The Far East in Early Modern Globalization:
China and the Mongols in Donne and Milton

by

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Department of English
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Abstract

Using both modern and early modern globalization theory, I explore an increasingly troubled awareness of Far Eastern culture as it is revealed in English Renaissance literature. The “China” of each generation tended to serve for western Europe a distinct set of discursive functions and rhetorical purposes. I study how China served as a cultural stimulus that compelled early modern Europeans to rethink their economic, theological, and political assumptions. I argue that in representing the images of China and the Far East transmitted by travelers and Jesuit missionaries in their works, images that caused considerable controversies in the early modern intellectual sphere, both Donne and Milton demonstrate an increasingly global consciousness, or what I call “global cosmopolitanism,” that responds with unexpected generosity to cultural and religious differences. Donne and Milton’s global cosmopolitanism is chiefly manifested in their
attempts to grapple with the implications—economic, political, and theological—of China’s reemergence in the world stage. Specifically, I study how Donne’s image of the “Anyan” strait in his “Hymne to God, my God” captures his awareness of the geographical discovery and cartographical mapping of the Pacific region and how he responds theologically to this global consciousness. I also explore how Donne’s depiction of Spanish “pistolets” in his elegy “The Bracelet” signals a perception of the early modern global commerce of gold and silver dominated by Ming China. Donne and Milton’s cosmopolitan reaction to Chinese culture registers in their willingness to engage the challenge posed by eastern antiquity to the authority of biblical chronology. Far Eastern imperialism as is represented by the Mongol Empire, I claim, constitutes a major inspiration behind Milton’s representation of empire in *Paradise Lost*. Unpacking richly layered allusions in Donne and Milton’s works at once reveals the commercial, cultural, and political messages they encode and illustrates the interpretive strategies used by Renaissance imaginative writers to decipher the Far East. Donne and Milton’s responses are exemplary because the issues their works raised reflect the larger concern in the early modern encounter with a highly civilized “other” that boasted an antique history, an advanced ethical system, and a powerful monarchial empire.
Acknowledgements

This dissertation was made possible through the wise supervision of my supervisory committee. I alone am responsible for any remaining defects and infelicities.

When I first started the graduate program in the department of English in the University of Toronto, I had only a superficial knowledge of western culture because I viewed the world through my Sinocentric lens. My enlightenment and achievement came chiefly from the generous help of the various people and sources I seek to acknowledge here.

Just as the west discovered the Far East in the Renaissance, my supervisor, Prof. Elizabeth D. Harvey discovered me. With a remarkable cosmopolitan spirit, Elizabeth embraces the cultural diversity epitomized in me. Elizabeth supported the current project when I first started it: she believed in its feasibility and worth, even when I myself was at loss. Without Elizabeth’s ardent passion, genuine interest, and unyielding faith in the project, I could not have brought it to completion. All along the way, Elizabeth has remained the lighthouse she always is—an infinite source of inspiration that encourages me to scale new heights. Elizabeth is not merely a dream-inspirer: my intellect sharpened and my English became polished under her magical touch. No words, whether in English or Chinese dictionaries, could fully express the profound gratitude I owe to Elizabeth. It is a 知遇之恩 that transcends any mundane expressions. My deepest gratitude goes with no less intensity to my co-supervisor Prof. Mary Nyquist. Like Milton’s Muse Urania, Mary has guided me from imaginative heights down to the solidity of the ground. A strict, highly demanding, and ever inspiring mentor, Mary trained me in the very art of the discipline. Under her step-by-step guidance, I feel my footing steadying and my intellectual muscles flexing. It is Mary’s liberal cosmopolitanism that has inspired me to shed Sinocentric lens and put on cosmopolitan spectacles in order to view cultural diversities. To use the Chinese saying, Mary is my 师父 to whom I owe a lifelong debt.

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I must say that since I was a Chinese and came to Canada only in my thirties, in supporting me, these various sources and resources have helped nourish an east-west communication no less intense and significant than that in the Renaissance I have traced in the dissertation. So my work on early modern universalism and global cosmopolitanism is also a tribute to the universal vision and cosmopolitan spirit of the patrons and guardians of this project, an acknowledgement of their contribution, albeit in an indirect way, to the cultural dialogue between east and west in modern times.
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Introduction

China and the Far East in Early Modern Globalization:
A Universalism/Global Cosmopolitanism approach

I: General Introduction

In 1977, James Knowles discovered Ben Jonson’s lost masque *The Entertainment at Britain’s Burse* (1609) in the State Papers Domestic of the Public Record Office.¹ The masque was commissioned by Sir Robert Cecil (1563-1612), Secretary of the State, and staged to commemorate the opening of the New Exchange. Knowles regards the masque as a performance that celebrates “eastward and westward colonialism” and “London’s developing consumer culture.”² The entertainment takes places in a “China howse[],” one of the “diuers” in London, as we learn from “The Master,” whose “gentl[]e” way of advertising the commodities tends to locate every item in a context, especially those that evoke commercial rivalries within both domestic and European markets. Apart from the knowledgeable Master, two other actors feature in the masque: the “Key Keeper” who

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² Knowles, “Jonson’s Entertainment at Britain’s Burse,” 115.
claims to be a “compasse” guiding the customer-audience navigating a vast array of eastern merchandise, and the “Shop-Boy” who is energetically touting the goods.3

What is most striking about Jonson’s *Entertainment* is the sheer number and variety of commodities the Burse puts on show. The profusion of Chinese wares is vividly dramatized through a long inventory enumerated by the “Shop-Boy.” After the Key Keeper introduces the occasion of the entertainment, we hear the Boy crying:


Displayed here is a mélange of material objects running the whole gamut from staple Chinese goods like silk and porcelain to ordinary necessities, decorative trappings,

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entertaining trinkets, mechanical devices, and even domestic animals, a variety that implies a multifaceted transcontinental trade.

In putting exclusively Chinese goods on display, Jonson’s *Entertainment* stages a snapshot of an embryonic global trade with the Far East, a trade that would likely elicit both enthusiasm and anxiety from the customer-audience. In his *The English Voyages of the Sixteenth Century* (1905), the historian W. A. Raleigh writes, “modern travel and geography owe their chief advances to the search for the fabled realm of Cathay,” and it is through “the discovery of a passage through one of the innumerable inlets of the North” that “the story of the English Voyages begins” (PN12:10). The “passage” here refers to the Northeast and Northwest passages project initiated by the English to reach the Far East in the sixteenth century. Compared with the Portuguese and the Spanish who had been immensely enriched by eastern riches, England was a latecomer and thereby novice in learning how to exploit the Chinese market. Jonson’s masque aptly captures the new experience typical of investments in new and unfamiliar enterprises. The Key Keeper tells us that everyone he meets wants to know about the new Burse: “About the howse, the roomes, the floore, the roofe, the lightes, the shops, the very barres and

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4 Unless specially noted, most quotes about English navigation are from Richard Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations, Voiages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 12 vols. (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1903-1905). Hakluyt’s work will be referred to as “PN” and quoted by volume and page number. W.A. Raleigh’s work was incorporated in Volume 12 of PN.

padlockes; Not a grayne in the waynscot, but they haue hade my affadauit for.” Being thus harassed, he complains to the King, “I haue had more interrogatorys geuen me in one hower, then all your lawe courtes euer knewe in a Michaelmas Terme.” Further, the questions addressed to the Keeper are of such a nature that he thinks “the wisest Contantables, that euer were, could not inuente.” Not only commoners but also would-be patrons appear confused by the new Burse. To illustrate such “perplexityes,” the Keeper evokes an imaginary chorus that makes various conjectures about the prospect of a Chinese Burse “before the shops were vp.” Some would “haue it a publique banque, where money should be lente,” others would like it to be “a lombarde, to deale with all manner of pawnes,” a “library,” or even “an Arsenall for decayed citizen.” These remarks are so random, the Key Keeper says, that “I wonder how such men could keepe theyr braynes from being guilty of imagining it, rather, a place to twiste silke in, or make ropes, or play a shittlecocke, better then nothing.” The arbitrary feature of these surmises vividly bears out the novelty of investing in Chinese trade in the beginning of the seventeenth century for the English. The investors simply cannot grasp how to use a shop that carries Chinese wares: as a “banque,” “library,” “pawnes” shop, or an “Arsenall.”

King James was not exempt from this general anxiety. That the King had no clearer idea of his position in the global trade with “the newe region” represented by China is pointedly articulated by the Key Keeper:

Your Maiestie will pardon me? I thinke you scarse knowe, where you are now nor
by my troth can I tell you, more then that you may seeme to be vpon some lande
discouery of a newe region here, to which I am your compasse.

Since the Key Keeper is addressing the King in person, he most probably perceives
James I’s bewilderment by his looks and manners—that puzzlement typical of those
confronted with the “discouery of a newe region.” His remark that the King “scarse
knowe[s]” where he stands alludes to the irresolute nature of the state policy regarding
the commerce with the Far East. The masque at once helps the King visualize the
prospect and offers him first-hand knowledge of the Asian trade, though rather than
reflecting the reality of this trade, the “entertainment” is sampled and specially
orchestrated for the royal view. The Keeper says that to act as the King’s “compasse,” he
has “walked the rounde this fortnight in my present place, and office,” a confession that
suggests hard work before making a presentation in the royal presence. Meanwhile, the
Master seems bent on turning the members of the royalty into customers when he
addresses the King, “ye looke like a man that would geue good handsell,” and the Queen
“ye looke like a good customer too.”⁶ What the Master actually has in mind is to enhance
the appeal of Chinese commodities to the King and thereby influence his policy in favor
of the eastern trade. Such trivial stuff as Chinese toothpicks did seem to appeal to royal
fancy at the turn of the seventeenth century. In Shakespeare’s Much Ado about Nothing
(1598-99), the young lord of Padua Benedick speaks to Pedro, Prince of Aragon, that “I

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⁶ Jonson, Entertainment, 132, 133, 134, 140.
will fetch you a tooth-picker from the furthest inch of Asia” (2.1.249-51).7

Jonson’s catalogue of eastern commodities bespeaks the presence of China in early modern Europe. This presence was tangible enough to be felt, sold, and bartered as material objects, and most importantly, these objects conveyed something about the exotic eastern culture. David Baker rightly argues that the “epistemic conundrums” entailed in the Asian trade contribute no less than commercial profit to the appeal of the eastern commodities in Jonson’s burse.8 Martin Butler holds that Jonson’s Entertainment “celebrates the expansion of British trade into Asian markets, and dwells approvingly on the luxury goods that could be bought from Salisbury’s marvelous mall.”9 Since by the early modern period, the gateway to the Far East, that is, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, were firmly controlled by the Turks, Venetians, and Egyptians, eastern goods were indeed exotic luxuries in western markets.10 But a large amount of eastern riches started to be imported into western Europe through the Cape of Good Hope after Vasco Da Gama’s (1460-1524) arrival at Calcutta in 1498, and the establishment of the East India

8 Baker, On Demand, 101.
Company in 1600 greatly augmented England’s traffic in eastern merchandise. So by the first decade of the seventeenth century, eastern commodities were no longer luxury items for the English. The goods represented in Jonson’s masque may seem exotic because they elicit an alien culture. Material goods are marvelous carrier of cultural codes, according to Liam Connell and Nicky Marsh, for “if we view culture as that complex of signs and significations (including language) that mesh into codes of transmission of social values and meanings,” then “money and commodities are themselves the primary bearers of cultural codes.”

The cultural message encoded in commercial goods is explicitly articulated by Jonson’s Master, who declares that “I assure you he that would study but the Allegory of a China shop, might stand worthily to be the Rector of an Academy.” What is suggested here is that, those alien goods impart a cultural “allegory,” the interpretation of which enables one to “stand worthily to be the Rector of an Academy.”

The deciphering of what David Porter calls “the Chinese Cipher” is especially enlightening because, the Master says, China is “The onely wise nation vnder the Sun: They had all the knowledge of all manner of Arts and letters, many thousand[s]years, before any of these parts could speake.”

The Master’s praise is not singular; rather, it is representative of the Renaissance reception of China, especially its remarkable cultural achievements. In his *The History of*

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Great and Mighty Kingdom of China (1585), the Augustinian friar González de Mendoza (1540-1617) expressly states that the Chinese “without all doubt seemed to excede the Greekes, Carthagenians, and Romanes” in the level of their civilization. The French essayist Michel de Montaigne (1533-92) was equally unreserved in his praise of China, which was, he observes in his “On Experience,” “a kingdom whose polity and sciences surpass our own exemplars in many kinds of excellence” and “whose history teaches me that the world is more abundant and diverse than either the ancients or we realized.”

Like Montaigne, the famous chronologer Joseph Scaliger (1540-1609) also recognized “exemplars” for the west in the Chinese culture. For Scaliger, the eastern empire “governs itself excellently” and “its fine control of public order [bonne police] wins admiration and condemns us Frenchmen.” The reason is that, Scaliger explains, while the French “have only a small kingdom by comparison with theirs, and yet we cannot bear to get along with one another, and we cut each other’s throats on credit,” the Chinese “live in tranquility, and have a system of justice so well administered that although they worship devils, they put Christianity to shame.”

Likewise, in his The New Organon (1620), the philosopher and Lord Chancellor Francis Bacon (1561-1626) showed no less

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regard for the ingenuity of the eastern people. According to Bacon, the three inventions of China, that is, “printing, gunpowder and the magnet,” “have changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world; the first in literature; the second in warfare; the third in navigation.”

China had thus a double presence in Renaissance Europe: in the cultural sphere as well as in transnational trade. China was known to the medieval west as “Cathay” through the narratives of the Venetian traveler Marco Polo (1254-1324) and the fourteenth-century English Benedictine monk Sir John Mandeville. Cathay also appeared in the accounts of the pontifical legates to the Mongol court, such as the Franciscan friar John of Plano Carpini’s *The History of the Mongols which we Call Tartars* (1247) and the Flemish Franciscan William of Rubruck’s *The Journey of William Rubruck* (1253-55). By Cathay medieval travelers meant the Song Empire (996-1271) before its conquest by the Mongol Tartars. After the Mongols overthrew the Song and established the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), Cathay referred chiefly to the northern part of China. The Mongol conquerors called the Han Chinese living in the southern part of China “Mangi,” a derogatory term that meant southern barbarians. By the time Jonson composed the

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18 For “Mangi,” see Polo, *Travels*, 164. It should be noted that whereas “Cathay” was a
entertainment, though Cathay still lingered in western minds through the wide dissemination of Polo and Mandeville’s works, there started to circulate another portrait of the Far East in the reports of Jesuit missionaries.\(^1\) After the Ming Empire (1368-1644) toppled the Yuan Dynasty built by the Mongol Tartars in 1368, the overland routes to China were largely blocked, which basically cut off western access to the Far East. Consequently, regions along the Pacific Ring disappeared from western view until the Iberian adventurers rediscovered them in the sixteenth century. As is pointed out by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and Nicholas Trigault (1577-1628), two Jesuit pioneers of the Chinese mission, “China,” the Ming Empire, or the so-called “Middle Kingdom” existing alongside early modern Europe proved none other than the medieval “Cathay.”\(^2\)

\(^1\) Some 300 manuscripts of Mandeville’s travel account have survived. Mandeville’s work was available in almost every major European language by 1400, and nine English editions appeared in the seventeenth century. 119 of Polo’s *Travels* are still extant, and John Brampton translated it into English in 1579. Both Polo and Mandeville’s accounts were adapted in Giovanni Battista Ramusio’s *Delle navigationi et viaggi* (1550-54) and Samuel Purchas’s *Hakluytus Posthumus* or *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625). Most references to Purchas in this dissertation come from *Hakluytus Posthumus* or *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 20 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905-1907). For Mandeville and Polo’s accounts see vol.11.188-306; 365-94.

\(^2\) For the name of “Middle Kingdom” see *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610*, ed. Nicolas Trigault and trans. Louis J. Gallagher, S.J. (New York: Random, 1953), 7. Matteo Ricci reached Macao in 1582. At his death in Beijing in 1610, Ricci left a journal recording both Chinese culture and the apostolic cause in China, which was brought from Macao to Rome in 1614 by Trigault, his fellow missionary in China. Trigault arrived in China in 1611. A year later, he went to Rome to recruit new missionaries, and returned in 1618. Trigault died in China in 1628. Trigault translated Ricci’s journal into Latin and published it under the title of *De christiana expeditione spud Sinas* (Augsburg, 1615). Trigault’s translation went through 11 editions between 1615 and 1625. Since Trigault prefaced Ricci’s journal with an extensive
Jonson’s Master recalls this western tradition of representing the Far East when he remarks that “Sir John Mandeville was the first [English author], that brought scynece from thence into our climate, and so dispensed it into Europe and in such Hieroglyphiks as these.”\(^{21}\)

Michael Edwardes observes that “the Renaissance, for all its Classical face, was alive with influences from the East, often disguised, their source almost always unrecognized.”\(^{22}\) A chief objective of my dissertation is to uncover those “disguised” and “unrecognized” sources, disclosing the “eastern origins” of some particular images and allusions in John Donne and John Milton’s works.\(^{23}\) China, though a profitable market for the Spanish and Portuguese, appeared to the English as a largely unforeseeable economic force and undecipherable cultural space at the turn of the seventeenth century. Compared with other oriental countries such as the Ottoman Empire and eastern India, Renaissance literary representations of the Far East are not many. But if we pay close attention, we can pin down some traces and echoes, resonances that, though slight in number, are significant enough to make us aware of the impact of the eastern culture upon the early modern imaginative literature. Those seemingly simple and accidental references actually evoke the broader background concerning the western discovery of introduction of Chinese culture, Gallagher’s modern edition will be referred to as Ricci-Trigault.


\(^{23}\) For a comprehensive overview of the eastern contribution to western civilization during 500-1800 see John M. Hobson’s *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004).
the Far East, and as such they are symptomatic of the multifaceted intercourse between western Europe and China in the early modern period. My aim is to explore this multi-dimensional global dialogue as it is mediated through commerce, chronology, theology, and politics. The “China” of each generation tended to serve for western Europe a distinct set of discursive functions and rhetorical purposes. I examine how China served as a cultural stimulus that compelled early modern Europeans to rethink their economic, theological, and political assumptions.

Most scholarship on the Renaissance literary representations of the Far East focuses on the late seventeenth-and-eighteenth centuries, and the few studies that do notice the allusions to China in Elizabethan and early Stuart literature confine their discussions to some general or tangential remarks, without engaging in sustained discussions. But there are admirable exceptions. David Porter examines the western reception of Chinese ideographical characters in the early seventeenth century, and Gwee Li Sui investigates the “the specter of scientific China” in Bacon’s *New Atlantis.*

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Robert Markley and Walter H. S. Lim bring the Far East into Milton studies. James Knowles and David Baker are pioneers in presenting sustained studies of literary images of China in the early seventeenth century. It is true that the impact of China upon Western Europe gathered momentum in the latter part of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, but its inception appeared at the end of the sixteenth century. My dissertation engages this very formative period from the 1580s-1670s, a period that saw the first substantial contact between China and western Europe and when cultural conflicts and shocks appeared at their most intense. Drawing upon scholarship on Renaissance representation of the Far East, I examine Donne and Milton’s responses to Chinese trade, chronology, geography, and the imperial system represented by the Mongol Tartars in particular. Most studies of the early modern encounter with the other resort to ethnic or racialist, colonial, and orientalist frameworks. But since these interpretive models presuppose various forms of inferiority, they are inappropriate for addressing the other in the Far East. As George H. Dunne puts it, if a conceptual paradigm that presumes the superiority of European culture “proved wanting in India,” “it would prove totally inept


I use the theory of early modern globalization to study Donne and Milton’s responses to China and the Far East in general. Manfred B. Steger differentiates between “globality” and “globalization.” By “globality,” he means “a social condition characterized by tight global economic, political, cultural, and environmental interconnections and flows that make most of the current existing borders and boundaries irrelevant.” By contrast, “globalization” indicates “a set of social processes that appear to transform our present social conditions of weakening nationality into one of globality.”

Since various forms of global “interconnections and flows” marked the transcontinental intercourse in the Renaissance, some scholars argue for the “birth” of globalization in the early modern period. Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez hold that “a global perspective instead of the predominant Eurocentric view” provides a perfect lens to study the transcontinental trade of precious metals between Europe-the New World-China in the Renaissance. Since the so-called “Manila Galleons” connected the Atlantic and the Pacific for the first time in history, Flynn and Giráldez claim, the establishment of the Manila colony by the Spanish in 1571 marks the “birth” of early modern globalization.

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30 Flynn and Giráldez, *China and the Birth of Globalization in the 16th Century*
Similarly, Walter Cohen maintains that “a more appropriately global picture of west European expansion” gradually took shape “shortly before Shakespeare’s birth” in 1564, and that “England initiated its modern imperial adventure by embarking on the oceans of global trade under the leadership of London’s merchant elite.”

In effect, what is showcased in Jonson’s *Entertainment* is precisely a global trade. The conjunction of east and west in Jonson’s China house, Knowles says, signals the unification of “the two directions of English expansionism,” that is, “the westward colonial thrust and the eastward maritime trading expeditions.”

Apart from the interconnections enabled by commercial trade, the Jesuits’ missionary work opened up various cultural circuits throughout the world, and the slave trade enacted a global labor flow.

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cultural and economic flows in the early modern period do not necessarily constitute “globalization,” they do exemplify processes that are “global.”

Referring to theories of early modern globalization, I propose a universalism/global cosmopolitanism approach to Donne and Milton’s images of the Far East. A globalized world naturally gives rise to two interconnected worldviews: one that is universal and one that is cosmopolitan. David Hollinger asserts that it is a “universal will” to “find the common ground,” and the “cosmopolitan will” to “engage human diversity.”

The images and metaphors of China and the Far East in Donne and Milton’s works reflect those divergent globalizing tendencies in the Renaissance. In capturing in their works some echoes of the transcontinental trade dominated by Ming China, the geographical and theological accommodation to the discovery of the Pacific region, the chronological controversy incited by Chinese antiquity, as well as the Mongols’ empire project, I argue, both Donne and Milton exhibit a “universal” and “cosmopolitan” will to embrace and engage the cultural diversity embodied by the Far East. By exploring both authors’ reception of the encounter between east and west in mercantile trade, geography, theology, chronology, and politics, I mean to provide new insight into the interpretative strategies used by Renaissance imaginative writers to negotiate the anxieties caused by cultural clashes and diversities.


My study positions itself in relation to two major bodies of literature, that is, western reports on China and sinological studies. My first primary source comes from the western tradition of representing the Far East, a tradition embodied by Polo and Mandeville’s travel accounts, the reports of the pontifical legates to the Mongol court, Mendoza’s *Mighty Kingdom of China*, Ricci and Trigault’s *Journals* or *De christianae expeditione apud Sinas* (1615), and the Jesuit historian Martino Martini’s (1614-61) *Sinicae historiae decas prima* (1658). Travel compilations such as Richard Hakluyt’s (1552-1616) *Principal Navigations* (1589-1600) and Samuel Purchas’s (1575-1626) *Hakluytus Posthumus* or *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625) also come under this heading. A second primary source consists in sinological scholarship, especially the so-called “Jesuit sinophile literature,” interpretative or critical works on the early modern reception of the Far East. Dunne’s *Generation of Giants* and David E. Mungello’s *Curious Land* belong to this category.36


As the backbone of my primary sources, I pay special attention to the Jesuits’ accounts of China.\(^3\) In effect, the encounter between east and west could not have been that fruitful without the intervention of Jesuit missionaries. By the first two decades of the seventeenth century, the Christian expedition in China envisioned and passionately pursued by St. Francis Xavier (1506-52) had been greatly expanded by his successors Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), “the Official Visitor of the Society [of Jesus] to the entire Orient,”\(^3\) and Matteo Ricci who was appointed by Valignano as “the Superior” of the China mission.\(^3\) These pioneering missionaries made it a prerequisite to study Chinese culture, and they relayed what they have absorbed from China back to Europe.

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\(^3\) Ricci-Trigault, *Journals*, 190. Valignano was initially appointed as “Official Visitor to the whole India Mission.” Later, “by order of the General of the Society of Jesus,” he “had ceased to govern the Mission of India. His authority then, under the title of Official visitor, extended only to Japan and to the China Mission.” Ricci-Trigault, *Journals*, 130, 290.

\(^3\) Ricci-Trigault, *Journals*, 295.
through complex and far-ranging communication networks. According to Steven J. Harris, the Society of Jesus established an “organizational structure” that “effectively combined spatially distributed networks (the Society’s overseas missions) with multiple nodal points or nexus (Jesuit Colleges and universities) which served as the locally conditioned centers for the gathering, collation, distillation, and dissemination of much of Jesuit science.” It is precisely because of this highly ordered regulation and dissemination network, Donald F. Lach and Edwin van Kley argue, that “hundreds of Jesuit letterbooks, derivative accounts, travel accounts…pamphlets, newssheets, and the like” were circulated and preserved. These books, Lach and van Kley remark, “were published in all European languages, frequently reprinted and translated, collected into the several large compilations of travel literature published during the century, and regularly pilfered by later writers or publishers.” Chinese culture as interpreted and transmitted by Jesuit missionaries provided a valuable resource for Renaissance interest in China, an interest that, in turn, inspired some intellectual enterprises whose “origins” could be traced, both directly and indirectly, to the Far East.

The large volume of Chinese culture introduced to Europe through the Jesuit missionaries spilled inevitably into literature. Renaissance literature, as a sensitive

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42 Lach and van Kley, Asia in the Making of Europe, vol. 3. 1890; see also Hobson, Eastern Origins, 200; and Clarke, Oriental Enlightenment, 40.
cultural barometer that responded nimbly to changes both in the physical and intellectual worlds could not have been deaf to the name of China shouted 11 times by Jonson’s Shop-Boy. In fact, alongside multitudes of Jesuit reports, Lach and van Kley remark:

Hundreds of books about Asia, written by missionaries, merchants, sea-captains, physicians, sailors, soldiers, and independent travelers, appeared during the [17th] century. There were at least twenty-five major descriptions of South Asia alone, another fifteen devoted to mainland Southeast Asia, about twenty to the archipelagoes, and sixty or more to East Asia.

Given this plenitude of works on the Far East, Lach and van Kley conclude, “few literate Europeans could have been completely untouched by it, and it would be surprising indeed if its effects could not have been seen in contemporary European literature, art, learning, and culture.” Indeed, in addition to the abundant references in Jonson’s masque, the image of China showed up in other literary works as well. China or Cathay figures prominently in Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (1516) and Francois Rabelais’s *Pantagruel* (1532). Ariosto’s epic poem relates the return of Orlando from Tartary, India, and Meida to the West, and the girl he has been long in love was “Angelica,” a native of Cathay. Rabelais situates the “Land of Utopia” and the “City of the Amaurots” in

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43 Lach and van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol.3. 1890.
China. The trans-Pacific journey represented in Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1627) starts from “Peru” towards “China and Japan.” George Puttenham comments on Chinese poetry in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589). In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), Robert Burton identifies various aspects of Chinese culture that are either adverse or conducive to the disease of melancholy. In his Shakespeare’s *Much Ado About Nothing*, the young Lord of Padua says to Don Pedro, Prince of Aragon: “Will your Grace command me any service to the world’s end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a tooth-picker from the furthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John’s foot; fetch you a hair off the great Cham’s beard; do you any embassage to the Pigmies” (2.1.249-53). In addition, Shakespeare also mentions a “Cathayan” or “Cataian” in *Merry Wives of Windsor* (2.1.130) and *Twelfth Night* (2.3.75), and speaks of “China dishes” in *Measure for Measure* (2.1.92). Donne and Milton’s portrayals of China prove part of this literary legacy of depicting the Far East.

I was raised and educated in China, and it might thus seem logical to examine east-west relations from a Chinese perspective. But since most of the materials used in

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my dissertation concern western reports on China and the focus of my study is the
western imaginative response to the discovery of the Far East, what is presented here is
largely through a western lens—how the west, its literary discourse in particular, receives
and views the cultural diversity represented by China. Nevertheless, it is worth noting
that this western lens is filtered through an eastern outlook. I hope my special background
will enable me to offer particular insight into the Sino-European intercourse in the early
modern period.48

II: Western Discovery and Rediscovery of the Far East

Hakluyt, in the preface to the second edition of his Principal Navigations (1598),
calls geography and chronology “the Sunne and the Moone, the right eye and the left of
all history” (PN1: xxxix). Steger maintains that globalization symbolizes “the expansion
and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and
world-space.”49 The eyes of early modern geography and chronology that encompassed
the axes of “world-time” and “world-space,” two defining indexes of globalization,
depict both the physical and thematic terrains of my dissertation. Since I shall engage

48 For Europe’s encounter with other worlds see Mary B. Campbell, The Witness and the
Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600 (Ithaca, NY.: Cornell UP, 1988);
Stephen Greenblatt, Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World (Chicago:
University Of Chicago Press, 1992); Jerry H. Bentley, Old World Encounters:
Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times (New York: Oxford UP,
1993); and Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock, eds. Cultural Encounters
49 Steger, Globalization, 15.
Renaissance conceptions of “world-time” in the two chapters on Donne and Milton’s negotiation with Chinese chronology, here I focus only on how the Far East came into the western picture of “world-space.”

Greek and Roman views of “world-space” were largely confined to the Mediterranean Ring, but the Far East was not totally cut off from the western horizon in ancient times. China appeared, now and then, on the fuzzy edges of western imagination. As is pointed out by Henry Yule, China had been “distinguished by different appellations as it was regarded as the terminus of a southern sea-route coasting the great peninsulas and islands of Asia, or as that of a northern land route traversing the longitude of that continent.” As the destination of the sea voyage southwards, this eastern country was called “SIN, CHIN, SINAE, CHINA,” and as the end of the northern overland route it gained the epithet “SERES,” a word originated from the Greek “serikos.” Since the root “ser” means silk, China appeared as a land of silk to Mediterranean antiquity.50 The only notable Greek reference to China was made by Herodotus (c.484-425 BC). In his The Histories (c.440 BC), Herodotus speaks of the “one-eyed Arimaspians, and beyond them the griffins which guard the gold, and beyond the griffins the Hyperboreans, whose land

50 It is the Portuguese who first used the name “China.” “Sin,” “Chin,” “Sinae/Thinae” and “Cina” are varied forms of “China” caused by different pronunciations of European languages. The Jesuit missionaries called China as the Chinese themselves called it, that is, “the Middle Kingdom” or “Ciumqu/Ciumhoa” [Zhongguo/Zhonghua], both of which mean a country situated in the very “center” of the universe. Ricci-Trigault, Journals, 5, 7.
comes down to the sea.” The “sea” here should mean the Pacific Ocean. In the Roman period, only the great geographer Claudius Ptolemy (c.90-c.168) and the natural philosopher Pliny the Elder (23-79) took “serious notices” of the Seres. The earliest Roman geographer Pomponius Mela (d.c.45) mentioned the three races residing in the furthest part of Asia, that is, “the Indians, the Seres, and the Scythians.” But it was Ptolemy who “first uses the names of SERA and SERICA, the former for the chief city, and the latter for the country of the Seres.” Ptolemy also mentioned “Thinae” in the Far East, and he derived this name from the Phoenician cartographer and mathematician Marinus of Tyre (c.70 -130) whose maps first showed China to the Roman world. But by “Thinae” Ptolemy meant a country different from “Serica.” In his The Natural History (c.78), Pliny notices that the first human occupants to the northeast of the Caspian Sea were “the people called the Chinese, who are well known for a woolen substance obtained from their forests.” However, as is noted by Yule, while both Mela and Pliny “recognize the position of the Seres upon the Eastern Ocean which terminates Asia,” “no such ocean is recognized by Ptolemy.” In his Geographia (c.150), a work that synthesizes the Roman knowledge of the world’s geography, Ptolemy puts “Serica” and “Sinae” at the extreme east, beyond the island of “Taprobane” (Ceylon or Sri Lanka)

54 Yule ed., Cathay and the Way Thither, vol.1. 15.
the “Aurea Chersonesus” (Malay Peninsula).

Medieval knowledge of the Far East, the Mongol Tartars and the Cathayans in particular, came chiefly through the Mongols’ western campaigns in 1218-60. The English chronologer Matthew Paris (1200-59) gave a vivid account of the sudden eruption of the Tartarian equestrians upon the western horizon in 1241. The Tartars, Paris writes, “came with the force of lightening into the territories of the Christians,” for “never till this time has there been any mode of access to them; nor have they themselves come forth, so as to allow any knowledge of their customs or persons to be gained through common intercourse with other men.”

Thus it is the Tartarian invasion of Europe that suddenly revealed the Far East to the medieval west. The west was shocked into recognition of a formidable east whose horses’ hooves had trodden flat a host of nations in Christendom. In his Purchas His Pilgrimage (1617), Purchas also observes that the Far East had been known to the west through the armies and merchants of the Carthaginians, Macedonians, and Romans, but later barbarian invasions had “drowne(d)” that knowledge. It is the “lightning” appearance of the Tartarian equestrians and the “terrible thunder-clap” of the Mongol wars that declared, once again, the Far East to western Europe.

