capital-expensive enterprise. Secondly, the demise of Antwerp as staple – and book market of Europe had caused many publishers from Antwerp to move to Amsterdam. They brought with them the knowledge, contracts, experience and money needed for a great book market, which therefore found its way to the capital. Thirdly, many travelers – Jesuits and merchants alike - docked in the harbor and brought interesting and important stories to be published with them. Fourthly, the wide availability of primary education had stimulated the rise of the standard vernacular language, giving the Republic a high level of literacy in comparison to other countries and providing a market for books.<sup>163</sup> At the same time, reading and literature became an important part of the culture of the United Provinces. Books became objects of status, and the possession of many of them became a symbol of being well-read and educated.<sup>164</sup> Lastly, many books in Latin and other European languages were published in the

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<sup>155</sup> Arblaster, 'Piracy and Play', 132-134; Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an 'Unpromising Beginning'', 558-564.

<sup>156</sup> The Jesuit Adam Schall used his close relationship with the emperor to make sure the Dutch embassy of 1655-1657 would not achieve their objective: free trade with the empire. Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an 'Unpromising Beginning'', 564-564.

<sup>157</sup> Weststeijn, 'The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries', 210.

<sup>158</sup> Ibidem, 210.

<sup>159</sup> Ibidem, 228-229; Mungello, *Curious land*, 75.

<sup>160</sup> Mungello, *Curious land*, 13-15.

<sup>161</sup> Weststeijn, 'The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries', 210.

<sup>162</sup> Prak, *Gouden Eeuw*, 258.

<sup>163</sup> Marieke van Delft, J.A.H.G.M Bots and Lysbeth Croiset van Uchelen Brouwer *Bibliopolis: History of the Printed Book in the Netherlands* (Den Haag 2003) 96-97.

<sup>164</sup> Van Delft e.a., *Bibliopolis*, 87-89.

United Provinces, thus creating an attractive market for writers who wanted their books to be distributed all over Europe.<sup>165</sup> For example, *Het Gezantschap* was published in Dutch and French in 1665 and later in German and English.<sup>166</sup> All these forces combined made the Dutch Republic the right place for Jesuits and merchants alike to publish their accounts and spread their knowledge across Europe.

Amsterdam, therefore became the birthplace of several of the most important Jesuits' books. The characteristics of the padres' writings were their encyclopedic and descriptive nature, in which many different aspects of the Middle Kingdom were described in a positive manner. Nicolas Trigault (1577-1628) published his *De Christiana expeditione apud sinas* (1615) in Antwerp, while Martino Martini published his *de Bello Tartarico in Sinis historia* (1654) and his *Novus Atlas Sinesis* (1655) in Amsterdam. Moreover, many pirated editions of the Jesuits' letters also found their way to the Dutch presses. These letters were annual reports, requested in 1622 by the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, a Catholic commission concerning the missionary endeavors of the Catholic Church. Officially these letters were restricted in Protestant countries, but pirated editions were widely available. For example, a Dutch translation of Trigault's report on China was published in Den Bosch,<sup>167</sup> which emphasizes the interest of the Dutch elite in the endeavors of the Jesuits and the Chinese empire.

Moreover, the VOC also neglected their objections with the Jesuits when the latter's information proved to be useful for trade. The Gentlemen Seventeen and their merchants themselves were also interested in knowledge that could help them in their commercial endeavors. For example, the board of the VOC even facilitated a library containing Jesuits' books for the embassy of 1655-1657.<sup>168</sup>

In conclusion, the relationship between the Jesuits and the United Provinces, including the VOC and its merchants, was not as contrasted as sometimes was claimed. The Jesuits, or individual padres did not naturally oppose the Protestant United Republic and the VOC when it was deemed useful for the support and success of the mission. Especially concerning the publication of the Jesuits' books. Moreover, the VOC gladly used the detailed Jesuits' information and books when it could help them in their mercantile endeavors. The relationship of the Jesuits with the United Provinces and the VOC proved to be fluid and not a rigid strong opposition.

### ***Travel stories***

There are some studies that confirm the conclusion of the previous paragraph. As such, it is of interest that these studies only study the influence of Jesuits' writings on proto-sinology, and neglect the possible influence of travel stories.<sup>169</sup> In the following paragraph more insight is given into the merchants' writings, to see if this provides clues for the strong opposition that is created in contemporary studies.

Besides the Jesuits' writings on China, the stories of the experiences of Dutch merchants with Chinese also rolled off the presses in the Republic. Their stories contributed to the overall portrayal of China in the Republic.<sup>170</sup> These merchants' accounts were part of a new genre, that rose in popularity in the seventeenth-century Dutch Re-

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<sup>165</sup> Van Delft e.a., *Bibliopolis*, 82-83.

<sup>166</sup> Reed, 'Bernard Picard on China', 223.

<sup>167</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe. Volume III, book one*, 451.

<sup>168</sup> Sun, *The Illusion of verisimilitude*, 75.

<sup>169</sup> Weststeijn, 'The Middle Kingdom in the Low Countries', 213; Mungello, *Curious land*, 39.

<sup>170</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe. Volume III, book four*, 1568-1569.

public: the travel story. This genre was based on the journals and experiences of merchants who had traveled all over the world.<sup>171</sup>

The focus of this study is on the travel stories appertaining to China. These travel stories are usually claimed to have a contrasting portrayal of the Empire with the stories of the Jesuits. This strong dichotomy neglects the wide variety among travel stories, enhancing an image where some travel books were very similar with those of the Jesuits, while others were not.

It proves to be difficult to arrange the many different travel stories, and many historians have come up with different categorizations.<sup>172</sup> Travel stories appealed to a wide audience, varying in wealth and capital, education and intellectual interest. Several studies have shown that publishers had much influence on the eventual texts of publications and were well aware of how to reach their intended audience.<sup>173</sup> Because the audience for travel stories was so diverse, publishers appealed to different readers which led to a great variety between the stories.

This diversity is also found in the travel stories appertaining to the Chinese empire. Addressing the readers with the least to spent was tried with books of a low price, published in small formats and containing almost no images. The wealthiest readers were lured with expensive, lavishly illustrated accounts with many beautiful engravings. In the first group of travel stories the connection to ships journals,<sup>174</sup> through its writing style and navigational information is still evident in the story. In the latter, more detailed, encyclopedic information on China was given during the unfolding of the linear story. For the more detailed and intellectual information, the editors of the travel stories used the Jesuits' writings.

Concluding, as the genre of travel stories was so divers in its portrayal of China, it is interesting that such a contrasting portrayal of Jesuits' and merchants' literature is proclaimed in contemporary literature. In the next paragraph, therefore, the writings of the Jesuits and the merchants on China are compared, to see if the strong opposite portrayal is justified or if this image should be more nuanced.

### ***A new category: intellectual and descriptive travel stories***

The usual dichotomy between Jesuits' stories and travel stories is not unfounded, in the seventeenth century travel stories were already contrasted with scholarly literature. On the one hand, there was a convention that travelers were natural liars,<sup>175</sup> while on the other the merchant was portrayed as an empirical observer, one who was not influenced by previous ideas and information about the lands he encountered. The merchant simply described the outer world as it was, without any presumptions. While, scholars and literary educated men, as the Jesuits, were already influenced by their knowledge of the

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<sup>171</sup> Barend-van Haefen, *Oost-Indië gespiegeld*, 57.

<sup>172</sup> For example, see Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 71-73; V.D. Roeper and G.J.D. Wildeman, *Reizen op Papier, Journalen en reisverslagen van Nederlandse Ontdekkingsreizigers, Kooplieden en Avonturiers* (Amsterdam, 1996) 136-137; Barend-van Haefen, *Oost-Indië gespiegeld*, 57-86. Roeper's ordering is similar to mine. She differentiated between the simple, sensational cheap travel stories, the extensive personal stories and the imaginary travel stories.

<sup>173</sup> Groessen, *De Bry collection of voyages (1590-1634)*; Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt (ed.), *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion* (Los Angeles 2010); Barend-van Haefen, *Oost-Indie gespiegeld*; Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*

<sup>174</sup> Many travel stories originated from journals of merchants, accountants or boatmen in which all important nautical data, important events and relevant information had to be noted by orders of the VOC. Barend-van Haefen, *Oost-Indië gespiegeld*, 58-65.

<sup>175</sup> Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 91; Barend-van Haefen, *Oost-Indië gespiegeld*, 88.

lands they visited and ordered their encounters and new information in an intellectual and prejudiced framework.<sup>176</sup>

The contrast between the uneducated and simple background of the merchants and literary intellectuals, were used as an advantage by editors of travel stories. In the forewords of several travel stories the low status and lack of education of the merchant and the plain writings style of the story were used as an argument for the veracity of the story. Another common trope for truthfulness was the claim that the author was persuaded and encouraged to publish his journal and that he himself never had even considered it.<sup>177</sup>

As such, there was a fickle differentiation made between the veracity of travel stories and intellectual writings. Both could be accused of portraying an altered view of the lands they encountered. Ironically, the arguments that were used against merchants and Jesuits was that the first lacked education, while the latter was too influenced by his education. Nonetheless, it were the Jesuits who had gained access into the Chinese empire and therefore could provide more detailed knowledge of the Middle Kingdom than the merchants.

The Jesuits' literature was very descriptive, giving many details on topics differing from, among others cities, agriculture, religions, philosophy and language. Moreover, it provided critical reflections on these topics. To illustrate this, a short elaboration about the Jesuits' portrayal of religion is given.

The Society of Jesus had ordered the religions practices in China into three 'religious sects': Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Confucianism received the most attention, because it was argued that it shared similarities with Christianity. For instance, many accounts were aimed to show that Confucianism was actually a monotheistic religion and that the pristine knowledge of God had been preserved longer in ancient China than anywhere else. This perspective on Confucianism was used to argue that the Chinese should be easy to convert and used to clarify and support Jesuits accommodation.<sup>178</sup>

The other two sects: Buddhism and Taoism were displayed with far less appreciation than Confucianism. These religions were given less attention and less critical, erudite inquiry. Despite of elaborate accounts on Buddhist rituals and ceremonies, there was no differentiation between the different Buddhist sects. Taoism received a lesser share of attention and was only presented as the enemy of monotheism.<sup>179</sup> The portrayal of Chinese religions in Jesuits' writings showed that the padres gave elaborate, detailed and intellectual inquiries on Chinese devotional practices and presented them in ways that suited their mission and objective. They did so on many others topics as well.

When comparing the descriptive and intellectual writings of the Jesuits with for instance the *Journal* of Bontekoe, (1646) many differences become apparent. The book is almost entirely devoted to the adventures of the Bontekoe and his fellow sailors.<sup>180</sup> One of Bontekoe's wild adventures was his participation in the expedition of Cornelis Reijseren along the coast of the Chinese province of Fujian in 1622.<sup>181</sup> The attention was not given to the different lands, customs and people, but rather to the adventurous

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<sup>176</sup> Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 90-91, 103-104.

<sup>177</sup> Ibidem, 90-91, 104-104; Barend-van Haften, *Oost-Indië gespiegeld*, 87-88.

<sup>178</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book four*, 1731-1753.

<sup>179</sup> Ibidem, 1731-1753.

<sup>180</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe. Volume III, book one*, 472-473.

<sup>181</sup> For the Van Reijseren expedition, see chapter one of this thesis. Thomas Rosenboom, *Het Journaal van Bontekoe, hertaald door Thomas Rosenboom* (Amsterdam 2001) 17-21.

and Christian aspects of the tale.<sup>182</sup> As such, no descriptive information is found in Bontekoe's *Journael*.

Moreover, while the Jesuits were in general very positive about the Chinese culture, people and empire, almost all Bontekoe's reflections on China were negative. In general he depicted the Chinese as cowards and easily intimidated. He even called the Chinese captives on his ship 'lambs':<sup>183</sup> obedient and subordinate. He mentioned several occasions in which the Dutch were greatly outnumbered – between two hundred and five hundred to a thousand – and the Chinese were still easily chased away.<sup>184</sup> Lastly, he accounted an event where the Chinese betrayed the Dutch. He described it as a 'blasphemous abomination,' and even added this verse to the story: 'The world knows no greater woe, than to appear a friend and be a foe.'<sup>185</sup> Thus, the Chinese people did not receive a well-earned verdict from Bontekoe.

In general the Jesuits spoke highly of the Chinese; the Jesuit Alvarez Semedo (1585-1658) attributed them with a high virtue, especially in regard to humility, virginity and chastity in his book *Imperio de la China, I cultura evangelica en el por los religiosos de la Compania de Jesus* (1642). However, this appreciation was solely dedicated to the Chinese literary elite. Merchants and seamen who Semedo only met occasionally were described as shrewd and deceitful. The Jesuit Nicolas Trigault (1577-1628) also described some negative aspects of Chinese and their behavior in his book *De Christiana expeditione apud sinas*. He mentioned the drowning of infant daughters, the castration of young boys and the high suicide rate among the poor.<sup>186</sup>

Trigault also commented on the Chinese treatment of foreigners, especially concerning trade. He was aware that foreigners were not allowed to trade in China and that Chinese subjects were restricted in their foreign trade. He mentioned the traditional tribute missions as the only exception. According to Trigault, even these embassies were treated more like dangerous criminals than respected ambassadors from a friendly country. As such, a negative representation of how the Chinese dealt with foreigners, especially merchants, was also presented in the Jesuit writings.<sup>187</sup>

Lastly, like the Jesuits showed a critical note in their overall glorifying view of the Chinese, Bontekoe mentioned one positive praise about some Chinese prisoners. A few prisoners were released with the promise that they should return with some provision. They actually did return, to the astonishment of Bontekoe, who commented that: 'Which shows a great virtue, shaming to many Christians who, as soon as they are out of trouble, often care little about their promises.'<sup>188</sup> Thus, as the overall depiction of China differed tremendously between the Jesuits and Bontekoe's *Journael*, some small similarities can be found. The usual dichotomy between Jesuits literature and travel stories stands in this comparison. But this was just one travel story, there were actually several other travel stories that share many more similarities with both the Jesuits' and with Bontekoe's portrayal of China.

These stories differentiated themselves from the Jesuits literature in that they were written from the perspective of merchants and based on merchants' stories. While at the same time – in which they differed with Bontekoe's *Journael* – they were greatly

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<sup>182</sup> Barend-van Haefden, *Oost-Indië gespiegeld*, 72-73.

<sup>183</sup> Rosenboom, *Het Journaal van Bontekoe*, 92.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibidem*, 79-103

<sup>185</sup> 'Er is ter wereld geen wreder venijn, dan vriend te schijnen en vijand te zijn.' *Ibidem*, 100.

<sup>186</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book four*, 1622.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibidem*, 1616-1617.

<sup>188</sup> 'Voorwaar een blijk van grote deugd, beschamend voor veel christenen die, zodra ze uit het nauw zijn, zich dikwijls weinig meer om hun belofte bekommeren.' Rosenboom, *Het Journaal van Bontekoe*, 89.

indebted to the padres' writings in their description of the Middle Kingdom. These travel stories appeared in large folio formats, contained several, if not many illustrations and besides the linear unfolding of the merchants' experiences, the story was paused to elaborate on the empire's culture, conducts, cities and more.

As this additional information was taken from Jesuits' literature, a portrayal of China similar to the Jesuits' writings was shown. The use of Jesuits' literature to supplement the narrative was probably due to the superior status of Jesuits as the providers of knowledge about the Chinese empire. The VOC also had its reasons to use the descriptive, encyclopedic literature of the padres. As a mercantile company, it needed support from rich and well-educated men. Therefore, after a few decades of relative secrecy, the board decided to portray itself more as a knowledge provider of faraway lands and allowed the publication of journals of VOC-merchants to be published.<sup>189</sup>

Therefore, the strong dichotomy between Jesuits' literature and travel stories is forfeited in this study. Instead, an extra category is added, called the 'intellectual and descriptive travel story.' As these books were expensive and descriptive, they contrasted with Bontekoe's *Journael* in its low price, small size and emphasis on personal and adventurous experiences. Bontekoe's *Journael* is hereof labeled as an 'adventurous travel story.'

Because the intellectual and descriptive travel stories were a blend of Jesuits' and merchants' writings, they stayed less true to the personal perspectives and experiences of the assumed writers. Instead, they rather reflected the seventeenth-century Dutch expectations of what should be written about the Middle Kingdom or what was assumed the readers wanted to know about the exotic grand empire. As such, it seems that for these stories on one hand the personal touch and adventurous flavor of the genre and the acclaimed impartiality of the merchant of travel stories was used, while at the same time there was the need to satisfy an audience that also yearned for more intellectual depth or elaborate descriptions of the Chinese cities, architecture and landscape. As this is also evident in *Het Gezantschap*, it is accounted as an intellectual and descriptive travel story too.

As the writings of the Jesuits and the adventurous travel stories influenced the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*, previous intellectual travel stories did too. The compilers of these stories chose which views from the merchants or Jesuits they used. This could have influenced Hendrik in his compilation of the story. Moreover, certain style figures accompanied all the texts appertaining to China, such as the styles of writing, the use of illustrations, and even the emphasis on descriptive or adventurous accounts. This influenced the compilation of *Het Gezantschap*. To know how *Het Gezantschap* was influenced by the three groups of texts, more insight is given into the similarities and differences between intellectual travel stories and both Jesuits' writings and Bontekoe's *Journael*.

In both Bontekoe's *Journael* and the intellectual and descriptive travel stories appertaining to China many words were spent on the attempts to conduct trade with the Chinese empire and the Chinese treatment of foreign traders. In general, the merchants were not commendable about these encounters with the Chinese. They displayed their annoyance about the high level of bureaucracy and the many customs and ceremonies that accompanied a possible trade negotiation. The Chinese were regarded as unfriendly, greedy and treacherous.<sup>190</sup> Within the collection *Begin ende voortganch van de Veree-*

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<sup>189</sup> Rietbergen, 'Zover de Aarde reikt', 166.

