

Milton in China. Tianhu Hao.

Renaissance Studies Series. Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2020. viii + 333 pp. ¥68.

Milton in China is an important work focusing on the history of the reception and translation of John Milton in China in the past two centuries. Over the course of two parts and nine chapters, Tianhu Hao offers a detailed and well-informed study of Milton's cross-cultural journey in China and examines Milton's works through Chinese perspectives. In the process, Hao provides a summary of numerous views held by Chinese scholars and kept in a rich variety of records, demonstrating the panoply of roles Milton played in the cultural development of modern China, while interrogating established assumptions about early readings of the poet in China.

The first part, comprising four chapters, begins with a correction concerning the first introduction of Milton to the Chinese audience. Hao shows that Milton was brought to the attention of the Chinese by Christian missionaries in 1832, several years earlier than the introduction of Shakespeare in 1839. Such impressively detailed evidence and close reading are pursued throughout four distinct studies: the reception of Milton in late Qing China (1832–1911), the multiple images of Milton in China (1912–2019), the reading and translation of Milton, and the teaching of Milton. Focusing on different epochs and social groups in the reception history, these studies reflect the pluralism of Chinese perspectives on Milton.

The second part contains deep readings of Milton's literary texts by Hao, who has worked on Milton and Renaissance studies for over two decades. Each of the five chapters engages with a wide range of current scholarship: comparative (Milton's idea of kingship and its comparison with Confucianism; Milton's first sonnet "On His Blindness" and its China connections), interdisciplinary (scientific Prometheanism in *Paradise Lost*, *Frankenstein*, and *Ex Machina*), and contemporary manuscript and bibliography studies (Milton's commonplace book; typography, engravings, and catchwords in Milton's 1720 *Poetical Works*). Together with the first part, they skillfully interweave linguistic, textual, poetic, and historical considerations, offering an excellent overview of Milton studies in China in the twenty-first century.

As Hao suggests in the conclusion, "Milton's cross-cultural journey in China is an interesting case and fascinating sketch of cultural exchange between China and the West. It promotes the transformation of new Chinese literature and also reflects a part of the modern Chinese history" (274). Indeed, as this book reminds us, the reception history has been shaped by devout Western missionaries, feudal Chinese scholar bureaucrats with biased attitudes toward foreign influence, important literary figures calling for development of a new literature and culture based on Western models, and earnest modern scholars searching for communication and mutual understanding between the East and West. It is presented as not only a literary movement but also a cultural phenomenon, involving religious, political, military, social, cultural, educational, publishing, ideological, and academic fields, spanning premodern, early modern,

and contemporary China. Hao conveys in chapter after chapter that the reading of Milton and Western literature has played a significant role in the development of Chinese literature, thoughts, and culture.

As the author proves his central thesis convincingly, the book stands as a case study of the original theoretical model put forward by Hao: cross-cultural knowledge production, based on Hans-George Gadamer's "Vorurteil" (prejudice) and William James's "selective attention" (52), focusing on cross-cultural texts, and aiming at cultural exchange between China and the West. Thus, the book may serve as a useful source of rare primary texts (collected from archives, chronicles, university syllabi, diaries, memoirs, and more), commented and contextualized with contemporary discourses, and listed in the appendix on Chinese translations of Milton's works from 1854 to 2019 and in the works cited, which is about thirty pages long. This book brings fresh air to the broader way we look at the meaning and significance of Renaissance and comparative studies.

The book is included in the Renaissance Studies Series published by the Center of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Zhejiang University, an associate organization of the Renaissance Society of America, in collaboration with Zhejiang University Press. As it embraces cross-cultural production, the book clearly expresses the hope that the Chinese perspectives it offers will prompt new avenues of inquiry and suggest directions for future research into the domain of early modern and comparative studies. This impressive book gives us a deeper, more varied appreciation of Milton's works in China, and is a valuable study for everyone interested in Renaissance and comparative literature.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.548

This work was supported by the National Humanities and Social Sciences Foundation, China (authorization: 21BWW046).

Shakespeare in Succession: Translation and Time. Michael Saenger and Sergio Costola, eds.

Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023. 336 pp. CAD \$120.

Shakespeare and Succession: Translation and Time positions Shakespeare as both participant in and object of translative succession, fusing, as the editors Michael Saenger and Sergio Costola acknowledge, "some unfamiliar approaches" by looking at "theatrical and linguistic adaptation in addition to historical study" (1). The collection is divided into essays by practitioners and historians. Contributions to the first half of the volume "are not generally saturated in the typical citation style of academic essays" (27). Tonal disjunctions are accompanied by what feels like an *in medias res* narrative, as the first