The communication set in motion by Tartarian warfare broadened western knowledge.

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knowledge both of the Mongol and Chinese empires. Medieval Euro-Mongolian
diplomatic and missionary exchanges marked the first official contact between western
Europe and the Far East, and it also drew attention to the “Mighty Kingdom” of China.
The Tartars’ successive sacking of Russia and conquest of Poland and Hungary rendered
it urgent for Christendom to negotiate peace with those formidable equestrians. To
achieve this aim, Pope Innocent IV (1243-54) dispatched John of Carpini (1182-1252) on
an embassy to the Mongol Empire (1245-47), and Carpini recorded this trip in his History
of the Mongols. In 1253 King Louis IX of France (1214-70) sent William of Rubruck
(1220-93) as a missionary to the Mongol court, a mission minutely documented in The
Journey of William Rubruck. Carpini and Rubruck’s works deal largely with the pre-Yuan
Mongol empire (1206-71), but both touch on the Mongols’ warfare with the Cathayans.
The missionary legacy started by Rubruck was inherited by the Franciscan priest John of
Monte Corvino (1247-1328), founder of the earliest Roman Catholic missions in India
and China. Sent in 1289 by the Papal Court as a legate to the Great Khan, Corvino
became the first archbishop of “Cambaliech” (Beijing) in 1307. According to Corvino’s
own letters, he had successfully converted a Tartar Prince, “built a church in the city of
Cambaliech,” and “baptized about 6,000 persons there.”

57 For Corvino’s letter see The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the
Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth
detailed description of China proper than his predecessors.\textsuperscript{58}

Although China was already known as Serica and Cathay in classical and medieval times, it was a “new” world to the Renaissance west because it was re-discovered after almost two centuries’ disappearance. The overthrowing of the Yuan Empire and the erection of the Ming dynasty in 1368 cut off the contact between east and west started by the Mongol warfare. Consequently, China was lost to the west until it was rediscovered by the Portuguese and Spanish in the sixteenth century in their quest for eastern riches. The historian W. A. Raleigh claims that maritime explorations feature a long “race for the Far East” (PN12: 8). Though “diversified with episodes and digressions and underplots,” Raleigh remarks, “the quest of Cathay” is “the main theme” of Hakluyt’s \textit{Principal Navigations}. (PN12:13) This “quest” was initiated by the Portuguese, who, reaching China in 1513, established a trading center at Macao in 1557. In 1571, to obtain a foothold for incursions into China, the Spaniards built the colony of Manila. Guido de Laverzaris, head of the Spanish adventure in the Far East, wrote to Philip II in 1572, “We are stationed here at the gateway of great kingdoms. Will your majesty aid us with the wherewithal so that trade may be introduced and maintained among many of these nations.”\textsuperscript{59} Not only navigators and explorers but also missionaries joined “the quest of Cathay.” In the account of his travel to China (1615), the Portuguese Jesuit

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\textsuperscript{58} Odoric’s work was included in Hakluyt’s \textit{Principal Navigations} (1599), vol. 2. 39-67; see its modern edition in Yule ed., \textit{Cathay and the Way Thither}, vol. 2. 97-267.

Benedict Goes [Benito de Goes] (1562-1607) says, though “Cathay” “was once familiar to Europe through the story of Marcus Paulus the Venetian,” this name “had in the lapse of ages so fallen out of remembrance that people scarcely believed in the existence of such a country.” It is precisely with the delegated mission to investigate whether the China newly revealed by the Jesuit missionaries was the medieval Cathay that Goes embarked on his eastern journey. Due to these re-discoveries, whether by commercial, military, or missionary means, Purchas explicitly accorded the “New” title to China when he remarks: “Now for the New World, we begin at China, which the Ancients knew not, and take all the East and North parts of Asia from the Caspian Sea, the Arctoan Regions, all America and Terra Australis, comprehending all in that New Title.” For the highly renowned Portuguese Jesuit missionary Alvaro Semedo (1586-1658) too, China was “the most valuable, that this our world hath been acquainted with, since that of America, whereby now the furthest East, as well West, is discovered and laid open to the present age.”

China was “new” to early modern Europe also in the sense that it was part of the terra incognita (unknown world) marked out by Ptolemy. Medieval and early modern cartographical conceptions of “world-space” were distinguished by the mapping of

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60 Yule ed., *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. 4. 198.
61 Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, vol.1. xlvi.
regions unknown to the Ptolemaic cosmogony. Ptolemy’s *Geographia* features three distinct parts of the world: the Roman provinces, the whole inhabited world, and the *terra incognita*. For Ptolemy, the inhabited world was bounded by four terminuses: Thule [Shetland] in the north, the Fortunate Isles [Cape Verde Islands] in the west, Cape Bojador in the south, and Taprobane in the east. But early modern geographical explorations burst open these boundaries established by Ptolemy, unleashing a host of new regions from the *terra incognita*. This geographical expansion is vividly captured by Shakespeare in his *Twelfth Night* (1601). Here we hear Maria, speaking of Malvolio, say, “he does smile his face into more lines than in the new map, with the augmentation of the Indies” (3.2.73-75). In fact, imagination of the unknown had already started before it appeared as regulated “lines” “in the new map.” Modern geography originated from medieval marine or Portolan charts, sea-charts that described the position of coasts and islands of the Mediterranean Sea. The practice of making marine charts culminated in the “portolan chart” (1311) of the Genoese cartographer Petrus Vesconte. What distinguishes Vesconte’s portolan chart is the drastic “contrast between the minute and accurate detail of their known lands and the blank spaces beyond,” a contrast that at once

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provided a fertile site for imagination and nourished ambitions to conquer the unknown.⁶⁵

Those unmapped regions in portolan charts became a focus of attention in the world map (c.1418) of Cardinal Guillaume Fillastre (1348-1428), who “wrote terra incognita (‘unknown land’) in three different places at his map’s northern and southern limits.”⁶⁶ This repetition shows that the Cardinal was thinking beyond conventional geographical confines and prying into uncharted territories, an intellectual venture that unleashed “a realm of new geographical possibilities.”⁶⁷ The Far East lay concealed in those unknown regions. In the preface to his 1492 globe, Martin Behhim (1459-1507), the German cartographer in the service of King of Portugal, referred to the Far East as a region “unknown to Ptolemy.”⁶⁸ The German cartographer Martin Waldseemuller’s (c.1470-1520) map of 1507 singled out “the land of Cathay and all of southern India” as a new region that lay “beyond 180 degrees of longitude,” the easternmost tip of which is located 60 degrees beyond Ptolemy’s limit.⁶⁹ Likewise, the famous astronomer Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543) observed that “Ptolemy extended the habitable area halfway around the world. Beyond that meridian, where he left unknown land, the moderns have added Cathay and territory as vast as sixty degrees of longitude, so that now the earth is

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inhabited over a greater stretch of longitude than is left for the ocean."  

The geographical rediscovery of China registered in, apart from travel accounts, the cartographical mapping of the Far East. The itinerary literature proved an inspiration for not only practical navigators but also adventurous cartographers to explore and plot the unknown. The Jewish mapmaker Abraham Cresques (d.1387) was a pioneer in delineating the nondescript Asian landmass. In his *Catalan World Atlas* (1375) made for King Charles V of France, Cresques identified and located most of the cities mentioned by Polo, Mandeville, and Odoric, such as Cambulac (Beijing), Quinsay (Hangzhou), Canto (Guangzhou), and Zayton (Quanzhou), associating these places with such stock figures as Gog and Magog and Prester John. The 1459 world map of the Venetian Fra Mauro and his assistant Andrea Bianco, a sailor-cartographer, included almost all of Polo’s toponyms. In his 1492 globe, Behhim stated that it was under the inspiration of Polo and Mandeville’s works that he undertook to map the Far East “unknown to Ptolemy.”  

The *Atlas* (1513) of Francisco Rodrigues, “Pilot-Major of the First Armada that discovered Banda and the Moluccas,” “introduced for the first time into European…The Gulf of Bengal, the Straits of Malacca, and the Southern Chinese Sea (from Java, along the Moluccas as far as Canton).”  

The world maps of the Spanish cosmographer Diogo Riberio (1527, 1529) presented a more detailed picture of

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Southeastern Asia. Japan or Polo’s “Zipangu” appeared on the Italian cartographer Giacomo Gastaldi’s (c.1500-66) map of 1550, and “Mangi” showed up in his *Asiae Nova Descriptio* (1570). In fact, *Asiae Nova* set out a very detailed account of Chinese provinces. The *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570) of Abraham Ortelius (1527-98), the celebrated geographer to King of Spain, included a separate map of Tartary and its 1584 edition added a map of China. Adorning Asia with jewels in the title page of his *Theatrum*, Ortelius gave a lively description of the customs and institutions of China.

III: The Ethnic, Orientalist, and Colonial Discourses vs. the Jesuits’ Accommodative Policy

Up to now, I have shown that the Far East had become, though by degrees, a definite cultural space in Renaissance travel literature and cartographical discourse. As is shown in the cartographical mapping of the Far East, the region was far from fantastic and legendary; instead, it was a geographical space no less tangible than the European continent. Nor did its culture and customs sound mythical any more by the early modern times. Margaret T. Hodgen states rightly that the narratives by Carpini, Rubruck, and

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Polo about the Mongols and Cathayans had an unexpectedly ethnological character. Sir Humphrey Gilbert (1539-83), pioneer of England’s colonial cause in America, wrote to his brother in 1566, “you might justly have charged mee with an unsetled head if I had at any time taken in hand, to discover Utopia, or any countrey fained by imagination: But Cathaia is none such…” Not merely practical explorers but also Jesuit missionaries made a point to highlight the un-Utopian feature of the Middle Kingdom. Speaking of their Journals, Ricci and Trigault remark, “we speak the native language of the country, have set ourselves to the study of their customs and laws and finally, what is of the highest importance, we have devoted ourselves day and night to the perusal of their literature. These advantages were, of course, entirely lacking to writers who never at any time penetrated into this alien world.” Since most Jesuit missionaries not only received sophisticated education but also were specially trained for a purported mission, the reports that were produced by such seriously minded scholars should be immune to charges of being fantastic. Then how did Renaissance Europe respond to the geographical and cultural space represented by China and the Far East? How did the two eyes of history mentioned by Hakluyt, that is, geography and chronology, serve to reorient western reception of the “other” residing along the Pacific Ring?

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The ethnic or racialist, orientalist, and colonialist frameworks provide three typical approaches to the Renaissance conception of the foreign other. The racialist discourse deals with diverse forms of discrimination or marginalization based on “various combinations of ethnic, geographic, cultural, class, and religious difference.”

According to Ania Loomba, “race” is an artificial construct, because “what we call race does not indicate natural or biological divisions so much as social divisions which are characterized as if they were natural or biological.” “Ethnicity” is a concept specially formulated to address this artificial nature of race. “To signal the mutability and contractedness of race,” Loomba observes, “many writers frame the word within quote marks and others substitute it with ‘ethnicity.’” Thus ethnic classifications do not necessarily entail racialist implications; the use of ethnic category to indicate essential inferiority or discrimination constitutes racism. The orientalist model proposed by Edward Said is a distinctive variant of ethnocentric studies. Said’s *Orientalism*, a study of the orientalist literature of the 19th century in the Middle East, sets up a new way of thinking about the racial other. Western depictions of the Orient (especially the Middle East) were not objective but filtered through a political demarcation between “‘us’ (Westerners) and ‘they’ (Orientals),” Said argues, for

when one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the

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78 Loomba, *Shakespeare*, 3.
end points of analysis, research, public policy…the result is usually to polarize the
distinction—the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more
Western—and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions,
and societies.80

Thus Orientalist discourse allows us to see how the west constructs an eastern “other” in
order to “control, manipulate, even incorporate what is manifestly a different (or
alternative and novel) world.”81 So like the ethnic spectacles, an orientlist lens focuses
on instances of marginalization, manipulation, and exclusion rather than equal and
reciprocal intercourses.

China remains largely a place name in most critical studies on the early modern
encounter with the other. Though much has been written on racial alterity in Renaissance
literature, few have touched on the otherness represented by China.82 Apart from a few
works on trade with the Far East, there seems to be a systematic neglect of the Chinese in

80 Edward W. Said, Orientalism, 25th Anniversary Edition, with a New Preface by the
81 Said, Orientalism, 12.
82 For early modern ethnic or racialist studies see Women, “Race” and Writing in Early
Modern England, ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge, 1994);
Kim Hall, Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England
(Ithaca, NY.: Cornell UP, 1995); Nabil Matar, Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age
of Discovery (New York: Columbia UP, 1999); Imtiaz H.Habib, Black Lives in the
English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Joyce
G. MacDonald, Women and Race in Early Modern Texts (Cambridge: Cambridge UP,
2002); Mary Floyd-Wilson, English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama
(Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003); and Johanyak and Lim eds., The English Renaissance,
critical scholarship on early modern literary representations of the Orient before the 1660s. Loomba presents a long catalogue of the “outsiders” for Shakespearean England, which include the “Indians, gypsies, Jews, Ethiopians, Moroccans, Turks, Moors, ‘savages,’ the ‘wild Irish, the ‘uncivil Tartars,” as well as non-English Europeans.”

China does not show up in this exhaustive list. The Far East is mentioned in Richard Barbour’s *Before Orientalism: London’s Theatre of the East 1576-1626*, a work that restricts the Orient to the Ottoman and Mogul empires. The Far East is excluded from Mary Floyd-Wilson’s *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* as well. But in including western depictions of Chinese culture in the collection of articles in *Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*, Debra Johanyak and Walter S. H. Lim chart new lines of inquiry in studies of the early modern receptions of the other.

The paucity of references to the Far East may be behind this critical neglect of literary portrayals of China before the 1660s. But another possible reason is that the “Middle Kingdom” simply does not fit in with the ethnocentric or orientalist interpretive paradigm that presupposes various forms of inferiority. Simply put, China is unrepresentable in racialist terms rather than “culturally and representationally suppressed.” Indeed, a racialist model might apply to the Turks, Moors, Indians, and Africans, since the literary images of these people largely reflected their real conditions.

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As declared enemies of Christian Europe, the Spanish and Barbary Moors and their associates Muslims and Turks in the east had been historically viewed through a racial lens. Later, when the first cargo of African slaves were unloaded on August 8, 1444 from the exploration ships commissioned by Henry the Navigator, and when Columbus paraded with his American Indians on his way to see the Spanish sovereigns in 1492, the other represented by the Africans and Americans began to be viewed through the racial spectacles as well. The establishment of the two colonies of Macau and Manila by the Portuguese and Spanish in the sixteenth century brought the Far East into the orbit of the “outsiders,” and as a consequence, China was focalized through the same lens fixated on already established others. But easy as it was to categorize other non-Christian and non-white peoples in racialist terms, China fitted uneasily within such a parameter because the “difference” it embodied, to use Bacon’s words, “comes not from soil, not from climate, not from race, but from the arts.” For western observers, Chinese culture was, rather than inferior, comparable or superior to the west in some major aspects of civilization. Polo remarked that Cathay “surpass[es] other nations in the excellence of their manners and their knowledge of many subjects.” For Mandeville, “the kingdom of Cathay is the largest kingdom there is in the world, and also the Great Chan is the

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86 The Islamic world split into three empires after the Mongol Hulegu sacked Baghdad in 1258, the center of Abbasid Persia (750-1258). These three new Islamic empires coexisting alongside early modern Europe were the Turkish Ottoman Empire (1299-1683), the Persian Safavid (1501-1722), and the Indian Mughal Empire (1526-1707).

87 Bacon, *New Organon*, 118.

88 Polo, *Travels*, 160.
strongest emperor there is under the firmament.” Similarily, Mendoza noticed that the Chinese were “so prudent and wise in the government of their common wealth, and so subtil and ingenious in all arts.” Ricci and Trigault even claimed a rational aspect of eastern paganism. “Of all the pagan sects known to Europe,” they say, we “know of no people who fell into fewer errors in the early ages of their antiquity than did the Chinese.” Put differently, the pagan philosophy of the Chinese was shot through with rational light, and thereby conformable to the Christian faith. So heathens as the Chinese were, they boasted a high level of civilization both in physical and spiritual terms.

The colonial model was similarly in adequate in addressing the early modern reactions to the Chinese culture. As Loomba notes, racial stereotypes can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome, but European colonialists reworked and entrenched the image of the racial other. This alliance between the racial and colonial other was especially close in the formative period of colonialism, that is, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. “Colonialism” means “the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods,” a term that refers both to “pre-capitalist” and “capitalist European” colonial practices. As Loomba points out, Said’s Orientalism initiates not merely a novel way of thinking about racialism but also “a new kind of study of colonialism,” that is, “colonial discourse.” As a framework used to describe, explain, and theorize colonial

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89 Mandeville, 139.
90 Mendoza, Mighty Kingdom of China, 39.
91 Ricci-Trigault, Journals, 93.
92 Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, 92.
93 Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, 8, 9.
practices, colonial discourse “indicates a new way of conceptualizing the interactions of
cultural, intellectual, economic or political processes in the formation, perpetuation and
dismantling of colonialism.” This conceptualization, Loomba argues, “allows us to see
how power works through language, literature, culture, and the institutions which
regulate our daily lives.”

The colonial model is resorted to by critics in their studies of Donne and Milton’s
representations of the new worlds. But this interpretive paradigm proves insufficient to
account for their images of China, images derived chiefly from travel and missionary
reports that emphasize its greatness and mightiness. Western observers themselves
recognized that the Chinese who “imagine[d] the whole world included in their
kingdoms” were far from a colonial object. The Chinese sense of self-sufficiency and
self-centeredness, a sense encapsulated in the term they called their Empire—the “Middle
Kingdom” — rendered the colonial approach insufficient. The Chinese call their country
the “Middle Kingdom” or “the center” of the world and their monarch “Lord of the
Universe,” according to Ricci and Trigault, because they “are of the opinion that the
extent of their vast dominion is to all intents and purposes coterminous with the border of
the universe.” The two missionaries also noted that “everything which the people need
for their well-being and sustenance, whether it be for food or clothing or even delicacies

Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, 43, 45, 50-51.

By the “New World,” I refer exclusively to “America”; and by “new worlds” I mean all
the new regions discovered by early modern explorers, China and the Far East included.

Ricci-Trigault, Journals, 43.
and superfluities, is abundantly produced within the borders of the kingdom [China] and not imported from foreign climes."\(^97\) The Chinese’s “opinion” of their own superiority and centrality was so formidable that in his *Complete Map of Mountains, Seas, and Lands* (1602), Ricci, to accommodate this highly entrenched attitude, had to place China in the very middle of the map.\(^98\) Unlike the eastern Indians who were, as Milton says, stained with “barbarism” and “worship as gods malevolent demons whom they cannot exorcise,”\(^99\) China, with its powerful ethical and monarchical systems, was frequently portrayed as inhabited by a people who were comparable with, and even superior to, western Europeans. Further, compared with those “historyless” people in America and Africa whose inhabitants were regarded as “ancestors” at an earlier, infant-like stage, Chinese antique history had to be reckoned with.\(^100\) Once contemporaneous with ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome and now standing side by side with Renaissance Europe, China boasted a long and uninterrupted history that, as Donne put it in 1614, “vex[es] us at this

\(^{97}\) Ricci-Trigault, *Journals*, 7, 10.


\(^{100}\) The term “historyless people” was used by Marx and Engels to describe those primitive aboriginals who could only subject themselves to be assimilated by the colonizers. For a critique of the “historyless” doctrine see Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, foreword by Thomas H. Eriksen, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Mary Nyquist, “Contemporary Ancestors of de Bry, Hobbes, and Milton,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 77.3 (2008): 837-75; and Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*, 338-39.
Most tellingly, the Chinese would on no account buy impositions from someone who had only "one eye." "Eye" is a potent metaphor because it circumscribes the perspective with which one views the world and summarizes the perspectival ken generated by contact between different cultures. While Hakluyt attempted to open the western eyes to a globalized world through the geographical discourse, the Chinese appeared to deny the effect of such an endeavor, for they refused to admit that the Europeans had "two eyes" like themselves. In his *La fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient* (c.1307), the Armenian Hetoum or Hayton notes that the Chinese "disdain the endeavours of all other Nations, in all kind of Arts, and Sciences: saying, that they only see with two Eyes, the Latines but with one eye, and that all other Nations are blind." The synecdochical "eye" that bespeaks a conscious superiority appeared in Mandeville’s report as well: "they [the Chinese] say that they see with two eyes and the Christians see with only one eye, because they are the subtlest after them" and "all other nations…are blind in both knowledge and practice." Mendoza also noticed that the Chinese “in their owne respect” “say that all other nations in the worlde be blinde, except the Spaniards, whom they have knowne but of late time.”

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103 Mandeville, 132.

104 Mendoza, *Mighty Kingdom of China*, vol.1. 50.
of eye had an ethnic and Sinocentric flavor, it nevertheless represented the position the Chinese would take in their encounter with the westerners—it is they rather than the intruders who would dictate the terms of exchange, whether commercial or cultural.  

The Jesuit missionaries did acquire a different vision of the eastern culture, a vision that directly informed their apostolic cause in China. Unlike the Portuguese and the Spanish who tried to open the door of the “Middle Kingdom” by cannons, the Jesuit missionaries adopted an accommodative approach. Ricci and Trigault mentioned the rationale governing Valignano’s accommodative policy in their Journals. “Judging from the immense expanse of this empire [China],” “the nobility of character of its people,” as well as “the fact that they had lived in peace for centuries,” Valignano says, “surely the wisdom of their system of public administration and the well known prudence of their governing Magistrates would seem to favor the proposed [evangelical] expedition.” The reason is that, Valignano further explains, “a clever and accomplished people, devoted to the study of fine-arts” should have the sagacity to “accept a few strangers, who were also distinguished for their learning and virtue, to come and dwell among them, especially if their visitors were well versed in the Chinese language and literature.” It is in consideration of the “nobility,” “wisdom,” “prudence,” and “learning and virtue” of the Chinese people that Valignano proposed the policy to accommodate rather than flatly

107 Ricci-Trigault, Journals, 130.
denounce this religious and cultural other. Valignano’s proposal received official sanction from the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (known as the Propaganda Fide) in 1659, which stipulated: “Do not try to persuade the Chinese to change their rites, their customs, their ways, as long as these are not openly opposed to religion and good morals. What would be sillier than to import France, Spain, Italy, or any other country of Europe into China? Don’t impose these, but the faith.”108 The Jesuits’ respect for Chinese culture paid off. In 1692, Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) promulgated a decree of toleration for Christianity.109 The encoding of the accommodative policy in pontifical and royal edicts marked the high water of the intercourse between east and west in the Renaissance.

The accommodative approach does not, however, obviate the deeper cultural differences that hinder a real reciprocal communication. As is instanced in the famous “Rites Controversy,” western reactions to Chinese culture could not be covered by the umbrella concept of “accommodation,” and there existed equally powerful competing interpretative alternatives.110 The “Rites Controversy” was sparked by different attitudes within the missionary camp towards Chinese funeral rites and ritual veneration of

Confucius. Whereas most Jesuits opted for compromise and respect for Confucian rites, considering them civil and political rather than religious ceremonies, the Franciscans and Dominicans condemned them as superstitious and idolatrous. The flame of this debate raged so high that it lasted from ca.1630 until 1745, involving such notable figures as the Popes, bishops, Chinese Emperors, the Jansenists, as well as the Sorbonne University in Paris. Since Pope Clement XI (1649-1721) supported the Dominican line of interpreting the eastern culture, the pontifical legate to Kangxi in 1705-07 was driven out of the imperial capital. Ignoring this royal displeasure, the Pope continued the hostile policy, issuing the Papal bull *Ex illa die* on March 19, 1715 to officially repudiate Chinese rites. In response, the Chinese Emperor proclaimed the Decree of Kangxi (1721), stipulating that “From now on, Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China, to avoid further trouble.” The eastern door shut resolutely against the missionaries at the imperial decree, and with it the golden age for western-eastern intercourse came to an end until it was reopened in modern times. Internal dissention within the Catholic Church and the resolute measures taken by the pontifical and imperial heads indicate the irreconcilable elements inherent in the two cultures.

**IV: The Universalism/Global Cosmopolitanism Model**

To confront and do justice to the irreconcilable elements in the cultural

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intercourse between east and west in the early modern period, I adopt, rather than the
ethnocentric, colonial, orientalist, or accommodative approach, the conceptual framework
based upon globalization theory to interpret Donne and Milton’s representations of China.
Although Chinese material objects as is vigouraly touted by Jonson’s Shopping boy must
have left a subtle influence upon western culture, my dissertation focuses chiefly on the
cultural aspect of early modern globalization, that is, anxieties caused by the first
substantial encounter with the Far Eastern culture, history, and politics. Cultural
globalization “refers to the intensification and expansion of cultural flows across the
globe.” As “culture” means “the symbolic construction, articulation, and dissemination of
meaning,” Steger says, language, music, and images, as “the major forms of symbolic
expression,” constitute the chief commodities in global cultural flows. Since “the
changing experience of space, time, and money has formed a distinctive material base for
the rise of distinctive systems of interpretation and representation,” Connell and Marsh
argue, cultural globalization allows us to see clearly “globalization’s economic and
discursive form” or “its material base and its cultural superstructure.” My chapter on
the resonance of the early modern global flow of gold and silver in Donne’s works seeks

112 For a most comprehensive study of Chinese material objects and their cultural
implications in the early modern period see David Porter, The Chinese Taste in
globalization theory see Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of
Globalization (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Fredric Jameson and
Masao Miyoshi, eds. The Cultures of Globalization (Durham: Duke UP, 1998); and John
113 Steger, Globalization, 71.
114 Connell and Marsh eds., Literature and Globalization, 3.
precisely to illustrate the “economic form” or “material base” of Renaissance cultural globalization. The cultural dimension of the early modern global economy is exemplified in the Jesuits’ apostolic mission. To convert the new pagans, the Jesuits dispersed themselves throughout the globe, setting in motion global cultural “interconnections and flows.” Though proceeding under the banner of Christianity, the evangelical cause was simultaneously a cultural enterprise, for, as Dunne remarks:

To the body of revealed truths, Christianity had developed cultural forms. It had accommodated itself and contributed to the development of European art forms, social customs, modes of dress, of language, of thought. It had also developed a body of ecclesiastical laws, Roman in character, regulating the discipline of Catholic life. A part of history as they were, these cultural and juridical forms were not divinely revealed.

So what the Jesuits carried with them was not only Christian faith but also the “European cultural forms” intrinsic to that faith. Like other human constructs, European culture possesses “no absolute values,” and as such it is susceptible to the influence of any host culture. But it is not my intention to study the influence on China exercised by European cultural forms disseminated by the Jesuits. Rather, my objective is to explore

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115 For the cultural globalization enacted by the Jesuits see Clossey, *Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions*.
the impact of Chinese cultural forms as they were transmitted by travelers and missionaries upon western culture in the Renaissance.\textsuperscript{117}

Which is superior, European or Chinese “cultural forms,” this question actually constitutes a fertile site of contention in globalization theory, which gives rise to two conceptual models, that is, “Eurocentrism” and “Sinocentrism.”\textsuperscript{118} J. M. Blaut defines “Eurocentrism” as “a unique set of beliefs, and uniquely powerful, because it is the intellectual and scholarly rationale for one of the most powerful social interests of the European elites.” For Blaut, “Eurocentrism is quite simply the colonizer’s model of the world.”\textsuperscript{119} Likewise, Eric R. Wolf argues that traditional western education serves to propagate and perpetuate “an entity called the West,” which makes people,

Believe[] that this West has a genealogy, according to which ancient Greece begat Rome, Rome begat Christian Europe, Christian Europe begat the Renaissance, the Renaissance the Enlightenment, the Enlightenment political democracy and the

\textsuperscript{117} For the Chinese influence upon the Jesuits, see Nicolas Standaert, “Jesuit Corporate Culture as Shaped by the Chinese,” in O’Malley et al. eds., 352-62.
\textsuperscript{119} Blaut, Colonizer’s Model, 10.
industrial revolution. Industry, crossed with democracy, in turn yielded the United States, embodying the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.\textsuperscript{120}

It is this presumably pure and uninterrupted “genealogy,” John M. Hobson says, that generates the worldview that “the East has been a passive bystander in the story of world historical development as well as a victim or bearer of Western power, and that accordingly it can be legitimately marginalised from the progressive story of world history.”\textsuperscript{121}

In contrast to Eurocentrism, Sinocentrism, a view held chiefly by those who argue for early modern globalization, asserts the centrality of China in the development of human history. The central role played by the Far East in the early modern global economy, especially through its leadership in the “silver trade,” proves a linchpin in modern theorization of Renaissance globalization.\textsuperscript{122} Andre Gunder Frank claims that it is China not Europe that held the center stage in the early modern global economy. Kenneth Pomeranz declares that the Far East was an “‘active’ force in creating a global economy,” because “somewhere between one-third and one-half” of the silver bullion

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\textsuperscript{120} Wolf, \textit{People without History}, 5.
\textsuperscript{121} Hobson, \textit{Eastern Origins}, 4.
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looted by the Europeans from the New World “wound up in China.” Hobson asserts that “the east enabled the rise of the West” during 500-1800, and “China’s economy was pivotal insofar as it constituted a silver sink into which much of the world’s silver was channeled.” For Baker, it is precisely “the Asian demand for New World silver that makes possible” the flood of Chinese goods in a British burse.

Instead of Eurocentrism or Sinocentrism, I adopt the universalism/global cosmopolitanism model to study Donne and Milton’s images of China and the Far East, a framework that recognizes the contributions of both the east and west to the progress of world history. In his “Sinicizing Early Modernity: The Imperatives of Historical Cosmopolitanism,” David Porter asks, “If we look to early modern China for instances of characteristic markers of modernity as we know them in the West, do we not simply reinforce the assumption of European normativity that we set out to challenge?” For Porter, “To escape the blinkers of exceptionalism” caused by “the assumption of European normativity” “requires a capacious global vision, which in turn calls for a more nuanced comparative methodology.” The universalism/global cosmopolitanism model I propose here features precisely such a “comparative methodology,” a comparison

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123 Pomeranz, *Great Divergence*, 161, 190.
that aims to highlight the will both to find commonality and embrace differences. By “universalism,” I mean a conceptual model that describes one’s perspectival ken or mental horizon, with an emphasis on the sense of “globality” or awareness of global interconnection. As a special expression of universalism in ethical terms and signifying what Porter calls “a capacious global vision,” “global cosmopolitanism” means an increasingly cosmopolitan global consciousness of the differences represented by newly discovered peoples and cultures. Fred Spier holds that the plethora of globes and maps in the Renaissance helped raise contemporary consciousness of a globalized world. The “first wave of true globalization,” he says, gave rise to “the first Earth Icons;” that is, “images of our planet used by people to show that they were global players.” For Spier, that many early modern maps and books contain such images “points to a vivid global awareness in this city [Amsterdam] at that time.”

By “global awareness,” Spier means the sudden enlightenment brought about by consciousness of a globalized world, a revelation unique to the age of discovery. What distinguishes the Renaissance from

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129 For the impact of geographical discovery upon imaginative literature see Robert R.
eighteenth-century enlightenment is a cosmopolitan spirit that responds with unexpected generosity to cultural and religious differences. Ulrich Beck defines a “cosmopolitan outlook” at once as “a global sense” of “boundarylessness” and an “alert, reflexive awareness” of “how globality overcomes and reconfigures differentiation.” The model of global cosmopolitanism allows us to see how awareness of “globality” or increasing global interconnections compelled early modern Europeans to “reconfigure differentiation” to accommodate the cultural, ethnic, or religious diversities brought into view by a universal lens. A universalism/global cosmopolitanism paradigm thus signals, as Hollinger puts it, a “universal will to find common ground” and a “cosmopolitan will to engage human diversity.” Simply stated, while universalism emphasizes the “common ground” with the “other,” cosmopolitanism stresses the need to embrace the “otherness.” Nevertheless, the term “global cosmopolitanism” does not necessarily imply moral approbation, and that the willingness to engage cultural difference is not incompatible with the desire to subsume, appropriate, or neutralize it. Viewed through a universalism/global cosmopolitanism perspective, China appears as central to the progress of history as western Europe, a perception that is implicit, I shall show, in both Donne and Milton’s portrayals of the Far East.

The universalism/global cosmopolitanism framework I propose draws upon early

modern conceptions of universalism and cosmopolitanism. The etymology of the word “universe” or its adjectival form “universal” shows that universalism is a historical concept that means different things at different times. “Universe” denoted for the Greeks and Romans the whole inhabited world. Accordingly, “universal” meant primarily “extending over, comprehending, or including the whole of something specified or implied.”

