

BOOK REVIEW

Marco Caboara, *Regnum Chinae: The Printed Western Maps of China to 1735*

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Marco Caboara's *Regnum Chinae: The Printed Western Maps of China to 1735* is an ambitious project. Inspired by Jason Hubbard's cartobibliography of Japan, Caboara collected 127 European printed maps of China dating from 1584 to 1735.¹ The book therefore starts with the first printed European map of China by Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598) and ends with Jean-Baptiste du Halde (1674–1743) and Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d'Anville's (1697–1782) 1735 map, which was the first to start a new series of knowledge on the geography of China. To contextualize the cartobibliography, the volume includes an introduction by Caboara and eight essays by other scholars that cover various aspects of the history of the mapping of China.

Caboara's introduction (chapter 1) presents a combination of miscellaneous notes and research results, as well as extremely useful visual overviews of the relationships among the different maps collected in *Regnum Chinae*. These overviews offer readers a quick understanding of which printed European maps had the greatest impact and which other European maps they relate to. Somewhat distracting in the introduction, title, and other chapters is the term "Western." Caboara describes maps made in Europe, or, more precisely, as he states in the introduction, maps from the printing centres of Antwerp, Rome, Amsterdam, London, and Paris, and maps from other cities such as Brescia, Douai, Delft, and Wolfenbüttel (p. 17). Why not simply speak of "European" maps, as Hubbard does in his title?² Using "European" instead of "Western" would be more precise.

The book's eight chapters provide background information on the mapping of China that further contextualize the cartobibliography. Chapter 2 by Li Xiaocong discusses Chinese maps of China; chapters 3, 4, and 5 by Angelo Cattaneo, Marica Milanese, and Francisco Roque de Oliveira explore how world maps and Portuguese maritime maps integrate the geography of China; chapter 6 by Jin Guoping discusses the mapping of Macau; chapters 7 and 8 by Lin Hong and Mario Cams connect Chinese source

¹Jason Hubbard, *Japonia Insulae: The Mapping of Japan. Historical Introduction and Cartobibliography of European Printed Maps of Japan to 1800* (Houten: Hes & De Graaf, 2012).

²Hubbard's work is not completely free of the term "Western" either. The first chapter, for example, is entitled "A typology of some of the early depictions of Japan by Western and indigenous cartographers."

material with the European printed maps discussed in the cartobibliography; and chapter 9 by Emanuele Raini analyses transcription systems used to render Chinese placenames into Latin script. These chapters engage with the material in the cartobibliography in various levels of detail. While the first four chapters mostly provide further background, the last three chapters engage directly with the European printed maps presented in the volume. Jin Guoping's chapter, however, seems out of place. It only lists maps and provides brief descriptions of how Macau is depicted on Chinese coastal maps and Portuguese manuscripts, so readers gain no further understanding of the mapping of China, whether in Chinese or in Portuguese sources, nor any deeper understanding of the maps showing Macau.

The quality of the chapters varies significantly. Two chapters illustrate this difference in quality: Li Xiacong's (chapter 2) and Lin Hong's (chapter 7). Li's chapter essentially consists of a list of Chinese maps of China from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth century, accompanied by brief descriptions. Unfortunately, Li Xiacong does not explain how he selected the maps. One might therefore assume that Li's list is comprehensive, or that it lists the most important types of Chinese maps between 1534 to 1735, the timeframe given in the title. However, this is not the case. Not a single map is discussed that depicts China in relation to the *fenye* 分野 (astral allocation) system, a type of map we can find in a range of encyclopedias and other sources.³ Furthermore, Li ignores more recent scholarship that might have helped him identify crucial steps in mapmaking and avoid imprecise statements. When discussing the series of what he calls "Maps of the whole realm' from the Qing Dynasty" (p. 56), Li mentions Huang Zongxi's 黄宗羲 (1610–1695) 1673 (now possibly lost) *Yudi zongtu* 輿地總圖,⁴ Yan Yong 閻咏 (1709 *jinshi*) and Yang Kaiyuan's 楊開沅 1714 *Da Qing yitong tianxia quantu* 大清一統天下全圖 (Complete map of the Great Qing unified under heaven), and the 1767 *Da Qing wannian yitong tianxia quantu* 大清萬年一統天下全圖 (Complete map of the everlasting Great Qing unified all under heaven) by Huang Zongxi's grandson, Huang Qianren 黃千人 (1694–1771). Li argues that "after the Qianlong reign (1735–1796), several series of single-sheet prints of the *Da Qing Wannian Yitong Tianxia Quantu* were successively produced, and the Western countries outside the Qing Empire were added to the western edge of the map" (p. 56). However, Zhou Xin has shown that a certain Wang Ri'ang 汪日昂 produced a map in 1725 that already expanded the depiction of the maritime space and added information on European countries to the western edge of the map. Wang