<sup>190</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book four*, 1568-1569; Rosenboom, *Het Journaal van Bontekoe*, 92, 96-100; Simon Dedoncker, *Een onderzoek naar de aanwezigheid van een hi-*

*nighde Nederlantsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (1645) of Isaac Commelin (1598-1676),<sup>191</sup> was the travel story of Cornelis Matelief. Matelief travelled to Asia in 1605 and arrived at the shores of China in 1607. He tried to establish trade contract with the officials of Canton but failed.<sup>192</sup> Matelief described a particular devious act by a Chinese official as: 'It was as good as a whole chapter out of Machiavelli.'<sup>193</sup> So, in the intellectual and descriptive travel stories, the reports on how the Chinese handled trade negotiations were also negative.

Besides the similar depiction of the Chinese treatment of merchants in the two types of travel stories, correspondence with the Jesuits' portrayal of the Middle Kingdom and their elaboration and praises on Chinese cities, architecture, agriculture, infrastructure and economy was found in the intellectual and descriptive travel stories as well. As example, Van Rechteren mentioned in his report *Journael, Ghehouden door Zeyger van Rechteren: Op zyne gedane voyage naer Oost-Indien* (1635) and reprinted in *Begin ende voortganh*: 'This land is rich of gold, also many pearls and an abundance of silk, full of all kinds of victuals and fruit (...), brew great mead. Beer that lasts for a long time is plenty.'<sup>194</sup> Matelief described that: 'There are the best and smoothest paved roads of all known lands, and (the land) is so completely paved and spread that large roads reach into the mountains.'<sup>195</sup> Both gave a positive portrayal of the Chinese economy and infrastructure that was similar with that of the Jesuits.

Jesuits and the writers of descriptive and intellectual travel literature both also mentioned the high number of vessels and ships in the empire. Jan Huygen van Linschoten described in his *Itinerario, Voyage ofte Schipvaert, van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naar Oost ofte Portugaels Indien* (1596) : 'The land is so full of ships and inland boats and others, in the Rivers and Docks, which makes it a miracle to tell: because affirming that in the harbor and rivers of Canton alone contain more ships and barges than the whole of Spain.'<sup>196</sup> Thus a similar, positive and extensive depiction of China's economy, infrastructure and vessels was given in both Jesuits' books and intellectual and descriptive travel stories.

Despite of these similarities, a small difference is found that reflects the influence of a mercantile perspective. The padre Trigault wrote that the sea-going Chinese vessels were of a much lower quality. Van Rechteren and Matelief mentioned otherwise, they

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erarchie tussen Java, Malakka en China in de perceptie van Nederlandse reisverhalen uit de 'Lange zeventiende eeuw' (Masterthesis History, Gent 2010) 69.

<sup>191</sup> The books consisted of twenty-one separate voyages in two volumes. It became a grand success and went into numerous editions and translations throughout the seventeenth – and the beginning of the eighteenth century. Lach, Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book one*, 461-467.

<sup>192</sup> Blussé and Van Luyn, *China en de Nederlanders*, 45-48.

<sup>193</sup> 't was soo goet als eem capittel yit Machiavel.' Akveld, *Machtstrijd om Malakka*, 41-42, 233.

<sup>194</sup> 'dit lant is seer goutrijck, oock veel peerlen ende overvloet van zijde, vol van alderhande lijftoch ende vruchten (...), brouwen mede seer goet. Bier dat lange dueren kan is vervloedigh.' Dedoncker, Een onderzoek naar de aanwezigheid van een hiërarchie tussen Java, Malakka en China in de perceptie van Nederlandse reisverhalen uit de 'Lange zeventiende eeuw', 70.

<sup>195</sup> 'zijn daer de beste ende effenste ghestraet van alle bekende landen, ende soo wel allesins ghebaent ende vervoeght datter groote wegen tot de gheberghte toelooopen.' Dedoncker, Een onderzoek naar de aanwezigheid van een hiërarchie tussen Java, Malakka en China in de perceptie van Nederlandse reisverhalen uit de 'Lange zeventiende eeuw', 62.

<sup>196</sup> 'Het landt is so vol schuyten ende binnelandsche schepen ende anderen, in die Riviere ende Havens, dat het een wonder is om te vertellen: want affirmeren dat alleenelick inde Haven ende Revier van Canton zijn meer Schepen ende Barcken als in geheel Spaengien.' Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Itinerario, Voyage ofte Schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Linschoten naar Oost ofte Portugaels Indien 1579-1592* (s'Gravenhage 1910) 87.

gave an elaborate positive description of Chinese junks.<sup>197</sup> Thus, although the intellectual and descriptive travel stories were strongly indebted to Jesuits' literature, their mercantile perspective was still present, even in the accounts based on the padres.

Another dominant mercantile perspective is also found in the description of Chinese religions. The Jesuits gave elaborate and critical inquiries about the 'three religious sects' and focused on Confucianism and its correlations with Christianity. The *Itinerario* and Van Rechteren's *Journael* contains similar positive views on Confucianism.<sup>198</sup> For instance, in the *Itinerario* was mentioned that the Chinese also believed in an immortal soul and that one should be punished in accordance to the morality displayed in life.<sup>199</sup> Nonetheless, in the intellectual and descriptive travel stories no differentiation was made between different religions or practices. Instead a more superficial and denounced portrayal of religious practices was given. For example, Linschoten mentioned: 'They worship the Devil at many places, only to avoid that he would cause them harm'<sup>200</sup> In general, when the merchants encountered rituals they did not understand, they tended to react with more emotional repulse and non-understanding than the padres. As example, Matelief displayed a curious, but suspicious attitude towards an indigenous practice, calling it a 'apery' (apenspel) to predict the future.<sup>201</sup>

There were several others similarities and differences between the three types of stories. The point here is that the writers, editors or compilers chose deliberately which aspects to highlight of the Chinese culture or of the personal experiences and verdicts of merchants in their encounter with Chinese. During the unfolding of the seventeenth century and the development of the book industry in the United Provinces, certain themes or style figures reappeared over and over and evolved into topoi. These topoi were present in all three types of literature. In Jesuits' literature, for example, there is repetitious praise of the former capital of Nanjing. In travel literature, the emphasis is put on adventurous stories and the personal experiences, and the intellectual and descriptive literature has a blend of different topoi.

Moreover, although all three categories were influenced by what their ascribed audiences wanted to read, the Jesuits' writings and adventurous travel literature did stay more true to the experiences of the ascribed author. While in the intellectual and descriptive literature, the seventeenth-century literary context and the evolving topoi are more profound. The compilers and writers of the intellectual and descriptive travel stories believed that their ascribed audience expected certain topoi from Jesuits' writings and travel stories.

As *Het Gezantschap* is also an intellectual and descriptive travel story, it is analyzed in the next chapter how and to what extent, Hendrik Nieuhof, the brother of Johan and compiler of the book, was influenced by the topoi of the three categories and the seventeenth-century literary context. When did Hendrik use Jesuits' literature and when did he emphasize a mercantile perspective? Did he follow many of his compilers of previous intellectual and descriptive travel stories in their choices of topoi, or did he make a different selection? In the next chapter first the emphasis will be on two other influences of *Het Gezantschap*. When all different influences have been revealed, it is analyzed how and in which intensity they effected the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*.

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<sup>197</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, book four*, 1615.

<sup>198</sup> Dedoncker, Een onderzoek naar de aanwezigheid van een hiërarchie tussen Java, Malakka en China in de perceptie van Nederlandse reisverhalen uit de 'Lange zeventiende eeuw', 69.

<sup>199</sup> Van Linschoten, *Itinerario*, 90.

<sup>200</sup> 'Zij aenbidden den Duyvel op veel plaetsen, alleenelicken om dat hyse gheen quaet en soude doen.' Van Linschoten, *Itinerario*, 90

<sup>201</sup> Akveld, *Machtstrijd om Malakka*, 216-217.

## Chapter three: the analysis of the different influences on *Het Gezantschap*

Where chapter two demonstrates that the previous writings on China can be seen as influences on the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*, this chapter emphasizes two other potential influences: the report and notes of Johan Nieuhof, the steward of the embassy on which *Het Gezantschap* was based, as well as the influence of China on its own representation. Firstly, I will focus on the report of Johan, secondly on China as an influence. After all the different factors of influences are named, their effect on the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap* is analyzed.

### *Johan's report to the Gentlemen Seventeen and Hendrik's publication*

This study argues that both Johan's report *and* his notes were used by his brother Hendrik and publisher Jacob van Meurs to publish *Het Gezantschap*. Because these notes are missing, the report that Johan handed to the Board of the VOC is the source that is used for this analysis. In the publication of Johan's story it is also unclear what the exact contributions of Hendrik Nieuhof and Jacob van Meurs were.<sup>202</sup> Because Hendrik is mentioned as the editor in the book, he will be held accountable for the textual representation of China in this study, and he will be mentioned as the author or editor.

Hendrik used Johan's report and notes as blueprint for the text. The word blueprint is used here, because of the many quotes that Hendrik used from the report, the almost identical chronological order of both narratives and the navigational structure that is present in both accounts. Nonetheless, when examining the difference in length of both stories, the narrative of the publication proves to be much more extensive.<sup>203</sup> Therefore, Hendrik must have added extra information to the story. When scrutinizing the additional information found in the publication, it is evident that much of it was derived from Jesuits' writings. Several padres are even mentioned by name.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, when comparing the spelling of the city- and village names as written down by Johan and Hendrik, Hendrik used the same spelling as Martini, with only a few exceptions. This makes *Het Gezantschap*, positioning in the larger context of texts concerning China an intellectual and descriptive travel story. Next to Hendrik's use of additional sources to write *Het Gezantschap* there are indications that Johan used secondary sources to write his report as well!

As mentioned in the previous chapter, VOC-merchants brought books with them about the lands and cultures they wanted to conduct trade with. This was also the case

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<sup>202</sup> In general not much is known about the relationship between authors and publishers in the seventeenth century. Sometimes the publisher went looking for copy himself, other times authors or translators offered their writings, and sometimes the publisher wrote the text himself. It appears that in the seventeenth century there was no clear demarcation between the activities of the publisher and the writer. Van Delft. *Bibliopolis*, 73.

<sup>203</sup> The report was a handwriting of 229 pages, while the travel story of the book consists of 208 printed pages, on which the text was displayed in two columns. When comparing the number of words on one page of the handwriting, approximately six of the pages fit on one printed page. Making the report about thirty-eight to thirty-nine printed pages long. Consequently, the text of the travel account in the book is five times as long. Van Meersbergen, 'De uitgeversstrategie van Jacob van Meurs belicht', 77.

<sup>204</sup> For example, Trigault is mentioned in the margins, while Martini is referred to in a positive way in the texts: '...the Jesuit Martinus Martine, (one of eminent erudite and knowledge expert on Chinese Antiquity...'; '...de Jesuit Martinus Martini, (een van uitstekende geleertheit en overvlieger in de kennis der Sineesche Outheden)...' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 5-6.

with the embassy of 1655-1657; in the archives of the VOC one can find that the ambassadors were provided with descriptions and a map of the Jesuit Martino Martini, amongst other documents.<sup>205</sup> Certain information that Johan displayed in his report seem to be based on the writings of Martini.

Martini was the writer of *de Bello Tartarico in Sinis historia* (1654) and the *Novus Atlas Sinesis* (1655), both published in Amsterdam.<sup>206</sup> *De Bello Tartarico* became the most authoritative and best-known description of the Manchu conquest and in general a very influential work in Europe.<sup>207</sup> The *Novus Atlas Sinesis* was published in 1665 by the Blaeu printing house.<sup>208</sup> The book contained seventeen maps: One of the entire Chinese empires, one for each of its fifteen provinces and one of Japan. These were the most accurate maps at that moment and together with Martini's provincial descriptions, it would remain the most precisely and detailed book on China's geography for the coming two centuries.<sup>209</sup> The *Novus* also re-appeared in 1664 in the *Blaeus grooten Atlas* in the volume *D'Atlas van 't uysterste Asia, Of Landt-beschrijving van 't Sinesche Ryck*.<sup>210</sup> Martini's *Novus* comprised over half of the large volume on Asia, thus literally putting China on the map in Europe.<sup>211</sup> As Martini's works were very influential and presented a high level of actuality about the affairs in China, they proved to be very important for the Dutch embassy in general and, apparently, Johan in specific.

At times Johan supplied descriptions in his report of phenomena of which it was very unlikely that he could have encountered them himself, while Martini provided this information in his works. For example, Johan delivered an elaborate descriptive account of the production of porcelain, in which he even mentioned that the technique for producing Jingdezhen porcelain could only be handed down within the family and not to anyone else.<sup>212</sup> In the *Blaeus grooten Atlas*, a very similar depiction of the Chinese production of porcelain is present. Only Martini did not describe how long the clay is baked in the ovens and the supervision of this progress, while Johan did. Martini only mentioned that it is done the same way as in the village Fayence in Italy.<sup>213</sup> So, one can conclude that because Johan did give more information about the production of clay than Martini, it is possible that he heard some details about the process of making porcelain in China from locals or his interpreters. Unfortunately, it cannot be analyzed how truthful Johan's and Hendrik's references were to these providers of information. It could also be a means to enhance the truthfulness of the story. Nonetheless, the fact that interpreters could have provided information which corresponded with Jesuits' literature, and Johan and Hendrik thus could have relied less on the padres' writings that can be expected is accounted in the analysis *Het Gezantschap*. There will be more instances in which the

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<sup>205</sup> Sun, *The Illusion of verisimilitude*, 53.

<sup>206</sup> Edwin van Kley, 'Qing Dynasty China in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Literature, 1644-1700', in W. F. Vande Walle and Noel Golvers (ed.), *The History of the Relations between the Low Countries and China in the Qing Era (1644-1911)* (Leuven 2003) 217-234. 218.

<sup>207</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book four*, 1665-1666.

<sup>208</sup> This was a family business that started in 1600 with the publications of cartographical works and quickly became one of the most famous publishing houses in the United Provinces. Prak, *Gouden Eeuw*, 141.

<sup>209</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book one*, 480-481.

<sup>210</sup> Joan Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, oft, Werelt-beschryving, in welke 't aertryck, de zee, en hemel, wordt veroot en beschreven. Negende stuck der Aerdrycks Beschryving welck vervat Asia en Sina in 't selve gelegen. D'Atlas van 't uysterste Asia, of Landt-beschrijving van 't Sinesche Ryck. Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving welck vervat Sina* (Amsterdam 1664)

<sup>211</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book one*, 480.

<sup>212</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhoofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 40-41.

<sup>213</sup> Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving*, 106.

possible role of interpreters and communication with natives is uncertain. Nonetheless, because of the many similarities with Martini's account, it is still probable that Johan employed Martini's work to supplement his story of the production of porcelain in his report. Other instances in which it is evident that Johan used additional sources to write his report will be mentioned during the analysis of *Het Gezantschap*.

Despite of this, at other moments Johan did not resort to writings of the Jesuits, for example in spelling the city names.<sup>214</sup> It is probable that Johan had reasons to strategically downplay his knowledge on certain topics, while impressing his superiors by giving much information in the case of other subjects. Perhaps he wanted to impress his principals with his mercantile insight, while at the same time he did not want to risk losing the credibility of his writings by making it too obvious that he based some of his report on secondary sources. As such, there is a discrepancy between Johan's attempts to prove he has gained a certain expertise of knowledge available on China, he needs to make it distinctly clear that he was not influenced by these sources and portrayed his own experiences and opinions on the Chinese empire. As such, the fickle differentiation between the veracity of uneducated merchants' writings and prejudiced intellectual Jesuits' knowledge is present in Johan's report. This means that if this was already present in Johan's report, Hendrik must have been under even more pressure to balance Johan's veracity as an empirical, unprejudiced merchant and Johan's beforehand knowledge on China, to be able to prove that *Het Gezantschap* brought new and accurate information. Several indications are found in *Het Gezantschap* that Hendrik indeed struggled with presenting Johan's account as truthful and accurate. For instance, Hendrik also used the truthfulness tropes so common in travel literature by emphasizing Johan's humble backgrounds and claiming that they both were encouraged by others to publish Johan's journal. In the analysis of *Het Gezantschap* the importance of the claim of veracity of Johan's account will be encountered several times.<sup>215</sup>

To make the compilation of *Het Gezantschap* into an even more intricate story about the interchanges of literature, the fact that Johan and Hendrik were indebted to Jesuits' sources brings up the questions of whether Hendrik was involved in the compilation of the report at all. From my analysis of the report and the publication I have deduced that Hendrik had a strong influence in the writing of the report and helped Johan compile it. When Hendrik's use of secondary sources is compared with Johan's indebtedness to other writings, interesting similarities can be seen. The secondary sources correspond in the description of certain events or cities. It could be that Johan's use of these sources inspired Hendrik to do the same or that Hendrik helped Johan out in the compilation of the report. I tend towards the latter, because when investigating the many details that Hendrik used from other sources and the way he added them in the linearity of the travel story – adding small details from numerous sources which fitted or supplemented Johan's descriptions – it becomes clear that Hendrik was a proficient

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<sup>214</sup> In the introduction of his report Johan even apologized for the spelling of the names, saying the following: '...(I) hope that your honors some misspellings and vague commentations, that I due to lack of education and judgment did not realize, will overlook. The origin of the city names other than the capitals, because of my incompetence in the language, I have not been able to ascertain, therefore those (the other cities) in most case will be referred to with significant names.' ; '...hoope dat Uwer EEd. Zommige letterfaaten en onklare reden, die ik door ongeleertheit en gebrek van oordeel niet merke, over 't hooft zullen zien. Den oirsprong van de namen der steden den andre hooftstukken heb ik om d'onkunde van de taal niet konnen vernemen, schoon diezelve meestendeel met beduidende woorden genoemd werden.' Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 31.

<sup>215</sup> Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*, 91; Barend-van Haeften, *Oost-Indië gespiegeld*, 81; Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 'opdracht', 4.

compiler of stories. It made him the designated person to help his brother out in compiling a report from his notes that would meet the expectations of the Gentlemen Seventeen.