As is shown in Ptolemy’s geography, the ancients did not claim a universal knowledge of the world because they knew that there were terrae incognitae. By contrast, medieval Popes and church assumed a kind of universal lordship, though their jurisdiction remained largely within Christendom. The word universe started to mean the whole geographical world only after maritime explorations had disclosed to full view a rounded globe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As a result of this revelation, the term universal became a geographical concept that signified “of the vniuersall carde and newe worlde” in Richard Eden’s (c.1520-76) Decades of the New Worlde (1555). Similarly, the capitalized “Universe” came to indicate the “cosmos” and “the whole of creation” in Puttenham’s The Arte of English Poesie. But “universe” started to denote specifically “the world, the earth, esp. considered as the abode of mankind or with reference to human activity” in The Travellers Breviat (1630), an English translation of the Italian thinker and diplomat Giovanni Botero’s (1544-1617) Le Relationi universali

132 Richard Eden, Decades of the New Worlde (London, 1555), 45.
As is indicated in the etymological origin of “universal,” a really universal lens became possible only at a time when the whole globe was exposed to view. In fact, people in the Renaissance were well aware of the unique spectacles afforded by the age of discovery. The expanding of horizons enabled by maritime explorations rendered it imperative to seek “a well chose Prospect,” says Donne’s friend and King James I’s ambassador to Venice Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639),

Such I meane as concerne the Properties of a well chosen Prospect: which I will call the Royaltie of Sight…there is Lordship likewise of the Eye (as of the feet) which being a rauging and Imperrious, and (I might say) an usurping Sense; can indure no narrow circumscription; but must be fedde, both with extent and varietie.135

Bacon expressed this “rauging and Imperrious” sight that “must be fedde, both with extent and varietie” as a “universal insight.” According to Bacon, the “wisdom of counsel and advice even in private causes” arises from “a universal insight into the affairs of the

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world,”¹³⁶ and a defining feature of this “universal insight” is that it is at once cultivated by and embraces “all diversity of natures and customs.”¹³⁷ Donne represented his universal outlook in terms of “God’s perspective glasses” by which “he looks not upon the Sun, in his spheare onely, but as he works upon the whole earth.”¹³⁸ Likewise, Milton also emphasized the importance of acquiring a “universall insight into things.”¹³⁹ My idea of a universal vision means precisely such a “Royaltie of Sight” or “universal insight” shaped at once by a prospect of “the whole earth” and knowledge of “all diversity of natures and customs.”

The universal outlook or what Porter calls “global vision” expressed by Renaissance thinkers was not a utopian vision but had a very specific historicity—it was a necessary outcome of physical explorations and discoveries. Though originating from a desire to know and understand the whole known world, universalism has evolved into a concept freighted with ideological valences. In modern globalization theory, universalism is often faulted for having spawned such exclusive ideologies as “Eurocentrism, colonialism, imperialism, racialism, nationalism, sexism, paternalism, heterosexism, and more.”¹⁴⁰ But a universal perspective meant quite a different thing in the Renaissance—it

¹³⁷ Bacon, Advancement of Learning, 270.
was a lens put on in immediate responses to a newly revealed globe, and as such it symbolized, rather than the claim of exhaustive knowledge or an ideological and essentialist construct, a real mental property typical of the early modern period. The historical rootedness of Renaissance universalism shows most powerfully in the fact that it was both the guiding principle and the lofty objectives of some practical intellectual endeavors. The universal horizon of Renaissance minds registers not only a new way of thinking but also a real revolutionary force, a force that actually fermented two large-scale intellectual reforms. One is the “universal history” project represented by Jean Bodin’s *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (1566), and the other is the “universal language” reform culminated in the famous linguist John Wilkins’s *An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language* (1668).141 The discoveries of new historical data and species of languages in the new worlds constituted a chief motivation behind the early modern historical and linguistic revolutions.

Cognate with though differing from universalism, global cosmopolitanism proves another pertinent model to study the early modern reception of the new world other. Cosmopolitanism comes from “cosmopolite,” a word that means a “citizen of the world” or “one who regards or treats the whole world as his country.” With “no national attachments or prejudices,” a “cosmopolite” is usually used as a counterpart to a “patriot”

who harbors intense national feelings. Thomas Blount’s *Glossographia* (1656) is the first English dictionary to include an entry for “cosmopolite,” by which he means “a Citizen of the World; or Cosmopolitan.” Conscious of their universal lens, people in the Renaissance tended to regard themselves as cosmopolitans. In his *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ* (1645), James Howell says, “I came tumbling out into the World a pure Cadet, a true Cosmopolite; nor Born to Land, Lease, House or Office.” In his *Principal Navigations*, Hakluyt remarks that a perfect Cosmographer “finde[s] himselfe Cosmopolites, a citizen and a member of the whole and onely mysticall citie vniuersall, and so consequently to meditate of the Cosmopoliticall government thereof” (PN1:16).

Renaissance cosmopolitans not only took notice of but also actively reacted to the diversities zoomed into view by the universal spectacles. As Alison Games argues, Renaissance cosmopolitanism distinguishes by its multivocal and pluralistic approaches to foreign cultures. For instance, the merchant’s “cosmopolitanism” was expressed by the clerics as “ecumenism,” that is, a wish to embrace religious diversification through the evangelical mission, and the colonialists articulated their cosmopolitan will in “their willingness to adapt and to learn from the examples of rivals and predecessors.”

As a unique expression of globality or global interconnection, the universalism/global cosmopolitanism framework necessarily challenges though by no means replaces “the national outlook” or “methodological nationalism.” The nationalist

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143 Thomas Blount, *Glossographia, or A Dictionary Interpreting all such Hard Words* (London, 1656), sig. L4r.
model presupposes that “the nation-state creates and controls the ‘container’ of society.” Since nationalism addresses what is regional and particular, a universalism/global cosmopolitanism paradigm raises doubts about its capacity to address issues of a global nature. In an age of globalization, Beck says, “cultural ties, loyalties and identities have expanded beyond national borders and systems of control.” For David Held and Anthony McGrew, “globalization involves a shift away from a purely state-centric politics to a new and more complex form of multilayered global politics,” because in a global economy “political communities” themselves are “enmeshed in complex structures of overlapping forces, relations, and networks.” However, a globalization approach does not supersede the nationalist model. Like universalism, the concept of nationalism needs to be developed into a useful conceptual and analytical category. Held and McGrew remark that “global economic change by no means necessarily translates into a diminution of state power; rather, it is altering the conditions under which state power can be exercised.” Nevertheless, they argue, both the

“descriptive, analytical and theoretical purchase” and the “values and normative attachments” of nation-state need to be “rearticulated, reconstituted and re-embedded at the intersection of regionalizing and globalizing networks and systems.”\textsuperscript{150} Thus a universalism /global cosmopolitanism model is not proposed at the expense of nationalism; rather, it seeks to bear out the global reaches and embeddedness of nation-states in an age of unprecedented discovery and expansion. Scholarship on early modern nationalism, especially in Milton studies, has been an entrenched critical practice.\textsuperscript{151} But a purely nationalist model is insufficient to account for the various “forces that were drawing the continents into more encompassing relationships” and “mak[ing] the world a unified stage for human action” in the early modern period.\textsuperscript{152}

The lens through which Donne and Milton view China might have taken various forms, Eurocentric, monotheistic, or nationalistic, but there are moments of transcendence that allowed them to entertain a universal/global cosmopolitan vision to view the eastern other on its own account. My study of Donne and Milton’s receptions of China and the Far East focuses on those images and allusions that capture those transcendent moments.

My chapters unfold as follows. The introduction, “China in Early Modern

\textsuperscript{150} Held and McGrew eds., \textit{Globalization/Anti-Globalization}: 212, 2, 211.  
\textsuperscript{152} Wolf, \textit{People without History}, 24.
Globalization,” means to establish both the broader historical backdrop and the overall theoretical framework governing subsequent discussions. I intend to show how the Far East came into the picture of western Europe and what was its position in the larger picture of the discovery story and early modern globalization. Chapter I, “‘Anyan,’ the Far East, and the New World: Donne’s Global Consciousness and Theological Cosmopolitanism,” examines how Donne’s geographical images, especially the “Anyan” strait in his “Hymne to God my God, in my Sickness,” symbolizes his perception of a globalized world, an awareness epitomized in the controlling metaphor of the union of east and west. For early modern Europeans, the strait of Anyan, bridging the two continents of Asia and America and linking the Arctic and Pacific, evokes at once the Far East, England’s Northwest passage project to China, and the New World. Referring both to globalization theory and Hakluyt’s account of the polar passage program, I examine how Donne’s image of Anyan symbolizes his awareness of the early modern geographical and exploratory processes that helped shape a global perspective and cosmopolitan spirit. The theological adjustment to the western discovery of the Far East represented in both “Hymne to God” and Donne’s sermons, I argue, suggests a theological cosmopolitanism, by which I mean an attempt at once to resituate biblical discourse within a global context and to engage the cultural diversities revealed by the global lens. Donne’s theological cosmopolitanism, I shall show, is manifested in his response to the “Heathen men” represented by people on both divides of the Anyan strait, that is, “Westerne Americans” and “Easterne Chineses” (Sermons, 9:336). Chapter II, “Global Silver-Gold Flows:
Chinese Resonance of Donne’s “Unfil’d Pistolets,” studies the “economic form” of the cultural communication between east and west in the Renaissance. Drawing upon Flynn and Giráldez’s theory of early globalization centering on the Far East, I argue that Donne’s image of Spanish coinage, that is, “unfiled Pistolets,” reflects a global flow of precious metals dominated by Ming China, the largest “demand-side” of Spanish colonial bullion.153 Chapter III and Chapter IV deal with Donne and Milton’s awareness of and negotiation with the anxiety caused by the threat Chinese antiquity posed to scriptural chronology. For both authors, what is at stake in the chronological debate is the authority of the biblical timeline. In Chapter III, “Chinese Chronology and Donne’s Apologetic Exegesis in Essays in Divinity,” I explore Donne’s engagement with the chronological controversy caused by Mendoza’s account of Chinese antiquity and Scaliger’s problematic reactions to it. I claim that in embedding his image of the eastern annals within an extensive exegesis of Genesis and Exodus, the biblical accounts of time and history, Donne evinces both recognition of and willingness to accommodate Chinese antiquity to scriptural timeframe. Chapter IV, “Chinese Chronology and Paradise Lost: Milton’s Apologetics and Global Cosmopolitanism,” investigates Milton’s negotiation with the chronological debate intensified by the publication of Martini’s Sinicae historiae, a work he discussed in his correspondence with Henry Oldenburg (1619-77), future Secretary of the Royal Society. I suggest the impact of the chronological controversy upon Milton’s overall deployment of scriptural time and his synoptic representation of

world histories in Adam’s historical survey in Book XI. The Chinese context, I argue, brings to light Milton’s global cosmopolitanism to engage alternatives systems of time. Chapter V, “Milton’s Tartar: ‘Global Leviathan’ vs. ‘Global Commonwealth,’” examines the part played by the Far East in early modern globalization from a political viewpoint. Situating Milton’s various allusions to the Tartars in *Paradise Lost* within the context of the Mongols’ western campaigns in the thirteenth century, I argue that the Mongol global empire was one of the imperial models that inspired Milton’s representation of the rivalry for “global Leviathan” between the God-Son confederation and the Satan-Chaos-Sin/Death alliance. The failure of the Mongol empire model, I claim, plays an important part in shaping Milton’s imagination of a new “global commonwealth” in the rule of the Son.

Donne and Milton are exemplars of Renaissance imaginative receptions of the Far East. Alongside the fluid cosmopolitanism represented by mobile travelers described by Games, the Renaissance also witnessed another kind of cosmopolitans, sedentary travelers who imagined the world by absorbing messages transmitted by those active cross-cultural agents. According to the historian W. A. Raleigh, “action and imagination went hand in hand…Shakespeare and Marlowe were, no less than Drake and Cavendish, circumnavigators of the world” (PN 12:95). I would call these poetic “circumnavigators” who creatively engaged issues of global dimension and relevance *imaginary cosmopolitans*. Both Donne and Milton are numbered, like Shakespeare and Marlowe, among these imaginary cosmopolitans who not only helped articulate and shape
contemporary reception of the “other” but also turn European “cultural forms” into global assets.\textsuperscript{154} China and the Far East started to assume a significance in world culture and history as never before, when Donne and Milton, two representative artistic and imaginative crafters in the Renaissance, undertook to engage its trade, politics, and chronology in startlingly fresh and revealing ways.

Chapter I “Anyan,” the Far East, and the New World:

Donne’s Global Consciousness and Theological Cosmopolitanism

On September 16, 2009, two German ships—the Beluga Fraternity and Beluga Foresight — had passed Novaya Zemlya, an island off Russia’s north coast. This event is significant in that it symbolizes the opening of the fabled Northeast Passage, a project initiated by the English to reach China in the sixteenth century. The hotly disputed global warming has miraculously opened up the Arctic sea-lane that was deemed an impossible dream by the early modern explorers. This essay traces the genesis of the polar dream and its reflection in John Donne’s image of the “Anyan” strait.

Images of new geographical discoveries pervade Donne’s works. In his “Hymne to God my God, in my Sicknesse” (1623), the speaker remarks,

Is the Pacifique Sea my home? Or are

The Easterne riches? Is Jerusalem?

Anyan, and Magellan, and Gibraltare,

All streights, and none but streights, are wayes to them,

Whether where Japhet dwelt, or Cham, or Shem. (16-20) ¹

This stanza is marked by the number of geographical references it contains and the juxtaposition of biblical figures with newly discovered places. There are two general critical approaches to Donne’s spatial imagery. One focuses on his physical places. Robert R. Owens claims that “since Donne’s geography is mystical in intent, exact designation of places is unimportant.” But other scholars recognize the importance of “exact” locations to understand Donne’s works. Donald Anderson associates Donne’s images of the earth with medieval TO maps. While Robert Sharp traces them to sixteenth-century “Cordiform Maps,” Claude Gandelman and Noam Flinker link them with “anthropomorphic” landscapes.


3 Donald K. Anderson Jr., “Donne’s ‘Hymne to God my God, in my Sickness’ and the T-in-O Maps,” South Atlantic Quarterly 71 (1972): 465-72. The Medieval T-O map features the letter “T” contained with an “O” circle. Whereas “O” represents the known universe, “T” divides the world into three parts, that is, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Jerusalem, the old world center, lies at the very intersection symbolized in the letter “T.” The three branches of “T” represent respectively the Mediterranean, the Aegean and the Black Sea, and River Nile and the Red Sea, watery bodies that separates the three known continents. The first TO map appeared in the Etymologiae of Isidore, bishop of Seville (c.560-636).

new geographic names,” but for most of them, John Gillies says, the poet’s new regions are “remorselessly typologised and sacralised, incongruously translated into the patristic geography in which all places point towards the ultimate place (the centric *omphalos* of Jerusalem) and in the sacred direction (east).”\(^5\) By contrast, Gillies himself proposes to regard Donne’s new places on their own accounts.

Neglected in scholarship on Donne’s geographical metaphors are their global dimensions and the part played by the “Far East” in shaping his global horizon.\(^6\) In his *The English Voyages of the Sixteenth Century* (1905), the historian W. A. Raleigh observes that “Modern travel and geography owe their chief advances to the search for the fabled realm of Cathay [China]” (PN12:10). Three of the six geographical images represented in “Hymne to God” refer to the Far East: the “Anyan” strait, the “Pacifique Sea,” and the “Eastern” regions, a predominance that signals the importance of the Far East in a global economy. It is through “the discovery of a passage through one of the innumerable inlets of the North,” Raleigh says, that “the story of the English Voyages begins” (PN12:10). The “passage” mentioned here refers both to the northeast pathway through Russia to China and the northwest route to “Eastern riches” via the Anyan strait.

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\(^6\) By “Far East,” I mean the Pacific region west of America, which includes Cathay or China, Cipangu or Japan, Korea, and the Spicy Moluccas in Southeast Asia.
in the Pacific.\(^7\) So “Anyan” and the “Pacifique” in Donne’s divine poem represent two pivotal landmarks in the Northwest passage project, a program that led ultimately to the discovery of America. This essay studies Donne’s response to the western discovery of the Far East in light of the polar passage project. Since America was “the fourth part of the world” (PN7:160) the west encountered in the “race for the Far East” (PN12: 8), I will examine Donne’s reception of the Amerindians too. In fact, all three straits depicted in “Hymne to God”—“Anyan,” “Gibraltar,” and “Magellan”—recall the western exploration of the Far East. Whereas Anyan symbolized England’s march to the Pacific, Gibraltar marked the Mediterranean-Red Sea gateway to the Indian Ocean, and Magellan famously died on his way to Southeast Asia. Donne’s three straits symbolize, therefore, the global circuits unsealed in “the race for the Far East.”

Given the globalized world featured in “Hymne to God,” I adopt the globalization theoretical framework to study Donne’s place names. Manfred B. Steger defines “globality” as “a social condition characterized by tight global economic, political, cultural, and environmental interconnections and flows that make most of the current existing borders and boundaries irrelevant.”\(^8\) Since various forms of global “interconnections and flows” characterized the transcontinental communication in the


\(^8\) Steger, *Globalization*, 8, 9.
Renaissance, some scholars argue for the “birth” of globalization in this period.⁹

Globalization is a multidimensional concept that can be defined in terms of various referents, one of which is geographical place. According to David Held and Anthony McGrew, “identifiable geographical referents” or specified “spatial referents for the global” are such important indexes of globalization that without them it is impossible to “distinguish the international and transnational from the global, or for that matter, processes of regionalization from processes of globalization.”¹⁰ “Anyan” is a representative geographical indicator for sixteenth-century globalization. For Donne’s readers, this strait, bridging the two continents of Asia and America and linking the Arctic and Pacific, evokes at once the Far East, the Northwest passage, and the New World, places that represent none other than a globalized world.

Referring both to globalization theory and Hakluyt’s account of the polar passage program, I examine how Donne’s image of Anyan symbolizes his awareness of the early modern geographical and exploratory processes and how these globalizing forces helped shape his universal vision and cosmopolitan spirit. The theological adjustment to a

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globalized world represented in both “Hymne to God” and Donne’s sermons, I argue, suggests a theological cosmopolitanism, by which I mean an attempt at once to resituate biblical discourse within a global context and to engage the cultural diversities revealed by the global lens. Ivan Strenski remarks that one can find “original and explicitly theological justifications of early globalization” in “the writings and teachings of sixteenth-and seventeenth-century Christian theologians and doctors of jurisprudence” such as Francisco de Vitoria and Hugo Grotius.\footnote{Ivan Strenski, “The Religion in Globalization,” 
\textit{Journal of American Academy of Religion} 72.3 (2004): 631-52, 633.} Donne’s globalizing of the scriptural economy represents one of such “theological justifications of early globalization.” In an undated sermon preached upon the Penitential Psalms, Donne says, “if I were to work upon “Heathen men, Westerne Americans, or Easterne Chineses, for their conversion to Christ, I should scarce adventure to propose to them the histories of the Martyrs of the Primitive Church” (9:336). Donne’s theological cosmopolitanism, I shall show, is exemplified in his reception of the “Heathen men” represented by people on both divides of the Anyan strait, that is, “Westerne Americans” and “Easterne Chineses.” The contexts of the Far East and the New World shed new light on Donne’s famous obsession with images of travels and voyages—it at once originated from and was enabled by his global vision and cosmopolitan spirit to know and embrace the other beyond the seas.\footnote{For Donne’s obsession with voyage images see Anthony Parr, “John Donne, Travel Writer,” 
\textit{The Huntington Library Quarterly} 70.1 (2007): 61-85; and Stephen Burt, “Donne the Sea Man,” 
\textit{John Donne Journal} 16 (1997): 137-84.}

For early modern Europe, Anyan was not a mere strait—it was closely associated
with the “fabled realm of Cathay.” H. J. C. Grierson and Clay Hunt identify Donne’s
Anyan with the Bering Strait. Refuting Grierson and Hunt’s view, Owens argues that
Donne’s Anyan is “not a place but an idea that was transformed into an image and for
nearly two centuries masqued as a physical location,” and that “Donne’s important
intention in the poem is not to identify places on the earth, but to assert a spiritual unity
symbolized finally by Jerusalem, ‘Christ’s Crosse and Adams tree.’” Though agreeing
with Owens’s claim of the fictional and spiritual associations of Donne’s Anyan, I
nevertheless focus on the relevance of its physicality to the poet’s global imagination, but
by this I mean a referent larger than the Bering Strait. Donne’s Anyan brought to mind a
geographical concept much broader than a mere gulf. Nor was this concept totally
detached from physical moorings. In his Principal Navigations, Hakluyt holds that
“Anian” refers both to the “people of, on the borders of America” and the “strait” central
to the Northwest Passage project (PN12:133). In fact, apart from the referents mentioned
by Hakluyt, Anyan also elicited the vast regions encompassed under the umbrella epithet
of the Far East, especially the empire of China that held an absolute sway over the eastern
hemisphere. Anyan most likely originated from a Chinese province called “Ania.” Ania showed up in the Italian cartographer Giacomo Gastaldi’s Asiae Nova Descriptio (1570)

15 “The Province of Aniu” appears in Polo’s travels but it refers to present Yunnan province in the south of China, see Polo, Travels, 190.
as a large province spanning the area between “Ganzu” (Gansu) and “Quinsai” (Hangzhou). In his *A Discourse of a Discoverie for a New Passage to Cataia* (1576), Sir Humphrey Gilbert speaks of “people which inhabite Mangia, Anian, & Quinzay” (PN7:165). “Mangia” can be traced to Marco Polo’s *Travels*, which referred to the southern part of China in the Yuan Dynasty.16 The rich and beautiful city of “Quinzay” (Kinsai or Quinsay) appeared in almost all medieval and early modern travel literature. In juxtaposing Mangia, Anian, and Quinzay, Gilbert apparently considered Anian a Chinese province. John Dee (1527-1608/9), Elizabeth I’s physician, mathematician, and cartographer, directly called Anian “the province of Ania.” In his advice to Arthur Pet and Charles Jackman about the “Northeasterne discoverie” in 1580, Dee remarked that if they “shall trend about the very Northerne and most Easterly point of all Asia, passing by the province of Ania,” they “may enter into Quinsay haven, being the chiefe citie in the Northern China” (PN3:263).

In addition to a land of “riches,” Anian also signified for the English the accessibility of the Pacific region. As Hakluyt points out, Anian was frequently associated with the Northwest passage, the Pacific entrance to the Far East. Gilbert defined the passage of “West and Northwest” as the route “on the North and Northwest part of America” through which “our Merchants may have course and recourse with their merchandize, from these our Northernmost parts of Europe, to those Orientall coasts of Asia, in much shorter time, and with greater benefite then any others” (PN7:212). Anian

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16 Polo, *Travels*, 164
was a linchpin in this northwestern route—its physical existence determined the feasibility of the whole project. In his treatise “Certaine Other Reasons, or Arguments to Prove a Passage by the Northwest” (1576), the English travel literature writer Richard Willes (fl.1558-76) expressly calls this gulf “the Northwesterne straight or Anian frette” (PN7:202).

Donne’s Anyan, as well the Far East, Northwest passage, and the New World this strait elicited, suggests a global consciousness. The profusion of what Fred Spier calls “Earth icons” in Donne’s works suggests an awareness of some flows and processes that transcend national or European borders, an enlightenment that inevitably modifies and reshapes his perspectival ken. Donne’s global consciousness registers centrally in the union of “east and west,” a recurring image in his sermons.17 This obsession with the unity of east and west is inseparable from Donne’s recognition of how a “flat” earth was transformed into a “round” globe by those globalizing forces. Simply put, Donne’s east-west image is expressed chiefly through the flat-round topos. In a sermon preached on March 28, 1619, he writes, “take a flat Map, a Globe in Plano, and here is East, and there is West, as far asunder as two points can be put; but reduce this flat Map to roundness, which is the true form, and then East and West touch one another, and all are one” (2:199). The flat-round topos here is used to represent the “touch[ing]” of “East and West,” a meeting that bears on the “one[ness]” of the world. The same rhetorical pattern

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17 Since for Donne in “the round frame of the World, the farthest West is East, where the West ends, the East begins” (10:52), the “east” and “west” in his idiomatic phrase “east and west” should refer to “Far East” and “Far West.”
and thematic concern also appear in a sermon preached upon the Penitentiall Psalms dated 1623: “in a flat Map, there goes no more, to make West East, though they be distant in an extremity, but to paste that flat Map upon a round body, and then West and East are all one” (6:59). In other words, despite their discursive separation on a “flat” map, “West and East” converge physically across a rounded globe. The flat-round topos is implicit in a sermon preached upon All-Saints Day dated about 1623 as well: in “the round frame of the World, the farthest West is East, where the West ends, the East begins” (10:52). As a northwestern gateway to the east, Anyan symbolized precisely the point at which the flat earth turns into a round globe or where “the West ends, the East begins,” and was thereby crucial to bearing out the “true” or globalized “form” of the world.

The globalization approach allows us to see, above all, how Donne responds theologically to a globalized world. The global horizon epitomized in Anyan or the union of east and west compels Donne to resituate Christianity not in the old world center (Jerusalem) but in the newly available idea of the global. While knowledge of the Far East helps cultivate a global consciousness, this consciousness serves, in turn, to alert him to the limitations of biblical discourse whose symbolic jurisdiction had been confined to the old worlds. A globalized lens apparently afforded Donne special insights into theological matters, as he describes in a sermon preached in 1622, “I can see round about me, even to the Horizon, and beyond it, I can see both Hemispheres at once, God in this, and God in the next world too…I can see him in all angles, in all postures” (4:175). What is depicted here is a universal outlook that allows one to see not only geographical but
also theological unity. But a global perspective also helps highlight the limitations of the biblical economy conceptualized within the Ptolemaic framework. This perception is implicit in Donne’s juxtaposition of old and new place names in “Hymne to God.” According to Genesis 10, after the flood, Noah’s three sons, Ham, Shem, and Japheth, scattered over the earth and settled down respectively in Africa, Asia, and Europe. In the passage cited in the beginning of this chapter, Donne juxtaposes the biblical world center “Jerusalem” with the new regions in the Pacific and the Far East, and couples the newly opened straits of Anyan and Magellan with the old continents divided between Noah’s three sons. The tension suggested in this arrangement reflects the broader conflict between the Ptolemaic biblical cosmogony and the globalized world of the Renaissance.

In the age of discovery, the world broadened out daily, and new regions kept on bursting upon the boundaries delimited by Ptolemy, as Toby Lester summarizes, “Thule in the north, the Fortunate Isles in the west, Cape Bojador in the south, Taprobane in the east, none was ultimate anymore. The ocean was unloosing its chains, and new worlds were coming into view.” Put another way, maritime explorations burst open the four extreme corners designated by Ptolemy, expanding the world beyond the European borders to new oceans and lands. With the collapsing of the old “ultimate” horizons, the scriptural cosmogony grounded in the Ptolemaic system started to collapse. The regional character of biblical locations appeared the more striking against a globalized world that had become a predominant motif in Renaissance cartographical and geographical discourses.

18 Lester, Fourth Part, 213.
Within a rounded globe, the old world appeared to shrink to smaller size and the old navel was irrevocably dislocated. The authority of Scripture thus hung critically on its ability to address regions far beyond its initial jurisdiction. To reinstate the centrality of Christianity, the whole infrastructure of biblical discourse needed to be orientated towards not Jerusalem or any other specific locations, but the whole globalized world. Donne was not only aware of but also undertook to address the limitations of biblical discourse. But rather than “assimilating the new science into the old” as Jeanne Shami claims, he seeks to expand the scriptural framework to contain a rounded globe.19 Specifically, he tries to globalize such cardinal biblical concepts as Jerusalem, Trinity, and the Gospel. The union of east and west proves a pertinent metaphor for Donne to represent the universality of the scriptural economy.

Donne’s global consciousness reshapes, aside from his theology, his perception of the other. Donne’s attempt to rearticulate the scriptural economy within a global framework indicates at once an apologetic will to justify Christianity and a “cosmopolitan will” to embrace differences. Since Donne typically addresses cultural diversification from a theologian’s viewpoint, I call this approach to the other theological cosmopolitanism—the willingness to engage religious difference by expanding the symbolic scope of biblical jurisdiction. Enlightened by the universal lens, early modern

Europeans showed an increasingly global cosmopolitanism towards the other. Alison Games argues that Renaissance cosmopolitans distinguished by their pluralistic approach to those “unlike themselves.” For instance, whereas merchants embraced cultural diversities “with enthusiasm and curiosity,” clerics accommodated to religious differences through “ecumenism,” and the colonialists expressed their cosmopolitan will in “their willingness to adapt and to learn from the examples of rivals and predecessors.” Donne’s theological cosmopolitanism partakes of this multivocal response to the foreign other, though in seeking to fit the scriptural framework to a globalized world, he expresses, like Vitoria and Grotius, a theologian’s reaction.

The “sun” image that symbolized cosmopolitanism in both classical and medieval times nicely captures Donne’s cosmopolitan spirit. Commenting on Seneca’s idea of cosmopolitanism, the German theologian Nicholas de Cusa (1401-64) said,

[E]ach of us dwells in two communities—the local community of our birth, and the community of human argument and aspiration that is, in Seneca’s words, ‘truly

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great and truly common,’ in which we look to neither this corner nor to that, but measure the boundary of our nation by the Sun.22

For Seneca as well as de Cusa, the Sun signifies the cosmopolitan “community” of “argument and aspiration.” Donne expressly articulates the cosmopolitan sweep of his “thoughts” in terms of the sun in his Devotions. “My thoughts” that “reach from east to west, from earth to heaven,” he remarks, tend to go “with the sun, and beyond the sun.” An imaginary cosmopolitan who, though trapped “in a close prison, in a sickbed,” can nevertheless make cosmic journeys through his far-ranging “thoughts,” is vividly conjured forth through the recurrent image of the sun.23

I: Anyan and the Northeast and Northwest Passages Project

The Northern passages appear a number of times in Donne’s poems and sermons, which signals his awareness of contemporary exploratory processes that helped expand a Eurocentric to a global horizon. In “Epithalamion I, The Time of Mariage,” he expresses the hope that “the passage of the West or East would thaw, / And open wide their easie liquid jawe / To all our ships” around “the Northern Pole” (111-14). In “Satire III,” speaking of the courage of those resolved to strike a path in the north, the speaker says, “Hast thou courageous fire to thaw the ice / Of frozen North discoveries?” (21-22) Also,

23 Donne, Devotions, 19.
in a sermon preached on April 5, 1629, Donne remarks,

Who ever amongst our Fathers, thought of any other way to the Moluccaes, or to China, then by the Promontory of Good hope? Yet another way opened it self to Magellan; a Straite; it is true; but yet a way thither; and who knows yet, whether there may not be a North-East, and a North-West way hither, besides? (8:371)

This passage reveals a substantial acquaintance with the various stages in the western discovery of the Far East. Though none of “our Fathers” had “ever” imagined “any other way” to the east except by the Cape of Good Hope, Donne says, the inconceivable did happen: Magellan opened up a southwest way. Nor is Magellan’s strait the only alternative. There are many other possible ways to the Far East, and the “North-East” and “North-West” passages represent such very possibilities.

Donne’s image of the polar route recapitulates a far-reaching national project that sought to encompass the world through the North Pole.\(^{24}\) The possibility of reaching the Far East via the Arctic region was already imagined in 1527 by Robert Thorne, a London merchant long residing in Seville. In a letter to King Henry VIII (1491-1547), Thorne writes that “of the foure partes of the worlde, it seemeth three parts are discovered by

other Princes.” Since the Iberian sovereigns have “encompassed the world” through
almost all other ways, for England, “there is left one way to discover, which is into the
North” (PN2:161). Thorne proposed three means of encircling the world through the
Arctic area: northwest, north-south, and northeast. (PN2:163) Though the blueprint
Thorne outlined did not receive much enthusiasm from King Henry, the project was
earnestly pursued during the reign of King Edward (1547-53).

