



World history—an interesting and fascinating work that was noticed in contemporary Europe.

The final chapter is probably the least surprising, as it is devoted to histories of the world, or world geographies written by contemporary Europeans, that present contemporary knowledge as it was broadened by the exploration and colonization of various areas of the Americas and Asia by the Dutch, the English, and Jesuit missionaries, among others. Marcocci calls this final stage of Renaissance writing of world history “a more static geopolitical body of knowledge,” exemplified in the works of Botero and Sherley.

Marcocci takes us on a fascinating journey through sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century imagination and suggests a new reading of texts that cannot be interpreted by the letter but must rather be understood in their appropriate contexts and ways of thinking about their authors, compilers, and patrons.

Jakub Basista, *Jagiellonian University*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2024.39

The Invention of China in Early Modern England: Spelling the Dragon.

Jonathan E. Lux.

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021. 224 pp. \$109.99.

One of the few monographs that considers English impressions of China between 1550 and 1650, Jonathan E. Lux's *The Invention of China in Early Modern England* is a compressed and well-researched study that ambitiously explores how changing implications of China were invented, debated, and manipulated in early modern England. It taps into a vast array of primary and secondary sources across disciplines and languages, and argues for the artificiality of China as it was produced in history, literature, travel accounts, and commercial and missionary reports during this period. To make sense of the English attitude toward China, it proposes the concept of utopian sinophilism to supplement where Edward Said's Orientalism fails. Therefore, it is of interest not only to experts in Sino-British contact but also to those interested in a new perspective into cultural exchange.

Generally speaking, early modern England first witnessed a tendency to describe China as a utopia, and then a reversed inclination to label it as an immoral tyranny. If these contradictory representations of China were both invented, then who invented them? How were they invented? In what sense were they inventions? To answer these questions, Lux intends to clarify the origin, production, and circulation of knowledge about China, and above all to illustrate the mechanism of the conscious selection and use of this knowledge. Chapter 1 questions the nature of China in early modern England. From the mid-sixteenth century, “China” appeared in written works as

“Cina,” “Cathay,” and “Catay,” and it flexibly signified porcelain, sarsaparilla, tea, region, and state. But what was China exactly? How to explain the production of China as “both a real place and an imaginative hyperreality” (8)?

Chapter 2 proposes the term *utopian sinophilism* to describe the intellectual tendency to imagine China as a utopian fantasy. Featuring the meritocratic selection of officials, the Great Wall, and the lost universal language, China was constructed as a social, aesthetic, political, technological, and philosophical model. However, Lux argues, utopian sinophilism was a movement made up of well-educated intellectuals who had never been to China. Partly to display their erudition and partly to respond to a frustrating reality, they intentionally designed China as the fictional Other. In other words, China mattered more as an imaginative precedent that allowed outrageous innovation than as a social and historical reality.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine how utopian sinophilism was contested by three social dynamics in seventeenth-century England. The first was the suspicion of Jesuits. When anti-Jesuit power prevailed, the utopia reaffirmed by papists was subject to doubt. The second came from the direct contact of the East India Company with China. The tradesmen found the South China Sea a place of diseases, strange customs, and cruel competition for scarce resources, and they recorded the fraud and duplicity of the Chinese people. The third was the shocking and bewildering news of Ming’s fall. For Whiggish critiques and republican theorists, Ming’s fall exposed the emperor’s moral flaws and the weakness of absolute monarchy, and reevaluation of China became an implicit way to articulate criticism of Charles II. By the end of the seventeenth century, a series of negative stereotypes about China marked the end of utopian sinophilism, and anticipated the meandering birth of an English Orientalism.

Lux’s work is particularly notable for its archival accomplishments and extensive references to existing studies, but it is not without its shortcomings. Lux has compiled some 350 English texts concerned with China and managed to work around 100 of them into his work, but as Lux acknowledges, little attempt was made at including a serious survey of ballads, lampoons, scribal publications, or private correspondences. The book’s citations from classical Chinese texts are equally remarkable, but its use of modern Chinese expressions seems less meticulous. The Chinese *chengyu* (“*ni wu fa dong*”) in chapter 1 sounds confusing even for Chinese ears, and the misquotation of some outdated Chinese studies partly demonstrates the author’s unfamiliarity with the relevant Chinese sources. Even so, this volume will prove useful to anyone engaged in the debated impression of China in early modern England and interested in the intellectual history of globalization.

Wang Xiao, *University of Exeter*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.536