An extra argument for this suggestion is the use of poems in the report and *Het Gezantschap*. The report includes some poems, which are also present in the publication. However, in the publication many more poems are incorporated that cannot be found in the report. Did Johan write more poems in his notes and did he choose to use only a small selection of them in his report? Or did Hendrik write the poems in the report and did he add more of them to *Het Gezantschap*? It is presumable that Hendrik was more literate than Johan, he was the one who took up the task of writing a comprehensive story based on Johan's notes, report and additional literature. Nonetheless, Johan did write the report; Jing Sun provides us with a strong argument that the handwriting of the report was certainly Johan's.<sup>216</sup>

Although these questions cannot be answered by this study, the reflections brought forward here provides new food for thought in the discussion about the compilation of the *Het Gezantschap* and show the intertwinement of the report, *Het Gezantschap* and previous writings. Now that the literary commixture of Johan's report, *Het Gezantschap* and previous writings about China have been described, which all influenced the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*, only one influence remains: China itself.

### ***China's influence***

To understand how China had an influence on its own representation in *Het Gezantschap* this research employs the concept Orientalism. As explained in the introduction, Orientalism is seen as a relationship of power between two entities which both influence to a various extent what is exchanged and what is not. To show how Orientalism is a relationship of power, instead of a one-way domination of one culture over the other in the portrayal of the orient, a few steps have to be taken. First, Johan and his fellow envoys entered China with certain goals and ideas about the empire, which reflected their cultural background as VOC-employees and as Dutch embassy. This cultural background affected the level of adjustment to Chinese culture and modes of conduct that they could produce. Their level of adaptation directly influenced the welcome Johan and his fellows received from the Chinese. It is exactly in the reception and welcome that the embassy received where the influence of China on Johan's representation of it can be found.

The importance of the embassy's cultural background, their level of adjustment and the consequential reaction of the Chinese towards them are evident in the fact that Johan and his fellow Dutchmen were only allowed to enter China by means of a tributary mission, while the Jesuits were already allowed entry into the empire for more than six decades. The Jesuits had been more willing to adapt to Chinese culture than the Dutch merchants and thus the padres were more accepted by the Chinese. It is exactly in the Chinese welcome, or the level of acceptance they displayed towards foreigners, where the influence of China is found in the relationship with the orientalists. So these are the instances that need to be studied in the *Het Gezantschap* in order to gain an idea of the influence of China on their representation in the West.

On the one hand the Chinese reception of foreigners was influenced by the attitude of these foreigners and their adaptation to Chinese culture, on the other hand it was

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<sup>216</sup> Sun, *The Illusion of verisimilitude*, 67-86.

constituted by the social, political and cultural circumstances and changes in the empire. Moreover, the institutions and officials that were designated to deal with foreign relations were in a more direct way of great influence on what foreigners were allowed to see and experience of China and its culture. The tribute mission itself is a perfect example of this. When the Dutch first arrived at the shores of the Chinese empire in the beginning of the seventeenth century they encountered opposition from the Portuguese in Macau and Cantonese and Fujianese officials who did not know who the Dutch were or how they could benefit from them. When the Dutch tried to achieve their goal several times by force, they overstayed their welcome for the decades to come. Only when the political situation in China changed again in the 1650's -the Manchus had claimed the throne and were searching for cultural ways to legitimize their claim and local officials and generals who were relatively free in their actions grabbed the opportunity to make as much profit out of trade as possible - the Dutch were allowed to enter the empire through the tribute system.

To conclude this section, the influence of China is analyzed in *Het Gezantschap* by focusing on the reactions of the Chinese towards the Dutch embassy and by researching if internal politics and events could have influenced these reactions. In the instances in *Het Gezantschap* where these reactions and their contexts are described, it is shown that China had an influence on its portrayal in one of the most important Dutch books on China, a book that influenced the Western view of China for the next century.

### ***A thematic analysis of the intertwinement of the different influences on the representation of China in Het Gezantschap***

Now that the different influences on *Het Gezantschap* have been discussed, it is important to explain the course of action to study the different influences on the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*. To analyze the different influences on China's representation in *Het Gezantschap* this chapter uses a thematic approach. This approach is chosen because these different themes together created the overall image of the Middle Kingdom. An approach that only focuses on all the events and experiences that accompanied a tributary mission would neglect several topics of which a strong normative view was in place, for example Chinese cities and devotional practices. Additionally, it would lose itself in too many details. Therefore, this approach is chosen to make the analysis comprehensible and concise, revealing how it differed per theme as to how much a certain influence affected the representation of China.

The themes are selected on basis of their strong verdicts, emotions and reactions on China, and on how the different influences had affected them. Certain themes and encyclopedic information based on Jesuits' sources are not accounted in the analysis, for the reason that it was evident that they were based on Jesuits' writings. These are for instance the description of holy mountains, certain festivals and different ways of dress. The themes that are analyzed are the following: Chinese crafts and practices, Chinese religious practices, the different characters of the inhabitants and their interactions with foreigners, the Manchus and Manchu conquest and lastly Chinese cities and architecture. Beside the analysis of the different influences on *Het Gezantschap* some words are said on the compilation of the report and the publication.

As the different themes are introduced, it is important to reveal how the different influences are intertwined, connected and overlapping with one another and how they will be marked and extracted from *Het Gezantschap* in the analysis. Firstly, I will address the influence of the report and the notes. Johan's report was the blue-print of *Het*

*Gezantschap* and therefore is the most important source. The report displayed his experiences and opinions on China during the tribute mission and therefore was a tremendous influence on the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*. Moreover, it is also the point of departure in order to distill the other two influences on *Het Gezantschap*: the previous writings on China and China itself.

The previous literature appertaining to the Chinese empire has been derived from the comparison between the report and the publication – the secondary literature that stems from before *Het Gezantschap* - as discussed in this thesis, is thus the literature that Hendrik and Johan employed as sources. For example, in the instances Hendrik provided longer descriptions and additional information it is analyzed if this information could be present in Johan's notes or in previous literature. When it is concluded that the description is taken from previous writings, it is analyzed which kind of source this could be: Jesuits literature, adventurous travel stories or intellectual and descriptive travel stories. All three genres were characterized by the use of different topoi, and these topoi will be studied to highlight which genre Hendrik used. Through this method this chapter demonstrates that it differed per topic which topoi Hendrik chose to use. Moreover, it illustrates how Hendrik was influenced by previous intellectual and descriptive travel stories and it reflects on whether or not he brought a new dimension to this genre.

To distill the influence of China in Johan's report his own reactions, attitudes and experiences need to be analyzed, which gives reason to research Johan's use of secondary sources for the writing of the report as well. This is done by assessing whether Johan could have had certain knowledge, by looking at the level of details of the story or at the specificity of the description. For example, certain events could only have occurred in the context of the tribute mission, so these descriptions reflect Johan's own experiences. Exactly in these descriptions the Chinese reactions towards Johan and the embassy and China's influence on its representation in *Het Gezantschap* can be found. Moreover, per theme and event it is analyzed if the cultural and political context in the empire influenced Chinese reaction towards foreigners and thus Johan's perception. The moment that the embassy traveled the assigned route from Canton to the capital Beijing, the new Qing-dynasty was still consolidating its claim by military and cultural means and these continuous developments influenced Johan's experiences in China on several occasions. Instead of giving a detailed account of the events in China during the 1640's-1650's, these are mentioned at the moments that they had an impact on the depiction in *Het Gezantschap*. Per theme a conclusion is formed on the different influences and to what extent they were used by Hendrik in the compilation of the story.

One more remark has to be made before starting, it is obvious that China's influence can be felt in the route that the embassy took. The envoys were obliged to do so, therefore this fact is present in and counts for every topic and will not be repeated over and over again. Only in events were extra influences or nuances can be brought to this fact, emphasis is placed upon it. This works the same for the tributary rituals and the audience with the emperor in the capital Beijing. Overall, *Het Gezantschap* provided a more detailed and personal depiction of the Chinese tribute system. With this being said, it is time to take a closer look upon the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*, starting with the Chinese crafts and practices.

## *Chinese crafts and practices*

The theme of Chinese crafts and practices is chosen as an example of a topic in which the Jesuits' literature had a profound influence. Much of the information on this theme is not present in Johan's report, so it is possible that a part of the additional information in *Het Gezantschap* was taken from Johan's notes. Nonetheless, it is more probable that much of the details were based on Jesuits' literature, because of the many similarities between *Het Gezantschap* and the padres' writings that are found in this theme.

In previous Jesuits' literature, with Martini's *Atlas Sinesis* as its prime example, every Chinese province was presented as producing certain products and excelling in certain manual skills. In the report only the commerce of the province through which the Dutch travelled is mentioned, while in the publication the crafts and industries of the other provinces were also given. Extra information was provided in the publication about the provinces and major cities that were on the travel route of the embassy. This information was clearly based on Martini's writings, being a summary of the information provided per province found in *Blaeus grooten Atlas*.<sup>217</sup> Below, some examples are given that provide possible insights in Johan's writings of the report, the translation of the report by Hendrik into the publication and the use of Jesuits' information.

As written in *Het Gezantschap* the city of Jamcefu, in the province of Nanking,<sup>218</sup> where the embassy docked at the twenty-first of May 1656, was famous for two reasons: the extraction of salt and its beautiful women. In the publication was written that the salt was retrieved by boiling seawater, as it was done in Europe, and was then exported all over the empire. This practice brought great prosperity to the city. Johan reported only the wealth of the city, and mentioned nothing of its salt production. Thus, Hendrik added this information to the description of the prosperous Jamcefu.<sup>219</sup>

In other instances, it seems that Hendrik used even the smallest hints or events to attribute extra details to Johan's narrative. Take his description of the surrounding lands of the village of Taujenjeen, in the province of Nanking. Hendrik wrote that this area was abundant with fruit fields and that many different birds species were present. This was not mentioned in the report, but Johan did write that the Dutch bought some different types of fruit for dinner, making this a good example of Hendrik's skills as a story-compiler.<sup>220</sup>

In the description of the events that occurred when the envoys passed the village of Tsisang, in the province of Nanking, an interesting nuance is found between the report and the book. On the fourth of June 1656, the group arrived in the village called Tsisang. The village itself was not very noteworthy, but according to the text in the *Het Gezantschap* this is the place where the Dutch encountered bamboo-rafts, also called 'rafting villages' (vlottende dorpen), for the first time. Hendrik wrote that these rafts: '...are composed in the Chinese way so peculiar and proficient, that the brightest Euro-

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<sup>217</sup> Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryvin*, 34-205.

<sup>218</sup> For the names of the villages and cities that Johan and Hendrik described, Hendrik's spelling is used. This is done because in case of the smaller villages and cities I was not able to find their contemporary names. To be consistent in this way of describing, I also use Hendrik's spelling of Canton (Kanton), Nanjing (Nanking) and Beijing (Peking) and his spelling of the provinces in this chapter. Therefore, in the other chapters of this thesis the modern names of these three cities and Chinese provinces are used, while in this chapter Hendrik's spelling is used.

<sup>219</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 114-115; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 44.

<sup>220</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 124; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 45.

peans would have their hands full, to craft equal rafts with the same materials so precisely and proficiently bound together.<sup>221</sup> Thus, a great appreciation and admiration was expressed towards these ‘rafting villages.’ An elaborate and marvelous description of these rafts was given in the publication, while nothing of these ‘rafting villages’ was mentioned in Johan’s report.<sup>222</sup> The embassy did encounter them, because the report includes an original drawing of a bamboo raft by Johan.<sup>223</sup> An etch of this drawing was also placed in *Het Gezantschap*, with some adjustments and extra figures to make it more appealing to the reader.<sup>224</sup> Reasons why Johan left this information out of his report to the VOC are difficult to move beyond speculations, but this account does provide a clue that the additional information – at least to some degree – was based on Johan’s notes. If the rafts are also mentioned in previous Jesuits’ literature is unclear. It was not found in the secondary sources used for this study, and as it is outside the scope of this paper to study all the padres’ writings, this question remains unanswered.

One Chinese practice that did reappear in several books, including *Het Gezantschap* and Johan’s report was the training of birds, called Louwa, to catch fish. The Dutch encountered this custom in the city of Cinningsiu, in the province of Xantung, where they arrived the thirteenth of June 1656. More information was given on this practice in *Het Gezantschap* than in Johan’s report.<sup>225</sup> The publication mentions that Mendoza also described this practice, but that his account differed with the Johan’s experience. To show this difference, Mendoza’s description was presented in the book, although no clear normative comparison or conclusion was derived from it.<sup>226</sup>

The last example of a curious practice that was mentioned in detail in both accounts is the chasing away of swarms of locusts by Chinese farmers. Around the beginning of the evening on the fourth of July 1656, the embassy sailed by the city of Single, in the province of Pekin. In both sources was written how the envoys witnessed a great commotion among the farmers on the bank. The farmers had organized themselves in several groups, which with banners and flags and while shouting and screaming, tried to chase away the locusts. The swarms arrived every year around July with the eastern winds and ate away entire harvests, creating famine and despair among the inhabitants. In the book an elaborate description was added, emphasizing on the desperation of the farmers to withstand the swarms, because otherwise they would lose their crops and their entire income. An adventurous and astonishing flavor was added to the narrative by mentioning that the swarms were chased into the river where they drowned and formed a mass of floating dead bugs. This happened while the boats of the embassy were passing by; as a consequence the embassy had to endure the swarms. As a result, the deck of the boat was covered in locusts, ‘so one could hardly place one foot in front of the other’<sup>227</sup> and the boats had a difficult time in moving forward through the corpses of the insects.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> ‘...na de Sineesche wijze zo geestigh en kunstigh t’zamen gestelt, dat de schranderste Europers werk zouden vinden, om diergelijke Vlotten met dezelfde stoffen zo gevoeglijk en kunstigh aan elkandre te hechten.’ Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 125.

<sup>222</sup> Hendrik wrote for instance that that some rafts were even so large, that two-hundred families would be able to live on it. Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 125-126.

<sup>223</sup> Ibidem, 50-51.

<sup>224</sup> Ibidem, 125-126.

<sup>225</sup> Ibidem, 127, 131-134; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 46.

<sup>226</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 127, 131-134; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 46.

<sup>227</sup> ‘... dat men nauliks den eenen voet voor den anderen kon verzetten,...’ Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 152.

<sup>228</sup> Ibidem, 151-152.

To conclude this theme, what can be derived from this subject in regard to the writings of the report and book? First, as was evident, Hendrik used much descriptive information from Jesuit sources to supplement the narrative of the embassy. Nonetheless, he also distanced himself from some Jesuits' writings. In the description of the *Louwa* he discredited the Jesuit Mendoza, comparing his description with Johan's and emphasizing their differences to highlight the truthfulness of Johan's experiences. Moreover, a new dimension of intellectual travel stories was brought forward. Not only did Hendrik want to woo his public by providing more detailed intellectual information, he even discredited a previous Jesuits' source. What this can entail for the position of *Het Gezantschap* in intellectual and descriptive travel stories will be shown below. In addition, the description of the rafting villages can be used as an argument that Hendrik had more of Johan's writings in his possession than only the report.

When comparing *Het Gezantschap* with other travel literature, the adventurous aspects of the journey correlate with the emphasis on Bontekoe's adventures. While Johan left the story of the locust swarms out of his report, Hendrik added this exotic story to the narrative. As such, although Johan left this narrative out, the fact that Hendrik found it an appropriate story shows the publication's affinity with travel literature and experiences that merchants underwent during their travels. The elaborate descriptions of the rafting villages also fit in the adventure trope of travel stories. Although these experiences show typical Chinese practices, the emphasis is placed on them because of the seventeenth-century literary expectation of adventurous travel literature. Therefore the influence of China on this matter is overshadowed by the seventeenth-century European literary context. Besides *Het Gezantschap's* similarities with adventurous travel stories, it is much more detailed about Chinese arts and practices than any other intellectual travel story. *Het Gezantschap*, therefore not only brought a new dimension to intellectual and descriptive travel literature by taking a stand in debate on China, it also provided more details and information about China.

Lastly, can a Chinese influence be noticed in the representation of this topic besides the aforementioned adventurous experiences? Although there are some personal of Johan's experiences present in this theme, they were strongly blended with Jesuit information and tended to be descriptive. This is possibly due to the importance of this topic in previous writings on China and therefore less space was given to experiences and more to detailed descriptions. Consequently, the seventeenth-century European literary tradition dominated the influence of China in this topic.

### *Religious practices in China*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the VOC-merchants in general knew less of the different religious sects in China than the Jesuits did and made almost no distinctions between different practices. This reflected their cultural background and intentions, showing their lack of education and not seeing the use in understanding different religions for their trade endeavors. This perspective is also found in Johan's report and in *Het Gezantschap*.

For instance, Johan's Protestant or Christian background was presented clearly at the arrival of the embassy in Peking when he thanked God for their safe arrival and for His blessings he had given the Company.<sup>229</sup> In other instances, he praised God when the Dutch merchants had passed a dangerous river, survived a thunderstorm or miraculously

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<sup>229</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 63, 93, 158, 197, 207.

ly made it through dangerous rapids.<sup>230</sup> Johan's cultural and religious background was also reflected in his interpretation of Chinese religious practices. He perceived the Chinese as pagans, who did not believe in the righteous God.

Johan and Hendrik described several pagan rituals and customs in the enfolded story. When Johan's report and the publication are compared, several literal quotes from the report are found in the book, but there are some differences as well.<sup>231</sup> The two accounts most differ in the number of details they provide and the length of the descriptions. *Het Gezantschap* contains several descriptions of pagan rituals which are not present in Johan's report. Considering the details in the account, it is probable that Hendrik derived this extra information from Johan's notes.