The English showed considerable irresolution between a northeast or northwest
approach to the Far East.25 Though Gerard Mercator (1512-94), the famous Flemish
cartographer who exhibited great interest in the English cause, ultimately favored a
northeastern way, this decision was made after much vacillation. As Nicholas Crane notes,
“On Mercator’s first map [1538], there had been a north-west passage to the Indies, but
no north-east passage, then on his globe [1541] there was a north-east passage but no
north-west passage. On his new world map [1569], there was a north-east and a
north-west passage.”26 The uncertainty exhibited by Mercator mirrored the hesitancy in

25 The feasibility of the two passages was actually officially debated before the Queen
and the Privy Council in 1565 between Anthony Jenkinson and Sir Humphrey Gilbert.
See New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612, ed. David
Like Jenkinson, Richard Eden, and John Dee also supported a northeast approach. See
Eden, Decades of the New Worlde (London, 1555); Dee, The Great Volume of Famous
and Riche Discoveries (London, 1577); E. G. R. Taylor, “John Dee and the Map of
North-East Asia,” Imago Mundi 12 (1955): 103-106; and Wallis, “England’s Search
for the Northern Passages,” 456. Gilbert and Willes championed a northwestern approach.
For Gilbert see The Voyages and Colonising Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, ed. D.
26 Nicholas Crane, Mercator: The Man Who Mapped the Planet (London: Phoenix,
practical explorations that relied much upon cartographical theorizations. When the polar project was resolved upon by “certaine grave citizens of London” in 1553 (PN2:239), the English began with the eastward exploration, and then left it off to search for a western route. The first north adventure undertaken by Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chanceler in 1553 was directed eastwards. Later in 1580 Pet and Jackman also embarked on a northeast quest. But both voyages ended up in failure, which “cast grave doubts on the possibility of reaching Cathay by the North East.” In effect, “The only incidental gain of the North Eastern voyages was the establishment of trading relations with Russia” (PN12:23). By the 1570s, the Northwest Passage appeared the only way left for England to access the much fabled Cathay. In his “Arguments” for a Northwest passage, Willes speaks of “four famous wayes” of going to “those fruitfull and wealthie Islands, which wee doe usually call Molucaaes.” These ways include, “the Southeasterne way round about Afrike by the Cape of Good hope” discovered by Vasco Da Gama in 1497; the “Southwest” way unsealed by Magellan in 1519-22; the “Northeast, beyond All Europe and Asia” that proved inaccessible by Willoughby; and the “Northwest,” which “Sir Humphrey Gilbert…discourseth at large” but was “not thorougly known” then (PN7:191,192). The work mentioned here refers to Gilbert’s *A New Passage to Cataia* that undertakes to “prove a passage by the Northwest to Cathaia, and the East Indies” (PN7:160). So by 1576 the only choice left for England to get to the Far East was the

The Anyan strait was central to the mapping of a northwestern passage. This Pacific door to the Far East was, Hakluyt says in the epistle dedication of his *Principal Navigations* (1599), of “exceeding great consequence” for England’s overseas ventures. To illustrate this importance, Hakluyt specially “inserted the voyage of one Francis Gualle a Spaniard” who has travelled from Acapulco in the New Spain to the Philippines and Macao and then back through Japan to the West Indies. During this trans-Pacific journey, Gualle found what is “called in most mappes The Streight of Anian” (PN1: Lxxviii). Anyan registers not only practical experimentation but also intellectual conceptualization of an unprecedented endeavor.\(^{27}\) Anyan sparked considerable “controversies of Geographie” (PN7:203). The feasibility of a northwestern route hinged on two hypotheses: whether there was a navigable strait between Asia and America, and whether the American continent continued into the Arctic region or if there was a passage between them. However, sixteenth-century cartographers could not reach a consensus “concerning the divers situation and sundry limits of America” (PN7:203). As Willes summarizes,

\[\text{Ortelius in his universall tables, in his particular Mappes of the West Indies, of all Asia, of the Northren kingdomes, of the East Indies, Mercator in some of his globes, and generall Mappes of the world, Moletius in his universall table of the}\]

\(^{27}\) See the Anian strait on the map in Hakluyt, PN 7: 256.
Globe divided, in his sea Carde, and particuler tables of the East Indies, Zalterius, and Don Diego, with Ferdinando Bertely, and others, doe so much differ from Gemma Frisius and Cabota …. (PN7:203).

With regard to the first hypothesis, the Flemish cartographer Franciscus Monachus (c.1490-1565) joined America to Asia with a narrow waist of land in his 1526 world map, a claim supported by the Italian geographer Josephus Moletius (1531-88) and many others (PN7:194). The Dutch mathematician Gemma Frisius (1508-55), rejecting Monachus’ postulate, argued that although many “connect this part of the earth [America] with Asia and say that it is one single continent,” “their arguments are not valid.”28 In his terrestrial globe of 1536 [collaborated with Mercator], Gemma divided Asia and America with the “Fretum arcticum sive Fretum trium fratrum,” that is, “the Arctic Strait or the Strait of the three Brothers,” a proposition that was, according to Willes, corroborated by the northwest voyage of Sebastian Cabot in 1508-09. (PN7:194) Also, the Italian cartographer Gastaldi depicted Asia and America as a single landmass in his 1548 world map, but in 1562 he gave up his previous theory, declaring in a small book that there was a strait separating the two continents and naming this strait “Streto di Anian.” Anyan appeared in the 1566 map of North America by the Venetian cartographer Bolognino Zaltieri (fl.1560-80) as a narrow channel that divides Asia and America. The globe that

first showed passages north and south of America was an anonymous globe-gores of
about 1530 (issued c. 1550). But the most affirmative cartographical evidence of a
Northwest passage came from Abraham Ortelius, the famous geographer to the King of
Spain who, Gilbert says,

doth coast out in his generall Mappe set out Anno 1569, all the countreys and
Capes, on the Northwest side of America, from Hochelaga to Cape de Paramantia:
describing likewise the sea coastes of Cataia and Gronland, towards any part of
America, making both Gronland and America, Islands disjoyned by a great sea,
from any part of Asia. (PN7:163)

In addition, though initially insisting on the “continuance” of “the West Indies land” to
“the North Pole,” Mercator and Moletius later “opened a gulfe betwixt the West Indies
and the extreame Northerne land” (PN7:193).  

It was Gilbert who put forward the most sophisticated argument for the possibility
of a Northwest passage to the Far East. For Gilbert, it was possible to find an oceanic

29 These gorges are now in the New York Public Library; see its facsimile version in
Wallis, “England’s Search for the Northern Passages,” 458. “Gore” means “one of the
many triangular or lune-shaped pieces that form the surface of a celestial or terrestrial
globe.” “Globe gores” indicate printed maps designed to be cut into triangular segments
30 For a detailed discussion of sixteenth-century mapping of the north Pacific region see
Wallis, “England’s Search for the Northern Passages,” 456-58; and L. Breitfuss, “Early
Maps of North-Eastern Asia and of the Lands around the North Pacific Controversy
pathway to “Cataia, the Moluccae, India, and all other places in the east” through “America by the Northwest” (PN7:162,163), as he states in his *A New Passage to Cataia*,

I found [America] to bee an Iland environed round about with Sea, having on the Southside of it the frete or straight of Magellan, on the West side Mar del Sur, which Sea runneth towards the North, separating it from the East parts of Asia, where the Dominions of the Cathaians are: On the East part our West Ocean, and on the North side the sea that severeth it from Groneland, thorow which Northren Seas the Passage lyeth, which I take now in hand to discover. (PN7:160)

The “Passage” lying through the “Northren Seas” and which Gilbert “take[s] now in hand to discover” refers to none other than the Northwestern route. By “Mar de Sur,” Gilbert means “the West Ocean beyond America…knowen to be open at 40. Degrees elevation from the Island Japan” (PN7:194). Put differently, while “our West Ocean” indicates the Atlantic, Mar del Sur means the northern part of the Pacific. If America is “but a part of ye continent adjoining to Asia,” Gilbert argues, then “people which inhabite Mangia, Anian, & Quinzay” “would before this time have made some road into it, hoping to have found some like commodities to their owne.” But no evidence shows that the Asians have ever crossed the Pacific, nor has anyone “ever found entry from thence [America] by land to Cataie, or any part of Asia.” The logical outcome is that, America is “one Island, and in no part ajoyning to Asia” and there should be a “Northren Seas and Passage” that
continues with “Mar del Sur, by some fret that lyeth between America, Groneland and Cataia” (PN7:165,166). Simply put, there should be both a pathway running between America and the polar region and “a navigable passage” that separates Asia from America. (PN7:172) This conclusion, Gilbert declares, is “verified by the opinions of all the best, both Antique, and Moderne Geographers, and plainely set out in the best and most allowed Mappes, Charts, Globes, Cosmographical tables & discourses of this our age” (PN7:164).31 Incited by Gilbert’s argument, Sir Martin Frobisher (c.1535-94) embarked on his famous northwest quests in 1576-78 (PN7: 204-42; 284-367) and John Davis (1550-1605) continued the search in 1585-87 (PN7:381-422).

II: “East and West are one”: Donne’s Globalizing of Biblical Discourse

In the Renaissance, the image of the globe has increasingly become a point of reference of theological contemplations. In 1570 Dee remarked that “some, for one purpose: and some, for another, liketh, loveth, getteth, and useth, Mappes, Chartes, and Geographicall Globes.”32 One reason of the popularity of globes resides in its theological relevance. Featuring the meditation of a devout soul in the throes of high fever, “Hymne to God” explores this relevance through cosmographical imagery. Standing at the “dore” of death, the speaker thinks it urgent to “tune” (3-4) the soul to afterlife. To articulate this

31 For the “best moderne Geographers” cited by Gilbert to support his Northwest Passage thesis see PN7:162-63.
preparedness, he compares his doctors to “Cosmographers,” and “I,” the suffering patient, to “their mappe”:

Whilst my Physicians by their love are growne
Cosmographers, and I their Mappe, who lie
Flat on this bed, that by them may be showne
That this is my South-west discoverie,

_Per fretum febris_, by these streights to die (6-10)

The doctor-cosmographer analogy here anticipates the remarks of Sir Thomas Browne (1605-82), a doctor and theologian in his own right. In his *Religio Medici* (1643), Browne says, “The world that I regard is myselfe, it is the Microcosme of mine owne frame that I cast mine eye on; for the other, I use it but like my Globe, and turne it round sometimes for my recreation.” Here Browne proves to be no less adept in playing imaginative games with the globe. In playing with the human body “like a globe” for his own “recreation,” the doctor transforms himself into a cosmographer. Whereas Browne the player _himself_ takes on the part of a doctor-cosmographer, Donne imagines his ailing body as a “mappe” subjected to the perusal of _his_ doctor-cosmographer. For Browne, the doctor-cosmographer role allows him to see the “earth” as “a point not onely in respect of
the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestiall part within us.” Likewise, in turning his doctor into a cosmographer and his ailing body a map, Donne’s speaker envisions a new relationship with God in afterlife. Since “All streights, and none but streights are ways,” high fever is one of the “straights” that lead to God. Magellan died of “febris” [fever] when exploring South America, but he succeeded in discovering the Southwest passage [fretum]. Likewise, the fever might loosen his bonding with God, Donne’s speaker says, but this relaxing can lead to “my South-west discoverie” (9), that is, other signs of divine grace.

Donne usually represents a globalized earth in the union of east and west. In fact, he constantly evokes this cosmic image to meditate on the Resurrection at such critical moments as sickness and death. In the sermon preached on March 28, 1619, he remarks that the “one[ness]” represented by the touching of east and west coincides with the “circle” of life, that is, the meeting of “the womb and the grave,” a coincidence he elicits to give comfort to King James who was “dangerously sick at New-Market.” (2:199-200) Also, in the same sermon preached in 1623, he remarks, just as in a rounded globe “the farthest West is East, where the West ends, the East begins,” “so in thee [God], (who art a World too) thy West and thy East shall joyne, and when thy Sun, thy soule comes to set in thy deathbed, the Son of Grace shall suck it up into glory” (10:52). Here the merging of east and west offers an apt metaphor for the unity of life and death as well.

The speaker of “Hymne to God” also uses the east-west analogy to speculate on the Resurrection. What marks Donne’s use of this analogy in his divine poem is its association with Willes’s theorization of the Anyan strait. Here we hear the speaker exclaiming,

I joy, that in these straits I see my West;
For, though there be currents yeeld returne to none,
What shall my West hurt me? As West and East
In all flatt Maps (and I am one) are one,
So death doth touch the Resurrection (11-15)

The journey and return via the “straits” featured in this stanza recalls Willes’s rationalization of the importance of Anyan in joining the two halves of the world. Subscribing to Gilbert’s Northwest passage hypothesis, Willes claims that practical voyages of travelers who “have gone out of Europe into Mar del Zur, and returned thence at the Northwest, do most evidently conclude that way to be navigable, and that passage free” (PN7:196). So, he argues,

Our travellers neede not to seeke their returne by the Northeast, neither shall they

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be constrained, except they list, either to attempt Magellans straight at the
Southwest, or to be in danger of the Portingals for the Southeast: they may returne
by the Northwest, that same way they doe goe foorth, as experience hath shewed.
(PN7:201-2)

To “disprov[]e” possible objections to this thesis, Willes contends that though “in
Magellans straight wee are violently driven backe Westward,” this does not mean that we
are unable to “returne Eastward” “through the Northwesterne straight or Anian frette.” It
is the “want” of “sea roome” that “causeth all narrow passages generally to be most
violent,” he reasons, but according to the maps of Cabot, Gemma, and Tramezine, “the
northwestern straight hath more sea roome at the least by one hundredth English myles,
then Magellans frette hath.” Thus it is possible that we can “returne Eastward” through
the “Anian gulfe” (PN7:202-3). Donne’s speaker might have had Willes’s theory in mind
when exclaiming, “I joy, that in these straits, I see my West / For, though theire currants
yeeld returne to none, / What shall my West hurt me?” What is alluded to here is the
popular notion that “those currents yield return to none” mentioned by Willes—one
cannot “retrune Eastward” via the Anyan or Magellan straits. But in attempting to return
to Europe through “these straits,” whether Anyan or Magellan, the speaker argues, even if
he would be “driven backe Westward” and thereby “see my West,” he will still rejoice,
for two reasons. First, if he cannot return eastward to Europe, he can nevertheless locate a
“home” in the Pacific and reap “the Easterne riches.” Second, “What shall my West hurt
89

me?” Anyway, “West and East / In all flat maps…are one” (10:52). So the sight of the Far
East is simultaneously a beholding of the Far West. In his “Good Friday, 1613. Riding
Westward,” the speaker states, “I am carryed towards the West / This day, when my
Soules forme bends toward the East. / There I should see a Sunne, by rising set, / And by
that setting endlesse day beget” (9-12). Jonathan Goldberg argues that in this poem
Donne presents “the tensions occasioned between two journeys: the outward physical
journey west, and the internal eastern journey,” and ultimately these two journeys
collapse into one: “the journey west that becomes the journey east.”35 The union of
geographical and spiritual journeys also features in “Hymne to God.” Here by delineating
a trip east that is simultaneously a trip west, Donne represents the globalized nature of his
spiritual “home.” Even though dislocated from Jerusalem, the speaker suggests, he can
still find a “home” through the Northwest passage in the Pacific region.36 The meeting of
Far East and Far West fictionally experienced by the Speaker as a traveler perfectly
expresses the “touching” of “death” and the Resurrection imagined by the believer lying
sick in bed. Just as Far East joins Far West via the Anyan strait, the speaker observes,
“death doth touch the resurrection” through the fretum [strait] unsealed by his febris

36 The relative nature of such terms as east and west is succinctly articulated in
Toscanelli’s letter to Columbus in 1475, “Do not marvel at my calling ‘west’ the regions
where the spices grow, although they are commonly called ‘east’; because whoever sails
westward will always find those lands in the west, while one who goes overland to the
east will always find the same lands in the east.” Quoted in The Life of the Admiral
Christopher Columbus by his Son Ferdinand, trans. and ed. Benjamin Keen (London:
Folio Society, 1960), 45.
But earth images are double-edged metaphors—their global scope helps sharpen the focus on the regional character of biblical loci. Renaissance Europe saw various apologetic attempts to accommodate the Ptolemaic scriptural cosmogony to an extended globe, and these endeavors threw into relief how much biblical signifiers relied on geographical referents for validity. For instance, noticing the questionable nature of the centrality of Jerusalem in an expanded world, the Venetian mapmaker Fra Mauro remarks in his *Mappamundi* of c.1450,

Jerusalem is in the middle of the inhabited world *according to* the latitude of the inhabited world, although *according to* longitude it is too far west. But because the western part, Europe, is more heavily populated, it is still in the middle *according to* longitude, not *considering* the physical space of the earth but the number of its inhabitants.37

Mauro describes here an attempt to adjust old religious locations to an enlarged world. As is indicated in his repeated use of the prepositional phrase “according to,” Mauro’s apologetic strategy is to alter the conceptual parameter within which a particular place is signified. “Jerusalem” takes on different meaning when viewed according to the three different points of reference—the “latitude” and “longitude” of the inhabited world and

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“the number of its inhabitants.” The local character of scriptural concepts proved also the concern of the Dutch scholar Isaac Vossius (1618-89). In his justification of the primacy of the Noachian flood, Vossius conceded that the whole world was not inhabited in the age of Noah, and the deluge most likely occurred only within “the borders of Syria and Mesopotamia.” Like Mauro, Vossius also resorted to changing the framework within which biblical signifiers were initially conceptualized. Whereas Mauro argues for what David N. Livingstone calls a “demographic” rather than cartographic universality of Jerusalem, Vossius claims that though local in spatial terms, “the Deluge was universal in an oecumenical sense, since the destruction was universal and the whole inhabited world overwhelmed.”

Donne’s “Hymne to God” features the same tension between the biblical geography and a globalized world. This tension is exemplified, above all, in the Anyan strait, a throughway that, by extending the world to the Pacific Rim, raised doubts about the centrality of Jerusalem. Donne does intend to “assert a spiritual unity” in the poem, but this unity is symbolized by, instead of Jerusalem as Owens argues, new geographical regions. The historical context informing Donne and Vossius’s world picture differed

39 For other claims of the primacy of Jerusalem in “Hymne to God,” see Hunt, Donne’s Poetry, 96-117; and Gardner, John Donne: The Divine Poems; Gardner even equates “Eastern riches” with “Jerusalem” in geographical terms, 108.
from that of Mauro’s. Projected before Columbus and Magellan’s epoch-making
discoveries, Mauro’s world map sought to integrate into a single cartographical grid the
“three disparate traditions” prevalent by the 1450s, that is, Ptolemaic atlases, medieval
mappaemundi, as well as the potlan charts.40 By comparison, Donne and Vossius faced a
totally changed world—those pioneer circumnavigators had transformed, as Donne calls
it, the “flat” earth into a “round” globe. What Donne seeks to do in “Hymne to God” is to
accommodate the biblical division of the world to this new configuration of the earth.
Donne notices the inability of the scriptural economy to contain the new worlds, but
rather than shifting the conceptual frameworks like Mauro and Vossius or superimposing
the biblical picture upon the new geographical form as TO-map makers did, he presents
the old and new place names as equals.41 In the poem the speaker asks, “Is the Pacifique
Sea my home? Or are / The Easterne riches? Is Jerusalem? / Anyan, and Magellan, and
Gibraltare ” Here the four spatial images—Jerusalem, the Far East represented by Anyan
and the Pacific, South America registered in the Magellan strait, and the Mediterranean
Sea embodied by Gibraltar—signify four reference points for the center of the world. The
four italicized place names, their undifferentiated juxtaposition, and above all, the three
emphatic quotation marks, indicate an evaluation of their equal candidacy for the world
center. In effect, the repeated use of the quotation marks suggests at once an interrogation

40 Edson, World Map, 140.
41 Apart from the map of Isidore of Seville, the thirteenth-century Ebstorf Map also
features the superimposing of the biblical view of the world upon the geographical grid in
representing the image of the physical world as is encompassed by the head, hands, and
feet of Christ.
of the primacy of Jerusalem and the imagination of the Pacific region as the new world navel or spiritual “home.”

42 Gillies also argues for the possibility of the Pacific ring as the new world center in the early modern world, Gillies, *Geography of Difference*, 187.

The merging of Far East and Far West both makes it necessary and affords an ideal framework for Donne to globalize the Trinity, a fundamental concept in biblical discourse. For Donne, the Father is “the God of East and West, of all places” (5:325), since only the divine eyes “can fixe it self upon East and West at once” (9:134). Further, in the same way “a Compasse” that “reaches over all our Map, over all our World, from our East to our West,” the Holy Spirit whose “Cloven tongue, opens as a Compasse” spans “from our birth to our death, from our cradle to our grave” (7:435). Here the geographical image of the “compass” is used to signify the universal “voice” of the Holy Ghost. The global scope of the Son’s redemptive power is pointedly articulated in a sermon preached in 1625: “the sins of all Nations, all the East and West, and all the North and South...were at once upon Christ” (6:275).

Given the global feature of biblical discourse, scriptural cosmogony and the new geography represented in “Hymne to God” agree rather than clash with each other. Donne articulates this agreement through the speaker’s awareness of the oneness of mankind represented by the two Adams, as he puts it, “both Adams met in me” (23). Apart from the union of life and death or “Paradise and Calvarie” (21), the two Adams also symbolize the unity of mankind. Whereas the first Adam bonds us in a common ancestor,
the second [Jesus Christ] unites us in the spiritual realm. In other words, the world is “one” (14) according to both Mosaic and apostolic laws. It is through, once again, the east-west metaphor and the flat-round topos that Donne manages to translate the biblical conception of unity into the unity represented by the new geography. It is true that east and west remain separated when the speaker lies “flat” in bed and his cartographers fail to detect the route to his sickness. But when the fever is gone and the flat map or the ailing patient, gathers and “round[s]” up, east and west will join through him and in him. The speaker’s simultaneous awareness of being a rounded map and of being an epitome of “both Adams” suggests a conscious attempt to merge the biblical economy with the new configuration of the earth.

III: Donne’s Theological Cosmopolitanism towards the Chinese and Amerindians

The global consciousness symbolized in Donne’s image of Anyan and personified in the ailing patient in “Hymne to God” also informs his perception of the other in the new worlds. Put another way, Donne’s theological cosmopolitanism is expressed as a will not only to globalize biblical discourse but also to engage the cultural diversities unleashed by those new regions. The strait of Anyan, as an emblem of the joining of Far East and Far West, represents the global scope of his cosmopolitanism—it extends to peoples residing along the Pacific Rim.

Donne’s theological cosmopolitanism informs his response to people on both divides of the Anyan strait—the Chinese and Amerindians. Donne’s reception of the other
represented by the Chinese signals both the “universal will” and “cosmopolitan will” identified by Hollinger. In an undated sermon preached on Luke 23.24, Donne invisions a cosmopolitan neighborhood in the union of east and west, as he says, “as by the sea the most remote and distant Nations enjoy one another, by traffique and commerce, East and West becom[e] neighbours” (5:238). China was numbered among the eastern neighbors in a global commercial network. In addition to the theological accommodation to the Far East as represented in “Hymne to God,” Donne also engages the Chinese in his sermons. In the undated sermon preached upon the Penitential Psalms, Donne presents “Easterne Chinenses, or Westerne Americans” as representatives of “Heathen men” and thereby ideal candidates for the evangelical cause. (9:336) In coupling the Chinese with Americans and designating them as heathens, Donne shows recognition of both their affinity and the otherness they embodied. But rather than barbarian and primitive pagans, Donne defines a “heathen man” as “a mere naturall man, uncatechized, uninstructed in the rudiments of the Christian Religion” (3:357) or one “without any knowledge of God” (4:149). This definition of heathens as “naturall” men uninitiated in the Christian doctrine suggests a “universal will” to identify common humanity. Also, in his theological treatise Essays in Divinity (1614), Donne lists various accounts of the origin of history and nations, and he singles out Chinese chronicles, observing that “The Chinese vex us at this day, with irreconcilable accounts.”43 As is shown by his extensive exposition of Genesis and Exodus, the biblical account of time and history, Donne, instead of unreflectively

43 Donne, Essays in Divinity, 22.
dismissing Chinese chronology on the grounds of its heathen nature, seriously engages rival claims of antiquity. This attempt to fit the disconcerting Chinese chronicles into the biblical timetable bespeaks a “cosmopolitan will” to accommodate cultural diversity. Donne’s theological cosmopolitanism is most apparent in his attempt to apply the apostolic economy to the West Indies. “The Gospell must first be published among all Nations,” but those “Heathen” Amerindians, Donne says, “surely…had not heard of the *faith* and the *obedience* of the Romanes” (4:279). The term “all Nations” meant different things in the time when the Gospel was first pronounced and in the early modern period. By the seventeenth century, “all Nations” should refer not only to regions around Palestine and within European borders but also peoples throughout the world. Donne admits that when the Gospel was promulgated, the apostles had not Dream’d of this world [America] which hath been discover’d since, into which, wee dispute with perplexitie, and intricacy enough, how any men came at first…for when *Augustus* his Decree went out, *That all the world should bee taxed*, the Decree and the Taxe went not certainly into the *West Indies*; when Saint *Paul* says, *That their Faith was spoken of throughout the whole world*, and that *their obedience was come abroad unto all men*, surely the *West Indies* had not heard of the *faith* and the *obedience* of the *Romanes*. (4:279)

Nevertheless, though not reaching “the West Indies” when first proclaimed, the
evangelical message was meant to address the whole world,

But as in Moses time, they call’d the Mediterranean Sea, the great Sea, because it was the greatest that those men had then seene, so in the Apostles time, they call’d that all the world, which was knowne and traded in then; and in all that, they preach’d the Gospell. So that as Christ when he said to the Apostles; I am with you, unto the end of the World, could not intend that of them in person, because they did not last to the ende of the world, but in a succession of Apostolike men, so when he sayes, the Apostles should preach to all the world, it is of the Succession too. (4:279-80)

Three apologetic strategies are suggested in these two passages. First, like Mauro, Donne turns to indicators other than old geographical markers to argue his case. Just as the “Mediterranean Sea” signified the whole world in Moses’s time, the “known” world was considered “all the world” by people in the Apostles’ time. Put differently, just as the universe meant the known world for the Greeks and Romans, the whole world in Moses’s and the Apostles’ time indicated, in addition to physical places, the scope of people’s knowledge of the world. Second, anticipating Vossius, Donne suggests that the Gospel is “universal” not in a physical but “an oecumenical sense.” “Ecumenical” as a term that means “representing the whole (Christian) world, or the universal church” was first proposed by John Foxe in his Actes and Monuments (1563), and it started to denote
“universal” or “world-wide” by 1607. Physical boundaries might pose constraint upon knowledge, but they cannot hinder the expansion of a spiritual church. So when Christ said “I am with you, unto the end of the World,” he did not mean the physical world; rather, he referred to “a succession of Apostolike men” devoted to the evangelical cause. Likewise, by “all the world,” Christ signified a “succession of world” to be opened up with the spreading of the Gospel. By a “succession of world,” Donne means, in addition to temporal unfolding, the successive revelation of the new worlds. The implicit message is that Christ had foreseen such discoveries and prepared his Gospel accordingly. Donne’s third apologetic tactic consists in a subtle shifting of parameters of reference, both physical and conceptual. The transposition of “the world” to the apostolic men and the translation of “all the world” into a “succession” of worlds bespeak a deliberate manipulation of the symbolic range of the signifiers under discussion. Whereas the signified, that is, the physical world within which the Gospel was first articulated, remains unchanged, the signifiers are detached and expanded to address the new lands.

Beck defines cosmopolitanism at once as recognition of “differences” and “conflicts,” the need to “redraw old boundaries,” and an awareness of “interdependence” or “civilizational community of fate.” The cosmopolitan features identified by Beck show up in Donne’s attitude towards the Amerindians. Unlike Spanish conquistadors who exploited, usually with military arms, the Americans under the banner of the apostolic

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mission, Donne advised the English planters to show cosmopolitan tolerance even to those natives who resorted to violence. In a sermon preached to “the Honorable Company of the Virginia Plantation” dated November 13, 1622, shortly after the Powhatan massacre that happened on March 22, Donne not only recognizes but also makes the best of the “conflicts” between the planters and the natives, as he states:

Beloved, you are *Actors* upon the same Stage too: the uttermost part of the Earth are your *Scene*: Act over the *Acts* of the *Apostles*; be you a light to the *Gentiles*, that sit in darknesse; be you content to carry him over these *Seas*, who dryed up one *Red Sea* for his first people, and hath powred out another red *Sea*, his owne bloud, for them and us. (4:265)

What is proposed here is a policy totally different from the one adopted by Capitan John Smith and Governor Thomas Dale who, like the conquistadors, saw the indigenous people as a “military problem.” 46 To avoid further conflicts with the natives, Donne advices the settlers and their investors to take a different view of their roles. Rather than armed men or colonial planters, they should regard themselves as apostolic missionaries

who undertake “to convey that name of Christ Jesus, and to propagate its Gospell”

(4:265). By practically performing or “Act[ing] over the Acts of the Apostles,” the planters will become the “light” that guides the “Gentiles” out of “darkness” in the way Moses led those exiled Israelites out of Egypt. Apart from the sacrifice of the Savior, Donne’s “red Sea” alludes to the “bloud[y]” massacre as well. The evangelical role, Donne suggests, will turn this “red Sea” caused by military confrontation into both the “Red Sea” that leads to the emancipation of the enslaved Jews and the precious blood that heralds the advent of the Gospel. Thus what Donne preaches through the evangelical message here is a cosmopolitan spirit to tolerate and assimilate even a bloody other.

Donne’s cosmopolitan spirit seeks not only to convert but also to turn a hostile other into a friendly “neighbor,” an image that indicates recognition of “interdependence” with the Amerindians. In a sermon preached on April 22, 1622, one month after the Powhatan massacre, Donne appeals to the “civilizational community of fate” to express the intrinsic bonding between Christians and pagans. Declaring that “all are our Neighbours,” Donne says:

A man is thy Neighbor, by his Humanity, not by his Divinity; by his Nature, not by his Religion: a Virginian is thy Neighbor, as well as a Londoner; and all men are in every good mans Diocess, and Parish. (4:110)

Francis Bacon holds that the “difference” between the Europeans and the natives in the West Indies “comes not from soil, not from climate, not from race, but from the arts.”

For Donne, “A man is thy Neighbor, by his Humanity, not by his Divinity; by his Nature, not by his Religion.” Whereas Bacon gauges cultural difference by the level of civilization, Donne calibrates it by common “humanity,” a criterion that differs qualitatively from “Divinity” and “Religion.” By locating the universal neighborhood in common humanity rather than religious convictions or intellectual sophistication, Donne articulates a kind of cosmopolitanism grounded in the law of Nature. Thus it is the perception of the “civilizational community of fate” with the New World heathens that compels one to regard a “Virginian” and a “Londoner” as neighbors, though by a “Virginian” Donne might have meant both the planters and indigenous Americans. Like the Sun, the image of “neighbor” is also significant in bearing out Donne’s cosmopolitan will to not “laugh[...] him[ idolater] to scorn” but to “assist him, direct him if thou canst” (4:110). A “neighbor” is “a person who occupies an adjoining or nearby house or dwelling.” The contradictory ideas of distance and continuity with the other entailed in

48 Bacon, *New Organon*, 118.
neighbor suggest the necessity of both drawing proper boundaries and maintaining peaceful intercourse. Moreover, in Scripture, neighbor signifies “a fellow human” or “teaching responsibility.”49 Donne’s neighbor implies thus both the common ground upon which the old communicates with the new world and the cosmopolitan will to teach “a fellow human.” With this cosmopolitan neighborhood in mind, Donne observes in the same sermon preached to the Virginia Company, the planters will augment Christendom by working on the continuity between the new and old worlds, as he states:

You shall have made this Iland, which is but as the Suburbs of the old world, a Bridge, a Gallery to the new; to joyne all to that world that shall never grow old, the Kingdome of heaven. You shall add persons to the Kingdome, and to the Kingdome of heaven, and adde names to the Bookes of our Chronicles, and to the Booke of Life. (4:280-81)

The planters should regard the New World, Donne suggests in the quoted passage, instead of an isolated island, “suburbs of the old world.” This idea of the interconnection between the old and new worlds is vividly telescoped in the image of the “bridge.” By continuing to build and fortify this linking “bridge,” Donne says, the planters can expand “the

Kingdome of heaven” to include even those pagan “persons,” adding heathen “names” both to “the Bookes of our Chronicles” and “the Booke of Life.” Simply put, the Christian regime will be greatly augmented by embracing those “Heathen men” represented by the Chinese and Amerindians.

Donne’s theological cosmopolitanism has qualifications—it extends to a heathen and even a bloody other but not to confessional enemies such as the Jesuits and Papists within Christendom. For Donne, the New World other can be converted by the apostolic message propagated by Protestant rather than Catholic missionaries. In his *Ignatius his Conclave* (1611), he describes the Jesuit apostolic cause as being modeled upon that of Lucifer, a hellish enterprise that “obtrude[s] to those ignorant and barbarous people sometimes naturall things, sometimes artificiall, and counterfeit.”50 This critique of the Jesuitical mission reflects the rivalry between the Catholics and Protestants for converts in the New World. The extreme success of Jesuit missionaries in South America proved a great cause of distress and envy for Protestants and Puritans who had encountered repeated failures in their attempts to convert the natives in the north. Richard Eburne, a preacher and defender of the colonial cause in America, wished in 1624, “I would to God there were among us, us Protestants, that professe and have a better religion then they the Papists, one halfe of that zeale and desire to further and disperse our good and sound

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Religion, as seems to be among them for furthering and dispersing theirs.”51 John White (1575-1648), another promoter of the New England colony, exclaimed, “What a scorne? Would it be to the Religion we professe that we should refuse to purchase the propagation of it at so easie a rate, when the Popish partie charge themselves with such excessive expense; for the advancement of idolatry and superstition.”52 In his sermon to the Virginia Company, Donne pictures a prospect that reverses the comparative notion of the apostolic achievements of the Protestants and Catholics. It is not the Catholic Jesuits, Donne remarks, but a Company comprised enterprising and conscientious Protestants that had become “a marke for the Envy, and for the ambition of our Enemies.” By “our Enemies,” he refers pointedly to “our Doctrinall, not Nationall Enemies,” that is, “the Papists” (4:272-73).