³See for example the map in *Xinban zengbu tianxia bianyong wenlin miaojin Wanbao quanshu* 新板增補天下便用文林妙錦萬寶全書, 1612, in Harvard University Library, <https://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:2093485>, j. 2, 2b–3a. For a list of other encyclopaedias that include such maps and a brief description, see Zhu Jianqiu 朱鑿秋 et al., eds., *Zhongwai jiaotong guditu ji* 中外交通古地圖集 (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2017), 171–73. Such maps are also found in comprehensive geographies, see Mario Cams, "The Confusions of Space: Reading Ming China's Comprehensive Geographies," *Monumenta Serica* 69 (2021): 530–31.

⁴Li assumes that an undated, untitled, and unsigned manuscript map reproduced by Walter Fuchs in 1937 is Huang Zongxi's 1673 map. However, this map contains place names that indicate it was made after 1678. To what degree this corresponds to Huang Zongxi's map is unknown. See Zhou Xin 周鑫, "Wang Ri'ang *Da Qing yitong tianxia quantu* yu 17–18 shiji Zhongguo Nanhai zhishi de shengcheng chuandi" 汪日昂《大清一統天下全圖》與 17–18 世紀中國南海知識的生成傳遞, *Haiyang shi yanjiu* 海洋史研究 14 (2020): 231; Unno Kazutaka 海野一隆, *Chizu bunkashijō no Kōyozu* 地圖文化史上の廣輿圖 (Tokyo: Tōyō bunko, 2010), 238.

Ri'ang's depiction would then circulate in all maps that followed, including Huang Qianren's map.⁵ Wang Ri'ang's map is therefore crucial to understanding this series of maps. Of course, given the vast number of Chinese maps of China, no overview can be comprehensive, but some guiding principles or typology of the maps would have greatly increased the value of the chapter.

In addition, Li's descriptions are not always reliable; there are several mistakes, unexplained claims, and difficult-to-understand explanations. I will give two examples. First, Li dates Liang Zhou's 梁鞞 *Qiankun wanguo quantu gujin renwu shiji* 乾坤萬國全圖古今人物事跡 (Complete map of all countries in the universe, with famous persons and important events then and now) to 1593, the date given on the map itself. However, it is well established in the literature that this date is incorrect and the map actually dates to sometime after 1601, possibly 1603 or 1605 (as is also noted by Lin Hong in his chapter of *Regnum Chinae*, p. 130).⁶

Second, Li's discussion of the *Huang Ming yudi zhi tu* 皇明輿地之圖 (Map of the lands of the glorious Ming) illustrates several flaws in his understanding of maps (p. 48). This map, prints of which survive in several libraries in Japan, is a reprint made by the Linquantang/Rinsendō 臨泉堂 printing house, and the reprint itself states that it was a map that had been made by Sun Qishu 孫起樞 in 1631, which reproduced a map made in 1536.⁷ Unno Kazutaka and Miya Noriko interpret "Rinsendō" as a Japanese publishing house (making the *Huang Ming yudi zhi tu* a Japanese reprint of a Chinese reprint of a Chinese map),⁸ while Li Xiaocong interprets the Linquantang as a Chinese publisher who produced the map in 1631 (making this a Chinese reprint of a Chinese map), without refuting or even mentioning Unno's and Miya's contrary claim. Further, Li claims that "scholars consider the *Huang Ming Yudi Zhi Tu* as the earliest surviving Ming woodblock-printed map of China" alongside

⁵Zhou Xin, "Wang Ri'ang *Da Qing yitong tianxia quantu*." This map is held by the Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University. Zhou Xin's article was published in January 2020, and according to Cabaora's introduction (p. 27), he approached the contributors only in November 2020. This omission therefore is not due to a drawn-out publishing process.