While reading the descriptions of pagan rituals in both sources, it becomes apparent that the rituals were regarded negatively not because of their content, but because they were pagan and thus not Christian. In general in both accounts, the pagan customs were approached with curiosity and bewilderment and in some instances also with disgust. It is mentioned several times how the Manchus and Chinese accompaniment who travelled with the embassy to Peking, offered at pagodas to different Gods for a safe passage over dangerous waters and rivers. In most of these instances the Chinese were portrayed as superstitious and the writers wondered how the Chinese could believe in these rituals and multiple Gods.<sup>232</sup> An example: 'The superstition and curious zeal of heathen devotion with which these astray and blind people together sacrifice to their idols a variety of fruits and animals, goes beyond all reason.'<sup>233</sup> This verdict is not found in Johan's report, although in the few instances he mentioned Chinese devotional practices of which he showed disbelief and amazement.<sup>234</sup>

Chinese paganism was generally negatively displayed and condemned. However the negative verdict on paganism was also used to emphasize how stunning it was that the Chinese showed great civility and an admirable devotion in some conducts and practices. In one instance, Johan's amazement towards the Chinese manners and organization of events and banquets was reflected in both accounts. In the publication Hendrik gave a religious twist to Johan's astonishment by adding a poem to the narrative:

Here fizzes an open sea of gold and silk clothes,  
The blinking metal prides its delicacies and spice  
Apollo descends swiftly, with all his muses, below,  
Are these heathen lands? We are in Paradise<sup>235</sup>

Hendrik probably displayed this religious perspective to emphasize his brother's surprise and admiration – as it was not apparent in the report – all to amaze the reader with

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<sup>230</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 64-65; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 36-37.

<sup>231</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 151; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 49.

<sup>232</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 59-60, 63, 65, 111, 195; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 43, 57.

<sup>233</sup> 'Met welk een waan-geloof en zonderlingen yver van Heidensche godvruchtigheid deze verdoolde en blinde menschen aan hunne Afgoden hier gemeenlijk allerlei vruchten en beesten komen op-offeren, gaat alleen geloof te boven.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 63.

<sup>234</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 38-40.

<sup>235</sup> 'Hier bruist een bare Zee van gout En zijde Kleder, Het blinkende Metaal trotst allerhande spijs. Apollo daalt gewis, met al zijn Muzen, neder. Is dit in 't Heidendom? Wij zijn in 't Paradijs' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 47.

the wealth, civility and morality of the pagan Chinese.<sup>236</sup> This bewilderment was also represented in *Het Gezantschap* in a passage about a group of monks that the embassy encountered near the city Nankang, in the province of Kiangsi, where they arrived on the twenty-sixth of April. In *Het Gezantschap* was written:

If these astray and blind people did as much for the true Religion, and were so zealous in their worship of the true God, they would not only be similar the old European hermits, who voluntarily endured such hardship, but far surpass them.<sup>237</sup>

As such, the devotion of the monks was met with great respect, however it was a great pity that they were so blinded by their pagan belief that they did not declare their devotion to the real God. Just as in the poem, Hendrik emphasized the superiority of the pagan's devotion over Christians to show the exoticism and wonder of the pagan practices.<sup>238</sup> Again, the story of the monks is not found in Johan's report.

Besides descriptions that are not found in Johan's report, certain encounters and observations were described in more detail in the book than in the report. For example, Johan noted a difference between the inhabitants of the south and north of China in regard to their devotion to the pagan Gods. In the north of China the statues of the Gods were not decorated with jewels and ornaments, as they were in the South of China. Only in some instances the statues in the North were cloaked in robes and given hats of reed,<sup>239</sup> which made them look as: 'They (were) witlessly lurking, as if they knew nothing.'<sup>240</sup> In the publication, slightly more words were given to this observation. Another illustration of a more detailed description in the book is when the envoys wanted to cross the lake of Poyang near the city of Ucienjen, in the province of Kiangsi:

The Chinese and the Tartars, that wanted to cross the lake Poyang, first sacrificed to the deity or devil of this Pagoda, for a fortunate and prosperous voyage. The offering, which I witnessed, and which hurts me to speak of here, is done by these blinded people to this deity as follows. The poor people take a grouse, but rich people take a pig, in front of the icon of the deity, which in this Pagoda is grinning eerily with a gaping maw, and cut the throat (of the animals) and let the warm blood of the sacrificed flow over the claws (because he is depicted there with griffin-claws as hands and feet); therefore this deity is usually very soiled and filthy with blood, with which he is sprayed upon.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 47; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 33.

<sup>237</sup> 'Deden deze verdoolde en blinde menschen zoo veel voor den waren Godtsdients, en warenze zoo yverig in het aanbidden van den waren God, zy zonden niet alleen den ouden Europese Kluizenaars, die vrywillig uitterlijk veel hebben uitgestaan, gelijk zijn, maar hen ook verre overtreffen.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 92.

<sup>238</sup> This is also found in the description of the pagoda on the Paolinxia square. It was viewed as a pity that such a beautiful building was used for pagan practices and devotion. Ibidem, 108-109; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 43.

<sup>239</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 150-151; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 48-49.

<sup>240</sup> '...zy onnozel zaten te loeren, als ofze nergens af wisten.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 151.

<sup>241</sup> 'De Sinezen en Tarters, die het meir Poyang over willen, doen eerst aan den afgod of duivel van deze Pagode, om een gelukkig en voorspoedige reize te hebben, offerande. Het offeren, dat ik zelfs daar zag, en daarom ook der pijn waart achte zulks hier te verhalen, doen deze verblinde menschen aan deze afgod in deze wijze. Slechte luiden nemen gemeenlijk een Hoen; maar rijken een Verken, dat ze voor het afgodenbeelt, dat in deze Pagode zeer yzelijk en met opgesperden bek te grimmen staat, den strot afteken, en laten het warme bloet van dezen slacht-offer over desselfs klauwen (want met griffioens-klauwen aan handen

In Johan's report only the following was said about the event: '...where the Tartars and Chinese sacrificed to the Devils, before they crossed the lake of Poyan.'<sup>242</sup> The most important aspect of the pagan ritual was mentioned in both accounts: the sacrifice to the Devil. The publication, however, revealed much more details and also showed the author's own repulsion of the ritual. Despite the fact it pained him to write it down, he did want his readers to know the details of the offer. As such, horrific details were given in the publication, communicating a feeling of abomination, while at the same time catching the attention of the reader. Considering the detail of the description, which fit well in the narrative of the embassy, it is likely that Hendrik derived this information from Johan's notes. In another instance, an even more elaborate account was given of an offer involving the sacrifice of animals, letting their blood gush over the statues of the Gods was given. However, this offer again is completely missing in the report.<sup>243</sup> This shows that the editor of *Het Gezantschap* chose to provide his readers many details about the pagan rituals of the Chinese, while Johan Nieuhof did not feel this need towards the board of the VOC. Perhaps he saw no need to do so, because these details were of no importance for future trade missions.

Overall, it is likely that Hendrik used notes of Johan for the description of Chinese pagan rituals. Hendrik provided details not found in the report, but which can only come from Johan's own experiences. In this topic Hendrik relied much more on Johan's own experiences than on writings of the Jesuits. This is already reflected in the lack of differentiation between the different Chinese religions and religious practices and in the personal level of curiosity, bewilderment and emotional disgust that was reflected on the rituals. As this was common in travel literature, *Het Gezantschap* showed strong similarities with previous travel literature on the representation of Chinese religious practices.

Another similarity with travel literature are the presence of prayers to the Christian God for safe arrival or passage through storms and the representation of pagan devotion. The latter was in some instances superior to Christian devotion, which was used in travel stories to emphasize the disappointment that the pagans did not direct their devotion to the righteous God. Moreover, the realization that pagans in some regards were having a higher moral, culture or ethics than Christians also occurred in Bontekoe's adventurous travel story. *Het Gezantschap*, therefore, in its representation of Chinese religions and practices also had similarities with adventurous travel stories.

The influence of China on the representation of Chinese religions is manifold. First and foremost, the opportunity for the Dutch to travel through China with Chinese and Manchu soldiers created the circumstances to witness and experience religious practices up close, contributing to the detailed descriptions of the practices and their reasons of conduct. Secondly, the route of the embassy provided a possibility for Johan to compare southern and northern devotion, although Johan's innate curiosity and empiricism added to this as well. As such, Johan's mercantile background, religion and lack of education, combined with the modes of conduct of tributary envoys in China influenced the representation of Chinese religions and practices in *Het Gezantschap*.

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en voeten staat hy daar uitgebeelt) henen loopen ; zulks deze afgod doorgaans heel morzig en slordigh met bloet, daar hy dus mee besprenkelt wort, beklat is.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 90.

<sup>242</sup> '...alwaar the Tartaren en Chijnesen offerhande aan de duyvels doen, eer zy 't meyr van Poyan overvaren.' Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 40.

<sup>243</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 111.

## *The inhabitants of China*

Another important theme, prominent in the report and the publication, were the different inhabitants of China and their characteristics. During their journey through the inner lands of China the Dutch encountered several people in China and formed different opinions on them. In Johan's report and *Het Gezantschap* several encounters with inhabitants, and opinions on them, were recorded. In some cases, inhabitants of particular provinces or cities were attributed typical characteristics.

In the first introductory pages of *Het Gezantschap* demographic, economic and historical information was presented of the provinces which the embassy had not travelled through. This information is also present in *Blaeus grooten Atlas*, and thus was based on Martini.<sup>244</sup> Hendrik noted the characteristics of the inhabitants of some of the provinces that the embassy travelled through, which Johan did not account. Therefore, in the publication this categorization is found more often than in the report. For instance, the people of the province Kiangsi were described as superstitious, as many of them were wizards and fortune-tellers. They travelled much to other provinces and were known there for the bad quality of their crafts.<sup>245</sup> In contrast, the inhabitants of the province Nankin were described as having high morals and as clever, polite and helpful. Many of them were also very good craftsmen and a great number of them applied for the state exams.<sup>246</sup>

Johan did report special characteristics of inhabitants now and then. He wrote that, 'so it seems,'<sup>247</sup> the inhabitants of the city Nanking were more sincere and polite than any other inhabitants of China and they also excelled in philosophy and the arts.<sup>248</sup> The use of Johan of the phrase 'so it seems,' conveys the feeling that he did not experience this himself. It is possible that he heard this from his fellow companions, a local Jesuit he encountered or through stories of his interpreters.<sup>249</sup> Although the latter is difficult to be conclusive about. It is also possible Johan derived this information from the writings of Martini or other Jesuits. Nanking and its inhabitants were always admired in every Western account written about them and was one of the most prominent topoi in Jesuits' literature, so perhaps Johan also felt the need to write this in his report to the VOC, to show he was familiar with the previous writings on China.<sup>250</sup>

In the publication, Hendrik praised the inhabitants of the former capital extendedly, applying the same positive attributes to them as Johan in his report, but again Hendrik added more praises to them. Moreover, in the book it was clear that Johan did experience the politeness and candidness of the people of Nanking, because he visited several homes and received a warm welcome there. Perhaps the editor derived this information from the several banquets the ambassadors attended in the city or he found this information in Johan's notes. Despite these possibilities to witness the city first-hand and communicate with local officials, the envoys were restricted to spending their nights in their barges and were not allowed to stay in the city. Therefore, one can wonder on

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<sup>244</sup> Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving*, 1-209, 213-232.

<sup>245</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 71.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibidem*, 95-96.

<sup>247</sup> '(zo 't schijndt)...' Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 43

<sup>248</sup> *Ibidem*, 43.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibidem*, 43.

<sup>250</sup> See for example Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving*, 115-117.

how many occasions they were able to experience the high moral of the inhabitants themselves.<sup>251</sup>

As such, in both accounts the description of Nanking's inhabitants is an interesting mingle between Johan's possible experiences and the influence of Jesuit writings on this subject. Despite this confusion, the influence of China is clearly present in this subject, showing how the Dutch were restricted in their freedom to travel and explore the city themselves.

A negative reference is found towards the Chinese natives in *Het Gezantschap* when the embassy arrived in the city of Jamcefu on the twenty-first of May. This city was known for its beautiful women, who were sold as concubines. This practice was described as an abuse of the women and as a scandalous commerce.<sup>252</sup> Interestingly, nothing of this verdict is found in Johan's report. It is probable that Hendrik chose to add this information to create strong emotions among his readers and let them be marveled and repulsed at the same time, as such it can be viewed as a trope from travel stories. Overall, in the book, with the negative portrayal of people from certain provinces, more sections are found in which Chinese inhabitants are criticized. The descriptions of the provinces are based on Jesuit writings while it is uncertain if the verdict on the inhabitants of Jamcefu is based on Johan's notes or other sources. The negative verdict is not found in the *Blaeus grooten Atlas*.<sup>253</sup>

Aside from the negative characteristics that were attributed to people of certain provinces and cities, and the commerce in Jamcefu, in both accounts the personal experiences of the Dutch with the Chinese and Manchus officials they encountered along the way were generally positive. From the first step the envoys set on the Chinese main land, they received a warm welcome. In both accounts several positive experiences with the native authorities of Kanton were described. For instance, a description of a fantastic banquet was given during which the Dutch were astonished by the manners of the natives and the service that was accorded to them.<sup>254</sup> The warm welcomes for the embassy continued during their journey to Peking and back to Kanton. For instance, when the embassy arrived at Nanhung, in the province of Quantung, on the fourth of April 1656 they received a welcome note, and later the governor arrived in person to meet them. The next day the Dutch received two additional notes, in which they were invited for a banquet at the governor's residence.<sup>255</sup> The book mentions that when the embassy arrived at the city of Hoaignan, in the province of Nanking, on the twenty-eight of May 1656 they were even escorted to the local magistrate with horses and sedan chairs.<sup>256</sup> When they arrived in Peking, in the province of Pekin several courtiers with food, beverages and refreshments awaited them.<sup>257</sup> Moreover, even when the Dutch were on their way back to Kanton, they were welcomed generously and friendly by local officials.<sup>258</sup> Johan did not write all of these experiences in his report, for example, the generous welcome in Haoigan, in the province Nanking, was not described.<sup>259</sup> In the description of these wel-

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<sup>251</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 109.

<sup>252</sup> Ibidem, 114-115.

<sup>253</sup> Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving*, 126.

<sup>254</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 47; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhoofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 33.

<sup>255</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 68; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhoofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 37.

<sup>256</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 120-121.

<sup>257</sup> Ibidem, 158; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhoofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 51.

<sup>258</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 195-196.

<sup>259</sup> Ibidem, 120; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhoofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 45.

comes, the ethnicity of the official – Chinese or Manchu – was sometimes mentioned, but no normative verdict was given on this matter. As such, no differentiation was made between the welcomes of the Chinese and Manchu officials.<sup>260</sup>

Besides these welcomes, the Dutch had much personal contact with the Chinese and Manchu officials during their stay in Peking. The ambassadors were frequently visited by imperial officials who asked them the same questions repeatedly. Despite these continuous repetitions, hardly any normative judgments about these interrogations were displayed. Only when the Dutch were informed they had to pay 10.000 to 14.000 taels<sup>261</sup> to the imperial council so it would change its advice to the emperor and allow the Dutch to pay tribute every five years, they were surprised and disappointed. In addition to this, the only normative expressions in these accounts were about the difficulty experienced by the Dutch to make themselves understandable and their annoyance about the negative rumors that the Jesuits had spread about them. Thus, in general a very non-normative, empirical and plain description of the diplomatic exchanges between the ambassadors and the local officials was given in both accounts.<sup>262</sup> This was in contrast with the usual depiction of trade negotiations in travel stories, adventurous and intellectual alike. Perhaps Johan and his brother Hendrik were less negative about the Chinese because they had a new scapegoat, the Jesuit Adam Schall who did everything he could to hazard the Dutch embassy.<sup>263</sup>

This difference between the envoys' experiences and that of other merchants is also found in *Het Gezantschap* itself. The experiences of the members of the embassy of 1655-1657 with the natives were totally different with those of former Dutch VOC employees. In the publication the experiences of Frederik Schedel (...-...) and Zacharias Wagenaar (1614-1668) are described. Both men had been sent to Kanton to investigate the claim of Martini that the new dynasty was open to free trade with foreigners. Schedel and Wagenaar both experienced resistance from the Portuguese and Jesuits, were ill-treated by Chinese officials and showed annoyance towards the high level of bureaucracy in the trade negotiations.<sup>264</sup> The story of Schedel and Wagenaar, therefore, shows the usual mercantile depiction of negotiating with the Chinese, which makes it interesting that at the moment when the Dutch adjusted themselves to the rules of the tribute system, their treatment by the Chinese changed tremendously.

Overall, several different aspects in this comparison of Johan's report and the publication on the inhabitants of China are apparent. When contrasting Johan's portrayal of China's inhabitants with those in the publication, a lower number of negative depictions are found in the report than in the publication. This is partly due to the use of Jesuits' characteristics of inhabitants per province in the publication. In contrast to the usual positive verdict in Jesuits' writings concerning China, in this case a topic more indebted to the Jesuits gives a more negative view of China and its people than a source based of

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<sup>260</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 146; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 48.

<sup>261</sup> It differs per source how the Dutch currency related to the Chinese taels. Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops claimed that one tael was equal to three and a half Florins. Leonard Blussé mentioned that one tael was worth 37,5 grams of silver. In *Het Gezantschap* was mentioned that one tael is worth approximately thirteen silver ducats. Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an 'Unpromising Beginning'', 548; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 97; Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 45.

<sup>262</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 158-169; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 51-55.

<sup>263</sup> Rahusen-De Bruyn Kops, 'Not such an 'Unpromising Beginning'', 564-564.

<sup>264</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 22-27.

the experiences of a merchant. Therefore, in this case China's influence on Johan's experiences was overrun by Hendrik's use of topoi from literature of the Society of Jesus. Despite this, in *Het Gezantschap* a more positive view of the Chinese treatment of foreigners was given than in previous merchants' - and Jesuits' writings about China. Johan and Hendrik both showed a positive treatment of the Dutch merchants by the Chinese, which was uncommon in European travel literature or in experiences of merchants. The description of the experiences of Schedel and Wagenaar are good examples of this.

The positive portrayal of the Chinese can be explained in the context of the tribute system, in which officials along the way warmly welcomed tributaries. During the trade negotiations in the capital a scapegoat was found in the Jesuits, who attempted to undermine the goal of the Dutch envoys. This distracted the merchants from the strong Chinese bureaucracy and repetitive questions, which usually were presented as annoying in previous literature. Aside from the more positive depiction than in previous merchants' writings, in *het Gezantschap* a yet more positive view is given of the treatment of tributaries than Trigault had done fifty years before in his book *De Christiana expedition apud Sinas*. This can all be attributed to the reactions of the Chinese towards the Dutch envoys and shows that the influence of China on the depiction of treatment of foreigners and envoys was strongly present in *Het Gezantschap*. Moreover, the realization of the first Dutch embassy was due to the changing social and political context in China, showing the influence of China on the portrayal of the Chinese inhabitants in two ways: their acceptance of the Dutch as envoys and the social context in which the Dutch were allowed to pay tribute to the Chinese emperor.