Donne’s theological cosmopolitanism is a special form of global cosmopolitanism outlined in the introduction chapter. Whereas global cosmopolitanism encompasses every aspect of a certain culture, theological cosmopolitanism puts special emphasis on religious difference. Donne’s conscious attempt to accommodate Christian theology to a globalized world through various adaptive strategies bespeaks a cosmopolitan will, a will that expresses both as an intellectual amplitude to adjust to changed historical and geographical contexts and a cosmopolitan generosity to engage cultural diversification. As is shown in the preeminence he accords to the Far East in “Hymne to God,” Donne’s

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theological cosmopolitanism, though more pronouncedly articulated in his attitude towards the Amerindians, is also implied in his response to the people on the other divide of the Anyan strait, that is, the Chinese. The strait of Anyan and the new peoples it represented allow us, therefore, to capture Donne’s distinctive reaction to England’s participation in the “race for the Far East.”
Chapter II Global Silver-Gold Flows:

Chinese Resonance of Donne’s “Unfil’d Pistolets”

Whereas chapter I studies how Donne’s global consciousness centrally registered in the “Anyan” strait reshapes his theological views, in this chapter I examine how his image of Spanish coinage bears upon his awareness of the early modern global trade of precious metals dominated by Ming China. In his *The English Voyages of the Sixteenth Century*, the historian W. A. Raleigh observes that one can identify “the single thread of interest” that governs Hakluyt’s seemingly formless *Principal Navigations*: it is “the long struggle of the nations of Europe for commercial supremacy and the control of the traffic with the east” that set off maritime discoveries. Following this “thread,” we can find that “there is the same glitter of gold and precious stones, the same odour of far-fetched spices” in “all the dreams of the politicians and merchants, sailors and geographers, who pushed back the limits of the unknown world” (PN12:2-3). Ever since Magellan discovered the southwest way “across the Pacific to the Philippins” in 1519-21, “the aim of the European navigators was not to explore or settle America, rather to discover a passage whereby America might be avoided, and a way opened to the lands beyond.” “Cathay, the ultimate goal of all Eastern travel,” Cipangu [Japan], “the richest island in the world for gold and spices,” and above all, the spicy Moluccas, were those “lands beyond.” (PN12:4) Together, these three eastern regions along the Pacific Rim constituted an irresistible magnet that orientated the “race for the Far East” (PN12:8, 9).
Given this fascination with eastern gold, it is no wonder that representations of precious metals are everywhere in Renaissance literature, but most studies deal with their origins in trade either within the European continent or between Europe and the New World.¹ This chapter adds the Far East to the picture and explores the resonance of the Europe-America-China commerce of gold and silver in John Donne’s image of “unfil’d Pistolets” (31) in his elegy “The Bracelet” (1593-94). Coins pervade Donne’s poems and sermons, which shows his concern with financial and economic issues.² But his particular metaphor of Spanish coinage, that is, “unfil’d Pistolets,” signals an attention not only to European but also the global trade of precious metals in the early modern period. In “The Bracelet,” Donne writes,

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Or were they Spanish Stamps, still travailing,
That are become as Catholique as their King;
These unlick’d beare-whelps, unfil’d Pistolets,
That, more than cannon-shot, availes or lets,
Which, negligently left unrounded, looke
Like many-angled figures in the booke
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² For Donne’s image of coins see “The Dreame,” lines 3-5; “A Valediction: of Weeping”: lines 3-4; “The Second Anniversary,” lines 369-70; and 521-22.
Of some greate Conjurer, which would enforce
Nature, as these do Justice, from her course (29-35)

The word “pistolet” refers to “a Spanish gold escudo,” especially the “double-escudo.”

In 1537, Charles V (1500-58) decreed that gold coins were denominated in “escudos” and silver coins in “reales.” One gold escudo equaled two silver coins of eight reales. So the famous “piece of eight [reales] always refers to the largest silver—never gold—coin of everyday circulation,” and the term “double-escudo” means “always gold, never silver.”

The “piece of eight” was also called a “peso,” a Spanish word that originally meant “weight” but later became “the name of the standard monetary unit of silver (and sometimes gold) in many Spanish American countries.” In the Renaissance, such large amounts of Spanish bullion flowed into England that “it was Spanish Coin—the ubiquitous pistolets—which constituted the lion’s share” in the royal mints. The Spanish background is thus crucial to understanding Donne’s “unfil’d Pistolets,” but most studies focus on their political and military connotations, and rightly so, given those wars and

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6 Sedwick and Sedwick, Book of Cobs, 2, 3.
diplomatic negotiations financed by “Spanish Stamps.”

The worldwide flow of Spanish bullion in the early modern period necessitates viewing its influence from a global rather than Eurocentric perspective. Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez claim that “imperial Spain can be fully understood only within the context of an emerging, silver-centered global economy.” According to John J. TePaske:

American silver was so ubiquitous that merchants from Boston to Havana, Seville to Antwerp, Murmansk to Alexandria, Constantinople to Coromandel, Macao to Canto, and Nagasaki to Manila all used the Spanish peso or piece of eight (real) as a standard medium of exchange; these same merchants even knew the relative fineness of the silver coins minted at Potosí, Lima, Mexico, and other sites in the Indies thousands of miles away.

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Given the “ubiquitous” presence of Spanish bullion, a regional or national approach to Donne’s pistolet cannot do justice to its full implications. Timothy R. Walton observes that “silver pesos and galleons became potent symbols of how Europe was fastening its grip on the rest of the world.”

Donne’s pistolet proves one of those “potent symbols” that evoke a global commercial network. But few have noticed the global dimension of Donne’s Spanish stamps. Though Shankar Raman claims that “Spanish colonial gains do not remain confined to Spain’s domains,” he restricts their circulation only to “the political and religious body of Europe.”

Coburn Freer holds that “Donne is one of the first English poets to sense the vast economic changes coming over Europe in general and England in particular,” but he does not associate these changes with the early modern global trade initiated by Spanish colonial mines.

Situating Donne’s pistolets within the worldwide flow of gold and silver and especially in relation to the Chinese market in the Renaissance, I adopt the globalization framework to study Donne’s image of Spanish coinage. Flynn and Giráldez assert that “a global perspective instead of the predominant Eurocentric view…yields a startlingly different view,” and this universal lens turns the Europeans into mere “intermediaries in

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Walton, Treasure Fleets, 42, 114.
the trade between the New World and China.” For Flynn and Giráldez, only when Spanish “galleons” or “treasure fleets” started to cross the Pacific and head towards Manila did the world become truly global. In reality, “the only avenue available for Spanish participation in Asian trade was via Mexico, over the Pacific Ocean” because the direct “Europe-Asia trade” of American bullion was controlled by “the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English.” Since the so-called “Manila Galleons” connected the Atlantic and the Pacific for the first time in history, Flynn and Giráldez claim, the establishment of the Manila colony by the Spanish in 1571 marked the “birth” of early modern globalization. Drawing upon Flynn and Giráldez theory, I argue that Donne’s image of unfiled pistolets captures a global economy dominated by Ming China, the largest “demand-side” of American silver. I shall study how Donne’s depiction of Spanish coinage draws in, through the rich associations of such metaphors as “veines” (38) and “unlick’d beare-whelps,” the various strands that tied the European to a global market of

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16 Flynn and Giráldez, “Silver Spoon,” 207.
precious metals.

In “The Bracelet,” Donne represents a threefold loss caused, either directly or indirectly, by Spanish stamps—personal, national, and global. The deluge of Spanish pesos augmented the business of trading uncoined metals and the practice of melting coined money back into “bullion,” that is, uncoined gold or silver in bars or ingots. For Donne’s speaker, both customs tend to cost the very subsistence of his life—“my guard, my ease, my food, and my all” (50). Beyond the personal loss, the robust “travailing” of Spanish coins also wreaks havoc upon national economy, debilitating “France” and “Scotland” and “mangle[ing]” the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands (40-41). Last, in stating that the Spanish bullion “run[s] through th’ earths every part, / Visit[s] all Countries” (18-19), Donne refers to its global circulation and impact. This chapter aims to show that the economic crisis of the European countries Donne represents in his elegy is not an isolated event; rather, it is part of the chain effect of the debasement of silver in Ming China, a devaluation caused by the global travelling of Spanish stamps.

Donne’s “many-angled” pistolets evoke, above all, the larger context of Spain’s discovery of gold and silver in American mines, the primary supply market in the early modern global trade. The sixteenth century witnessed Spain opening up a series of rich mines in Peru and Mexico, which yielded such staggering volumes of precious metals that “the official imports registered at Seville indicate that between 1500 and 1650 over a hundred and eighty tons of gold and sixteen thousand tons of silver were sent from the
New World to Spain.”17 Mints close to local mines were built in Mexico in 1535 and in Peruvian Lima and Potosí between 1565 and 1574.18 During the reign of Phillip II (1554-98), to expedite output, these colonial mints launched the so-called “cob coinage.”19 “Cobs” are gold or silver coins struck “in hit-or-miss fashion on planchets (blanks) of irregular shape and uneven surface” in American mints.20 Unfiled pistolet was a special form of these colonial cobs. Walton remarks that “Mint workers hammered the silver into a thin bar, cut off chunks roughly equivalent to the weight of the coins, and then trimmed and stamped the coins by hand.”21 Donne’s adjectives such as “unfil’d,” “unlick’d,” “unrounded,” and “many angled” graphically capture the most striking feature of American cobs—their “rough[]” and “irregular” forms. Both silver and gold cobs were impressed with “Spanish Stamps” and subsumed under the general term bullion.22 As Donne notices, American cobs were purposefully or “negligently left unrounded.” In fact, part of the popularity of colonial cobs came from their irregularity. American mints produced “asymmetrical” rather than “rounded” coins because, Daniel Sedwick and Frank Sedwick explain, “most cobs were not struck primarily for circulation but as an expedient means for sending bullion in fixed quantities, easily divisible and accountable, back to the

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17 Henry Kamen, Empire: How Spain Became a World Power 1492-1763 (New York, Perennial: Harper, 2004), 287; also see Walton, Treasure Fleets, 82.
18 For other Spanish colonial mints see Sedwick and Sedwick, Book of Cobs, 51-56.
19 Sedwick and Sedwick, Book of Cobs, 8. Walton observes that “initially…gold coins were not manufactured in the colonial mints, and all gold was shipped to Europe as bullion.” Treasure Fleet, 20.
20 Sedwick and Sedwick, Book of Cobs, 8.
21 Walton, Treasure Fleets, 41.
22 Sedwick and Sedwick, Book of Cobs, 10, 11, 12.
treasuries in Spain and ultimately to the melting pots of Europe.”

Alongside the Europe-New World nexus, Donne’s pistolets also elicit the New World-China-Europe lap of the global commerce. There is now a consensus that China played a predominant role in the early modern global economy, especially through its dominance of the silver trade. Andre Gunder Frank asserts that “from a global perspective Asia and not Europe held center stage for most of early modern history.” For John M. Hobson, “the east enabled the rise of the west” during the period between 500-1800, and “China’s economy was pivotal insofar as it constituted a silver sink into which much of the world’s silver was channeled.” Hobson calls Chinese primacy in the early modern silver trade a “global system of arbitrage,” “‘global’ because it took the form of a continuous loop that went from the Americas, across Eurasia to China and back westwards to Europe.”

Kenneth Pomeranz claims that if China had not “absorb[ed] the staggering quantities of silver mined in the New World over three centuries,” American mines “might have become unprofitable within a few decades.”

The China trade connection of Donne’s pistolets was crucial, though not immediately visible because it moved through such intermediaries as Spain and America. But the Chinese background helps us understand Donne’s unique response to the economic implications of the early modern global trade that involved almost all known

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24 Frank, *ReORIENT*, xv.
continents. I am not claiming Donne’s direct or even explicit knowledge of the historical reality that large quantities of Spanish colonial silver ended up in China. But the various images and allusions in his poems and sermons point to an awareness of the global commerce between east and west; as he himself puts it, “by the sea the most remote and distant Nations enjoy one another, by traffique and commerce, East and West becom[e] neighbours” (5:238). A major source of Donne’s knowledge of the eastern trade is Hakluyt’s Principal Navigations. Hakluyt presents an extensive account of the Northeast and Northwest passages project, a program launched by the English with the express purpose to seek eastern gold and spices. Donne’s various allusions to the polar passage ventures, his attention to “Eastern riches” in the “Pacifique Sea,” his constant reference to American mines and the debasement of gold caused by the influx of Spanish bullion, as well as his personal participation in the famous Cardiz and Azores expeditions (1596-97) to intercept Spanish treasure fleets—all these indicate his awareness of the “ubiquitous” travelling of colonial metals, its journey to the Far East in particular.

I: China and the Global Arbitrage of Silver and Gold

In order to understand Donne’s imagery of gold and silver, we need to consider the global circulation of Spanish bullion and how it operated in the early modern period. As the historian Raleigh notes, eastern wealth, gold in particular, was a central inspiration for maritime explorations. In his Travels, Marco Polo, the Venetian traveler who stayed in the

27 Donne, “Hymne to God My God, in my Sicknesse,” lines 16-17.
court of the Yuan Emperor Kublai Khan (1214-94) for over two decades, records a tower built of gold measuring “a full finger’s breadth in thickness.” The fourteenth-century English travel writer Sir John Mandeville depicted the imperial palaces of the Yuan Empire as supported by “twenty-four columns of fine gold.” It was chiefly by resorting to Polo and Mandeville’s alluring pictures of the eastern gold that Columbus won the support of the Spanish sovereigns for his 1492 voyage. Columbus was noted for his gold manifesto: “Gold is the most precious of all commodities; gold constitutes treasure, and he who possesses it has all he needs in this world, as also the means of rescuing souls from purgatory, and restoring them to the enjoyment of paradise” (PN10:17,18).

Columbus’s gold rush established a prototype for later explorers. The Queen’s famous courtier Sir Walter Raleigh’s (1554-1618) voyage to Guiana was made with the explicit purpose of seeking the mythical gold city of El Dorado. Sir Martin Frobisher brought home from his 1576 northwest venture “a piece of shining black stone, which the assayers of London tested and pronounced to be rich in gold,” and it was mainly in search of this gold that he embarked on two other voyages. (PN10:27)

It is an irony of history that an adventure initiated by desire for eastern riches ended up in the discovery of mines in America. But the east indeed possessed gold. In his “An Excellent Treatise of the Kingdom of China” (1590), the Jesuit missionary Duarte de Sande (1547-99) writes,

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28 Polo, *Travels*, 188.
29 Mandeville, 131.
This region [China] affordeth especially many sundry kinds of metals, of which the chiefe, both in excellencie & in abundance, is gold, whereof so many Pezoes are brought from China to India, and to our countrey of Japan, that I heard say, that in one and the same ship, this present yeerr, 2000 such pieces consisting of massie gold, as the Portugals commonly call golden loaves, were brought unto us for merchandise: and one of these loaves is worth almost 100 ducats. (PN6:354)

This account agrees nicely with Polo and Mandeville’s reports of eastern gold. Chinese gold did ultimately flow to Europe, though unlike the colonial gold, it could not be discovered or freely appropriated by the Europeans: it had to be purchased with American silver. Richard von Glahn remarks that the Chinese “desired only one particular form of bullion—silver. Gold, a net import a century earlier, flowed out of China during the ‘silver century.’”

William S. Atwell identifies three major routes through which the precious metals of the New World flowed to China. The first “ran directly across the Pacific from Acapulco on the west coast of modern Mexico to the Philippine Islands.” Ships running on this Pacific pathway were famously called “Manila Galleons,” which

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undertook “probably the most lucrative branch of international trade with the Orient.”

Flynn and Giráldez hold that “throughout the seventeenth century, the Pacific galleons carried two million pesos in silver annually (i.e., more than 50 tons) from Acapulco to Manila, whereupon Chinese merchants quickly transshipped it to China.” Both the second and third routes passed from Europe around the Cape of Good Hope to the east. According to Atwell, “a second route for New World silver going to China began with the famous flotas de plata, the Spanish treasure fleets which carried bullion every year from Mexico and the isthmus of Panama to Seville.” A considerable amount of bullion carried via this route was “illegally” appropriated by the Portuguese and transported to Lisbon. From Lisbon the Portuguese re-shipped the bullion they intercepted from the Spanish “around the Cape of Good Hope to Goa,” through Malacca, and ultimately to Macao, where they “used this silver to purchase Chinese goods for the markets of Japan, India, the Middle East and western Europe.” The third global circuit also started with the treasure fleets, “but in this case some of the bullion which arrived in Seville was shipped [thereafter], legally or illegally, to Amsterdam and London.” The Dutch and English East India Companies undertook to transport part of this silver to South-East Asia, where it was used to “purchase pepper, spices…Chinese luxury goods such as silk and

porcelain.” In this way, Artur Attman says, “The precious metals which were re-exported from Spain and Portugal to the trading nations of Western Europe formed the basis of the growing bullion flow to the East.” Nevertheless, compared with the direct importation from American mines, shipment covered by the last two routes occupied a smaller percentage of the total silver output to China.

Two major factors rendered possible the Renaissance “global system of arbitrage” of gold and silver. First, in early modern Europe, gold, silver, and copper were separate monetary units with distinctive circulation routes. Accordingly, the movement of each metal should be conceptualized differently rather than subsumed under the umbrella concept of “money.” Second, there existed a profitable “bimetallic” ratio difference in the early modern Sino-European bullion trade. A “bimetallic system” means a “monetary system in which both gold and silver coins are legal tender.” “Bimetallic flows” will be


36 According to Flynn and Giráldez, the annual transportation of New World silver via the Manila galleons “equals the combined quantity of silver shipped from Europe to Asia by the Portuguese Estado da India, the Dutch VOC, and the English East India Company combined during the seventeenth century.” Flynn and Giráldez, “Cycles of Silver,” 398, footnote 12.

37 Flynn and Giráldez, “Cycles of Silver,” 397. For the necessity to distinguish silver and gold as separate monetary units see also Kirti N. Chaudhuri, The Trading World of Asia and the East India Company, 1660-1760 (New York: Cambridge UP, 1978), 156.
“set in motion when the disparity between the ratios [silver/gold] in two countries was particularly pronounced.” 38 Chuan Hangsheng records that “from 1592 to the early seventeenth century gold was exchanged for silver in Canto at the rate of 1:5.5 to 1:7, while in Spain the exchange rate was 1:12.5 to 1:14, thus indicating that the value of silver was twice as high in China as in Spain.”39 Put another way, while in Spain 12.5 to 14 reales of silver were needed to buy 1 escudo of gold, in China, merely 5.5 to 7 reales of silver were required for the same amount. This great purchasing power of silver in Asia evidently made it very profitable for Europeans to do gold business there. Pedro de Baeza, a Spanish Official who had done business in Asia for almost three decades, remarked in 1609 that “bringing gold from China means a gain of more than seventy-five or eighty percent.”40

One unavoidable outcome of these “bimetallic flows” was the ultimate decline in the purchasing power of both metals. Early modern European markets witnessed a glut of precious metals. Though a considerable part of American bullion flowed to the Asian market, still a substantial portion went to Spain and circulated within Europe. Seville turned out to be a mere entrepôt that distributed New World bullion to other European countries or the Far East. Attman states that “a significant proportion of the American

precious metals imported into the Iberian Peninsula were dispatched from there to the arteries of world trade, above all, in Holland, France, and England. This applies to Spain’s precious metals, as well as Portugal’s.”41 In 1571 the Spanish theologian and economist Tomás de Mercado (1525-75) deplored that “in Flanders, in Venice and Rome, there is so much money from Seville that the very roofs could be made of escudos, yet in Spain there is a lack of them. All the millions that come from our Indies, are taken by foreigners to their cities.”42 Meanwhile, new mines were discovered in eastern Europe. So the gold bought with silver from China, along with “the deluge of gold imports from America” and “the flow of gold” from eastern Europe, led ultimately to a surfeit of gold in western Europe.43 This is why among the “four or five causes” of “the high prices we see today” identified by the French jurist and Universalist Jean Bodin (1530-96) in 1568, “the principal & almost only one [cause](which no one has referred to until now) is the abundance of gold & silver, which is today much greater in this Kingdom than it was four hundred years ago.” In particular, Bodin says, “there have come from Peru since the year 1533, when it was conquered by the Spaniards, more than a hundred millions of gold, & twice as much silver.”44 The precious metals overflowing European markets naturally

41 Attman, American Bullion, 30.
42 Tomás de Mercado, Suma de Tratos y Contratos or Compilation of Deals and Contracts (Seville, 1571), quoted in Kamen, Empire, 193.
II: “Unlick’d beare-whelps”: European-New World Resonance of the “unfil’d Pistolets”

Donne’s unfiled pistolets reflect the global trade network enacted by Spanish bullion as is outlined above. This section focuses on the Europe-New World cycle of this network. Donne shows a particular attention to American mines and gold in his poems and sermons. In his elegy “To his Mistris Going to Bed,” the speaker pleads for “License” for his “roving hands” to touch “my America, my new found lande, / My kingdome” and to embrace “My myne of precious stones, my Empiree” (25-29). Donne’s famous amatory metaphor of “precious stones” here has a material base—it recalls the New World mines and the imperial desire to possess them. As is instanced by the famous explorer Sir Francis Drake’s (1540-96) capture of Spanish treasure fleets in 1577 and Sir Walter Raleigh’s two expeditions to the legendary gold city of Guiana (1596, 1616), what English explorers wished to appropriate for the Crown were those Indian mines that had immensely enriched the Spanish monarchs. American mines glitter in Donne’s sermons as well. In a sermon preached at Lincoln’s Inn in May 1620, he observes that “hee that hath a plentifull fortune in Europe, cares not much though there be no land of perfumes in

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the East, nor of gold, in the West-Indies” (3:123). Donne asks in a sermon dated January
30, 1625, “Wouldest thou say and not be thought mad for saying so, God hath created a
West Indies, therefore I cannot want Gold?” (6:208) For Donne, it is a preacher’s duty to
serve “as his [Christ’s] Ophir, as his Indies, to derive his gold, his precious consolation
upon the King himselfe” (7:135). In other words, the gospel, when properly tapped,
works like either the biblical Ophir or American mines, a resourceful goldmine for the
English crown.

The body proves a central metaphor in Donne’s representation of the New World
mines, and what distinguishes this body is its unguarded openness and remarkable
fertility. Specifically, Donne’s image of American mines is gendered as a rich and
unresisting female body that invites the willful exploration of western planters. Under the
touch of his “roving hands,” the speaker in “To his Mistris” observes, “my America”
becomes a body that can not only be embraced but also produces, in large numbers,
“precious stones.” A similar corporeal metaphor appears in “The Bracelet.” The global
circulation of Spanish pesos, the speaker says, resembles the movement of “the soule”
that “quickens head, feet, and heart, / As streames, like veines, run through th’earths
every part” (37-38). This “soule,” a symbol of the robust travelling of Spanish pistolets,
should be the same spirit that animates the fertile womb of the “new found lande” and
“quickens” the birth of those infant whelps. For fanciful planters like Donne’s speakers,
not only the mother land but also its offspring can be freely kneaded under their masterful
thumbs. Colonial mines and the circulation of their metallic produce are recalled, once
again, when Donne remarks in his *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* that “if a man carry treasure in bullion, or in a wedge of gold, and have none coined into current money, his treasure will not defray him as he travels.” The “bullion” or “a wedge of gold” here refer to none other than those unfiled pistolets that needed to be filed and “coined into current money” to pay one’s travelling expenses. “Another man may be sick too, and sick to death, and this affliction may lie in his bowels, as gold in mine, and be of no use to him,” Donne continues to say, “but this bell, that tells me of his affliction, digs out and applies that gold to me.” The productive “bowels” of American mines are here elicited to convey the common fate of mankind—just as Spanish bullion “Visit[s] all Countries,” the gold lying in the “bowels” of the dying “applies” to all.

Donne’s image of unlicked bear whelps registers the progress of England’s colonial enterprise in the New World. Bears famously lick their young whelps into shape. Likewise, those irregular pistolets, while working their way into every corner of the world, would be cast into any shape that suited to local needs. The malleable feature of American bullion was vividly suggested by the process through which cobs were struck. Sedwick and Sedwick observe that while in mints, “slabs of silver or gold…were rolled in the style of bread dough into crude elongated shapes of variable thickness.” The analogy of “bread dough” effectively bears out the ductility of colonial coins, a feature also mentioned by Donne in his sermon preached to the Company of the Virginia dated

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46 Donne, *Devotions*, 103.
November 13, 1622:

[B]e not discouraged. Great Creatures ly long in the wombe; Lyons are littered perfit, but Beare-whelpes lick'd unto their shape; actions which Kings undertake, are cast in a mould; they have their perfection quickly; actions of private men, and private purses, require more hammering, and more filing to their perfection.(4:271)

The corporeal metaphor occurs, once again, in this sermon addressed to the Virginia Company at the critical moment when the colonial cause suffered serious setbacks from the Powhatan massacre happened in March 1622, an Indian uprising against the English in the Virginia colony. The unlicked “beare-whelps” and unlittered “Lyons” in this passage should refer to those unfiled pistolets. Accordingly, the “wombe” that breeds these “great Creatures” means the productive colonial mines. For Donne, both “Kings” and “private men,” that is, planters and investors in the Company, are mid-wives of the baby bears and lions buried deep in those fertile wombs. But disapproving of the rash “actions” of the investors to force the issue and act independently of the state, Donne counsels patience and cooperation between the crown and private men. Since “Great Creatures ly long in the wombe; Lyons are littered perfit,” Donne argues, the investors should, rather than force those metallic creatures into premature births, wait patiently for their natural ripening. Further, because metals mined by private persons “require more
hammering, and more filling to their perfection” and those “lick’d unto their shape” by
the King go “quickly” into circulation, the investors should coordinate their “actions” to
those of the crown’s. Also, the tender and supple nature of those infant creatures
definitely invites the delivering and shaping hands of the planters, a prospect that must
have sounded especially inspiring in contrast to the gloom caused by the massacre.

Apart from the colonial enterprise in Virginia, Donne’s metaphor of whelps also
reflects England’s ambition in South America. In a verse letter to Mr. R.W., Donne writes,
“Guyanaes harvest is nip’d in the spring, / I feare” (18-19), and if “these Spanish
businesse” (23) “Eclipse [s] the light which Guyana would give” (25), “Almightie
Vertue” might be “an India” (28). What is referred to here is England’s competition with
Spain for commercial opportunities in South America, especially Raleigh’s famous
attempts to turn Guiana in to “an India” for the English crown. Most tellingly, in
Raleigh’s gold expedition to Guiana in 1595, the ship invested by Sir Robert Cecil,
Secretary of the State, was named none other than “the Lions whelpe.” The royal vessel
juxtaposed the two images of “lions” and “whelpe” to signify the state’s determination to
shape into perfect lions the New World whelps, that is, “the plates of gold” of Guiana, a
term that recurs like a refrain in Raleigh’s The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and
Beautiful Empire of Guiana (1595). For planters directly commissioned by the Crown,
not only the whelps of bears but also those of lions could be licked into shape. By
comparison, Donne separates the two images in his sermon to the Virginia Company,
remarking that “Lyons are littered perfit, but Beare-whelpes lick’d unto their shape,” a
differentiation intended at once to highlight the attraction of the New World gold and suggest alternative ways of appropriating it. Though American gold appears an inexhaustible fountain of hope, the investors should be strategic in tapping that fountain. The association of unlicked whelps with unfiled pistolets is made the more explicit by Raleigh in his multifarious references to “Mint,” “refiner,” “Assay-master,” “comptroller of the Mint,” “trial,” the “mother of gold” or “scume of gold,” “gold…in grains” and “the white spar,” “massie gold,” and “gold oare” in the preface to the *Empire of Guiana*. (PN10:343-45) The piling of images of precious metals and their mintage suggest the English resolve to “assay” and get a hold on the New World gold. Whereas “Charles the 5…had the maidenhead of Peru” (PN10:346), Raleigh was resolved to shape the whelps of Guiana gold into perfect lions, turning the empire of Guiana into “a better Indies for her Majestie [Queen Elizabeth] then the king of Spaine hath any” (PN10:342). Put differently, the “massie gold” of Guiana was expected to become, like the Peruvian gold possessed by Spanish kings, “pistolets” stamped with the image of the English Queen.

To find another “India” was only one of the many ways the English employed to appropriate Spain’s American wealth. Challis observes that “the bullion which flowed into England from abroad was won through trade, war and diplomacy, piracy and privateering, and bi-metallic flows.” In his elegy “Loves Warre,” Donne alludes to these various means of appropriating Spanish treasures. Though “Midas joyes our Spanish journeys give / Wee touch all gold,” the speaker in this poem says, we could

48 Challis, *Tudor Coinage*, 150.
“find no foode to live” (17-8). The word “touch” here recalls, apart from the legend of
Midas and its amatory association, England’s attempts to capture Spanish galleons loaded
with precious metals. The phrase “Spanish journeys” brings to mind the whole history of
England’s imperial wars with Spain and the hijacking of the treasure fleets culminated in
Drake and Raleigh’s adventures, either in the Peruvian and Mexican waters or close to
the Spanish homeland. A chief purpose of the Cardiz and Azores expeditions Donne
famously attended was to intercept Spanish treasure fleets and to seize a base along the
Iberian coast.49

Paradoxically, Spanish bullion, instead of enriching, impoverished England and
other European countries, as Donne succinctly puts it, though “wee touch all gold” in
“our Spanish journeys,” we could “find no foode to live.” While the crown and his
planters were bent on amassing American wealth, the colonial metals backfired at home.
Above all, the moldable nature of those “unrounded” pistolets provided marvelous
candidates for “clipping” and “sweating,” illegal techniques used to obtain gold chips and
crumbs filed off from irregular coins and thereby contributing to the devaluation of
coins.50 It was easy to cast those rough-hewn metals into any shape that suited one’s
needs. Harry E. Cross says that “when dealing with Spanish pesos…a variance of plus or

49 For Elizabeth’s organized pirating of Spanish treasures see Susan Ronald, The Pirate
Queen: Queen Elizabeth I, Her Pirate Adventures, and the Dawn of Empire (New York:
50 C. H. V. Sutherland, English Coinage 600-1900 (London: Batsford, 1973), 66, 69;
John Chown, A History of Money from AD 800 (London: Routledge, 1994), 13; and
Sedwick and Sedwick, Book of Cobs, 12.
minus 5.0 percent in actual silver content should be allowed to account for the irregularities of mintage and clipping.\textsuperscript{51} These fraudulent practices find their way into Donne’s poems. Stephen Deng rightly states that Donne’s French crowns are “‘pale’ from having a high content of base metal such as tin, and they are ‘lame’ and ‘lean’ from clipping, washing, sweating.”\textsuperscript{52}

Along with these counterfeiting undertakings was the more pernicious practice of melting already coined money back into tradable bullion. “The Bracelet” captures the prevalent anxiety over this custom, with the speaker fearing and unwilling to cast his gold coin into a necklace. In the Renaissance, gold and silver served as, in addition to hoarded wealth and monetary currency, commodities in exchange. According to the speaker in “Love’s progress,” the intrinsic worth of gold resides in its innate nature, but its commercial value arises from “our new nature,” that is, “use,” “the soul of trade” (11-16). However, trade proved a double-edged mechanism: it enhanced the appeal of casting coined money into trading commodities, especially when gold or silver coins were debased, a practice that caused a great outflow of precious metals. R. B. Outhwaite observes that “the gold which was exported was not necessarily monetised gold; the undervaluation of gold would make it profitable to melt down gold plate, jewelry and

\textsuperscript{52} Deng, Coinage and State Formation, 176. For Donne’s image of these counterfeiting skills also see Freer, “Donne and Elizabethan economic theory,” 506. For the “sweating” of coins see “Satire 5”: “The mony which you sweat, and sweare for, is gon / Into’ other hands” (40-41).
other ornaments." This tendency to commercialize coined money, Sir Walter Raleigh remarks in his advice to King James on “trade, commerce, and coin,” has “drained” England of bullion:

While the current cash of this kingdom can be converted into bullion, and so made a trading commodity, it will either be conveyed to the best market or wrought into plate at home. It is evident, notwithstanding those great sums coined in the last two reigns, ‘twas no sooner made than converted into trading commodity, which, if it happens again, the nation may be totally drained of it.