⁶Scholars who have noted the wrong date include Funakoshi Akio, Timothy Brook, Mario Cams, and Gong Yingyan: Funakoshi Akio, "Some New Lights on the History of Chinese Cartography," *Annual Report of Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences of the Faculty of Letters Nara Women's University* 19 (1975): 153–54; Timothy Brook, *Completing the Map of the World: Cartographic Interaction between China and Europe* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 2020), 42–43, 166–67; Mario Cams, "Circling the Square: Encompassing Global Geography on Large Commercial Maps," in *Remapping the World in East Asia: Toward a Global History of the "Ricci Maps,"* ed. Mario Cams and Elke Papelitzky (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2024), 137. Lin Hong cites Gong Yingyan 龚缨晏, "Kunyu wanguo quantu yu 'Zheng He faxian Meizhou': Bo Li Zhaoliang de xiangguan guandian jinlun lishi yanjiu de kexue jing" 《坤輿万国全图》与“郑和发现美洲”——驳李兆良的相关观点兼论历史研究的科学性, *Lishi yanjiu* 历史研究, no. 5 (2019), 146–165, 192.

⁷The confusion with dates continues: in *Regnum Chinae*, the date is given as "fifteenth year of the Jiajing period (1534)" (p. 48). However, Jiajing 15 is 1536. To be precise, the map gives the date as Jiajing *bingshen* 丙申, which is indeed the fifteenth year of Jiajing, i.e. 1536.

⁸Miya Noriko 宮紀子, *Mongoru teikoku ga unda sekaizu: Chizu ha kataru* モンゴル帝国が生んだ世界図. 地図は語る (Tokyo: Nihon keizai shinbun shuppansha, 2007), 26. Unno Kazutaka also found other books printed in the seventeenth century by a publisher named Rinsendō located in Kyoto. Unno Kazutaka 海野一隆, "Edo jidai kankō no Ajia shoiki chizu" 江戸時代刊行のアジア諸域地図, in *Tōyō chirigaku shi no kenkyū: Nihon hen* 東洋地理学史の研究: 日本編 (Osaka: Seibundō, 2005), 358. I have followed Unno's and Miya's suggestion: Elke Papelitzky, "Sand, Water, and Stars: Chinese Mapping of the Gobi and Taklamakan Deserts," *T'oung Pao* 107, no. 3–4 (2021): 387.

the well-known atlas *Guang yutu* 廣輿圖 (first printed 1556 or 1557) by Luo Hongxian 羅洪先 (p. 48). For this statement to make sense, Li must have taken the *Huang Ming yudi zhi tu* as a map printed in 1536, given the rich corpus of printed maps published in the second half of the sixteenth century. Regardless of whether the extant *Huang Ming yudi zhi tu* is a Chinese or a Japanese print, it is certainly a reprint made in 1631 at the earliest.⁹ Given that reprints could frequently introduce changes to a map (as for example the addition of the Great Wall in later editions of the *Guang yutu*, as Li mentions, p. 44), we should not blindly believe that a map calling itself a reprint is a faithful reproduction. Li's random selection of maps, careless discussion, and ill-considered assumptions stand in contrast to the detailed analysis and careful consideration of editions and states of European maps undertaken by Caboara in the cartobibliography.

Lin Hong's chapter, on the other hand, is crucial to the volume, both because of its contents and because of the quality of the research. Lin analyses the work of the Jesuits Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607), Michał Boym (1612–1659), and Martino Martini (1614–1661), who all created maps of China. The chapter takes us through the creation process of these maps, carefully reconstructing their source material and how the three Jesuits used the material. All three Jesuits had access to printed geographies, including the 1586 edition of the *Da Ming yitong wenwu zhushi yamen guan zhi* 大明一統文武諸司衙門官制 (System of civil and military titles, positions, and offices of the unified Great Ming) used by both Ruggieri and Boym, as well as a pre-1626 edition of Lu Yingyang's 陸應陽 *Guangyu ji* 廣輿記 (Records of extended territories) used by Martini. Lin reveals that the Jesuits not only relied on the maps, but also consulted the text of these geographies. Additionally, Boym and Martini had access to Chinese maps on single sheets. Using Boym's maps of the provinces, Lin Hong masterfully reconstructs what Boym's source must have looked like, demonstrating that Boym had access to a now lost Chinese map of the Ming empire (pp. 128–131). Lin Hong reconstructs not only the source material but also *how* these men created their maps, step by step. He supports his findings with impressive self-created maps and graphics. The maps by Ruggieri (indirectly) and Martini (more directly) then resulted in European printed maps discussed in the cartobibliography: Nicolas Sanson d'Abbeville's (1600–1667) 1656 *La Chine royaume* (entry 47 in the cartobibliography) and the general map of China in Martini and Joan Blaeu's 1655 *Novus atlas sinensis* (entry 43 in the cartobibliography), which, as Caboara acknowledges in his introduction, “remained for the next 80 years the most reprinted and reliable cartographic image of China” (p. 24).