### *The Manchus and the Manchu-conquest*

The envoy's encounter with the Manchu conquest of the Chinese empire was also influenced by the Chinese social context. Despite the fact that no differentiation was made between the welcomes of Manchu and Chinese officials, the Manchus were often negatively referred to in *Het Gezantschap*. The most prominent encounter of the Dutch with this ethnic group was the confrontation with effect of the Manchu conquest on the Chinese country side. During their travel to and from Peking the Dutch group encountered many ruined cities and buildings and heard many stories of the horrors of war. Overall, in both accounts the destruction was met with despair, sorrow and disbelief by the Dutch. Johan and Hendrik in some cases emphasized the destruction of classical and ancient Chinese buildings. In Johan's introduction of his report he wrote: 'It appears as if her (China's) ingenuity accompanied with her freedom was taken by the Tartars. In Nanking one can still witness some of the splendor of the ancients.'<sup>265</sup> The Manchu rulers were portrayed in both accounts as a barbarous, nomadic and cruel tribe that destroyed the ancient splendor of the Chinese empire. For example, the destruction of the countryside near Kanton received this description in *het Gezantschap*:

The ancient Greeks and haughty Romans, who formerly subdued so much of the world, never injured their defeated and subjugated people with so much misery and cast down their eyes with such an unbearable sorrow as the cruel and merciless Tartars. (Who so miserably maltreats these regions in the last invasion, and destroyed almost all cities, villages and hamlets to the ground, and made them into heaps of rubble and nesting are-

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<sup>265</sup> "t Schijnd off haar 't vernuft met den vrijdom tevens van de Tartaren is afgezet. In Nanking ziet men noch enigsins wat van de luister der aalouden.' Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuwhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 31.

as for birds and wild animals,) have not only been equal to them, but surpassed them by far...<sup>266</sup>

Some destroyed cities were described in more detail. Johan and Hendrik both wrote that it was told by Manchus or others that in the siege of Kanton, in the province of Canton, eighty thousand to one-hundred thousand people were slaughtered and in Nanchang, in the province of Kiangsi, forty-thousand were butchered. Both described that Johan had heard the numbers of deaths from locals, although Johan wrote that Manchus had provided him this information, while Hendrik reports it was told by inhabitants.<sup>267</sup> Apparently, Johan indeed gathered information from natives with the help of interpreters. Unfortunately it cannot be analyzed how truthful Johan's and Hendrik's references were to these providers of information. In some instances, only Hendrik mentioned that the local people told Johan of the destruction and pillaging of the Manchus, while this was not mentioned by Johan. It is probable that Hendrik added these references to enhance the credibility and actuality of the travel narrative.<sup>268</sup> As such, no decisive conclusion can be formed on the role of interpreters in the provision of information concerning the Manchu conquest.

Besides this, Johan and Hendrik frequently described the effects of the Manchu conquest on the Chinese landscape. Both accounts elaborated in the description of the siege of Kinnungam, in the province of Kiangsi, on the hardships done against the female inhabitants. All the younger women were raped, and later four thousands of them were draught out of the city and sold to brothels.<sup>269</sup> The actuality of these destructions was emphasized when the Dutch on their return to Kanton passed the city of Nangam, in the province of Kiangsi, on the fifteenth of January 1657. During the travels, the city had been attacked by the Manchus and almost completely destroyed. Even the lodge where the ambassadors had spent the night during their previous visit, was torn down.<sup>270</sup> It seems that Johan received this information during his journey, because some details do not correspond with or are not present in Martini's description.<sup>271</sup> The influence of interpreters and their possibility to enhance contact between the Dutch and natives therefore seems to have occurred in certain instances. Nonetheless, this gives no decisive an-

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<sup>266</sup> 'd' Aal-oude Grieken en trotze Romeinen, die eertijds zoo veel werelts af-liepen, hebben noit hunne overwonnelingen en ondergebrachte volken met zoo veel jammernissen, en den oogen onverdragelijke ellenden gesoolt en geteest, of deze ruwe en onbarmhartige Tarters (van wien deze gewesten in den laatsten inval zo jammerlijk mishandelt, en by-na alle Steden, Dorpen en Vlekken tot den gronde gesloopt, en tot puin-hoopen en nestel-plaatzen der Vogelen en wilde dieren gemaakt zijn,) hebben hen hier in niet alleen gelijk geweest, maar ook zeer verre ten boven gegaan.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 58.

<sup>267</sup> Ibidem, 44, 89; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 35, 40

<sup>268</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 123; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 45.

<sup>269</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 82-83; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 39.

<sup>270</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 196; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 58.

<sup>271</sup> For example, Martini wrote that 100.000 people were slaughtered in Kanton instead of 80.000 and he did not account the treatment of the women in Kinnungam. Joan Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, oft, Werelt-beschryving, in welke 't aertryck, de zee, en hemel, wordt verthoont en beschreven. Negende stuck der Aerdrycks Beschryving welck vervat Asia en Sina in 't selve gelegen. D'Atlas van 't uysterste Asia, of Landt-beschrijving van 't Sinesche Ryck. Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving welck vervat Sina. Historie van den Taratarischen Oorlog, waer in verhaelt wert, hoe de Tartaren in onse eeuw in 't Sinesche Rijck sijn gevallen, en 't selve byna geheel hebben veroverd : nevens een korte beschrijving van hare zeden en gewoonten* (Amsterdam 1664) 25, 32.

swer on how much information the interpreters had provided Johan. Although the Manchu conquest was important topic in both accounts, more details and elaboration about these events was given in the publication. Moreover, in the publication some descriptions of destroyed cities were given which are not found in the report.<sup>272</sup> At least was one of these story of destruction is found in de *Blaeus groote Atlas*.<sup>273</sup> Hendrik, therefore also relied on Martini's writings for his description on the Manchu conquest.

In the publication one more incident is given, which is not related to war, in which the cruelty of the Manchus was demonstrated again. This incident is not described in the report, and described the Manchu treatment of the Chinese pullers of the bark.<sup>274</sup>:

Here we saw, alas! To what a miserable and piteous condition the Chinese were reduced by the recent war: for in this towing they must serve the least Tartars as servile slaves; and without distinction between young and old, people must strain on the towline harder than beast to pull their vessel against the current of the river. (...) And when it happens that someone because of frailty was slightly slow at pulling, and his strength succumbed, there instantly was a Tartar (who wore a pair of thick and crude boots) behind him, and hits him enthusiastically with a piece of wood, without any compassion.<sup>275</sup>

The Dutch were appalled once again by the cruelty of the Manchus. Although this event had nothing to do with the conquest itself, it was related to the former war, by emphasizing that the living conditions of the Chinese had decreased considerably under the new ruling dynasty. Because of its specificity – this is not an incident that was found easily in the writings of a Jesuit – and its detailed description Hendrik likely has got this story from Johan's notes.

Concluding, the accounts of the Manchu conquest are more elaborate in the book, as a higher number of destroyed cities were mentioned and more details about their destruction was provided by Hendrik. In some cases, also the behavior of the new rulers against Chinese civilians are presented in the publication, which are not found in the report. Some of these encounters probably were in Johan's notes, attributing to the likeness that these were his personal experiences and were not based on Jesuits' writings.

Moreover, other strong differences with the writings of Martini, who wrote the most influential book on the Manchu conquest, are found. Lach and Van Kley claimed that Martini depicted the Manchu conquest as the tragic fall of an empire to foreign conquerors. He did not describe it as the fall of civilization to barbarity.<sup>276</sup> Several cruel sackings of cities were described, but he also mentioned that the Manchus quickly adapted to Chinese civilization, ruled as a traditional Chinese dynasty and even gave

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<sup>272</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 141; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 47.

<sup>273</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 89; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 40. ; Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Historie van den Taratarischen Oorlog*, 25-27

<sup>274</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 57-58.

<sup>275</sup> 'hier zagen wy, helaas! In welke eenen deerlijken en jammerlijken staat de Sineezen door dezen lesten Oorlogh vervallen waren: want in dit trekken moeten zy de minste Tartars, als lijfeigen slaven, ten dienste staan ; en worden, zonder aanschouw van jonge of oude perzoonen, erger als beesten, in de trek-lijn gespannen, om hun Vaartuigh tegen stroom de Revier op te trekken. (...) En gebeurt 'et dat iemand door flauwhartigheid wat te traag in 't trekken valt, en zijne krachten hem bezwijken, daar zit terstont een Tarter (die in een paar dikke en grove Laerzen steekt) achter her, en tout'er met een stuk houts, zonder eenigh meêdogen, lustigh op.' Ibidem, 57.

<sup>276</sup> Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book four*, 1666.

some positive remarks about the Manchu conducts of war.<sup>277</sup> He gave an very positive portrayal of the first Manchu emperor, Shunzi, mentioning how after his first 'king's speech': 'The entire court was astonished by these words from a six-year-old child ; so that they all exclaimed that he was chosen by the Heavens.'<sup>278</sup> Besides the emperor, Martini's portrayed Drogon, the uncle of the emperor and regent of the empire as: '...he was not just excellent in advice and cautiousness, as in courage and loyalty; so he amazed the wisest of the Chinese with this fine reasoning and advice, and won their hearths with politeness and justness.'<sup>279</sup> Martini's portrayal of the new dynasty, therefore was different than that in *Het Gezantschap* and Hendrik's and Johan's portrayal did not correspond with previous Jesuits literature.

Another difference between Martini and the Nieuuhofs is that Johan and Hendrik always mentioned that the destruction they encountered was due to the Manchus. They did not mention any of the rebels armies, Ming successors and relatives and other fighting groups. Johan and Hendrik portrayed the Manchus as the only cruel army, while Martini mentioned the different fighting parties who almost all exercised extreme hardships among the Chinese people, countryside and cities. As such, Martini's background as scholar and more in-depth knowledge of China and its history is reflected in his writings, while Johan and Hendrik more superficial observations were reflected in the report and *Het Gezantschap*.

But how is China's influence expressed in these descriptions? First and foremost, the social and political context is most evident in this topic. Before and during the Dutch embassy, the Manchu conquest had been and still was having a destructive impact on the Chinese empire. This is clearly present in Johan's personal experiences and in Hendrik's translation of them in *Het Gezantschap*. Secondly, the route the envoys took was important in this theme. Some of the most longest-standing opposition against the Manchus was in the south-east of China, among others in the areas that were under the control of Koxinga.<sup>280</sup> The route passed through or alongside this part of the empire, attributing to the horror and the actuality of the conquest found in *Het Gezantschap*. The influence and reflection of China's state of affairs in the years 1655-1657 is not stronger in any other theme of this analysis.

The cruel actions of the Manchus during their conquest were not the only negative characteristics of the Manchus that Hendrik attributed to them. Besides their cruelty, the Manchus were also represented as barbarous uncivilized primitives. An exemplary topic for Hendrik's ridicule of the Manchus were their table manners. Hendrik, for instance, described the food and table manners of the Manchu officials as:

...his Highness let some meat be brought, of which he tastily and hungrily started eating, so that the blood and fat (because it was undercooked) dripped from his mouth and hands, that like him all the other Tartar lords, who sat with them, followed, that they looked more like gluttonous and plump peasants, than the imperial council of China.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Historie van den Taratarischen Oorlog*, 9, 18, 25.

<sup>278</sup> 'Het geheele Hof stond verbaest over deze woorden van een kint van ses Jaren ; soo dat sy altemael riepen dat hy van den Hemel en het noot-lot gekoren was.' Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Historie van den Taratarischen Oorlog*, 18.

<sup>279</sup> '...hy was niet min uytmuntende in raet en voorsichtigheyt, als in moet en getrouwigheyt; soo dat hy met fijne redenen en raetslagen de wijsten der Sinesen dede verwonderen, en hare harten met fijne beleeftheydt en rechtvaeridgheyt veroverde.' Ibidem, 18.

<sup>280</sup> Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 35-38, 53-55.

<sup>281</sup> '... liet zijn Hoogheit wat Speks voor hem brengen, daar af hy zo smakelijk en hongerigh begon t'eten, dat hem het bloet en vet (want het was maar half gaar) by de mont en handen neêr liep , daar in hem al

Hendrik continued that when more food was ordered: ‘...his Highness and the aforementioned Tartar Lords sat behind there once more equally gluttonous and filthy ;...’<sup>282</sup> In these quotes the highest Manchu officials, the members of the imperial government, were compared to farmers and were displayed in a degrading manner. Moreover, the traditional Manchu food, of which the meat appeared to be still raw, was also not valued highly. In *Het Gezantschap* also another banquet was described. This is one of the three traditional banquets every embassy has to attend after they paid tribute to the emperor:<sup>283</sup>

When the banquet began, the cooked and roasted meat-dishes were served, however only on three plates. These dishes looked so distasteful and messy, that one had reason to doubt if the meat was prepared, and to what extent the Tartars had paid attention to it.<sup>284</sup>

At the end of the meal all the dishes were collected, but the steward called his servants back for: ‘...a dish, with a cooked piece of rib of a camel, on which he munched and chewed so hungrily and enthusiastically, that one would think, that he had not eaten much that day.’<sup>285</sup> This exact quote is also found in Johan’s report, while all the others’ descriptions of the table manners of the Manchus are absent. An interesting note to this description is that Hendrik even described the reluctance of Schall in eating the half-raw Manchu dishes and instead ordered some fruit.<sup>286</sup> After the banquet, all the leftovers could be taken home, to be enjoyed later. A custom which was common among the Manchus, as is described in the publication. This created some ridicule among the Dutch participants:

It was very entertaining and farcical to see, how the filthy Tartars dealt with the remaining food, and stuffed their leather pockets and flayed rough animals skins with it. They did so in such a distasteful and spilling way, that the meat juices of the cooked food dripped through their pockets, making their clothes and boots stiff from the grease. These people were so gluttonous and hungrily digging-in and taking the left-overs, that it appeared as if they were raised by peasants on the land, rather than at the court.<sup>287</sup>

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d’andere Tartarische Heeren, die by hem zaten , zodanigh navolgden, datze beter gulzige en plompen boeren geelen , dan Rijks-raden van Sina.’ Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 163.

<sup>282</sup> ‘...zaten zijn Hoogheit en de gemelde Tartarische Heeren daar al weder even gulzigh en smeerigh achter;...’ Ibidem, 163.

<sup>283</sup> Ibidem, 180.

<sup>284</sup> ‘Als het banket opgenomen was, wierden de gekookte en gebraden vleesch-gerechten opgedischt , doch alleen maar in drie schootels. Deze gerechten zagen ‘er zoo begruist en morssig uit , dat men reden had om te twifelen waar in het gekookt was, en hoedanigh de Tarters daar meê gehandelt en omgesprongen hadden.’ Ibidem, 180.

<sup>285</sup> ‘...eenen schootel , met een gekookt ribbenstuk van eenen Kameel, daar hy zo hongurig en graag achter zat te kluiven en peuzelen , dat men zou gezeid hebben, dat hy dien dag niet veel gegeten had.’ Ibidem, 180; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 54.

<sup>286</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 163.

<sup>287</sup> ‘t was zeer vermakelijk en kluchting om te zien , hoe de smeerige Tarters met deze overgebleven kost in de bocht sprongen , en hunne leere zakken en afgestroopte ruige beeste-vellen daar mee vol propten. Zy gingen daar zoo gruzigh en morzigh mee te werk , dat de zoppen van de gekookte spijzen onder door de leeren zakken droopen , zulks hunne kleeren en laarzen stijf van smeer stonden. Zoo gulzigh en hongerigh waren deze menschen in ’t toetasten en ’t weghnemen van de overgeblevenen spijze, datze eer by de Boe-

In this quote anew, the table manners and dishes of the Manchus were ridiculed. Added to this was a negative depiction of their native clothes. The fact that they wore 'rough animal skins,' again did not display much respect. Thus, in *het Gezantschap* the Manchu were depicted as mere farmers, having barbarous table manners, uncivilized dishes and wearing barbarous clothes. This was a great contrast with the description of other banquets, in which the participants were praised for the politeness, manners and the tasteful food. Moreover, as Johan did not report the same barbarous actions of the Manchus during the banquets, he did write about the banquets in which the Chinese were praised.<sup>288</sup> Hendrik, therefore emphasized the Manchus uncivilized manners much more than Johan.

In previous writings about China the Chinese banquets were always accounted as occasions of high class and civility. The westerners were even astonished by the great number of rituals and ceremonies accompanying a banquet and that no sign of informality was found among Chinese having dinner.<sup>289</sup> In general, table etiquette and high-quality dishes were regarded in high esteem in Europe, as kitchens, foods and table manners became characteristics for the more upper class. The usual depiction of Chinese etiquette and eloquence regarding banquets and manners were a means to show the high-culture of China. The depiction of the Manchus therefore is highly contrasting with the old culture of China. Hendrik's portrayal of the Manchus thus strongly contrasted with Martini's depiction of the new dynasty. Hendrik presented the regime change as a fall of civilization to barbarity, while Martini claimed the opposite.<sup>290</sup>

As table etiquette was highly appreciated by the European elite, so was self-restraint and delicacy in the consumption of alcohol. Drunkenness, was therefore believed to be an example of uncivilized behavior. Johan and Hendrik both accounted a story in which Manchu officials had been drinking severely and were even still drunk the morning after the party. Hendrik described the incident as:

In the Hall (...) the chairs, tables and benches were scattered around, from which one could detect and deem, that they (the Tartars) had celebrated the feast of Bacchus. Most of the Gentlemen, who friendly welcomed and entertained the Ambassadors, were still full and drunk.<sup>291</sup>

In his depiction of the Manchus, Hendrik thus created a severe contrast between the old and new Dynasty.

The representation of the Manchu as barbarous people was also demonstrated in an elaborate account of three other embassies that were present in the Beijing at the time that the Dutch were there. One embassy was of another Manchu tribe, one of the Mughul-empire and one was called the 'Lammas', which were from the Khalka area, a

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ren op 't lant , dan ten hoof schenen opgevoed te zijn.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 180.