In fact, the melting of gold and silver coins into tradable bullion had always been a concern for English sovereigns before the eighteenth century. The Elizabethan Proclamation on October 9, 1560 explicitly prescribed that “any person who broke or melted even one single coin, or exported more than he could take in his purse, should be guilty of felony and should be punished, not merely according to the existing laws, but with the ‘greatest and most severe pain that may be devised.’” But as is noted by Raleigh, such laws proved far from effective. In reality, this practice continued well into

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the seventeenth century. In 1637, the Star Chamber charged a dozen persons of “culling out the weightiest coins, for melting down His Majesty’s money into bullion, and for giving above the prices of His Majesty’s Mint for gold and silver.”

Donne’s “The Bracelet” mirrors the contagious influence of this illegal practice. To compensate for her lost necklace, the speaker says, his love asks him to melt his gold coin bearing “twelve righteous angels” (9). But the speaker himself is apparently unwilling to turn his “current cash” into a “trading commodity.” Coins impressed with “angels” were issued during the reign of Henry VII (1457-1509), and they proved reliable monetary units in early modern England. Unlike the silver penny whose weight was continuously in decline from 1526 to 1601, gold angel had, ever since its first issuing, been “progressively enhanced until 1551” and its value remained steady the rest of the sixteenth century. Three possible meanings are thus suggested in the adjective “righteous.” First, it denotes the decent or right use of gold as a monetary currency. Second, the epithet indicates that gold angel is solid money that one can depend upon. But this reliable currency, Donne’s speaker suggests, is deteriorating as a result of fraudulent practices. Third, the term also veils a critique of turning coined money into a commodity.

Apart from commercial profit, the tendency to melt coined money into tradable commodities also arose from the fashion of fetishizing objects. The coins impressed with “angels” were made from those “ubiquitous pistolets” that constituted the “lion’s share”

in the royal mints. Rather than protecting “righteous Angels,” those baby bears produced in American mines, once transported to an alien soil, grew into “bad Angels” (75) that wreaked havoc upon private lives. This transformation was inseparable from the practice of fetishizing objects. In his *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), Philip Stubbes draws attention to the poverty caused by idolizing objects, especially exotic goods. For Stubbes, it is the undue valuing of “trifling merchandizes” “beyond the seas” that “impoverish[ed] us.” Stubbes attributes this overestimation of alien objects to “pride.”58 Donne shares Stubbes’s view of the baneful effect of fetishizing. In “The Bracelet,” the speaker “Mourne[s]” the disappearance of his love’s “seavenfold chaine” not for his bad “luck” but for “the bitter cost” this loss has brought on him (7-8). His gold coin “should do good workes, and should provide / Necessities,” but it “now must nurse thy pride” by being cast into a necklace (73-74). So Donne also blames the infatuation with trivial objects to vain “pride,” and he represents the “bitter cost” caused by this vanity through contemplating on the relation of “form” and “being.” According to Thomas Mun (1571-1641), the East India Company director, “that is not the denomination of our pounds, shillings and pence, which is respected, but the intrinsique value of our Coins.”59 For Donne, since “forme gives being” (76), the denomination or formal stamp and the inherent value are equally important. He resorts to the theological denotation of “Angels”

to express the close relation of matter and form. Theologically speaking, “Angels” are “commanded” by “heaven,” the speaker says, to “provide / All things to me, and be my faithfull guide, / To gaine new friends, t’ appease great enemies, / To comfort my soule” (13-16). While bearing the “forme” of “righteous Angels,” his gold coin insures the “matter” of his life, that is, his basic subsistence, social relations, and the peace of his soul. But once “these twelve innocents” (17) “are burnt and tyed in chaines” (22) for vain pride, they become “bad Angels,” a new form or denomination that will cost the very “necessities” of his life, on two accounts. First, the transmutation deprives the gold of its “use” value, reducing it to a mere symbol of riches incapable of providing for his life. Second, when thus transformed, though the original being—gold, “doth still remayne” (69), its old form—the good angels, vanish; with them is gone the insurance of his physical, social, and spiritual life. So what is cost in transmuting his gold into an object is not only money or “that seely old moralitie” (5) but also the basic rights blessed to him by those good angels. It is this deprivation of his fundamental human rights that makes the “wretched Finder” (91) deserve “my most heavy curse” (94).

The havoc wrought by those “bad angels” coined from Spanish bullion extends beyond personal life to national economy. In fact, the Europeans themselves were quite aware of the subversive power of Spanish coinage. In the preface to his Empire of Guiana, Raleigh draws attention to the formidable power of Spanish pistolets: “it is his [King of Spain] Indian gold that indangereth and disturbeth all the nations of Europe, it purchaseth intelligence, creepeth into counsels, and setteth bound loyaltie at libertie, in the greatest
Monarchies of Europe...to the general losse and impoverishment of the kingdome and common weale so reduced” (PN10:347). Similarly, a friar remarked in 1630 that “Potosí lives in order to serve the imposing aspirations of Spain: it serves to chastise the Turk, humble the Moor, make Flanders tremble and terrify England.”

Donne reproduces this invidious working of colonial metals in his poems. In “Satire 2,” the speaker says, “Rammes, and slings now are seely battery, / Pistolets are the best Artillerie” (19-20). For the speaker in “The Bracelet,” Spanish “pistolets” or “pistols” are weapons that are “more” destructive “then cannon-shot” (32). The unnatural power of these monetary arms is so great that they can, like those “figures” used by “some greate Conjurer,” “enforce / Nature...from her course.” National economy proves most vulnerable to the magical influence exercised by Spanish pesos. The vigorous travelling of Spanish coins, rather than boosting domestic economy, has “slily made / Gorgeous France, ruin’d, ragged and decay’d; / Scotland,” and “mangled seventeen-headed Belgia” (39-42). Nor did England escape the general wreck. Though by 1561 Elizabeth had managed to stem the monetary deterioration caused by the “Great Debasement” in the 1540s, English coins were in jeopardy once again at the latter part of the sixteenth century.

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60 Enrique Otte, ed. Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias, 1540-1616 or Private Letters of the Emigrants to the Indies (Seville, Jerez: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1988), 525, quoted in Kamen, Empire, 286.

Smith (1513-77), Elizabeth’s Secretary of the State, blamed the “debasement and exchange depreciation” of coins to the importing of foreign, especially Spanish bullion.\textsuperscript{62} The grave consequence of this devaluation is reflected in Donne’s monetary images too. We hear Donne asking why “the whole precious Gold” has changed “To such small copper coynes” in “The Second Anniversarie (429-30), and “had wee chang’d to gold / Their silver” in “The First Anniversarie.” Likewise, in “The Lamentations of Jeremy,” the speaker wonders “How is the gold become so dimme? How is / Purest and finest gold thus chang’d to this?”(269-70)

III: The Image of “veines”: Chinese Association of Donne’s Spanish Coinage

Up to now I have touched chiefly on the English-Spanish-American commercial nexus implicit in Donne’s unfiled pistolets. This section studies the global dimension of this image, especially its association with the Far East. In addition to the practices of clipping and fetishizing, “bi-metallic flows” of gold and silver also played a part in the ruining of European economies dramatized in “The Bracelet.” Like trade in general, the flows set in motion by the disparity in the gold-silver ratio proved double-edged as well: they could at once enrich domestic economy by attracting foreign bullion and impoverish it by causing an outflow of precious metals. Outhwaite remarks that “if one metal was

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\item Outhwaite, Inflation, 23-44; 54-56.
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debased more than the other, there would be a tendency for bi-metallic flows to be encouraged, with the most debased metal entering the country and the least leaving it.”

Simply stated, debased money engendered a vicious cycle that drove out good and drew in bad metals. In a letter to William Cecil in 1551, a London merchant called William Lane writes, the “lightness” of the silver coin caused both the exchange rate to fall and the merchants to export “a hundarthe thowsand powndes of gold” within a short time of only three months. Since “the pownd of gold ys Rychar than the pownd of whyte mony,” Lane observes, “shortely we shall be quite off all owre Ryche mony for a base quyne.”

Early modern bi-metallic flows were not a regional but a global phenomenon, and they were enabled by various trading circuits running across the globe. The three transcontinental and trans-oceanic routes through which American bullion flowed to China exemplify such global highways. In “The Bracelet,” Donne represents these global trading circuits in the image of “veines.” It is via “streams” or “veines” (38), the speaker observes, that the “soule” of Spanish pistolets flowed to “th’earths every part.” *Vein* literally means a “tubular vesse[l] in which the blood is conveyed through the animal body” or a “small natural channel” within the earth through which “water trickles or flows.” But *vein* also denotes “a deposit of metallic or earthy material having an extended or ramifying course under ground; a seam or lode; spec. a continuous crack or fissure

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64 Quoted in Outhwaite, *Inflation*, 56.
filled with matter (esp. metallic ore).”⁶⁵ In his Decades of the New World, Richard Eden observes that “Although golde be founde in maner euery where in these regions of golden Castile...the myne or veyne whiche owghte to be folowed, ought to bee in a place whiche may stande to saue muche of the charges of the labourers.”⁶⁶ Eden’s equalization of “myne” with “veyne” bespeaks an affinity—mines are subterranean veins that contain “metallic ores,” an affinity also touched on by Donne in his Devotions.⁶⁷ Further, while mines are veins of the earth, oceans are watery arteries of the globe. So Donne’s image of veins elicits at once the earthly “vessels” through which Spanish bullion visited every part of the earth, the metallic veins in American mines, and the oceanic bodies that carried Spanish treasure fleets across the Pacific and Atlantic to “th’earths every part.”

Both the earthly and watery veins proved indispensable to the global circulation of Spanish bullion represented in “The Bracelet.” The colonizers could open up the veins in earth and drive out its precious blood, but they could not stop the ceaseless flow of those oceanic bodies that helped distribute the metallic products of American mines throughout the globe. As an isolated continent living largely in the state of nature, America appeared a helpless virgin that yielded passively to the “roving” hands of western colonizers. But once linked with other continents via those fluid veins, whether subterranean mines or oceanic arteries, this maiden land became a formidable matrix that determined the economies of countries visited by its metallic offspring. In other words, the mines or

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⁶⁶ Eden, Decades of the New Worlde (1555), 211.
⁶⁷ Donne, Devotions, 19.
veins that subjected America to colonial exploitation turned out to be the very agency that allowed it to elude imperial domination. Donne is noted for his notion of the oneness of the world, a notion epitomized in this oft-quoted remark in the *Devotions*: “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main… any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind…."68 An “island” is connected to and becomes “a piece of the continent” through none other than those oceanic throughways. Moreover, since *vein* also signifies “an inclination or desire, a tendency, towards something specified,"69 the oceanic veins would incline the isolated land of America to expand and get in touch with other continents. “If all the veins in our bodies were extended to rivers, and all the sinews to veins of mines,” Donne observes in the *Devotions*, then the human body would coincide with the earthly body.70 Likewise, if “the veins of mines” in America “extended,” they would merge and circulate the globe with those oceanic veins.

What was carried by those earthly and watery veins proved to be the lifeblood of the nations visited by Spanish pistolets. Like France, Belgia, and Scotland mentioned in Donne’s divine poem, China was numbered among such nations. A Spanish official expressly called the flow of bullion from the New World “the lifeblood of the kingdom [Spain]” and compared the sea lanes to “the very veins that give life to this great and vast

68 Donne, *Devotions*, 103.
70 Donne, *Devotions*, 19.
body.” Since veins are primarily “vessels in which the blood is conveyed through the animal body,” the “lifeblood” here speaks vividly of the crucial importance of American bullion to Spain, a “great and vast body” that, paradoxically, depended on those infant bears for survival. American bullion was “lifeblood” not merely to Spain; “silver” was “blood [plata es sangre]” for the “Great and Mighty Kingdom of China” as well. In the 1570s, the Ming Empire promulgated the so-called “Single-Whip” taxation policy, which required taxes be paid in silver rather than in the previous paper money. This “silverization” of taxation generated such a demand for American silver that it virtually became “blood” for Ming China. One Spanish Admiral remarked in 1638 that “the king of China could build a palace with the silver bars from Peru which have been carried to his country.” Frank Spooner observes that “the avidity of the Chinese for silver established a commercial epoch for the international economy.” “Without this avidity,” the Florentine merchant Filippo Sassetti said on January 20, 1586, “the [Spanish] reales would not have risen so much in value as they now are. The Chinese, among all the

72 Boxer, “Plata es Sangre.”
74 The term “silverization” comes from Flynn and Giráldez, “Silver Spoon,” 208.
peoples of Asia, are wild about silver as everywhere men are about gold.”

Given the global circulation of Spanish stamps and the large absorption of silver by Ming China, the early modern European economic crisis as is noted by Bodin and Smith and represented by Donne was only part of the chain-effect caused by the American-China-Spain bullion trade. Flynn and Giráldez argue that sixteenth-century European price inflation was a global phenomenon, for it reflected the repercussions of the debasement of silver in China. Ming China, though drawing in most of the world’s silver, did not spend it. J. P. Geiss notes that “in the late sixteenth century…when silver from Mexico and Japan entered the Ming empire in great quantity, the value of silver began to decline and inflation set in, for as the metal became more abundant, its buying power diminished.” So the “silver sink” became ultimately a real “sink” that sank the Ming Empire into economic depressions. Chinese silver inflation played a significant part in the collapse of the Spanish empire—“Spain vanished as a serious Western power as its silver basis eroded.” This contagious influence caused by Chinese silver debasement was not confined to Spain; it “was responsible for a power shift within early modern Europe” as well. Its royal mints relying heavily on Spanish bullion, England was necessarily

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implicated. “As an integral part of the sixteenth-century European economy,” Challis claims, “England obeyed the forces which dominated that economy, amongst which was the influx of bullion from the New World.”

In addition to such graphic metaphors as veins and unlicked whelps, the Chinese resonance of Donne’s pistolets can also be conjectured from his general attention to the Far East. Donne was quite aware of the countries around the Pacific Ring newly revealed during the “race for the Far East.” In “Hymne to God My God, in my Sicknesse,” he speaks of locating a “home” in “the Pacifique Sea” or “The Eastern riches” (16-17). In a letter written in 1614 to his friend Tobie Matthew, he observes that “Men go to China, both by the Straights, and by the Cape.”

But Donne’s interest in the trade with China is most apparent in his constant reference to the Northeast and Northwest passages project.

It is by “the discovery of a passage through one of the innumerable inlets of the North,” that is, the Northeast and Northwest routes to “the fabled realm of Cathay,” the historian W. A. Raleigh writes, that “the story of the English Voyages begins” (PN12:10). Economic profit was the chief incentive behind England’s polar ventures. The sixteenth century saw the English economy suffering from Spanish imperial hegemony and the flooding of foreign commodities. According to Hakluyt, by the 1550s it had become almost impossible for the English to trade with their European neighbors who requested

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only a “small” amount of their produce. Even the demand for those commodities that had long enjoyed popularity was in decline. This formed a drastic contrast with the strong currency of “all foreign merchandises” whose prices were “wonderfully raised” (PN2:239). It is at this moment that the Far East came into the picture for the English, with unprecedented vividness and urgency. Hakluyt remarks that the intention to “remed[y]” the “mischeife” besetting the English market, the envy of “the wealth of the Spaniards and Portingales” that was “marveilously increased” by “the discoverie and search of newe trades and countreys,” as well as the supposition that “the same to be a course and meane for them also to obteine the like”—these three factors combined to oblige “certaine grave Citizens of London” to strike alternative ways to deliver the English economy from its quandary. Ultimately, those wise heads “resolved upon” “a newe and strange Navigation,” that is, to “open a way and passage for our men to travaile to newe and unknown kingdomes” (PN2:239-40). This new resolution led to none other than the Northeast and Northwest passages program.

The chief aims of the polar passages project were to gain eastern riches and to “feed those heathen nations with our commodities” (PN3:264). In the epistle dedication to Robert Cecil in the second edition of his *Principal Navigations* (1599), Hakluyt writes, because our chiefe desire to find out ample vent of our wollen cloth, the naturall commoditie of this our Relame, the fittest places, which in al my readings and observations I find for that purpose, are the manifold Islands of Japan, & the
Northern parts of China, & the regions of the Tartars next adjoining (PN1: Lxxii).

Likewise, in his *A New Passage to Cataia*, Humphrey Gilbert argues that the Northwest Passage through America is “the onely way for our princes, to possesse the wealth of all the East parts (as they terme them) of the world, which is infinite” (PN7:185). To motivate Englishmen to participate in the eastern trade, Richard Willes paints a rosy picture of countries plying trade in the Far East:

> The rude Indian Canoa halleth those seas, the Portingal, the Saracens, and Moores travaile continually up and downe that reach from Japan to China, from China to Malacca, from Malacca to the Moluccaes: and shall an Englishman, better appointed then any of them all… feare to sail in that Ocean? What seas at all doe want piracie? What Navigation is there voyde of perill? (PN7:201)

As is pointed out by Willes, though their continental and even Muslim neighbors had rushed to the East, profiting from its seemingly inexhaustible resources, Englishmen, for fear of “piracy” and “peril,” had been lagging far behind in exploiting the eastern market, a belatedness that would cost its economy dearly. The usual excuses of “piracy” and “peril” invented by Englishmen, Willes suggests, would only further exclude England from the profitable grid of trade in the Far East.

The picture Willes painted in the 1570s must have inspired Donne’s poetic
imagination. Donne refers to England’s polar passages project a couple of times. In “Epithalamion I, The Time of Mariage,” he speaks of the “the passage of the West or East” (111) around “the Northerne Pole” (114). In “Satire III,” talking about the courage of those resolved to blaze a path in the north, the speaker observes, “Hast thou courageous fire to thaw the ice / Of frozen North discoveries?” (21-22) Though proceeding in full swing after its initiation in the 1550s, the Arctic venture appeared an impossible dream for the English by the 1630s. However, in a sermon preached on April 5, 1629, Donne says,

who ever amongst our Fathers, thought of any other way to the Moluccaes, or to China, then by the promontory of Good hope? yet another way opened it self to Magellan; a Straite; it is true; but yet a way thither; and who knows yet, whether there may not be a North-East, and a North-West way hither, besides? (8:371)

This statement shows not only a comprehensive knowledge of the various stages marking the discovery of the Far East but also a cheerful optimism for the polar enterprise. There are many possible ways to circumvent the route around “Good hope” to reach the Spice Islands and China, Donne points out, but no Englishman had ever tried to seek those ways out before Magellan discovered the Southwest strait in 1519-22. The polar passage project might appear hopeless, but just as Magellan once turned the impossible into the possible, the English might eventually find “a North-East, and a North-West way.” Thus
though in his youth Donne displays anxiety about the global repercussions of the eastern trade, in his old age, he was optimistic about the commercial opportunities in the Far East. Given this sustained attention to English trade with the Far East, Donne could not have been ignorant of the “sink” that sank many of those unfiled pistolets.

Donne’s response to the global commerce of precious metals is not an explicit expression of his global cosmopolitanism that emphasizes a generous attitude towards cultural differences. However, his representation of the worldwide circulation of Spanish coinage does indicate an active attention to trading partners or commercial others beyond European borders. Put differently, Donne’s global cosmopolitanism in this chapter is chiefly manifested in his awareness of those globalizing forces that involved almost all known continents in a commercial network and his willingness to engage the implications of those forces in his imaginative works. Most importantly, these globalizing processes allowed us to understand what Connell and Marsh calls the “material base” of the “cultural superstructure” marking the early modern globalization described in other chapters of the dissertation. Further, as is powerfully demonstrated by Robert Markley and David Porter, the pattern of global trade suggested in Donne’s “The Bracelet” resonates through the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, though the whole picture was complicated by the Dutch and English’s interventions in the eastern market and the focus of the exchange shifted from gold and silver to other commodities.

81 Markley, The Far East and the English Imagination, especially chapter 1, 4, and 6; and David Porter, Ideographia, Chapter 4.
Chapter III Chinese Chronology and Donne’s Apologetic Exegesis

in Essayes in Divinity

For orthodox Christians in the Renaissance, “Pentateuch beginning with the first chapter of Genesis...constituted an infallible history of the origin and initial progress of the human race.”¹ In his Essayes in Divinity (1614), Donne comments on the biblical account of the beginning of time and history as is represented in Genesis and Exodus. Donne’s biblical commentary has an apparent apologetic agenda. The Essayes is usually read as an autobiography in which Donne justifies his being ordained as an Anglican priest in 1615.² Apart from the personal note, Donne’s apologetic exegesis also arises from a desire to wage a “defensive warr” against sectarian religions, for only when “the whole Catholick Church were reduced to such Unity and agreement,” he remarks, can the Savior “allure and draw those to us, whom our dissentions, more then their own stubbornness with-hold from us.”³ One purpose of this “defensive warr,” I shall show in this chapter, is to establish a unified front within Christendom against alternative accounts of time presented by pagan annals, or as Donne puts it, to prove the “antiquity”

² John Donne, Essayes in Divinity: Being Several Disquisitions Interwoven with Meditations and Prayers, ed. Anthony Raspa (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s UP, 2001), xxxix-xliv. All quotations about this treatise are from Raspa’s edition. My work is greatly indebted to Raspa’s extensive and illuminating comments on the Essayes in the endnotes.
³ Donne, Essayes, 58, 59.
of Moses against “many strong oppositions.”

Chronological considerations obviously lie behind the apologetic agenda in Donne’s *Essayes*. St. Augustine (354-430) holds that “If any, even the smallest, lie be admitted in the Scriptures, the whole authority of scripture is presently invalidated and destroyed.” Donne recognizes the subversive power of numbers in biblical commentary. As he puts it,

And error in Numbring is *De substantialibus*…and sometimes annuls, ever vitiates any Instrument, so much, as it may not be corrected. Nothing therefore seems so much to indanger the Scriptures, and to submit and render them obnoxious to censure and calumniation, as the apparance of Error in Chronology, or other limbs and members of Arithmetick.

Scripture is most prone to chronological lapses because, Donne explains, “the author hath erred… if any number be falsely delivered.” He uses a legal analogy to show the necessity of justifying scriptural chronology against “any profane Historie.” Just as a defendant in a court must give protestations that can be supported by evidence from his friends and neighbors, Donne says,

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4 *Essayes*, 14, 15.
when any profane Historie rises up against any place of Scripture, accusing it to Humane Reason, and understanding…it is not enough that one place justify it self to say true, but all other places produced as handling the same matter, must be of the same opinion, and of one harmony.⁶

*Profane* originally denotes “unholy,” “heathen” or “pagan.” But when used to describe history and literature, profane is a neutral term unrelated to “what is sacred or biblical.” Thus *profane history* means “secular,” “lay” or “civil,” which distinguishes from sacred or ecclesiastical history.⁷ Like evidence offered in a legal court, according to Donne, the integrity of Scripture resides in its overall doctrinal “harmony.” Chronological errors tend to undermine this unity and thereby make Scripture susceptible to “accus[ations]” from “profane” histories, a vulnerability that accords a topical urgency to the exegesis of the biblical timeline as is depicted in the first two books of Moses.

Chinese antiquity was numbered among Donne’s profane histories that rose up against Scripture. Edwin J. Van Kley maintains that Chinese chronology did not “create problems” in Europe before the publication of the Jesuit missionary Martino Martini’s *Sinicae historiae decas prima* (1658).⁸ But as is shown in Donne’s *Essayes*, Chinese

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⁶ *Essayes*, 62-63.
⁷ “profane, adj. and n.” *OED Online*. 3rd, ed. June 15, 2012. In the *Essayes*, Donne uses the word “profane” to describe pagan peoples and nations, see 22, 50, 54, 63.
⁸ Edwin J. van Kley, “Europe’s ‘Discovery’ of China and the Writing of World History,”
antiquity had already raised problems by the 1610s. According to Donne, “That then this Beginning was, is a matter of faith, and so, infallible. When it was, is a matter of reason, and therefore various and perplex’d.” He cites eight authoritative accounts that claimed to address the “beginning” of the world through reason. From these eight records, he singles out the eastern annals, observing that “The Chinese vex us at this day, with irreconcilable accounts.”9 Much has been written on Donne’s exegesis in the Essayes, but few have associated it with the chronology polemic, especially the debates sparked by Chinese antiquity.10 Anthony Raspa does draw attention to Donne’s reference to Chinese history, but he confines his consideration of the eastern background to some general remarks.11

9 Essayes, 22.
11 Raspa ed., Essayes, xxxvii-xxxviii. Raspa identifies two sources of Donne’s image of China, that is, Gerald Mercator’s Historia Mundi: Containing his Cosmographick Description...of the World (Seville, 1535); and Richard Willes’s augmented edition of Richard Eden’s translation of the Spanish historian Peter Martyr d’Anghiera’s accounts of Spanish discoveries under the title of Decades of the New World (1555). Willes’s edition appeared under the title of The History of Travayle in the West and East Indies (London, 1577). (Raspa ed., 131). It should be noted that Raspa misplaced Eden and Willes chronologically: it is Willes who translated Eden’s work, not vice versa. I add to Donne’s source of Chinese history Joseph Scaliger, De emendatione temporum (Paris, 1583); Rev.
This chapter situates Donne’s allusion to Chinese annals within the context of the chronological controversy ignited by González de Mendoza’s *Mighty Kingdom of China* and Joseph Scaliger’s engagement with Mendoza’s account in his chronological theory.¹² Mendoza’s treatise was “the key European authority on China until [Nicholas] Trigault’s version of Matteo Ricci’s fundamental history was published in 1615,”¹³ and it presented, above all, a system of time that clashed with the biblical timeline. Synthesizing various reports on China, Mendoza represented Chinese dynastic history in the form of a catalogue of more than two hundred monarchs, spanning from Vitey or Huangdi (2717-2599 BC) all the way to Emperor Longqing (1537-72) of the Ming empire.¹⁴ Mendoza’s work did not deal with Chinese chronology *per se*, but his chronicling of China’s imperial lineage served to bring out its deep antiquity. The historical data Mendoza set forth proved difficult to integrate into scriptural chronology. The conflict between the eastern and biblical timelines became more evident when Scaliger, founder of (Leiden, 1598; Geneva, 1629), and *Thesaurus temporum* (Leiden, 1606), and Juan González de Mendoza, *Historia de las cosas mas notables ritos y costumbres del gran reyno de la China*, 8 vols. (Rome, 1585; Venice, 1588). Mendoza’s work was translated into Latin by Joachim Brullius and published in Frankfort (1589) and Antwerp (1655), 4 vols. It was rendered into French by Luc de Laporte (Paris, 1589), 8 vols. I quote from the English edition *History of Great and Mighty Kingdom of China* (1588) translated by Parke and edited by Staunton.

¹² Mendoza “was a member of an abortive Spanish embassy to China in 1584,” and his work “is made up from a collation of the reports of various Augustine and Franciscan friars who had attempted to penetrate into China.” Hudson, *Europe and China*, 242.


¹⁴ For Mendoza’s account of Chinese history see the *Mighty Kingdom of China*, Book III, chap. I., 69-76. For Mendoza’s various sources see Rubiés, “Spanish Contribution,” 104.
of modern chronology, insisted on giving an equal weight to profane histories and used Mendoza as a source of Chinese history in constructing a universal temporal framework. In the working version of the first edition of his *De emendatione temporum* (1583), Scaliger resorted to Mendoza’s account to speculate on Chinese chronology, and in the second edition (1598) he discredited outright eastern antiquity. Later in 1602, Scaliger came across the Byzantine historian George Syncellus’s (d.810) *Ekloge chronographias* or *Extract of Chronography*, which records Part I of Eusebius of Caesarea’s (c. 263-339) *Chronicle*, a section omitted in St. Jerome’s translation. In this long-neglected part, Eusebius lists the ancient dynasties of Egypt as documented by the


16 Eusebius’s *Chronicle* consists of two parts. Part I “Annals” contains the unsettling accounts of Egyptian and Babylonian histories as is recorded by Manetho and Berossus. Part II “Chronological Canons” compiles, in tabular forms, synchronized dates from Assyrian, Hebrew, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman histories. See Grafton, “Dating History,” 83; and *Historical Chronology*, 540-43.
third-century Egyptian historian Manetho. In his *Thesaurus temporum* (1606), Scaliger posited *pre-creation* “proleptic time” to address the Egyptian history that exceeded the scriptural timeframe. Although Scaliger discounted Chinese chronology before his encounter with Manetho’s Egyptian history, his “proleptic time” nevertheless reflected back upon his previous theory, a reflection that tended to cede authority to Chinese antiquity as well.

Referring to Mendoza’s account and Scaliger’s problematic response, I argue that Chinese chronology, together with the Chaldean and Egyptian antiquities, played an indispensable part in motivating Donne’s exegesis of Genesis and Exodus. As is shown in the works of Scaliger, the French universalist Jean Bodin, and the Dutch humanist J. Goropius Becanus (1519-72), of the eight popular accounts of world history Donne cites, the problems raised by Chaldean and Egyptian chronicles were more or less resolved by the time the *Essayes* was composed. By contrast, the disturbing antiquity of the Chinese remained to be grappled with. The reign of Vitey (2717-2599 BC) called into doubt the biblical version of the world’s origin. Since Exodus features the “miracle” of numbers — “what a small Number, in how short a time, how numerous a people, through how great pressures, and straits, were by him [God] propagated and established,” this

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18 *Essayes*, 61.
bibilical account is vulnerable to the charge of chronological errors. To defend scriptural chronology against the challenges mounted by Chinese antiquity thus constitutes an important motive behind Donne’s biblical commentary. Although Donne mentions China only once in the *Essays*, this reference is nevertheless symptomatic of a thinker who was attempting to reconcile a different system of time with an accepted view of chronology, an orthodox timeline that was putatively supported by divine authority.

Donne’s apologetic arsenal comes chiefly from the exegetical discourse. Since his images of profane histories are embedded within an extensive exposition of the first two books of Moses, apologetic exegesis is the predominant strategy he adopts to negotiate the chronology polemic. Donne subscribed to the traditional fourfold exegetical scheme that addressed the literal, allegorical, anagogical, and typological senses of Scripture. Following protestant and humanist hermeneutics, he advocated the primacy of the literal sense, representing it as a matrix from which other senses derive. But to refute charges on chronological grounds, he needed, above all, to establish the historicity of Scripture by representing it as a literal and historical document whose chronology could be counted on. Nevertheless, Donne notices that despite its historical status, Genesis cannot be adequately interpreted by a chronological methodology. None of the eight authoritative accounts of the world’s history can “ease us, nor afford us line enough to fathom this bottom [the world’s beginning],” he asserts in the *Essays*, so “the last refuge uses to be, that prophane history cannot clear, but Scripture can.” But “since the world in her infancy did not speak to us at all (by any Authors;) and when she began to speak by Moses, she
spake not plain, but diversly to divers understandings,” he argues, the infant world can only be addressed by spiritual “faith.” Likewise, the chronology controversy also resonates in his exposition of the “numbers” and “names” in Exodus, two major sources of chronological errors. To counteract accusations based on numerical and nominal grounds, Donne links these two double-edged concepts together. When separate, numbers and names might bolster profane histories, but once combined, they bear out a “Miraculous History” that has the capacity to enfold all peoples, together with their chronologies, into “One fold, and one shepherd.”

We should differentiate between Renaissance historical exegesis and the chronological methodology advanced by Scaliger. Though like the “metaphorical” or “anagogical,” the “historical” is numbered among the “various applications and accommodations” of the literal sense, historical exegesis aims to define Scripture as a verifiable document by examining some physical indicators of the Mosaic history. By comparison, the chronological framework uses dates and numbers to study the principle of time represented in all histories, whether sacred or profane, and thus prioritizes the numerical over other historical indexes. After Scaliger’s epoch-making reform, the chronological model was widely used in historical studies, Hebrew history included.

Thus whereas historical exegesis regards Scripture as a historical rather than allegorical text, chronological exposition focuses on the consistency of dates and numbers in the

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19 *Essayes*, 22, 23.
20 *Essayes*, 53, 56.
21 Whitaker, *Disputation*, 404.
Mosaic books.

The anxiety Donne evinces over Chinese antiquity evokes the larger context of ancient and the early modern debates over chronology. As St. Augustine’s negotiation with the Egyptian history in his *City of God* shows, the primacy of scriptural chronology was already a contested point for the early fathers. To denounce the claims of an Egyptian history of “more than a hundred thousand years,” Augustine writes, we should “place our reliance on the inspired history belonging to our religion and consequently have no hesitation in treating as utterly false anything which fails to conform to it.”

Although Augustine’s monotheistic approach to chronology was followed in the Renaissance, in his edition of *City of God*, the humanist Juan Luis Vives (1493-1540) nevertheless called attention to the Chaldean history of 47,000 and the Egyptian’s of over 50,000 years. Not only Egyptian and Chaldean dynasties but also the lately discovered empires of Inca, Aztec, and China presented a new set of data that clashed with the biblical timeline. Don C. Allen remarks that “a controversial storm over the

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24 See Vives, *St. Augustine’s “City of God”* (Basle, 1522). Book XII, Chap. 10. Vives made the commentary on the advice of Erasmus, and it was translated into English by John Healey in 1610.

discrepancies in the universal calendar was roaring by the end of the sixteenth century.”