Lin Hong therefore provides us with the background of important European material, connecting it to the Chinese mapping of China. In addition, the chapter reveals several aspects that apply to the history of Chinese mapmaking more generally. Mapmakers used many sources, which could include not only maps but also text. Lin encourages us to think more deeply about source material and to consider not only *what* material mapmakers used but also *how* they used it. Combined with Lin Hong's skill in creating digital maps, these methodological considerations make his chapter the highlight of *Regnum Chinae*.

The second part of *Regnum Chinae*, the cartobibliography, is impressive. Caboara collected European printed maps up to 1735 that focus on China in its entirety and arranged them chronologically. He collected maps printed in various forms: wall

⁹This statement also ignores that the 1461 *Da Ming yitong zhi* includes a map of the whole Ming state, which is mentioned by Li (pp. 40–41).

maps, smaller sheet maps, maps in books, maps on title pages, maps in illustrations, maps as part of board games, and maps on cards of card games. Caboara distinguishes between editions and states: “editions” refer to prints of newly engraved copper plates, while “states” refer to prints of amended plates. Each edition receives its own entry, with separate states grouped together. *Regnum Chinae* reproduces at least one state of each edition and in many instances illustrates details of the differences in the states as well. Each entry starts with handy bullet points giving the most important information, such as the title, publishing information, and size. The entry then describes the contents of the map, noting its distinctive features, and provides information on the publisher and publication. In the case of maps printed in books, the entries include handy tables listing the titles, dates, and languages of the books the map appeared in. Each entry is rounded off with a list of libraries that hold the map and references to the map. With these descriptions, Caboara provides an amazing resource and lays the groundwork for future research on these maps.

Regnum Chinae is a traditional cartobibliography and its main purpose is to collect and describe the maps themselves. With his extensive knowledge, Caboara could have decided to innovate in the genre and explore further the maps’ context, in particular by discussing the relation between text and map in the many maps in books that *Regnum Chinae* includes. Likewise, in a few instances (e.g. entry 39, p. 267), the illustrations show how the maps are embedded in the original book, giving the reader a fascinating glimpse into how an early modern reader might have encountered the map. These additions would have elevated *Regnum Chinae* above being a research tool, and brought it in line with recent developments in the history of cartography.

Regnum Chinae is extensively illustrated and fully printed in color, making it generally easy to follow the chapters and cartobibliography. Other aspects of the production, editing, and copy-editing, however, leave much to be desired. The translations from Chinese (in particular Li Xiacong’s and Jin Guoping’s chapters) are sometimes awkward and hard to follow. The whole book is plagued by typos, wrong punctuation, and unstandardized editing (e.g., transcribed Chinese book titles of books are sometimes capitalized, sometimes not). In addition, Chinese primary sources in the bibliography are cited by the year of their twentieth/twenty-first century edition with no indication of the original date. Finally, paragraphs are typeset in an unconventional and inconsistent way. In most chapters, paragraphs are simply indicated by a line break with no indent or extra space between them while sometimes in the chapters and always in the cartobibliography, an empty line separates paragraphs. Despite these disruptions to the reading experience, the cartobibliography’s comprehensiveness and wide range of material make it an extremely useful tool for further studies on the history of European mapping of China.

Lastly, although unrelated to the contents of the book, the gender unbalance among contributors is disappointing. Only one of the chapters was written by a woman. In twenty-first century scholarship, this can and should be done better.