<sup>288</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 33.

<sup>289</sup> Lach, Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book four*, 1631.

<sup>290</sup> Groessen, *The De Bry collection of voyages*, 130-131.

<sup>291</sup> 'In de Voor-zaal (...) lagen de stoelen, tafels en banken alles over hoop, waaruit men genoeg konde bespeuren en oordeelen, datze het feest van Bacchus geviert hadden. Ook waren de meeste Heeren, die de Gezanten vriendelijk onthaalden en onderhielden, noch half vol en dronken.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 201; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 58.

province loyal to the Dalai Lama.<sup>292</sup> Johan only described that these three tributaries were also in the capital and paid tribute to the emperor in the same ceremony as the Dutch, while in the book much more details are given about all envoys. The Southern-Manchus were portrayed in a very denigrating way:

On the lower-body he wore a wide trousers, that fitted him in such a sloppy and baggy manner, like a sail was hanging around his legs. The boots he was wearing, were so plump, heavy and thick-soled, that they did not obstruct him in the slightest when walking ; they also (were) so wide and loose around his legs, that he (the Tartar) could kick them off without much effort.<sup>293</sup>

The embassy from the Mughal-empire, in contrast, was depicted in a much more positive manner. Many praising adjectives were added to their clothing and appearance. The description of the Mughal-ambassadors was followed by a positive portrayal of their empire, only to emphasize the positive valuation of these ambassadors.<sup>294</sup> This differentiation between both groups reflected the normative distinction between new Manchu-dynasty of China and the Chinese native inhabitants. One a cruel, barbarous former nomad tribe, the other inhabitants of a century-old, civilized grand empire.<sup>295</sup> Although Johan did not compare the two different embassies, this quote: 'It appears as if her (China's) ingenuity accompanied with her freedom was taken by the Tartars. In Nanking one can still witness some of the splendor of the ancients.'<sup>296</sup> does show the same verdict on the new rulers of the Middle Kingdom in comparison with the former Ming dynasty.<sup>297</sup>

Thus, besides the cruelty of the Manchus, Hendrik added barbarous and nomadic characteristics to this ethnic group that is not present explicitly in Johan's report. Nonetheless, the detailed and specific descriptions makes it probable that Hendrik based these accounts on Johan's notes and his experiences. Moreover, in later Dutch embassies the same portrayal of the Manchus' manners is given.<sup>298</sup> China's influence therefore, is found in in the tributary context. Johan was able to witness the Manchus behavior during the tributary banquets, because of his role as a steward in a Dutch embassy.

From this can be concluded that the depiction of the Manchus in *Het Gezantschap* were to a vast extent based on Johan's own experiences and his views of the destroyed country. Nonetheless, Hendrik did use some of Martini's writings on the conquest and intensified Johan's view on the cruelty of the Manchu, although Johan's opinion on this

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<sup>292</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 164, 170-172; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 50-51

<sup>293</sup> 'Aan 't beneden-lijf had hy een wijde pols-broek, die hem zo slordigh en ruim om de beenen hing te slingeren , niet anders als of er een zeil om hing. De laerzen die hy aan de beenen had , waren zo plomp, zwaar en dik van zoolen, datze hem in 't gaan geen kleen beletzel gaven ; ook hingenze zo wijd en zobbigh om de beenen, dat hy die zeer licht en met kleene moeite zou daar af geslingert hebben.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 170.

<sup>294</sup> Besides the written account, two images of both groups of ambassadors are placed in the publication. The Manchu tribe was placed in the countryside, standing in front of an encampment, while the Mughals were depicted on a large square surrounded by beautiful exotic buildings. In this way the origins of both embassy groups were portrayed; the Southern-Manchus were nomads, while the Mughals were inhabitants of a strong, civilised empire. As such, the pictorial portrayal of both embassies strengthened their textual representation. Ibidem, 171-172.

<sup>295</sup> Ibidem, 170-172.

<sup>296</sup> 't Schijnd off haar 't vernuft met den vrijdom tevens van de Tartaren is afgezet. In Nanking ziet men noch enigins wat van de luister der aalouden.' Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 31.

<sup>297</sup> Ibidem, 31.

<sup>298</sup> Wills Jr., *Embassies and Illusions*, 73-74.

matter is also vivid in the report. Besides Hendrik's additional negative depiction of the rulers of China, he also emphasized their barbarity by showing their nomadic and uncivilized heritage through their table manners and clothing. Especially the etiquette of the Manchus was a strong contrast with the usual highly civilized and eloquent Chinese. As such, the contrast with Martini's portrayal of the Manchus as a new traditional Chinese dynasty is even stronger.

How is the influence of China found in this negative depiction of the Qing-dynasty? First and foremost, the Manchus had not defeated all the Ming-followers and part of their campaign had and was still taking place along the route of the envoys. Secondly, the tributary context gave Johan and his fellow Dutch merchants the possibility to witness the Manchus as the new rulers of China in their administration of Chinese bureaucracy and rule. Although the Qing-dynasty did adjust themselves greatly to their new role - their strong pursuit to only allow trade with foreigners through the means of tribute is a clear example of this - their nomadic origins were still strongly present in the clothing, traditional dishes and table manners. The social context in China is therefore strongly present in the depictions of the Manchus in *Het Gezantschap*.

### *Chinese cities and prominent buildings*

On the journey from Kanton to Peking the merchants passed through many Chinese cities. Because it was Johan's duty to make realistic drawings of all the cities, villages, palaces, rivers and other strange buildings he described them in great detail.<sup>299</sup> As such, the descriptions of the cities and buildings received a prominent place in both accounts.

In the introductory pages of *Het Gezantschap* a non-normative description of the general outline of Chinese cities was given. It was mentioned that almost all Chinese cities were mostly the same, they only differed in size and mercantile activities. Almost all of them had two walls, containing several guard towers, military barracks and weapon storages. The inner city wall was surrounded by a moat. Every city had two gates, which were separated by a big square on which the military did their training practices.<sup>300</sup> Because it was part of the general introduction of *Het Gezantschap* this description was not mentioned in the report. Hendrik took this description from Jesuits' literature as a very similar description is found in *Blaeus groote Atlas*.<sup>301</sup>

Johan wrote in the introduction of his report: 'And because we passed so many villages and castles that it would bore someone to read about all of them, so I shall omit them all and continue to describe the cities, in the order that they are located alongside the rivers, in their stature...'<sup>302</sup> It appears Johan did not hold back that much, because many cities and villages were described in the report. In both accounts the cities were described in an empirical observing manner, but many praising adjectives were added to the description. Because of the number of city descriptions a few examples that are representative for the general portrayal and that are useful for this analysis are given below. Just as in the Jesuit writings, Nanking and Peking received a prominent place in the report and the publication, showing that Johan and Hendrik were influenced by this aspect of Jesuits' literature.

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<sup>299</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhoofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 13-14.

<sup>300</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 9.

<sup>301</sup> Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving*, 16.

<sup>302</sup> 'En overmits wij zoo veel dorpen en kasteelen gepasseert datt hett emant zou vervelen te lezen, zoo zal ik diezelve altemaal achterwege laten en vervolgen de steden, gelijk zij in orde langs den oever van verscheidene revieren gelegen zijn, beschrijvende meteen hare gestalte...' Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhoofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 31

On the fourth of May 1656 the Dutch arrived in Nanking, in the province of Nanking, the former Chinese capital. In the publication three and a half pages were devoted to describing the city, which was praised for its beauty many times. Its architecture, infrastructure, wealth and wide availability of different foods and crafts were mentioned extensively.<sup>303</sup> Johan gave a similar, but less detailed account of Nanking. Nonetheless, Johan's description is so detailed that it is likely that he used previous Jesuits' writings for it.<sup>304</sup>

The imperial palace received special attention in the publication, more than in Johan's report who only mentions that it is 20.000 'stairs'<sup>305</sup> long and that they 'took some rubbles of the debris of the roof with us to show that the palace was built of everlasting materials.'<sup>306</sup> Despite the fact that it was destroyed by the Manchus in their conquest of China and only a ruin remained, it was described in *Het Gezantschap* as very beautiful and having the size of the city of Harlem. Hendrik mentioned that these claims were based on the ruins that were left of it and on stories of inhabitants of Nanking. As no additional information from the inhabitants are present in the report, it is probable that Hendrik based his information on Johan's notes and that perhaps indeed Johan had received additional information through his interpreters. Nonetheless, the imperial palace of Nanking was also a prominent topos in many Jesuits' writings about China. Hendrik, therefore, could also have based the additional information about the imperial palace on Jesuits' writings, and portray it as it was told by Nanking's inhabitants. Moreover, a certain story about the circumference of the outer wall, that is found in every Western description of Nanking is also present in *Het Gezantschap*.<sup>307</sup> As such, Hendrik is even more indebted to other secondary sources in his description of Nanking than Johan.

In the publication great astonishment was shown that while the Manchus did not sack the city of Nanking and left it unharmed, they completely destroyed the ancient palace. This is met with great grieve and a poem about the destruction of the palace was added to the account.

Blood thirsty Bellona,  
What remains unblemished,  
When your black torch gleams in the thunder of war,  
Another Troy is here consumed by flames,  
And the family of the king chased away and destroyed.<sup>308</sup>

In the report the same poem was written, although this does not provide us with more information on whether Johan or Hendrik wrote it, it does show us that in the re-

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<sup>303</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 102-105.

<sup>304</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 42.

<sup>305</sup> It is unclear to me how many meters he meant with this measurement. It does show that Johan gave an idea of the size of the imperial palace. Ibidem, 43.

<sup>306</sup> '...namen noch zommige stucken van 't puin der daken met onz om te tonen dat het hoff van onvergancklijke materialen geboudt was.' Ibidem, 43.

<sup>307</sup> The story goes that when two horseback riders leave the city from the same gate, and start riding in opposite directions around the city, they will not meet before nightfall. Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, Volume III, book four*, 1607; Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving*, 119.

<sup>308</sup> 'Bloeddorstige Belloon, Wat blijft'er ongeschonden, Wanneer uw zwarte toors in 't oorlogsonweer gloeyt. Een andere Trooya is hier van de vlam verslonden, En 's Kongings gansche Huis verjaagt en uitgeroeyt.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 106.

port the same grief over the destruction of the palace was presented.<sup>309</sup> Nonetheless, Johan did not spend more words on it besides the poem.<sup>310</sup> Despite this, in the report a much longer description of Nanking was given than of any other city and again many topics that were addressed in the publication were also addressed in the report. This city did have an effect on Johan, because, as mentioned before, in the introduction of the report he wrote that only in the city of Nanking some of the beauty of the classical and ancient era of China is found, the rest was destroyed by the Manchus.<sup>311</sup> Hence, Johan showed great admiration for Nanking and emphasized his repulsion for the conquest of the Manchus. But, once again, in the publication more glorifying words were attributed to Nanking, showing a more enlightened view of the city than in the report.

To the publication a personal touch was also added, which is not found in the report. It was already mentioned that on the return of the journey to Peking, Johan took a stone from the destroyed imperial palace with him.<sup>312</sup> In the actual description of the embassy's stay in Nanking on the return journey to Canton, Johan visited the ruins of the palace to 'witness it once, and without a doubt for the last time.'<sup>313</sup> Hence, in the publication it was demonstrated that Nanking and its imperial palace had touched Johan on an emotional level. Giving Nanking a special place amongst all the other Chinese cities in *Het Gezantschap*, the same as in many Jesuits' reports.

To conclude this section, Hendrik used secondary sources, while it is probable that some information that is not found in the report was derived from Johan's notes. This is due to the high level of personal experiences and emotions that Hendrik wrote in the additional descriptions in the publication. Therefore it is likely that Johan and Hendrik both were influenced by Jesuits' writings on Nanking, but that Johan from his personal experiences also reached the same conclusion on the former capital as the Jesuits.

Peking also received much attention in both accounts. Hendrik provided more information on Peking than Johan, but both accounts greatly corresponded with earlier Jesuits' descriptions of Peking. It is thus probable that Johan and Hendrik relied on Jesuits' literature for their description of the capital. Hendrik had only used the Jesuits' descriptions more extensively than Johan, and as was done in several Jesuits' writings, compared Peking with Nanking. For example, in the publication much space was devoted to the dirty streets of Peking - in comparison with the tiled street in Nanking - the inhabitants ways of enduring it and the differences between the many sedans.<sup>314</sup> It is clearly visible that the editor of *Het Gezantschap* had difficulty in providing an interesting and elaborate account of the city of Peking because Johan could not provide that much information. This is also mentioned in the publication. The reason for this is that Johan had to remain in their assigned lodge most of the time and had no time to witness the city himself.<sup>315</sup> To at least give a description based on an eyewitness account, a description of 'a certain Markus Paulus'<sup>316</sup> was added to the text.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> The poems were spelled differently in the report and the publication. Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 106; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 43.

<sup>310</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 43.

<sup>311</sup> Ibidem, 31, 42-43.

<sup>312</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 105.

<sup>313</sup> '...noch eens, en buiten twijffel voor het laaste, t'aanschouwen', Ibidem, 193.

<sup>314</sup> Ibidem, 185-189; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 55; Lach and Van Kley, *Asia in the making of Europe, book four*, 1607.

<sup>315</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 184.

<sup>316</sup> The famous Marco Polo. It is of interest that while Hendrik did discredit Mendoza's writings about the Wall and the practice of fishing by means of the Louwa birds, he did not show any opinion on the writings of Marco Polo and used his description of Peking without any hesitation.

In both accounts the need was expressed to describe the imperial palace of Peking in detail, because it was one of the most renowned buildings on earth. Johan described some features of the palace during the audience to the emperor, while after this episode he paused the chronological story to give a more detailed description. He was very positive about the features of the imperial palace, its buildings and its pleasure gardens. He wrote for example: 'Outside the cruciform plan of the inner court there are several pleasure gardens, filled with all kinds of fruit trees and beautiful houses, whom the emperor had ordered to decorate so gracefully, that the eye cannot witness anything more pleasant.'<sup>318</sup> Afresh, Johan could not have witnessed personally the level of detail that the description entails, making it assumable that he had used other sources for the story.

In the publication three and a half pages were spent on the depiction of the palace. Hendrik used literal sentences from the report, but also added more information. Besides Johan's descriptions, he also reported about the activities, lives and residences of the eunuchs, the emperor's concubines and the emperor and his wife. As such, he used even more secondary sources to complete the description of the palace. The description of the imperial palace was concluded with the words:

If I would specifically narrate all the other artistic masterpieces, such as pleasure gardens, orchards, brooks and pools, as others eccentricities, that decorate and exalt this court, I would fasten myself to an interminable objective, that would rather require an entire book than a few pages.<sup>319</sup>

To conclude the description of Peking, Johan's use of secondary sources to compile his report is quite evident. Hendrik and Johan both mentioned that the envoys were not allowed to leave their lodges without permission, but Johan did describe several characteristics of the capital and its inhabitants. Characteristics that are very similar with the depictions of the Jesuits, which Johan could not have witnessed himself. It is assumable therefore that Johan, because of his lack of eyewitness description of the capital resolved to the writings of the padres. Hendrik, who wanted to give an even more elaborate story of the Imperial Palace, used even more writings of the Jesuits. Johan and Hendrik, therefore both were influenced by the topos that Peking and Nanking were in Jesuits' writings.

Besides Nanking and Peking many other cities and villages which the Dutch passed by were mentioned in both accounts. In both writings in general the descriptions of the cities were very similar in terms of their expressiveness and the emphasis that was placed on certain characteristics. Hendrik, however, added more details and several positive attributes were intensified. From a comparison between the two sources on the description of several cities it can be assumed that Johan in some cases provided more information in his notes than in his report. Hendrik used these additional details in the publication and added information from Jesuits' books to the description. Moreover, in

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<sup>317</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 189

<sup>318</sup> 'Buiten 't kruis van dit binnenste bestek zijn verscheyde lusthoven, voll van allerhande fruitboomen en zo schoone huizen, die deze keyzer zoo sierlik heeft laten opbouwen, dat het oog niet aangener zien kan.' Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 54.

<sup>319</sup> 'Indien ik al d'andere overkunstige werk-stukken, zoo van lust-hoven, Waranden, Beeken en Poelen, als andere byzonderheden, die dit Hof verciere en verheerlijken, in 't byzonder wilde verhalen, 'k zag my aan een ondeindelijk werk vast, en dat veel meer een geheel boek als eenige weinigh bladen zou vereischen.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 178-179.

the introduction of every province Hendrik named many more cities and its accompanying economic, architectural and demographic information.

The Chinese influence on the portrayal of Nanking, Peking and other Chinese cities differed. In case of Nanking, China's influence is reflected in the fact that a mercantile group, with different cultural backgrounds and intentions than the Jesuits, came to the same conclusion as the padres on their opinion of Nanking. The city indeed was an amazing sight for seventeenth-century Europeans and the allowance of the Chinese to let Westerners witness the city is what accounted for the later European representation of this city. China's influence on the representation of the capital was practically the same. Johan too was resorted to stay in his lodge and was not able to witness the capital himself. Hence, he relied on the Jesuits' writings on Peking, that in general, were not so flattering about the capital. Therefore, Johan's and Hendrik's description of Peking showed little personal remarks and was a more descriptive narrative. China's influence, therefore, is in a paradoxical way present in the non-personal and descriptive portrayal of the capital. When it comes to all the cities and villages that the envoys passed by, China's influence was very subtle. Personal experiences and description of Johan were mingled with Jesuits' descriptions of every city, making it difficult to distil the influence of China on this subject.

Besides cities, much time was spent on other exotic, Chinese buildings. In both accounts some triumphal arches, many pagodas, Chinese handmade cliffs and the Chinese Great Wall were described. The different Chinese pagodas received the most attention and amazement in both accounts. As such, these architectural delights will be described first.