Michael T. Ryan also notes that “what really interested sixteenth-and seventeenth-century observers about exotic peoples was their past, not their present. This was especially true for the so-called high civilizations in Mexico, Peru, India, and China.”

Early modern thinkers responded differently to the new pagan histories. The famous classical scholar Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614) dismissively declared that “I don’t see how these fantasies [alternative claims of antiquity] of foolish peoples are of much use for real history.”

Similarly, Francis Bacon observes in his *The Advancement of Learning* that those “Heathen Antiquities” made up mostly of “fables and fragments” were undoubtedly “deficient.”

In contrast, Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) and Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) seemed to look favorably on pagan chronicles. Bruno appeared to believe a Chinese history of “twenty thousand” years, and Marlowe was accused of endorsing the doctrine that “the Indians and many Authors of antiquity haue assuredly writen of aboue 16 thousand yeares agone wheras Adam is proued to haue lived within 6 thousand

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27 Ryan, “Assimilating New World,” 531.

28 Quoted in Grafton, “Rise and Fall,” 174.


years.”

The chronological data provided by the new worlds tended to corroborate the pre-Adamic doctrine that became popular in the latter part of the sixteenth century. The antiquity of the new pagan annals seemed to place those newly discovered peoples within a non-Adamic lineage. The reputed alchemist and physician Paracelsus (1493-1541) claimed that “it cannot be believed that such newly found people in the islands are of Adam’s blood,” and they must have come from “a different Adam.” Likewise, for Bruno, “the black race / Of the Ethiopians, and the yellow offspring of America,” “cannot be traced to the same descent, nor are they sprung / From the generative force of a single progenitor.”

The French Calvinist Isaac de La Peyrère (1596-1676) was more outspoken, declaring pointedly the existence of pre-Adamites in his Praea-Adamitae (1655). In remarking that “an enormous pretending Wit of our nation and age undertook to frame such a language, herein exceeding Adam,” Donne exhibits not only knowledge but also disapproval of the pre-Adamic thesis, a heretical doctrine that seemed espoused by “an enormous pretending Wit” in early modern Europe. Not surprisingly,


33 Quoted in Slotkin ed., Early Anthropology, 43.

34 Essayes, 27.
Chinese antiquity that seemed to support such a radical theory was vexatious to Donne’s devout sensibility.35

What was at stake in Renaissance controversy over chronology was the primacy both of the biblical timeline and the Adamic lineage, which gave most orthodox chronological studies an apologetic edge. Colin Kidd claims that the “study of universal chronology became one of the foremost disciplines of the early modern period. It tackled questions of fundamental importance to the identity of Christendom, and it attracted some of Europe’s foremost minds.”36 Anthony Grafton holds that “from the late sixteenth century onward, in fact, religious dissidents regularly cited chronological evidence when they challenged the authority of the Bible.”37 For Arthur B. Ferguson, “what led protestant England to the study of chronology was, after all, not so much a disinterested desire to clarify the perspective of history as a compulsion to bring universal history into accord with the biblical narrative.”38 The challenge to scriptural chronology appeared the more striking when considering the conflicting accounts of time set out in the Latin Vulgate and Greek Septuagint bibles. In his A Disputation on Holy Scripture against the Papists (1588), the English Calvinist William Whitaker (1547-95) notes that “there is the greatest difference between the Hebrew and Greek books in the account of dates and

35 For English Preadmites see Popkin, Isaac La Peyrère, 36.
years," for “the Greek books reckon 2242 years from Adam in the beginning of the world to the flood, as we read in Augustine, Eusebius, and Nicephorus’s Chronology. But in the Hebrew books we see that there were no more than 1656. Thus the Greek calculation exceeds the Hebrew by 586 years.”39 Given the contradiction in the biblical canons themselves, it is but natural that the temporal markers they represent such as the creation and Exodus were susceptible to charges from profane histories.

I: Universal History and the Chronological Discourse

In order to understand how the discovery of Chinese chronology affected western thought, we need to examine how the west, especially the early modern thinkers, imagined human origins and how they conceived of time, which is summarily captured in the two discourses of history and chronology.40 Bodin defines the “chronological principle” as “a system of universal time” that serves as “the guide for all histories.”41 “Time,” according to René Descartes (1596-1650), is “only a mode of thinking” about

39 Whitaker, Disputation, 121.
“duration.”42 As a special form of thinking about time intervals, chronology is widely used to calculate and establish temporal frameworks for great events in biblical, national, and universal histories. History deals with the deployment of time as well, but time means different things in history and chronology, which became two distinctive disciplines at the turn of the seventeenth century. According to the French Jesuit theologian Dionysius Petavius (1583-1652), chronology is a “pure calculation of time” that differs qualitatively from “history,” for

History has as its own to possess fully the matter of deeds and to write down their order, usually with proofs, arguments, and witnesses, whence the order of individual years is established. Chronology indeed inquires after one thing, by what signs and marks each thing may be arranged in its years and times, and is nearly always content with that. It does not extend further than individual events.

In fact, for Petavius, chronology is “one of the four sciences [physics, astronomy, music, and civil divisions of time] which have do to with time.”43 However, despite their distinction, chronology and history are nevertheless closely connected. The German

astronomer Erasmus Reinhold (1511-53) wonders “What obscurity would there be in the past had there been no distinction of time? What chaos would there be in our present life if the sequence of years were unknown?” 44 In fact, chronological dates, together with geographical locations, are veritable indicators of historical narratives. It is on this account that Richard Hakluyt called geography and chronology “the Sunne and the Moone, the right eye and the left of all history” (PN 1: xxxix)

But historical and chronological studies had undergone different stages of development by the Renaissance. Compared with the robust growth of history, chronology appeared an atrophied discipline. The sixteenth century saw a marked development of chronology, however, since it was during this era that people became fully aware of the necessity of a linear and universal principle of time.45 This intense “chronological awareness,” that is, “a consciousness of dates and numbers,”46 was enhanced by the universal history project flourishing in France, an intellectual movement that sought to establish a uniform timeline by reassessing the historical sources of such disciplines as theology, jurisdiction, and history. Bodin asserts that since “the most important part of the subject [universal history] depends upon the chronological principle,” “a system of universal time is needed for this method of which we treat,” because “those who think they can understand histories without chronology are as much

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44 Tatian, Oratio ad Graecos, 3; cited by Scaliger on the title-page of his De emendatione temporum (1583), see Grafton, “Origins and Setting,” 100.
45 On Renaissance chronology see, in addition to Scaliger and Wilcox’s works, Patrides, “Renaissance Estimates,” and Almond, Adam and Eve, 82-86.
46 LePan, Cognitive Revolution, 113, 122.
in error as those who wish to escape the windings of a labyrinth without a guide.”47 Just as cartographers tried to encompass the globe in a single grid, the Universalists attempted to comprehend the historical world within a unifying matrix. However, neither classical nor medieval chronological theories could provide the overarching temporal paradigm demanded by the universal history project. Wilcox notes that ancient and medieval chronological theorizations tend to be “relative,” “epochal” and “thematic,” characteristics that render them insufficient to address the cosmic architecture of time imagined by the Universalists. The Christian chronological model represented in Eusebius’s *Chronicle* also fell short of a universal scale. Since “Eusebius was more interested in a particular synchronization, that between the sacred history of the Hebrew and the profane history of the world’s empires,” Wilcox remarks, “the dates he chose for the synchronization were epochal and thematic rather than absolute.”48 Though medieval chronologers such as Otto of Freising (1114-58) and Matthew Paris (1200-59) displayed awareness of dates and numbers, chronology during this period still privileged multiple timelines and lacked a comprehensive framework. Renaissance witnessed a broad chronological awakening, which can be glimpsed in the mushrooming of chronicles and

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47 Bodin, *Method*, 303. For primary works on universal history also see Philipp Melanchthon, *Sententiae veterum aliquot patrum de caena domini* (Wittenberg, 1530); Francois Baudouin, *De institutione historiae universae et eius cum jurisprudentia conjunctione* (Paris, 1561); Melchior Cano, *De locis theologicis* (Salamanca, 1563); and Henry Isaacson, *Saturni Ephemerides: Tabula Historico-chronologica* (London, 1633).

48 Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 106. For Scaliger’s critique of Eusebius see *De Emendatione* (1583), 251.
the high prestige they enjoyed. In a letter to Seth Calvisius dated December 3, 1605, Scaliger said that every year the Frankfurt book fair witnessed a new crop of chronologies. In the same year, Bacon remarked that among the three parts of “Just and Perfect history,” that is, “Chronicles,” “Lives,” and “Narrations or Relations,” chronicles are “the most complete and absolute kind of history, and hath most estimation and glory.”

Two major factors lie behind the unprecedented flourishing of universal chronicles in the Renaissance. The contradictory interpretations of scriptural chronology and the discordant sources presented by both classical antiquity and new pagan annals combined to call forth the necessity of instituting an umbrella principle that could at once locate, chart, and reconcile all histories within a uniform chronological matrix. On the one hand, Renaissance exegetes could not reach a consensus concerning the scriptural timeline.

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49 Major English chronicles include: Thomas Lanquet, An Epitome of Chronicles (1549); Lodowik Lloyd, The Consent of Time (1590); John More, A Table from the Beginning of the World to this Day (1593); Christian Helvetius, Historical and Chronological Theatre (1609); Anthony Munday, Briefe Chronicle of the Successe of Times from Creation (1611); and Sir Walter Raleigh, History of the World (1614).

50 Scaliger to Calvisius, December 3, 1605, quoted in Grafton, Historical Chronology, 10. For major continental chronicles see: Hartmann Schedel, Nürnberger Chronik (Nürnberg, 1493); Sebastian Franck, Chronica (Strasbourg, 1531); Guillaume Postel, Cosmographiae disciplinae compendium (Basle, 1561); G. Mercator, Chronologia (Cologne, 1569); M. Beroaldus, Chronicum Scripturae Sacrae (Geneva, 1575); and F. Patrizi, Mystica Aegyptiorum et Caldeorum (Ferrara, 1591). For a synthesis of classical, medieval and Renaissance universal chronicles, see Patrides, Milton and the Christian Tradition, 226-49.

51 Bacon, Advancement of Learning, 179.
Patrides lists 29 proposals of the creation date from 108 early modern writers. Iacobus Curio complained in 1557 that “you will find it easier to make the wolf agree with the lamb than to make all chronologers agree about the age of the world.” Likewise, the physician chronologer Thomas Allen (1608-73) observed in 1659 that there were “very many (and some great) differences amongst Chronologers and in the Computation of Scripture-Chronologie.” On the other hand, the apparent conflict between the new pagan annals and the biblical timeline cried out for explanation, for as Thomas Nashe (1567-1601) lamented, “impudently they persist in it that the late discouered Indians are able to shew antiquities thousands before Adam.” The inadequacy of classical and medieval chronological schemes both to address the divergent biblical commentaries and contain the new historical data impelled Renaissance chronologers to seek a universal timeline. Though acutely aware of such a necessity, Bodin did not propose a specific chronological model. It was Scaliger who undertook to construct the unifying temporal principle imagined by Bodin, establishing chronology as an independent discipline.

II: Donne’s Knowledge of Chinese Antiquity and Scaliger’s “proleptic time”

In the Essayes, Donne declares that “of such Authors as God preordained to survive

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54 Thomas Allen, A Chain of Scripture Chronology (London, 1659), 5.
all Philosophers, and all Tyrants, and all Heretics, and be the Canons of faith and manners to the worlds end, Moses had the primacy.”56 Donne’s statement reflects the undisputed priority enjoyed by scriptural chronology in the Renaissance. As van Kley notes, most early modern thinkers tended to “test[] the ancient annals or records of any people by their conformity to” the biblical timeframe.57 The Calvinist Matthaeus Beroaldus (d.1576) claimed in 1575 that “we have everywhere followed the authority of Holy Scripture, which the Lord has granted us as a sure and indubitable foundation.”58 John More, the “apostle of Norwich,” asserted unequivocally that profane histories must be brought “to that account which is set down in Scriptures, from the beginning of the worlde till the suffering of Christ, most exactly, and so labour to make the times of forreigne histories to agree with that account of the holy Scripture…”59 For Bodin, “if the sacred founts of the Hebrews and the revelations of divine law bear witness that the world had a precise beginning of creation,” “to seek further would seem a crime—to doubt, seems wicked.”60

Scaliger proved an exception in according an equal status to “profane” histories in a universal temporal framework. For Scaliger, chronology “aims not to find a moral order in the past, but simply to reconstruct that past; it employs not merely the one divinely-inspired source, but all sources.”61

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56 *Essayes*, 15.
57 van Kley, “Europe’s ‘Discovery’ of China,” 360.
59 More, *A Table* (1593), Preface.
61 Grafton, “Rise and Fall,” 169-70.
sources,” Scaliger refused to regard scriptural timeline as the sole standard. Contrary to those who “babble that the authors whom they call profane did not know the events of their own time,” he writes in *De emendatione*, “profane” writers do “have their own understanding of divine and human letters, and

It is not surprising if they, to whom sacred history is one thing, and *profane* history, as they call it, another, come to conclusions different from ours…Nor do we care about the fantasies of those who despise *profane* letters. No truth is *profane*. In the mouth of a *profane* man all truth is sacred.62

The bold statements that “no truth is *profane*” and “in the mouth of a *profane* man all truth is sacred” amount to a declaration of the independence of pagan histories. As possible carriers of “truth,” Scaliger contends, profane and scriptural systems of time contribute equally to a universal timetable.

To accommodate profane histories to a single template, Scaliger invented a chronological model called the “Julian Period.” In 525, to construct an Easter table for the years 532-626, Exiguus, inventor of the Anno Domini (AD) dating system, adopted the 532-year cycle (the 19-year lunar cycle times the 28-year solar cycle). Drawing upon Exiguus’s Easter calendar, Scaliger managed to formulate a chronological principle by adding a third variant, that is, the “indication,” a term that means “a civil cycle of fifteen

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years, at the end of which a census was to be taken for tax purposes.” By multiplying 15
with Exiguus’s 532-year cycle, Scaliger got a cycle of 7980 years, a timeline he
designated as the “Julian Period.” Wilcox summarizes the significance of Scaliger’s
Julian model as follows:

By multiplying the three cycles Scaliger had created a chronology that would
comprehend all the events of human and divine history and would run almost
1,700 years into the future. With this instrument he could integrate all the civil
and religious calendars he had collected and studied, could correlate all previous
dating systems, and could locate any event or series of events completely and
unambiguously on a single time line. He had devised an absolute dating system
whose numbers were independent from any specific series of events.

Thus for the first time in western history, there appeared a linear and absolute temporal
framework that was supposed to embrace all histories, whether sacred or profane.
Scaliger’s innovation received international acclaim; as the Italian philosopher Tommaso
Campanella (1568-1639) put it, “the Germans admire Scaliger’s chronology, and many of
our countrymen follow it ... for he wished to correct the count of years from the eclipses

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63 For the “Julian period,” see De emendatione temporum (1583), 198. For a detailed
discussion of the Julian system see Wilcox, Measure of Times Past, 198-99; Grafton,
“Rise and Fall,” 162; and Historical Chronology, 249-50.
64 Wilcox, Measure of Times Past, 199.
and lunar cycles mentioned in the histories of older times....”

But there were disturbing exceptions that disrupted the Julian parameter. Egyptian dynastic history as is recorded by Manetho and preserved by Eusebius proved one of these exceptions—it could not be contained by the 7980-year cycle. Scaliger’s famous accommodation of this anomaly in his *Thesaurus temporum* exposed the limitations of the Julian system. In Manetho’s record, Egyptian history goes back to 5285 BC, a period of time that evidently exceeds the creation date [3949 BC] or the Julian Period [4713 BC] set up by Scaliger. To accommodate this difference, Scaliger posits “the first Julian Period of proleptic time,” calling it “the postulated Julian Period.” By “proleptic time,” he means “that which is assumed before the Mosaic computation,” which is distinct from “Historic time,” that is, “that which is traced downwards from the Hebraic computation.” Scaliger’s Julian period, which integrates the lunar, solar, and indication systems, was not novel, since it had been used by Byzantine historians. But his “proleptic time” caused “the dismay of many of his Protestant friends and the delight of many of his Catholic critics” when *Thesaurus temporum* was published in 1606. Even Scaliger himself was uneasy with a proleptic history beyond biblical creation, and “tried

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66 Grafton, “Rise and Fall,” 171.
69 Grafton, “Dating History,” 84.
several times to justify his own compromise procedure.”

China also presented a set of historical data that exceeded Scaliger’s Julian framework. Before his encounter with the Egyptian history in 1602, Scaliger had already expressed disbelief in Chinese chronology, but his engagement with Mendoza’s account served to corroborate rather than discount eastern antiquity and its heretical implications.

On the margins of the working version of the first edition of De emendatione (1583), Scaliger jotted down Mendoza’s catalogue of Chinese monarchs:

The Sinese (whom the Spanish call Chinese, for reasons unfathomable to me) reckon 4,282 years from their ancient king Vitey to Honog, who ruled after the year of the Lord 1570. For they count 2,257 years from Vitey to Tzintzom, the last of the race of Vitey. He separated the Tartars from the Sinese by a continuous wall. From him to Honog, around the years of the Lord 1570, 1571, 1572, etc., they reckon 2,025 years. This sum amounts to 4,282 years, as we said before. Hence Vitey is far older than Abraham.

Mendoza traced Chinese dynastic rule from Vitey to Boneg (Scaliger’s Honog) or Emperor Longqing, the reigning monarch when the Mighty Kingdom of China was published in Rome in 1585. Tzintzom should refer to “Qin Yingzheng,” that is, Emperor

70 The passages in question are Scaliger, Thesaurus temporum, Isagogici Canones, 117, 273, 274, 309-310, 312; Grafton, “Rise and Fall,” 173.
71 Grafton, Historical Chronology, 406.
Qin Shihuang (259BC-10BC) who united China for the first time in 221 BC and built the Great Wall to “separate[] the Tartars from the Sinese.” The ancient Chinese king Vitey should mean Huangdi (Yellow Emperor). Scaliger put 4282 years between Vitey to Honog, a calculation that agreed with Chinese chronology, because Huangdi ruled in about 2717-2599 BC. This comment on Chinese history appeared with little modification in the second edition of *De emendatione* (1598). According to Grafton, “no passage in the second *De emendatione* would have a more powerful—or unexpected—impact than the discussion of Chinese chronology that Scaliger included as a counter-weight to his assemblage of pagan reports that agreed neatly with the Bible.” “His [Scaliger’s] disapproval is clear enough,” Grafton observes, for he thinks the Chinese’s claim of an antediluvian history showing themselves as “*veris monumentis historiae destitute*,” and that their antiquity was invented because of their “*temporum inscitia*” and “*vetustatis affectatio*.72 However, despite his disapproval, the heretical suggestion of Scaliger’s response to Chinese chronology can nevertheless be interpolated from his handling of Egyptian antiquity. Grafton holds that “Scaliger certainly realized that he seemed to be calling the authority of the Bible into question,” for

The prominent place of his discussions of Egypt and proleptic time in the *Thesaurus* ensured that no careful reader could miss them. Scaliger’s insistence

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72 Grafton, *Historical Chronology*, 405-06. For Scaliger’s comments on Chinese history see *De emendatione* (1629), 366.
on giving equal weight to the Bible and to the pagans could only lead to disaster in a case where they disagreed so unequivocally. But he refused either to abate the rigorousness of his method or to recognize the seriousness of the conflict between his sources. He neither attacked the Bible explicitly, nor made it clear that he was not attacking it.  

The radical message implied by both the prominence Scaliger gives to proleptic time and his ambiguity towards “his method” and “the conflict between his sources” was aptly captured by La Peyrère to make his “attack” “the chronological authority of the Bible.” La Peyrère claimed that it was by resorting to, in addition to Egyptian, Chaldean, and Amerindian antiquities, Scaliger’s theory of the “prodigious account of the Chinenesians” that he proposed the pre-Adamic thesis.

La Peyrère’s speculation was not ungrounded: it was supported by other numbers in Scaliger’s chronological tables. In *De emendatione*, Scaliger puts the creation in 3949 BC, the flood in 2294 BC, Babel in 2177 BC, Abraham’s migration in 1941 BC, and the Exodus in 1496 BC. Mendoza dated the rule of the first Chinese monarch Vitey in 2717-2599 BC, a date that challenged several numbers in Scaliger’s template. Chinese antiquity called into question, above all, Abraham’s status as the father of all nations.

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73 Grafton, “Rise and Fall,” 173.
74 Grafton, *Historical Chronology*, 406.
76 Grafton, *Historical Chronology*, 277.
Wilcox maintains that “Scaliger’s use of nonbiblical sources raised doubts about the antiquity of the Kingdom of Israel and its precedence over the pagan empires,” because “as scholars came to see a single continuous time in which the events from all empires occurred, the process of synchronization made the position of Israel seem incongruous to the pious.” The “nonbibical sources” of the Chinese posed a direct challenge to the “precedence” of “the Kingdom of Israel.” Scaliger notices that by Mendoza’s account there are 2257 years from Vitey to Tzintzom and 2025 years from Tzintzom to Honog, which makes a total of 4282 years, a number that, Grafton says, proves “Vitey [2717-2599 BC] is far older than Abraham [1941BC].” Not only Abraham but Noah’s patriarchal status was also called into doubt, because the Chinese lived 303 years before the flood, a fact that came to Scaliger’s mind in the second edition of De emendatione:

“quare Vitey fuerit longe antiquior Abrahamo, cum ea summa longe epocham diluvii post se relinquat.”

The Essayes reproduces this contemporary chronological debate. Donne lists 58 alternative accounts of time in this treatise:

In the Epistle of Alexander the Great to his Mother, remembered by Cyprian and Augustin, there is mention of 8000 years. The Chaldeans have delivered observations of 470000 years. And the Egyptians of 100000. The Chineses vex us

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77 Wilcox, Measure of Times Past, 209.
78 Grafton, Historical Chronology, 405-06.
79 Scaliger, De emendatione (1629), 366.
at this day, with irreconcilable accounts. And to be sure, that none shall prevent them; some have call’d themselves Aborigenes. The poor remedy of Lunary and other planetary years, the silly and contemptible escape that some Authors speak of running years, some of years expired and perfected; or that the account of dayes and monthes are neglected……

As is noted by Raspa, Donne identifies eight authoritative systems of time in the quoted passage, that is, Cyprian and Augustine’s records of Alexander’s epistle to his mother; the ancient histories of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Chinese; some aboriginal annals and the hypotheses both of “running years” and “Lunary and other planetary years.” Aside from these eight popular views, he mentions 50 others. The Dominican friar Sixtus Senensis (1520-69) “reckons almost thirty several supputations of the years between the Creation, and our blessed Saviour’s birth, all of accepted authors, grounded upon the Scriptures,” and the Spanish Jesuit theologian and exegete Benedictus Pererius (1535-1610) claims that “he might have increased the number by 20.” But Donne does not seem to think it necessary to engage Senensis’s thirty “supputations” and the

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80 Essayes, 22.
81 Raspa ed., Essayes, 130-32. Alexander’s letter came down to us through the citations made by the bishop of Carthage St. Cyprian in his De idolorum vanitate liber (247) and Augustine’s City of God. I follow Raspa’s scheme in identifying Cyprian and Augustine as two separate sources. For Donne’s seventh and eighth sources see Raspa ed., Essayes, 131, 132.
82 Essayes, 22.
additional twenty added by Pererius.  

Three among the eight influential accounts of history Donne names proved especially unsettling in the Renaissance: the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Chinese. The Egyptians claimed a history of 100,000 years; “the Chaldeans were the most ancient of all peoples, by the weighty testimony of not only Moses but also Herodotus, Ctesias, and Xenophon”; and the hitherto unresolved chronology of the Chinese continued to “vex us at this day.” But the Chaldean and Egyptian antiquities had been more or less reconciled with scriptural chronology by the 1610s. Bodin discounted both Herodotus’s record of “a kingdom among the Egyptians for 13,000 years” and Cicero’s account of the Chaldean history of 470,000 years, because the Hebrew writer Josephus (37-100), with “a most definite system of chronology” based on Manetho and the Phoenicians, had “openly refuted the inane stories of the Egyptians and the Greeks by adding the ages of the kings of the Egyptians and of the Phoenicians.” Likewise, Scaliger thought Manetho’s account “more worthy of belief” than those of Herodotus, who was but a foreigner.  

Unlike Egyptian antiquity, for most Renaissance thinkers the Chaldean history agreed with rather than contradicted scriptural chronology. Western knowledge of Babylonian history came chiefly from the Greek historian Callisthenes (360-28 BC), Aristotle’s  

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83 The authorities Sixtus Senensis named are in his Bibliotheca Sancta (1566), Book V. Benedictus Pererius’s work means his Commentariorum et Disputationum in Genesim (Lyons, 1606). See Raspa ed., Essayes, 132.  
84 Bodin, Method, 337.  
85 Bodin, Method, 320.  
86 Scaliger, Thesaurus temporum, Isagogici Canones, 310, quoted in Grafton, “Rise and Fall,” 172; also see Historical Chronology, 714.
disciple who went with Alexander on his eastern expedition. According to the Greek commentator Simplicius (490-560), when requested by Aristotle “to collect the antiquities and records of the Chaldeans,” Callisthenes “wrote back that he had diligently collected the Chaldean records and had found there the history of 1,903 years.” “This number,” Bodin observes, “fits the sacred history of Moses and Philo.” In fact, for Bodin, both Callisthenes and Moses “drew the truth from the purest sources, agreed so far as concerns a universal system of time.”

Goropius also holds that Callisthenes’s report provides “remarkable evidences of agreement between the Chaldeans and those whose computations rest on the Bible.” Scaliger maintains that “the Chaldean computation deviates very little from the Mosaic” as well.

Easy as it seems to accommodate the Chaldean and Egyptian antiquities to the biblical temporal system, Donne admits that “The Chineses vex us at this day, with irreconcilable accounts.” This remark raises three points. First, the eastern annals are not only singled out but also described with a strong verb, “vex.” Second, whereas histories of other ancient civilizations are set down in exact numbers, Chinese chronicles are cast in a disconcerting phrase, that is, “irreconcilable accounts.” While the verb “vex” connotes feelings of trouble and distress after a serious engagement with some disturbing

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89 Scaliger, *De emendatione* (1583), 202, quoted in Grafton, *Historical Chronology*, 264; for Renaissance attempts to synchronize the biblical and Babylonian timelines as is reported by Callisthenes see 262-67 of this work.
problems, the adjective “irreconcilable” signals frustrated endeavors. Together, they suggest an unsuccessful negotiation with the chronology problematic. Moreover, vex also implies an acute awareness that without reconciling the “irreconcilable” eastern antiquity, Scripture could not claim a universal jurisdiction. Third, the temporal phrase “at this day” indicates the topical urgency of the chronological issue around 1614 when the Essayes was written.

Donne’s attention to the chronological polemic was corroborated by his knowledge of Scaliger’s innovation. That Donne knew Scaliger’s chronology is supported by the presence of the 1583 edition of De emendatione in his library and by his annotation on its fly-leaf in the form of a Latin epigram:

To the Author.

Times, laws, rewards, and punishments, thou ‘art fain

To improve, friend Joseph; sure, thou’lt strive in vain;

The zealot crew has found the task too tough;

Leave them no worse than they are, and that’s enough.

J. Donne.90

The tone expressed in this epigram is that of disapproval and friendly suggestion. The

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term “friend Joseph” indicates that the disagreement is directed at the work not the author. Indeed, Donne might have personally known Scaliger through his close friend Henry Wotton (1568-1639). Wotton once befriended Casaubon who kept up a lengthy correspondence with Scaliger from 1594 onwards. Donne thinks that “friend Joseph” has certainly “[striven] in vain,” because he failed to “improve” “times, laws, rewards, and punishments” through, presumably, the effort to reform chronology. In addition to commenting on the general effect, Donne’s Latin epigram also alludes to contemporary responses to Scaliger’s chronological reformation—“the zealot crew has found the task too tough.” A possible referent of “the zealot crew” might be those committed Christians who found it hard to stomach Scaliger’s proleptic time. The last sentence is a caveat: it is “enough” for Scaliger to “leave them no worse than they are.” The third-person pronouns here could refer either to “the zealot crew” or the chronologers whose works Scaliger had taken upon himself to reform. In addition to the direct pithy comment in the poetic form, Sir Geoffrey Keynes says, “there is plenty of evidence in Donne’s copy of the book that he was interested in Scaliger’s work.”\(^{91}\)

**III: Chinese Chronology and Donne’s Apologetic Exegesis in the *Essayes* **

To understand Donne’s engagement with the controversy over Chinese antiquity, we should take a look at his interpretation of the scriptural system of time as it is represented in Genesis and Exodus. A chief objective of Donne’s biblical commentary is

\(^{91}\) Keynes, “Donne and Scaliger,” 108.
to prove that Scripture is “the last refuge” in establishing a universal timeline. To achieve this aim, he needs to justify scriptural chronology against the 58 alternative claims of time, especially the “strong oppositions” from the eight authoritative accounts. Though neither the Chinese nor any other chronology appears in Donne’s actual exegesis, the challenges they pose nevertheless serve as the invisible but powerful background to which the interpreter unconsciously refers.

The biblical exegesis featured in the Essayes was typical of Renaissance hermeneutics that prioritized the literal sense of Scripture. Ancient and medieval commentators largely followed the fourfold exegetical scheme proposed by John Cassian (d.435) who divided the “spiritual scientia” into “three genera,” that is, “tropologia, allegoria, and anagoge.” These three “spiritual” senses, together with the “literal,” constitute the fourfold expository framework. Most early and medieval commentators privileged the “allegorical” sense, but Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) and Nicholas of Lyra (1279-1340) came to realize the importance of the “literal” meaning. In the Renaissance, the literal sense was elevated to an unparalleled status by the Reformers and

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92 Essayes, 22.
94 Wood, Interpretation of the Bible, 76-84; Smalley, Study of the Bible, 83-106; and Preus, From Shadow to Promise, 27-66.
humanists.\textsuperscript{95} Don C. Allen remarks that since “the Bible was the center of Luther’s theology and the literal interpretation of the text was the beginning of all his thinking,”\textsuperscript{96} “the literal exposition was widely approved as the basic exposition by most of the exegetes of the Renaissance.”\textsuperscript{97} The interpretive principle Whitaker proposed was representative of the protestant hermeneutics, according to which “there is but one true, proper and genuine sense of scripture, arising from the words rightly understood, which we call the literal.”\textsuperscript{98} The literal sense was further promoted by the humanist “grammatical exegetes” such as Desiderius Erasmus (c.1467-1536) who “applied the philological to the scriptural text to the exclusion of mysticism or spiritual apologetics,” with “the exposition of accurate and literal meaning” as their typical “\textit{modus operandi}” and “grammar and philology” as their “\textit{apparatus criticus}.”\textsuperscript{99}

Donne was quite aware of the exegetical tradition outlined above, and following

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\textsuperscript{96} Allen, \textit{Legend of Noah}, 42-43. \\
\textsuperscript{97} Allen, \textit{Legend of Noah}, 68-69. \\
\textsuperscript{98} Whitaker, \textit{Disputation}, 404. \\
\end{flushleft}
the Reformers and humanists, he emphasized the primacy of the literal sense. Chanita Goodblatt rightly observes that “Donne’s continuous citing of such an array of textual authority bespeaks his participation in ‘a tradition of literal exposition originated in the Middle Ages and culminated in the great exegetical works of the Reformers.’”100 Donne claims that “the sense which should ground an assurance in Doctrinall things, should be the literall sense” (7:192), calling “the curious refining of the allegorical fathers” some “fine cobwebs to catch flies” or “strong cables by which we might anchor in all storms of disputation and persecution.”101 He states expressly in the *Essayes* that “we inherit the talents and travels of al Expositors,”102 and when commenting on Genesis, he declares pointedly that he is following “the Example of our late learned Reformers.”103 Although he opposes the philological practices to “excerpt and tear shapeless and insignificant rags of a word or two, from whole sentences, and make them obey their purpose in discoursing,” his extensive exegesis of names and numbers in the *Essayes* shows visible influence of the humanists.104

Donne does not privilege the literal at the expense of the metaphorical, though Dennis B. Quinn claims that “all Donne had in mind was the eschewing of nonliteral senses, with which allegory, tropology, and anagogy had become synonymous.”105

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101 *Essayes*, 46.
102 *Essayes*, 30.
103 *Essayes*, 21.
104 *Essayes*, 46.
reality, rather than “eschewing…nonliteral senses,” Donne attempts to articulate an exegetical principle that at once prioritizes and reconciles the literal with all the other senses. Since “to divers understandings there might be divers literal senses,” he says in the Essayes, to be “called literall is to distinguish it from the Morall, Allegoricall, and the other senses.”

Put differently, the other senses are but different “understandings” of the literal, an interpretation that recalls both Whitaker’s expository doctrine and Lyra’s theory of *duplex sensus literalis*. Whitaker maintains that “allegories, tropologies, and anagoges are not various senses, but various collections from one sense, or various applications and accommodations of that one meaning [the literal].”