In both accounts the square Paolinxia, with in its center a Porcelain Pagoda received much adoration. The Pagoda was situated in the surrounding lands of the city of Nanking. In both sources was mentioned that the square contained the most beautiful buildings and pagoda of China. Both described a temple on the square which had ten thousands statues, differing in size, displaced in different rows on the wall. The pagoda on the square received the most attention.<sup>320</sup> In the publication one full page is devoted to the pagoda, which was described as:

...which in eminence and all kinds of artistic masterpieces, in such an extent excelled above all other Chinese forms of art, that the Chinese proved what bright and captious artisans their fatherland produces.<sup>321</sup>

In both accounts the height, numbers of stairs, its outer appearance and the material of the spire was described in detail.<sup>322</sup> In the publication Hendrik mentioned more details and added more positive adjectives. Hendrik even added a poem dedicated to the pagoda, in which its beauty was praised, as well as pitied, because the right God was not praised there.<sup>323</sup> Once more, Hendrik stayed true to Johan's description but added more

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<sup>320</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 108-109; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 43.

<sup>321</sup> '...die in kostelijkheid en allerlei prachtig kunstwerk, zodanigh boven alle andere Sineesche kunstwerken uitmuntte, dat hier aan de Sinezen hebben doen blijken, wat schrandere en spitsvondige kunstenaars hun Vaderlant uitlevert.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 108.

<sup>322</sup> Ibidem, 108-109; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 43.

<sup>323</sup> 'Even if this Building surpasses the seven wonders of the worlds, by which means the old age mocks this new world ; O Nanking, the gleam of your gilded Churches horrifies me, as God name is not called upon there' ; 'al trotft dit trots Gebou de zeven wonder-werken, Waar meê den ouden tijdt deez nieuwe

additional information based on other sources. Moreover, looking at the clear details in Johan's description, it is again presumable he used some other sources to complete his report. Nonetheless, he did witness and probably visit the pagoda and was struck by its beauty, but for the detailed description that was expected from him he turned to other writings. Therefore, the description of the Paolinxia can be seen in the same light as the description of the former imperial palace in Nanking. Johan had a similar opinion of it as the Jesuits, based on his own experiences. Only for a more elaborate description he needed to turn to the writings of the padres. Hence, despite the different cultural backgrounds of Johan and the Jesuits, the square was so strikingly amazing for Westerners and the approval of the Chinese to show it to them led to its later Western representation.

Just as with the description of cities, several other pagodas and other buildings, ascribed as typical Chinese, as triumphal arches were described in both accounts. The triumphal arch was introduced in the description of the city of Kanton. In both accounts was mentioned that the arches were attributed with beautiful stone carvings, while in the publication more positive adjectives were added to its description.<sup>324</sup> In the publication also an image of the triumphal arch was added to give the readers a good view of its appearance. Next to this, the publication provided a general description of Chinese triumphal arches which is not found in report, probably based on other books appertaining to China.<sup>325</sup>

In general, in the publication all the pagodas and arches received a positive evaluation. It was mentioned several times that this particular building was one of the most beautiful ones in all of China. They were presented as the typical attributes of the Chinese city- and landscapes. In the report, many pagodas and some arches were described, but did not receive such a positive evaluation as in the publication.<sup>326</sup> Anew, a same conclusion can be derived from the representation of pagodas in both accounts. It is probable that Johan provided more details in his notes, which Hendrik used alongside the books of Jesuits. He mixed the report, Johan's notes and other books in his descriptions of these buildings, making the influence of China on this representation very subtle and difficult to extract.

One other typical Chinese architectural endeavor received much attention and appreciation in both writings. On the eighteenth of June 1656, the Dutch passed by the village of Pekkinsa, in the province of Kiangsi. In the surrounding lands of this village several handmade cliffs were situated, containing stairs and different floors. In both accounts appreciation was expressed for the high level of Chinese craftwork that these cliffs portrayed and the fact that many of the cliffs were destroyed by the Tartars created much grief among the Dutch. Despite this, Johan did make a drawing of these buildings and the etch of this drawing was added in the publication. Once again, Hendrik wrote

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wereld tart ; My gruwelt voor den glans van uw vergulde Kerken, O Nanking, daar Gods Naam niet aange-roepen wert.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 109.

<sup>324</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 35.

<sup>325</sup> In the *Blaeus groote Atlas* a slightly similar general description of these triumphal arches, named 'zegebogen' is given. Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving*, 119.

<sup>326</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 16.

<sup>326</sup> Ibidem, 76-78, 135-136, 139-140, 150; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 38, 46-48.

more words and praises in the publication, although Johan did show much appreciation in his report too.<sup>327</sup>

In the secondary sources about the Jesuits' writings these handmade cliffs were not mentioned or at least not as a prominent topic in the Padres' accounts. Martini also did not mention them in his description of the province Kiangsi.<sup>328</sup> It is assumable therefore that Hendrik's elaboration in the publication were based on Johan's notes and not necessarily on books of the Society of Jesus. From it can be derived that the description of the cliffs was based to a great extent on Johan's own experiences. So, can an influence of China on this depiction be found? First and foremost, the route that the envoys were assigned to take, passed by these works of arts, giving Johan and his fellow Dutchmen the possibility to witness them. Secondly, once again the social context influenced its portrayal because of the destruction by the Manchus. The fact that these handmade cliffs were such a rarity and curiosity for the Dutch and were destroyed by the Manchus, stimulated an even greater repulsion for the barbarity of the Manchus. Hendrik wrote that:

The defacing and demolishing of these artistic cliffs and beautiful rocks, clearly shows, with what grimness and demented unconstraint the Tartars, in the last war have pillaged through the entire empire (...) rightfully one could proclaim and declare, that the Tartars demolition, defacement and obliteration of such pieces of art on such unchanged locations, only did so to increase the notoriety and brilliance of the other great cities and places of importance, in which such pieces of art are still displayed to this day.<sup>329</sup>

Consequently, the influence of China is found in the social context of the destruction of these cliffs witnessed by the Dutch which strengthened the portrayal of the Manchus as cruel barbarians.

Last but not least, the legendary Great Wall of China. Johan did not spend much words on it in his reports. He only mentioned that standing from the city gates of Peking, the Wall could be seen in the distance. Johan reported that he heard from Chinese farmers that it was possible to ride back and forth from the capital to the Wall in just one day. Perhaps Johan indeed heard this from local peasants or he derived this information from Jesuits' writings. Nothing more is said about the Wall in the report.<sup>330</sup> And what a difference this is with the account on the Wall in the publication.<sup>331</sup> The same story as in the report was given, but was followed by the words:

And since this Wall is on the one hand a labor-intensive colossus that through its magnitude and length amazes the whole world, on the other hand, because several writers

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<sup>327</sup> Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 79-81; Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 39.

<sup>328</sup> Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving*, 192-206.

<sup>329</sup> 'Het schenden en sloopen van deze Kunstklippen en aartige Steentrotzen, geven duidelijk genoeg te kennen, met welk een verwoedheit en uitzinnige baldadigheid de Tartars, in deze laatsten oorlog door het gansche Rijk huis gehouden hebben (...) met recht zou iemand kunnen bybrengen en zeggen, dat de Tartars het sloopen, schenden en weg-breken van zoodanige Kunst-stukken op ondervermaarde plaatzen, alleen te dien einde aldaar in 't werk hadden gestelt, om d'andere groote Steden, en plaatzen van meer belangh, daar in zoodanige kunst-stukken zich noch ten huidigen dage vertonen, des te grooter luister en glans by te zetten.' Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 79.

<sup>330</sup> Blussé and Falkenburg, *Johan Nieuhofs Beelden van een Chinareis*, 55.

<sup>331</sup> Blaeu, *Blaeus grooten Atlas, Tweede deel van 't negende stuck der Aerdrycksbeschryving*, 19-20.

only thought up trifles and dreams about it, I shall shortly and plainly certify what I have taken from eyewitnesses in *Peking*, and from credible writers.<sup>332</sup> (Italics in original)

In *Het Gezantschap* a clear point was made that in this description, in comparison to other books, a realistic portrayal of the Chinese Wall was given. The depiction of the wall was concluded with a long citation of the Jesuit Mendoza, to emphasize that he gave a false account of this magnificent piece of architecture and to emphasize the truthfulness of the description in *Het Gezantschap*.<sup>333</sup> As conclusion was given:

It is justified that this Wall accounts as the wonder among wonders, not only because her immense length, thickness and weight, but also because of her durability, noticed due to enduring so many years of all-devouring time, without any derogation or dilapidation; but nowadays still appears robust, solid and imperishable, as when it was made.<sup>334</sup>

In the comparison of the description of the Wall between the report and the publication a similar paradox of China's influence as in the description of Peking can be found. Johan was not able to witness the Wall himself, so he claimed that he referred to what he heard from local Chinese or his interpreters. He left it at that, but Hendrik could not resort to such a short description of one of China's most impressive buildings. It is of interest that although Johan could not provide him with more information, Hendrik used additional sources for the Wall's portrayal and at the same time discredited the writings of Mendoza on this subject.

Hendrik's choice to dismiss Mendoza's description can be seen as a literary tool to hold on to the level of truthfulness and actuality that he was claiming of *Het Gezantschap*. As Johan could not provide him the information he needed, Hendrik had to depend on Jesuits' writings. The act of discrediting one former writing and emphasizing that the portrayal in *Het Gezantschap* is accurate, masked the fact that Hendrik himself had to rely entirely on secondary sources. Moreover, it can also be interpreted that Hendrik criticized Mendoza, thus taking a stand in a debate about China as a means to increase the intellectual status of *Het Gezantschap*. So, a new dimension of intellectual travel stories is brought forward. Not only did Hendrik want to woo his public by providing more detailed intellectual information, he took a stand in debates about the Middle Kingdom and even wanted to contribute to them.

When focusing on the influence of China on the representation of the Wall, anew the different background and intentions of Johan and the envoys are apparent. Because the Chinese Wall was not on route to the capital and the envoys were restricted in their freedom to explore the countryside, Johan had no possibility to witness it. As such, Hen-

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<sup>332</sup> 'En aangezien deze Muur eensdeels een werk en gevaerte is, dat door zijn over-groote zwaarte en lenghte de gansche Wereld in optocht van verwonderigh houd; en ten andere, eenige Schrijvers daar van alleen maar een deel beuzelingen en droomen uit hunnen kruin gestooten hebben, zal ik het werk naakte-lijk, voor zo veel ik te *Peking* van ooghtuigen, en uit geloofwaerdige Schrijvers daar af heb kunnen verne- men, in 't kort verklaren.' (italics in original) Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap Der Neêrlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*, 189.

<sup>333</sup> Ibidem, 191.

<sup>334</sup> 'Met recht magh deze Muur voor een wonderwerk van alle wonderwerken verstreken, niet alleen ten aanzien van hare overgroote lengte, dikte en zwaarte; maar ook ten opzicht van hare onvergankelijkheit, gemerkt het alreê zo veel jaren den alverslindenden tijt verduurt heeft, zonder eenige mistal of bouwelligheit te krijgen; maar vertoont zich noch tot op dezen tijdt zoo hecht, vast, en onvergankelijk, als of het eerst gesticht was.' Ibidem, 191.

drik, in his attempts to adjust to the expectations of an intellectual travel story had to rely on other descriptions, creating a similar portrayal of China's most astonished piece of architecture as the Jesuits in China.

To conclude this theme, the use of secondary sources by both Hendrik and Johan are clear in their descriptions of Nanking, Peking, the imperial palace in Peking and the pagoda on Paolinxia square. Although Johan indeed added his own eyewitness account to his description, which are used by Hendrik, their indebtedness to the writings of the Jesuits still stands. Despite this, in the description of Nanking and the pagoda on Paolinxia square Johan's opinion closely correlates with those of the Jesuits, ascribing also for that reason a similar portrayal. As such, despite the cultural differences, the former capital and its nearby pagoda was an amazing sight for Westerners, regardless of their intentions and backgrounds, showing that China's approval to let both groups witness these architectonic delights even surpassed these different perspectives.

In case of the depiction of the capital and its imperial palace, Johan was required to explore them as he was assigned by the VOC board. From this can be derived that Johan had reasons to add these narratives in his report to the VOC. Perhaps he felt he was obliged to describe these topics and felt he would not be taken serious if he would show his incapability to witness them. Overall, the embassy were the first Dutch merchants to enter the capital and imperial palace. As such, the strong restriction that were endorsed on the tributary envoys in China are reflected in *Het Gezantschap* in its indebtedness to other sources, and exactly here the influence of China is found in a paradoxical manner.

What is of interest is that although Johan did not feel the need to describe the Wall - it was clear that the route of the envoys did not pass this exotic structure - Hendrik did. Moreover, to emphasize the veracity of his descriptions, Hendrik even discredited Mendoza, showing that the description of the Wall in *Het Gezantschap* was more accurate. This gives an interesting insight into Hendrik's positioning of the publication in seventeenth-century Europe. Although he was publishing a travel account, he did want to show that his book contained next to accurate descriptions and images of China, also an advanced current intellectual plea, making it a true intellectual travel account, or perhaps even a new step in intellectual and descriptive travel literature. As such, in Hendrik description of the Wall, the paradox influence of China is found, but at the same time and more profoundly the influence of the seventeenth-century European intellectual literature too. Next to these description, the subtle influence of China is found in the overall descriptions of Chinese cities and profound buildings. Hendrik clearly mixed Johan's own descriptions of these buildings and towns with Jesuits literature, making the influence of China difficult to extract. The description of the handmade cliffs, therefore, are interesting in this respect. They reflect a Chinese form of architecture not that prominent in former writings or perhaps even not mentioned before by Jesuits. The cliffs received much praise and interest in Johan's and Hendrik's writings. Their depiction even reflected Johan's thoughts on the new dynasty, anew emphasizing his disgust for their barbaric invasion and destruction of the country. Hence, the influence of China is found in the obliged route the Dutch had to take and in the current state of destruction of the country site, creating an admirable depiction of the handmade cliffs and Chinese craftsmanship and disgust for the new ruling dynasty.

This theme concludes the thematic analysis of the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*. It has become evident that China influenced its representation in multiple ways, differing in intensity per topic. Moreover, in some topics the seventeenth-century European literary contexts and traditions were more influential than in others, depending more heavily on previous merchants' writings or Jesuits' writings. More importantly,

in some instances Johan's actual experiences were the most influential and were not overshadowed by style figures, contexts and literary expectations and exactly there China's influence was most profound.

### ***China's overarching influence on different themes and different topoi***

The analysis of the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap* shows that it differed per topic how much Hendrik relied on particular sources and how influential China was. In some themes Hendrik felt the need to provide a lot of descriptive and intellectual information, even criticizing the Jesuit Mendoza, while in others he focused much more on the mercantile perspective of Johan and on previous travel stories. Nonetheless, Hendrik was indebted more to the Jesuits' literature than previous intellectual and descriptive travel stories in providing much more descriptive information on the Middle Kingdom.

Despite this, the greatest literary influence on *Het Gezantschap* was of course Johan's report. The themes in which Johan's perspective is most prominent and not overshadowed by Jesuits' writings are that of Chinese religion and practices, the handling of foreigners and the description of the Manchus and the Manchu conquest. Religion, an important intellectual topic for the Jesuits in regards to their accommodationist policy, is one of the most personal themes in *Het Gezantschap*. The emphasis is on Johan's experiences with religious sacrifices and devotional practices and his personal opinion of them. Johan viewed the practices as either repulsive or was astonished by the intensity of the devotion the pagans showed, claiming that this devotion surpassed that of many Christians. Moreover, the only differentiation between religious practices that Hendrik incorporated in *Het Gezantschap* concerned a religious practice that Johan had witnessed himself, and could have witnessed because of the route the embassy took; the difference between the decoration of Idols in the South and North of China. This strongly contrasts with the Jesuits strict differentiation between Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Because religion was such an important topic for the Jesuits and also a criticized one, it appears that Hendrik was hesitant in using the Jesuits' writings on this topic. What also should not be forgotten is that the Jesuits were Catholic, while Johan and his fellow envoys and more importantly, the intended reading audience were Protestants. Using a Catholic point of view on religion was probably a dangerous step to take for Hendrik, thus he withheld from using the Jesuits' view on Chinese religions. The portrayal of Chinese religions, therefore, was strongly influenced by Johan's depiction of and experiences with them.

Beside Chinese religious practices, the portrayal of the Manchus also remained close to Johan's experiences with this ethnic group. Hendrik chose to emphasize the Manchus destruction of the Chinese countryside and cities and associated this with the Manchus barbarous, nomadic origin which he highlighted by means of describing their disgusting table manners and ridiculous clothes. The use of many strong adjectives on this particular topic is rather striking. Hendrik did not hold back in accentuating what he thought was characteristic for the new ruling dynasty. His portrayal clashed with Martini's, a Jesuit to which he in other instances stayed true and whom had written the most influential book on the Manchu conquest, *De Bello Tartarico*. In the second part of *het Gezantschap*, the 'general descriptions,' Hendrik even added a translation of *De Bello Tartarico*, adding extra information and details to it. So why did Hendrik give such a negative and different depiction of the Manchus?

To answer this question, first the Jesuits' outlook on the new dynasty has to be accounted for. The more positive portrayal of Martini can be explained by the fact that

the Jesuits wanted to keep their position in China and at the court, so they had to ally themselves with the new dynasty. A negative depiction of this dynasty would not help the Jesuits in their continuing efforts to rally support for their mission through the portrayal of China as a civilized, grand empire, ready and willing to be Christianized. The merchants had no such interest in portraying the Manchus positively. Moreover, when taking into account the thick description of the Manchus' barbarous ways of conduct in *Het Gezantschap*, one should keep in mind that the Manchus simply were an appealing theme to let the readers at home marvel, wonder or feel repulsed by. The terrible destruction of the Chinese grand empire and the invasion of the Manchus were a striking thread in the story of the embassy. It contributed to the actuality of the narrative and therefore its truthfulness and could arouse strong emotions in the readers. Therefore, this can also be seen as an example of the topos of adventurous feelings and repulsion towards foreign natives and barbarians. Johan provided the information and experiences in his report, Hendrik used this and exaggerated them as a topos to attract and amuse his readers in his depiction of the Manchus as terrible and barbarous invaders of a once glorious and civilized empire. As such, the influence of travel stories is also evident in this theme.

Which bring us to the last subject in which Johan's experiences were evident in *Het Gezantschap*: the portrayal of the Chinese treatment of envoys and merchants. In *Het Gezantschap* a new representation of this theme is brought forward in comparison with travel stories and Jesuits' literature. In all previous literature appertaining to China the Chinese handling of merchants and tributaries was always depicted in a negative way. The positive depiction of the treatment of envoys shed a complete new light on this aspect of Chinese culture. Although Johan sometimes showed some annoyance towards the bureaucratization of the tribute mission, especially in Peking, this is not highlighted in the report or publication. Instead, the emphasis in both cases was one the opposition the envoys received from the Jesuit Adam Schall and the Portuguese. It is probable that the thwarting of some Jesuits and the Portuguese was a nice story for a VOC-narrative, in which the usual rivals were to blame, and the picture of the glorious ancient and civilized Middle Kingdom showed no cracks in the surface. In the traditions and ceremonies of the tribute system, therefore, Hendrik did show that the Manchus adjusted themselves to the superior Chinese culture and in this instance, he did follow Martini's positive opinion of the Qing-dynasty. Hendrik, therefore, portrayed the Manchus as was fitting to him. In case of the Manchus acts of war and table manners, the emphasis on their nomadic and barbarous origins could amaze the readers, while in their use of the tribute system they could be used to be contrasted with the despicable Jesuits in Beijing.

Despite the negative role that Schall was ascribed to in the outcome of the tribute mission, the influence of Jesuits' writings was profound in *Het Gezantschap*. The themes Chinese crafts and practices, the inhabitants of China and the Chinese cities, buildings and architecture were the most indebted to the writings of the padres. In the first two themes Hendrik relied mostly on Martini's long lists of demographical information per province, using this information for his own enumeration of the provinces, but also for the details in the unfolding travel story. Hendrik apparently felt the need to match the quality of the Jesuits' encyclopedic survey of the Middle Kingdom, but also saw opportunities to use the many data to enrich a particular event or story in the narrative. The latter is most evident in the narration of the cities of Nanjing and Peking, the Paolinxia pagoda and the Wall. In some instances he found an entry in the narrative of Johan in order to position these descriptions in the book, in others instances he spoke to the reader directly, arguing that this particular building or city was so well-known in the world that

he could not withhold an elaborate description. Hendrik's proficiency in handling such a large bulk of data and seeing its potential for different aspects of the travel story, reveals him as a skilled story compiler.

In the descriptions of cities and prominent buildings Hendrik was strongly influenced by the topoi present in Jesuits' literature. Because Johan was asked by the Gentlemen Seventeen to describe the cities they encountered in detail, he could not have left out the two most important cities of China: Nanjing and Peking. Hence he resorted to Jesuits' writings to meet the needs of the VOC-directors. Hendrik, who wanted to write a descriptive and intellectual travel story, could not withhold from describing the former and present capital either. As Johan could not provide him with information, Hendrik had to rely entirely on the Jesuits knowledge. One can wonder whether Hendrik regarded this as a problem. He wanted to showcase his knowledge of the writings appertaining to China, otherwise he could not make the claim that Johan brought new information and descriptions adding to what had already been written. Therefore, regardless of the information his brother could have provided him, Hendrik was unable to leave out Nanjing and Peking. They were of too much importance as topoi for anyone who wanted to describe the grand empire of China and wanted to claim he presented new and actual information.

The fact that Hendrik used these topoi and elaborated on them in such great detail, highlights that Hendrik wanted to match the standard of Jesuits' literature and make sure that *Het Gezantschap* received the place and prestige that Jesuits' books had in society. The fact that Hendrik discredited a sixteenth-century Jesuits' source and claimed he himself presented a truthful description of the use of *Louwa* and the Wall only strengthened this claim. Perhaps Hendrik wanted to present *Het Gezantschap* as an even better source than Jesuits' literature, because as it contained the same intellectual and descriptive information as the Jesuits' works, it also contained the mercantile, unprejudiced and empirical perspective.

Which brings us to how Hendrik used and was influenced by adventurous travel stories and intellectual and descriptive travel stories. Firstly, several topoi and tropes of travel literature are evident in *Het Gezantschap*. Adventurous accounts, emphasis on details and personal experiences, marvel, repulsion and Christian moral appeared many times in the unfolding of the story. Many of these narratives were mixed with elaborate descriptions, emphasizing Hendrik's talent as a story compiler once more, although in some cases the mercantile tropes were dominated and pushed to the back by the high level of details. This brings us to the contrast between *Het Gezantschap* and previous intellectual and descriptive travel stories. Hendrik used similar topoi as his predecessors, emphasizing China's wealth, cities and economy, but at the same time he gave many more details and information in an encyclopedic, enumerating and narrating manner. *Het Gezantschap*, therefore differed from previous intellectual and descriptive stories in its amount of information and in how this information was presented, enumerated and narrated. Moreover, Hendrik took position in certain Jesuits' debates and provided new information in which he went against claims and representations as they were uttered by the Jesuits.

As such, it can be claimed that Hendrik had a clear mission with the publication of *Het Gezantschap*; he wanted to construct a travel narrative that besides supplying adventurous stories and descriptions to marvel about, revealed new, actual and accurate information about the Middle Kingdom. At the same time he wanted it to appeal to an intellectual audience, so he placed great emphasis on topoi in the style of Jesuits' writings, showing he was knowledgeable about these writings and traditions and could even

make a claim about or against them while providing new information. As such, he wanted to write an intellectual and descriptive travel story that gained the same intellectual prestige as Jesuits' writings while simultaneously it was also approachable for a travel story audience. Due to the objectives of Hendrik, aspects of Chinese culture were represented with different levels of appreciation and reprobation. Some facets of Chinese civilization were appreciated and displayed with great marvel, while others were disapproved and portrayed as despicable. As such, a different and new representation of China was presented in *Het Gezantschap*, one in which the opinions and points of views of Jesuits and merchants were combined and reflected in a new way.

Now that Hendrik's choices of literature and their effects on the representation of China have been pointed out, one last, but very important, influence has to be scrutinized: China itself. The influence of China is largely related to the tradition of paying tribute, the rituals and conducts that accompanied this, the route that the embassy was obliged to take and the Chinese and Manchu natives and officials that the Dutch encountered. Moreover, the cultural and political circumstances influenced this tradition and the experiences of the Dutch embassy at the same time. As the influence of China is reflected in the experiences of Johan, China's influence corresponded with the new images that *Het Gezantschap* brought of the Manchus and the treatment of merchants and envoys. Especially in the latter, the impact of China was profound.

As the Dutch adapted themselves to the Chinese modes of conduct and agreed to send an embassy to the Chinese emperor, the gates of the empire were opened for them and they were received in a new and more positive way by the Chinese. This change in the Chinese reaction towards the Dutch is strongly evident in *Het Gezantschap*. Johan's depiction of religious practices and the possibility to witness them personally and up-close were due to the obligation of Manchus and Chinese supervisors to accompany them to the capital. Nonetheless, Johan's and Hendrik's negative verdict of the Manchus and some religious practices were beyond the control of the Chinese, but in case of the Manchus these verdicts did reveal the current state of affairs in the Chinese empire. The Chinese influence is also found in the depiction of Nanjing and the Paolinxia pagode. Although Johan and the Jesuits had different goals and intentions in China, Johan's opinion of and personal experiences in the former capital and its nearby pagoda corresponded with the Jesuits', making it probable that both forms of architecture were astonishing for Westerners.

The correspondence of Johan's opinion with subjects that had become topoi in Jesuits' writings reveals a new layer in the analysis of the influence of China on its own representation. As Johan and his fellow Dutchmen were the first Dutch to gain a restricted access into the empire, they caught a glimpse and some new views of what had already been known to the Jesuits' for several decades. While the Jesuits' portrayal of China was indeed influenced by their mission and the need to attract sponsors, it did contain truths about China, truths which Johan confirmed to some degree as he gained a similar access into the empire.

The fact that a mercantile group supplied similar depictions of the Middle Kingdom to that of the Jesuits, revealed that in the reception and level of acceptance China gave to foreigners, Jesuits and embassies alike, they influenced their later representation by these foreigners. As such, in the Jesuits' portrayal, just as in the previous merchants' portrayal of the Middle Kingdom, China's influence was already present! This illustrates that a different attitude towards the empire created a different reaction and thus created a different portrayal of the empire. *Het Gezantschap*, therefore is a mixture of both kinds of depictions and the influence that China had on them. Although Hendrik made deliber-

ate choices about which sources he used for which topic and he was influenced by seventeenth-century ideas of the Middle Kingdom, topoi present in different Western writings and the preferences of his intended reading audience, China's influence was always and already there. The existence and endurance of China's influence on Western literature was thus profound. It overarched the Western representation of the Middle Kingdom, as it was sometimes dominated by Western ideas, but it was always present. The Western representation, therefore, from the beginning was influenced by a relation of power in which China was the gatekeeper and decided what was revealed of its culture and inner lands.

## Conclusion

The task that was set for this study was to extract and study the different factors that influenced the representation of China in *Het Gezantschap*. The influences that are derived from the texts and studied are the report of Johan Nieuhof, the previous writings on China, the accompanying topoi and seventeenth-century literary context and China itself. In order to study these different influences this research employed the field of book history and a different perspective on orientalism. Beside the main objective of this study, other questions and perspectives emerged from the analysis as well and an overview of those is presented in the following paragraph.

In the previous studies of *Het Gezantschap* its primary sources have been discussed extensively. The question was mostly how sincerely and truthfully Hendrik had transmitted the story of the embassy and which sources he had used in order to do so. When Johan's report was re-discovered in the 1980's a new phase in the discussion about the primary sources commenced. Several historians claimed that Hendrik used Johan's report and the notes he made during the journey to write *Het Gezantschap*. Jing Sun on the other hand claimed that Hendrik had only used Johan's notes, and not his report. I argued against this claim. In several instances Hendrik provided details in *Het Gezantschap*, which are not found in Johan's report, but because of their specificity these details cannot be based on any other sources than Johan's notes. As such, for me it is evident that Hendrik was in possession of both the report – or a copy of it – and Johan's notes.

When this study progressed, I formed new ideas about the compilation of *Het Gezantschap* and Johan's report. Firstly, there are inclinations that Johan has also used secondary sources for his report. His description of Peking, Nanjing, the Paolinxia pagoda and the production of porcelain reveal facts and details that Johan could not have witnessed himself. It seems that Johan felt the need to impress the VOC board and believed he could not admit that he was unable to give more details about the most known and appreciated characteristics of China. Especially when he did encounter or visit them. Nonetheless, a critical note must accompany this conclusion. From the report one cannot derive the possible influence the interpreters on site have had on Johan's experiences in China. Also, one cannot make solid claims about any possible communication with locals or the Chinese and Manchus that accompanied the embassy to the capital. Perhaps they were able to provide Johan with more information than he could have witnessed himself personally. In the report and the publication there are indeed instances in which it is mentioned that certain information was passed on to Johan. Unfortunately, these remarks could also have been used to enhance the truthfulness of the story and do not necessarily imply that Johan received much information from the interpreters indeed. As such, the additional information in Johan's report and *Het Gezantschap* that corresponds with Jesuits' literature can also in part be based on information received from and through interpreters. A study which pays more attention to the role of the steward in an embassy can perhaps bring a more decisive conclusion on this matter.

Secondly, the analysis strongly indicated that Hendrik helped Johan in the compilation of the report. With the possible influence of interpreters in mind, the use of secondary sources by both brothers strongly corresponds per event and theme. Moreover, the compilation of *Het Gezantschap* reveals that Hendrik was a proficient story compiler and proved very capable in using many details to write a comprehensive, structured narrative. An extra argument is that the publication incorporates more than the report. It is possible that Johan wrote more poems in his notes and chose not to use these in the

report. It could also be that Hendrik wrote the poems in the report and composed more poems for the eventual publication. Because of Hendrik's talent as a writer and story compiler and the fact that Johan chose to let his brother publish a book based on his stories, I incline to the latter. Both questions, whether Johan was indebted to secondary sources and how influential Hendrik was in the compilation of the report cannot be decisively answered by this study. However, it does bring new perspectives to the debate of the primary sources of *Het Gezantschap*.

As the standpoint of this study in the ongoing debate about the primary sources of *Het Gezantschap* has been argued, the focus can now be shifted to the different influences on *Het Gezantschap* and what conclusions can be derived from these. First, I will focus on the literary sources; the Chinese influence will be accounted for later. It has been shown that it differed per theme and event which sources influenced Hendrik and to what extent. What is important here is what can be derived from Hendrik's choices in his use of different literary sources.

Hendrik clearly had a goal in mind with the publication of *Het Gezantschap*. It seems he wanted to publish a book that could match the intellectual standards of the Jesuits' literature. This also becomes evident in the fact that *Het Gezantschap* was divided into two sections: a travel narrative and an encyclopedic account with intellectual and descriptive information on China. Beside the encyclopedic nature of the latter section, the travel narrative already revealed the intellectual enterprise of Hendrik. This is even more evident in the few instances in which Hendrik even discarded former Jesuits' writings and emphasized the accuracy of his own account.

At the same time, Hendrik also used tropes and topoi from previous intellectual and descriptive and adventurous travel stories. Next to presenting a work in the vein of the Jesuits' intellectual knowledge, Hendrik also wanted to write a narrative that was entertaining and based on actual experiences of merchants who were not influenced by mission goals and the need to rally support and patrons. Therefore, personal experiences, adventures, marvel, repulse, barbarous and pagan practices and Christian morale are frequently displayed in *Het Gezantschap*.

When comparing *Het Gezantschap* with intellectual and descriptive travel stories, it is evident that Hendrik provided much more detail and insight into the contemporary literature concerning China. Hence, not only in Hendrik's use of Jesuits sources but also in comparison with previous intellectual travel literature it becomes clear that Hendrik wanted to write an intellectual and descriptive travel story that gained the same intellectual prestige as Jesuits' writings, while at the same time it was also approachable for a travel story audience. From this one can deduce that *Het Gezantschap* was a new step in the development of intellectual and descriptive travel literature, but also in the seventeenth-century literary tradition. The fact that the strict dividing lines between intellectual accounts and narrative and adventurous writings became more and more blurred over the course of the seventeenth century raises interesting questions about the development of literary genres, and more importantly, its readers and the social changes in Dutch society.

The position of *Het Gezantschap* in the developments of Dutch literature, readership and society also evokes new questions about the importance of travel stories in the seventeenth-century Dutch portrayal of China. This study highlights that travel stories until now, have received far too little attention in research on the intellectual assimilation and dissimilation of the representation of China in Europe. Exactly these stories, and the blending of travel stories with Jesuits' writings, brought this information to a wider and more diverse audience. At the same time, more time should be spend on the

Jesuits' representation of China and the effect of this on the Dutch reading public. Until now the emphasis has been on the effects of the Jesuits' writings on the intellectual field in the Dutch Republic and Europe. Although this remains an important field of study, the inclusion of a focus on a more visual and expressive aspects of the padres' literature could bring more insight into the Western image of China in the whole of society, and not just in the intellectual field. Concluding, the strong divide between the research fields used for the Jesuits' literature and travel stories should be tempered, while at the same time the differences between the different writings should not be marginalized.

The latter is crucial for the study of the influence of China on the different European writings about its culture. In this study the influence of China on its representation in *Het Gezantschap* was distilled through the analysis of the Chinese reactions towards and treatment of the envoys and Johan. The idea behind this course of action was that the Chinese reaction towards foreigners was influenced by a strong undercurrent of change in the social and political domain. The social and political context was the most evident in the traditions and officials that were related to foreign affairs, such as the tribute system and the officials that were involved in this system. At the same time, social and political situations unrelated to foreign affairs also influenced these aspects of Chinese society. The Chinese reactions towards foreigners were therefore actively mediated, staged and controlled by the Chinese themselves. The only influence foreigners could possibly practice in this system was their own level of adjustment to Chinese culture, because this allowed them greater access to it.

For that reason the different background of Western travelers and eventual writers are important. These backgrounds contributed to the intensity of adaptation to the Chinese, which affected to a certain extent how foreigners were received and treated by the Chinese. This also implies that within the information pertaining to China that was transported and adapted to the West, China's influence was consistently and inevitably there. Therefore, the Chinese indirectly and probably unintentionally influenced proto-sinology and the further development of Western sinology.

Moreover, this information gives new insights into the concept of orientalism and the circulation of knowledge. The Western representation was no one-dimensional Western portrayal. The events in China and the Chinese response to foreigners did have a tremendous effect on the content of the Western representation of China. Moreover, as in some studies the emphasis is placed on orientalism's later influence on its own Western representation, in this thesis is shown that the orientalist could have an immediate influence on its own Western representation by means of how the social and cultural context affected the reactions towards orientalists. China, therefore, had a direct influence on proto-sinology, which later developed in the field of sinology. As such, by the influence of China on proto-sinology a different perspective is given on the circulation of knowledge. The Western studies of Chinese culture were not solely a Western framework imposed upon Chinese civilization. It was a relationship in which the West and China both learned from each other's 'ways of knowing,' and in which both cultures were influential. No one in this relationship produced a one-dimensional portrayal.

One critical remark has to be made. The perspective on Orientalism and circulation of knowledge as relationships is easily applied to the Chinese context and especially the tribute system. The Chinese clearly controlled the restrictions that were imposed upon foreigners. Other empires and countries did not have these kinds of systems or to a lesser extent, so this interpretation of Orientalism does not apply in all situations, as much as it does for this specific one. Nonetheless, the framework that is applied here can be

useful for other situations in history and bring new insights into the relationships of representations of and between different cultures.

Moreover, the study and translation of native sources can bring great insight into the Asian perspectives of encounters. As more and more native sources are studied by native academics or academics that are proficient in the native languages, more knowledge and insights are being produced on the changing relationships between East and West. In this manner, with the inclusion of native sources, instead the *influence* of China, it's *agency* and China as *agent* can be studied. By this means the Western assimilation and dissemination of China and proto-sinology can truly become a research field on the exchanges and relationships between the East and West.

## List of illustrations

**Figure 1.** The route of the Dutch embassy (1655-1657) as given in the map in *Het Gezantschap*.

**Figure 2.** The frontispiece of *Het Gezantschap*.

**Figure 3.** Map of China (1500-1800). Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West* (Plymouth 2009).

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