For Lyra, a “[letter] can apply to a [second] literal sense which is just as literal as the first. In light of this, one should consider that the same letter at times has a double sense.”

By a second literal sense, Lyra means the various derivations of the first literal sense. Thus for Donne as well as Lyra and Whitaker, the literal is the primary matrix from which other senses derive.

In addition to re-asserting the literal, Renaissance also witnessed an attempt to re-conceptualize the “historical” sense of Scripture. Both early and medieval commentators tended to identify the historical with the mere literal or “grammatical”

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106 Essayes, 46.
107 Whitaker, Disputation, 404.
Historical exegesis assumed a new dimension in Protestant hermeneutics—it looked at biblical stories, not as allegorical and typological metaphors, but as real historical events. Debora K. Shuger remarks that when “Scaliger’s *De emendatione temporum* came out in 1583, Casaubon’s New Testament scholia in 1587—a new sensitivity to historical continuity developed, replacing the seamless fabric of typological time” and turning Scripture into “a historical document that both implies and elucidates late antique culture.”

Donne noticed this “new sensitivity to historical continuity” in biblical scholarship. Patrides points out that in the Renaissance “the acceptance of the historicity of the Mosaic account of creation is attested by the widespread persuasion that the world was created, as William Perkins estimated late in the sixteenth century, ‘between fiue thousand and sixe thousand yeres agoe’.”

Donne subscribes to this “widespread persuasion,” interpreting the literal sense as the “historicity” of Scripture as well. “Because we are utterly disprovided of any history of the World’s Creation,” he declares, “except we defend and maintain this Book of Moses to be Historical, and therefore literarrly to be interpreted.”

To interpret Genesis “literally” is to regard it as a “historical” document.

To treat Scripture as a historical text necessarily subjects it to the scrutiny of the chronological methodology that emphasizes the consistency of numerical evidence. To

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109 Whitaker, *Disputation*, 404.
112 *Essayes*, 21.
counteract accusations of chronological errors in Scripture, Donne insists on the
distinctive feature of the Mosaic history, that is, its allegorical signification, declaring that
“there is then in Moses, both history and precept.”¹¹³ In other words, Scripture represents
at once history and allegory—when literally interpreted, it features “history,” and when
allegorically approached, it conveys “precept.” In effect, the literal sense is often
expressed in precepts or “by allegories,” Donne argues, so that “in many places of
Scripture, a figurative sense is the literall sense” (6:62-63). Thus, he says in a sermon
preached on 1 Corinthians 15:29, “We [Anglicans] have a Rule, by which that sense will
be suspicious to us, which is, Not to admit figurative senses in interpretation of Scriptures,
where the literall sense may well stand” (7:193). Given this necessity of the allegorical
and its frequent coincidence with the literal sense, a chronological model that relies
largely on numbers and dates cannot adequately account for the Mosaic history. Things
would be much simpler, he says in his *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610), “if the errour were onely in
*Chronologie*, as to give Pope Nicholas a place in the Councell of *Carthage*, who was
dead before; Or in *Arithmeticke*, as when purposely he enumerates all the *Councels*, to
make the number lesse by foure.”¹¹⁴ But in truth, chronological lapses only indicate
something superficial and the deeper allegorical meaning goes beyond mere arithmetic
calculations.

As a distinctive expression of the metaphorical sense, spiritual “faith” proves the

¹¹³ *Essayes*, 21-22.
ideal model to interpret the fathomless “bottom” of the creation.\textsuperscript{115} For Donne, the exegetical principle that “a figurative sense is the literall sense” is especially pertinent to the study of Genesis. On the one hand, he suggests a literal approach, for in this book “there is danger in departing from the letter” (6:62). On the other hand, a mere literal exegesis proves inadequate because “the literall interpretation of successive days cannot subsist, where there are some dayes mention’d before the Creation of these Planets which made days.”\textsuperscript{116} But this pre-creation time can nevertheless be interpreted allegorically and addressed by faith. Donne defines faith as, in contrast to rational reasoning out of “Logick” or “Rhetorique,” a “Character, and Orindance which God hath imprinted in me” (7:95). He argues for the primacy of this divine seal in commenting on such scriptural tenets as the Resurrection and creation. To understand the Resurrection, “the roote and foundation thereof is in Faith; though Reason may chafe the wax, yet Faith imprints the seale,” since “the Resurrection is not a conclusion out of actuall Reason, but it is an article of supernaturall faith” (7:95). In like manner, “it is an article of our belief, that the world began.” So when interpreting Genesis, “we are not under the insinuations and mollifyings of perswasion, and conveniency; nor under the reach and violence of Argument, or Demonstration, or Necessity,” he argues, rather, we should subject its exegesis “under the Spirituall, and peaceable Tyranny, and easie yoke of sudden and

\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Essayes}, 22.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Essayes}, 38-39.
present Faith.”\textsuperscript{117} The inscrutable nature of the creation dictates that its account should go beyond both rational theorization and mathematical calculation—there is no way to imagine the world’s origin; never mind calculate its exact date.

Though inapplicable to Genesis, the chronological model cannot be easily refuted when used to interpret Exodus, a book in which numbers figure prominently. Since “the miracle of propagating” represented in Exodus “consists in the Number,” this book is easily challenged on chronological grounds. Faith can address pre-historical time, but it cannot account for events that happened in historical time and could be verified with physical evidence. Since the creation permits little room for our “reason” and “discourse” and “must be at once swallowed and devour’d by faith,” Donne observes, it is not so “apt” to stimulate us to great “Acts of Honour.” By comparison, we can be well affected by God’s delivery of those captivated Israelites, because such “miracles” “are somewhat more submitted to reason, and exercise and entertain our disputation, and spiritual curiosity by the way.”\textsuperscript{118} Thus, “though in our supreme Court in such cases” as “when profane Historie rises up against any place of Scripture, accusing it to Humane Reason, and understanding,” “the last Appeal” is “Faith,” Donne says, “yet Reason is her Delegate.” So the numbers in Exodus cannot be lightly dismissed with a spiritual faith—it must be intellectually engaged with reason. St. Augustine holds that “an argument aroused by an adversary” sometimes “turns out to be an opportunity for

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Essayes}, 19.

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Essayes}, 61.
Donne responds with the same rationale to those who question the “variety in Numbring” in Exodus, arguing that by this “variety” God means “his word should ensure and undergo the opinion of contradiction, or other infirmities, in the eyes of Pride (the Author of Heresie and Schism) that after all such dissections, & cribrations, and examinings of Hereticall adventures upon it, it might return from the furnace more refin’d, and gain luster and clearness by this vexation.” Engagement with charges of numerical inconsistency thus ends up only adding more “luster and clearness” to Scripture.

In addition to numbers, names constitute another major source of chronological lapses, especially in histories comprised of dynastic rules. Names are fundamental to maintaining the identity of a certain people, according to Bodin, so when they are “obliterated,” confusion occurs unavoidably in their chronology. Reliable chronology should be constructed according to “certain epoch or initial point of time,” Bodin asserts, and the very practice to “define[] time by the ages of kings is cause of chronological errors.” For instance, because of the loss of the names of some of their monarchs, the chronological systems derived from “the kings of Assyrians, Persians, and Egyptians” remain problematic. Though China did not appear in Bodin’s list, its long dynastic history as is recorded by Mendoza must have been viewed in the same light by early

119 Augustine, *City of God*, 650.
120 Essayes, 63-64.
modern Europeans.\textsuperscript{122}

Donne’s strategy to address the chronological confusion caused by numbers and names is to link them together. To counteract charges on nominal grounds, he seeks to establish the “certainty and constancy” of the names occurring in Exodus by comparing them with those corruptible and easily perishable “ethnic” or “heathen” names.\textsuperscript{123} God’s concern with names is everywhere in Scripture, he writes, since “How often in the Scripture is the word Name, for honour, fame, vertue? How often doth God accurse with abolishing the Name?” In particular, God shows special care with names in the book of exile. As he puts it, “in no language are Names so significant” as in Exodus, so much so that “if one consider diligently the senses of the Names register’d here, he will not so soon say, That the Names are in the History, as that the History is in the Names.” As a consequence, “wheresoever these Names shall be mentioned, the Miraculous History shall be call’d to memory; And wheresoever the History is remembered, their Names shall be refreshed.” While “ethnic” or “heathen” names “putrifie and perish,” Donne says, those “honour’d with a place in this book [Exodus] cannot perish, because the Book cannot.” He concedes that names in Exodus, just like numbers, “are diversely named” and “not always alike.” But he argues that although “error and variety in Names, may be pardonable in profane Histories, especially such as translate from Authors of other language,” the “one Author of all these books [of Scripture], the Holy Ghost” insures the

\textsuperscript{122} For Renaissance fascination with dynastic history see Grafton, \textit{Historical Chronology}, 70-71.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Essayes}, 51, 54.
“certainty and constancy” of the names in Exodus.\textsuperscript{124} By turning the tables, Donne
strikes home the point that, unlike profane histories, nominal lapses are simply
unpardonable in the Mosaic history. Paradoxically, the truth of names in Exodus comes
from their close alliance with numbers. Since God “commands His [people] to be
numbered, and to be numbered by name,” the Hebrew history closely follows “this Order,
of being first Named, and then Numbred; or first Numbred, and then Named.”\textsuperscript{125}
Donne’s argument is that, when separate, numbers and names might support profane
histories, but once combined, they symbolize a “Miraculous History” that has the
capacity to enfold all peoples in “One fold, and one shepherd.” Given this unity, the new
pagans such as the Chinese and Amerindians should belong to the Adamic family;
accordingly, their systems of time should conform to scriptural chronology.

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Essayes}, 50-51, 53.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Essayes}, 60.
Chapter IV Chinese Chronology and *Paradise Lost*:

Milton’s Apologetics and Global Cosmopolitanism

Not only Donne but also Milton was concerned with seventeenth-century chronological debate. The stake for both deeply committed Christians is the challenge Chinese antiquity posed to the authority of scriptural economy. The primacy of Scripture resides, first and forest, in its alleged priority. The rival timeline claimed by Chinese history, together with the credence it lent to the pre-Adamic doctrine, threatened to undermine this priority. Colin Kidd claims that the “study of universal chronology became one of the foremost disciplines of the early modern period. It tackled questions of fundamental importance to the identity of Christendom, and it attracted some of Europe’s foremost minds.”¹ For both Donne and Milton, the chronological issue is “of fundamental importance to the identity of Christendom.” But they approach the issue differently. Whereas Donne comes to grips with the chronological polemic in a theological treatise devoted to contemplating the first two books of Moses, Milton negotiates the anxiety this polemic caused by representing the Mosaic history in an epic poem. Despite the difference, however, an apologetic desire to defend the authority of the Adamic culture against competing claims of antiquity nevertheless lies behind the representations of Hebrew history in both *Essayes in Divinity* and *Paradise Lost*.

The conflict between Chinese antiquity and biblical chronology proved to be a

controversial issue in not only the early but also the middle of the seventeenth century. In his *Essayes*, Donne lists 58 different systems of time, and among the eight most popular ones he singles out Chinese antiquity, observing that “the Chineses vex us at this day, with irreconcilable accounts.”

In 1662, the Bishop of Worcester Edward Stillingfleet (1635-99) remarks in his *Origines sacrae* that “the most popular pretenses of the Atheists of our Age, have been the irreconcilableness of the account of Times in Scriptures with that of the learned and ancient Heathen Nations.”

One of these “learned and ancient Heathen Nations” was China, a powerful pagan empire once contemporary with Greece and Rome and which continued to exist alongside early modern Europe. In his “Histoire de la Chine,” the French philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623-62) puts the question bluntly, “which is the more credible of the two, Moses or China?”

That both Donne and Stillingfleet used the word “irreconcilable” to describe the clash between scriptural and profane chronologies indicates that the issue harassing thinkers in the 1610s remained unresolved in the 1660s.

As I have shown in the chapter on Donne and Chinese chronology, debates over eastern antiquity started with the publication of Mendoza’s *Mighty Kingdom of China* in 1585. Mendoza’s chronicling of about 200 Chinese kings from Vitey or Huangdi

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5 Mendoza records Chinese history in Book III, Chapter I of his *Mighty Kingdom of*
(2717-2599 BC) all the way to the Ming Emperor Longqing (1537-72) and Scaliger’s engagement with Mendoza’s account in his *De emendatione temporum* (1583, 1598) triggered a disputation over Chinese antiquity at the turn of the seventeenth century. This debate intensified when the Jesuit missionary Martino Martini (1614-61) published his *Sinicae historiae decas prima* in 1658. Unlike Mendoza’s brief relation and many misspellings, Martini’s extensive account, with detailed facts, precise numbers, and accurate names, provides compelling evidence for Chinese antiquity. Martini himself remarks that “there is hardly any nation in the whole World to be found comparable to the Chinois for their certainty in Chronology.” The Dutch scholar Isaac Vossius (1618-89) constantly used such superlative adjectives as “accuratissima” (most accurate) and “certissima” (most certain) to describe eastern antiquity.

Chinese history as is recorded by Martini clashed with some major biblical dates...
set down by Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) in his *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (1650-54), the most authoritative work on chronology by the time *Historiae sinicae* came into press. The English biographer William Winstanley (c.1628-98) noted that Ussher’s work was “acknowledged by the learnedst Men of this Age for the admirable Method and Worth of it, not to have hitherto been parallel’d by any preceding writers.”

The orientalist Humphrey Prideaux (1648-1724) considered Ussher’s *Annales* “the exactest and most perfect work of chronology that has been published.”

Ussher dated the creation in 4004 BC, the Noachian flood in 2349 BC, and the arrival of Abraham in Canaan in 2126 BC. *Sinicae historiae* traces Chinese imperial lineage from King Fuxi (2952 BC) to Emperor Aidi (7-1 BC), and it relates a Chinese flood occurring around 2258-2207 BC. The historical data Martini revealed challenged the flood and Abraham’s rule dated by Ussher. The Chinese deluge was only about 100 years after the biblical one fixed by Ussher, which indicates that the Noachian cataclysm was either the very eastern flood or only a regional occurrence. Further, Chinese sources also “raised doubts about the antiquity of the Kingdom of Israel and its precedence over the pagan

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The rules of both Fuxi and Yao (2356-2255BC), the emperor who reigned during the flood, called into question Abraham’s patriarchal status.

Ussher adopted Scaliger’s Julian system in his *Annales*, and the discrepancy between Ussher and Martini’s dates also cast doubt upon the most advanced chronological theory in the Renaissance. Scaliger’s chronological system proved to be a double-edged framework. On the one hand, his invention of a pre-creation “proleptic time” to accommodate the Egyptian history he encountered in part I of Eusebius’s *Chronicle* entails an implicit endorsement of Egyptian antiquity. On the other hand, if proleptic time could address the history of Egypt, it could surely accommodate Chinese chronology too. This was actually the reading of Isaac de La Peyrère. As Anthony Grafton puts it, “His [Scaliger’s] disapproval [of Chinese annals] is clear enough,” but “one clever reader of his work, Isaac de la Peyrère would use the Chinese chronology Scaliger laid out, only slightly misquoted, as one of the bases for his own attack on the chronological authority of the Bible.”

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14 Grafton, *Historical Chronology*, 405-06; see La Peyrere’s own statement of his application of Scaliger’s theory in *A Theological Systeme upon that Presupposition that Men were before Adam* (London, 1656), 17ff. For La Peyrere’s radical theory and its connection with the chronological issue see Wetsel, “Histoire de la Chine,” 205-06.
chronological theory, the authority of Ussher’s chronicles seems especially tenuous.

This chapter considers Milton’s representation of the biblical account of time in
Paradise Lost in light of the chronological debate heightened by Martini’s Sinicae
historiae.\textsuperscript{15} I argue that the threat that Chinese antiquity posed both to scriptural systems
of time and to Adamic precedence shape the arrangement and nature of Milton’s
treatment of human history in his epic poem. The critical issue I raise here is whether
Milton was aware of the challenge Chinese antiquity mounted to scriptural timeline and
how he negotiated this challenge in his dramatic exegesis of Hebrew history.\textsuperscript{16} The
Chinese context, I shall show, provides new insight into the apologetic agenda pointedly
articulated in Paradise Lost, that is, to “assert Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways
of God to men” (1.25-6). For mid-century England, China represented an at once enticing
and dangerous other. Robert Markley rightly claims that “The destin’d Walls / Of
Cambalu” “serve a complex double function” for Milton: “they stand synedochemically for
the riches that will help Europeans overcome the curses of sin and scarcity and they pose
a formidable challenge to Eurocentric visions of history, politics, and theology.”\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} All quotes about Milton’s poetry come from John Milton, Complete Poems and Major
about Milton’s prose work are from The Complete Prose Works of John Milton, ed. Don
and cited parenthetically by volume and page number.

\textsuperscript{16} On Milton and biblical exegesis see Evans, J. M. Evans, Paradise Lost and the Genesis
Tradition (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968); Patrides, Milton and the Christian Tradition; and
Regina Schwartz, Remembering and Repeating: Biblical Creation in Paradise Lost

\textsuperscript{17} Markley, The Far East and the English Imagination, 71.
Chinese chronology, in particular, posed a great threat, to use Henry Oldenburg’s words to Milton, to “the antiquity of the Mosaic and Adamite epoch” (YP7:491). However, rather than “sidestep[ping] the implications of Chinese antiquity that Jesuit commentators such as Martini and Matteo Ricci (whom Milton no doubt encountered in the writings of Samuel Purchas) treat forthrightly” as Markley claims, Milton was one of those “foremost minds” who, as Kidd says, undertook to “tackle[] questions of fundamental importance to the identity of Christendom.” I am not claiming, however, Milton’s direct engagement with Chinese chronology. Rather, what I am arguing is that, Chinese antiquity resonates in both his overall deployment of biblical time and in his synoptic representation of world histories in *Paradise Lost*. Though denying Milton’s concern with eastern chronology, Markley nevertheless admits that “his [Milton’s] rejection of Jesuit accounts of China’s history implicitly testifies to his awareness of the problems they pose.”

History appears in two general forms in *Paradise Lost*: an invisible comprehensive system of time and a graphic profile of world histories. Milton represents both forms with the chronological polemic in mind. The chronological background brings to light, above all, Milton’s image of a unifying temporal framework based on scriptural chronology. Much has been written on the time scheme in *Paradise Lost*, but rather than

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a systematic timeline, critics tend either to deny a temporal paradigm at all or focus on “small-scale readings of chronology.”

Grant MacColley’s 31-day, Galbraith M. Crump’s 28-day, and Alastair Fowler and Gunnar Qvarnström’s 33-day timelines, though aiming at a uniform paradigm, speak to Milton’s microcosmic rather his macrocosmic architecture of time. Anthony K. Welch explicitly claims that “Milton rejects a single overarching chronology in favor of several” or “a set of small-scale chronological templates.” In fact, what Milton attempts to set up in his epic poem, instead of local time frames or several timelines, is an abstract unifying framework. Ussher dates human history from the creation (4004 BC) to the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD). By contrast, Milton’s epic poem traces history from an abysmal eternity to an apocalyptic future, for

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22 Welch, “Reconsidering Chronology,” 14, 15.
“in this light of eternity alone, is the Works of God seen aright, in the entire piece, in the
whole design, from the beginning to the end.”\textsuperscript{23} George W. Whiting notes that “Milton
was not interested in such detail” as “the exact date of the creation of the world and the
number of years in each period.”\textsuperscript{24} Milton’s privileging of general over particular time
arises from apologetic considerations, one of which is the chronological issue. An
overarching framework allows him both to establish the universality of scriptural
chronology and to incorporate alternative accounts of time.

The comprehensive timeline Milton represents in his epic poem is marked by two
distinctive yet interconnected epochs: the creation and the fall.\textsuperscript{25} Whereas the creation
distinguishes between \textit{pre-creation} and \textit{post-creation} time, the fall differentiates
\textit{pre-historical} from \textit{historical} time that marks the birth of human history. By pre-creation
time I mean the unfathomable period before the creation, an epoch represented by Milton
in the exaltation of the Son, the heavenly war, and the fall of the rebellious angels. Apart
from pre-creation time, Milton also presents two other sub-species of pre-historical time,
that is, \textit{heavenly time} and the \textit{paradisiacal time} Adam and Eve enjoyed in the
prelapsarian Eden. Accordingly, post-creation time refers to what happens after the
creation of Adam and Eve, and it includes both paradisiacal and historical time. Thus

\textsuperscript{23} Peter Sterry, \textit{A Discourse of the Freedom of the Will} (London, 1675), 166.
\textsuperscript{24} George W. Whiting, \textit{Milton and This Pedant World} (Austin: University of Texas Press,
1958), 183.
\textsuperscript{25} The Noachian flood was also a hotly contested point in seventeenth-century
chronological controversy, but since it is a complex topic that requires a separate
engagement, this study focuses only on the creation and fall.
what distinguishes Milton’s representation of scriptural chronology is his identification of pre-historical, especially pre-creation time, an apologetic strategy that enables him at once to assert the primacy of the biblical timeline and to refute Scaliger’s “proleptic” time that seemed to support Egyptian and Chinese antiquities. Milton’s point is clear: since profane histories start to date from historical time, the pre-historical time unique to Hebrew history can assimilate any system of time. However, most scholars confine Milton’s temporal image to post-creation time, neglecting his extensive account of the pre-creation epoch. Although some do touch on “the long Paradisal time,” they do not associate it with the chronological issue. Milton’s dramatization of Hebrew history comprising several distinctive yet interconnected epochs, I claim, allows him at once to defend the priority of biblical time and to establish a unifying framework that can accommodate rival claims of antiquity.

Milton’s synoptic representation of world histories and empires in Book XI bespeaks a global cosmopolitanism to engage cultural differences, Chinese antiquity included. Whereas a comprehensive historical scroll aims to represent a single timeline,


27 Welch, “Reconsidering Chronology,” 8; and Helen Gardner, A Reading of “Paradise Lost” (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 39.
the close-up segment unfolds to show how this temporal matrix contains and assimilates histories of different lands and peoples. In this book Milton presents an overview of “all Earth’s Kingdoms and thir Glory” (11.384) through the “Visions of God” (11.377), that is, the perspectives both of the divine historian Michael and the first patriarch Adam.

Corresponding to the cosmic scope of pre-historical time, historical time is showcased on a global stage featuring a host of geographical names, places that symbolize, as Julie S. Peters says, “the whole expanse[s]” both of human history and geography. To encompass a vast array of profane histories within Adam’s prophetic vision shows that “alternative chronologies” are far from “superfluous” for Milton as William Poole claims. Instead, this historical encompassing suggests both the indispensable place of “alternative chronologies” in a universal timetable and Milton’s cosmopolitan spirit to engage cultural diversities. In other words, rival claims of antiquity help to reveal a new dimension of the apologetic agenda of Paradise Lost—Milton’s global cosmopolitanism to find commonality and embrace differences. Chinese antiquity is numbered among the pagan histories that need to be incorporated into the biblical timeline. In Adam’s survey, “the Seat / Of mightiest Empire, from the destin’d Walls / Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can” to “Paquin of Sinaean Kings” (11.386-90), comes first and foremost. The pride of place Milton accords to China, the superlative epithet “mightiest” he uses to describe the

Far Eastern empires, and his so-called “two Chinas” represented respectively by
“Cambalu” and “Paquin”—all these, I argue indicate Milton’s recognition of, and
apologetic negotiation with, Chinese antiquity. Simply put, Chinese chronology
constitutes an invisible but powerful motivation behind Milton’s synopsis of world
histories.

One chief reason of Markley’s denial of Milton’s concern with Chinese
chronology is its affiliation “Euhemerism,” an approach to history originated from the
Greek historian Euhemerus (330-260 BC) who interpreted gods and demigods as humans
deified for some symbolic purposes. For Markley, Martini’s work belongs to the
euhemeristic historiography represented by Sir Walter Raleigh, Henry Issacson, and Isaac
Newton, a tradition Milton “considers both theologically and politically suspect.” In
fact, by the time Milton wrote, the euhemeristic methodology had already been called
into serious question, and Milton himself exhibited considerable skepticism towards
euhemerism in his *The History of Britain* (YP5:4-5, 8-9). So contrary to what Markley
claims, Martini’s *Sinicae historiae* is far from a euhemeristic work, since it features,
instead of gods or demigods, sage kings of flesh and blood, such as Fuxi, Yao, Shun, and
Yu, wise men whose reigns and achievements were documented as physical and historical
facts. The ethnographical rather than legendary feature of the eastern history has been
well noted by Ricci and Trigault: “their[Chinese] history of more than four thousand

years…really is a record of good deeds done on behalf of their country and for the common good. The same conclusion might also be drawn from the books of rare wisdom of their ancient philosophers. These books are still extant and are filled with most salutary advice on training men to be virtuous.” For instance, King Fuxi was noted for both his creation of Chinese pictorial characters and the composition of Yijing or the Book of Changes, a work that seeks to explain the creation and change of the world through divination and mathematical principles. The much-applauded feats of King Yao in channeling the Chinese flood found its way into both Martini and Webb’s works. Milton is too sophisticated a thinker to classify as mythical such a clearly defined cultural and geographical place as China, to regard Martini’s patently ethnographical work as euhemeristic, or to appeal to a “theologically and politically suspect” framework to confront a controversial problem that has aroused the curiosity of, as he says, “too many” Oxford intellectuals. (YP7:492)

Milton’s attention to Chinese culture and chronology has not received the critical attention it deserves. Markley’s focus on mercantile trade neglects the cultural complexity of Milton’s image of China, and Walter H.S. Lim’s orientalist approach that

32 Ricci-Trigault, 93.
33 Martini, Sinicae historiae, 39-40, and Webb, Historical Essay, 60.
presupposes the superiority of European culture ignores traces of genuine and reciprocal communications. Nor can the nationalist and colonialist models prevailing in Milton studies adequately address his image of China. Ulbrich Beck defines a nationalist approach as the attempt to “analyze[] societies on the assumption that they are nationally structured” and to presuppose that “the nation-state creates and controls the ‘container’ of society.” However, in an age of increasing global interaction, Beck argues, “cultural ties, loyalties and identities have expanded beyond national borders and systems of control.”

David Loewenstein and Paul Stevens hold that the nationalist model is especially pertinent to “debates about the nature and definition of nationalism in Milton and his England,” because it can effectively address “what Milton of *Areopagitica* might consider ‘brotherly dissimilitudes’ and ‘neighboring difference’” (YP2:555, 565). But given the broader backdrop of early modern globalization and the cosmic scope of Adam’s historical survey, by “brotherly dissimilitudes” and “neighboring difference” Milton might have also meant disparities of a global dimension, that is, the otherness represented by people “from the Pillars of Hercules all the way to the farthest boundaries of India,” that is, the Far East. (YP4:554-55) Meanwhile, Milton’s portrayal of China also modifies

37 Loewenstein and Stevens, eds. *Early Modern Nationalism*, 12.
his alleged colonialism. Signifying “the conquest and control of other people’s land and
goods,” colonialism, like orientalism, also assumes the superior force of western
Europeans. Pompa Banerjee and J. Martin Evans read colonial implications in Milton’s
representations of eastern and western Indians, but the colonial framework cannot
sufficiently articulate his response to the unique challenges posed by the Far East, a
region deemed by Milton himself “the Seat / Of mightiest Empire.”

Rather than the orientalist, nationalist, or colonist frameworks, I adopt the
globalization interpretive model to approach Milton’s image of China and its association
with the chronological controversy in Paradise Lost. According to Joseph Nye,
“Globalism describes the reality of being interconnected, while globalization captures the
speed at which these connections increase—or decrease.” Adam’s survey of world
histories, I claim, suggests a globalization that interconnects and incorporates almost all the
known parts of the world within the purview of the biblical patriarch. Peters also
approaches Paradise Lost from a global perspective. But whereas Peters focuses on
Milton’s conception of a global legal order, I study the global cosmopolitanism Milton

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38 Loombia, *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism*, 8.
142-65; and J. Martin Evans, *Milton’s Imperial Epic: “Paradise Lost” and the Discourse
of Colonialism* (Ithaca, NY; Cornell UP, 1996). On other works on Milton’s colonialism
3-21; Jyotsna G. Singh, *Colonial Narratives/Cultural Dialogues: “Discoveries” of India
in the Language of Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1996); Balachandra Rajan, *Under
Western Eyes: India from Milton to Macaulay* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1999); and
Shankar Raman, *Framing “India”: The Colonial Imaginary in Early Modern Culture*
exhibites in his images of world histories and empires. Milton’s references to America in his prose works and his attention to Moscovia and China in *A Brief History of* helped *Moscovia* (1671) indicate both a global horizon and a cosmopolitan spirit to engage the other.\(^{41}\) This horizon and spirit, I shall demonstrate, are also expressed in Adam’s overview of “all Earth’s Kingdoms and thir Glory.” Though almost all the known parts of the world contribute to shaping Milton’s global cosmopolitanism, I focus on the part played by the Far East.

### I: Martini’s *Sinicae historiae* and Seventeenth-century Chronological Debate

The historical date offered in Martini’s *Sinicae historiae* clashed with both the timelines in Ussher’s chronology and those set in the Latin Vulgate and Greek Septuagint bibles. Martini records Chinese history from the rule of Fuxi to the Western Han Dynasty (206BC-9AD). As is pointed out by David E. Mungello, Martini’s chronological table largely agreed with that set down by the Chinese themselves in the modern times.\(^{42}\)

When summarizing Europe’s century-long preoccupation with Chinese antiquity, the German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) drew special attention to Martini’s work, which contained a fair account of early imperial reigns the Chinese had established.

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\(^{41}\) For Milton’s references to America see YP1:585; 1:881; 1:802.

\(^{42}\) Mungello, *Curious Land*, 132
them… [T]he chronology begins with Fuxi in 2952 BCE, which was troubling to many readers of Martini’s work, because James Ussher’s Biblical chronology had been published only a few years before and had persuaded many that creation had taken place in 4004 BCE, and the Noachian flood in 2349 BCE.43

Leibniz’s “troubling” echoes Donne and Stillingfleet’s “irreconcilable,” and both terms denote the disturbances caused by the conflict between Chinese and scriptural systems of time. By Ussher’s chronology, the creation occurred in 4004 BC and the flood in 2349BC, a temporal scheme that conformed to the dates set in the Vulgate though contradicting those listed in the Septuagint—the creation (5200 BC) and the flood (2957 BC).44 Ussher’s dates proved especially vulnerable to the challenge posed by Chinese antiquity due to the contraction in the biblical cannon itself, a discrepancy expressly pointed out by the English theologian William Whitaker. In his *A Disputation on Holy Scripture against the Papists*, Whitaker notes that “the Greek books reckon 2242 years from Adam in the beginning of the world to the flood,” but “in the Hebrew books we see that there were no more than 1656.” Thus, Whitaker concludes, “the Greek calculation exceeds the Hebrew by 586 years.”45 The temporal framework set up in the Vulgate is apparently unable to contain Chinese antiquity. Fuxi’s rule (2952 BC) is 603 years prior to the flood fixed by

45 Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture Against the Papists*, 121.
Ussher (2349 BC). Thus either there would be 2259 (603 plus 1656) years between Adam and Noah or Fuxi was numbered among those “long-lived pre-diluvian Patriarchs whose regularly recorded ages and generations provided accurate milestones back to the Creation.”

Either case calls scriptural authority directly into question. Also, the close proximity of the Chinese cataclysm (c. 2258-2207 BC) to the Noachian flood (2349 BC) plainly challenges its universality. Nor can the dates of the Septuagint provide convincing chronological evidence against, as Donne says, charges from profane histories. As C. A. Patrides points out, “to have accepted the Septuagint’s chronology involved the inevitable conclusion that by the time of the Renaissance the world was, at the very least, 6500 years old—an obvious impossibility in view of the tradition that the world would end on or before its 6000th year.”

The conflict between Chinese and scriptural timeframes gave rise to a hot debate over Martini’s Sinicae historiae. To disentangle himself from a controversial issue, the Jesuit historian himself discredited the strict authenticity of Chinese antiquity. But despite his disclaimer, most of Martini’s contemporaries considered him a Chinese apologist or at least an objective ethnologist, for, as David Wetsel puts it, “in the course of his exposition of the Chinese chronologies, Martini often comes off more as an ethnologist than as a Christian apologist.” In fact, Wetsel says, “Martini’s real attitude

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48 See more on this topic in Mungello, Curious land, 124-27.
49 Martini, Sinicae historiae, 26, 27.
toward the Chinese pretensions to great antiquity is difficult to assess. Often, he simply observes that, were the Chinese figures correct, it would be necessary to revise radically the European version of history.” 50 Wetsel’s remarks are corroborated by Martini’s own contemporaries. In his *Dissertatio de vera ætate mundi* (1659), Vossius observes that “the Interpreter [Martini] of the *Chinique Chorography*, a man that very well understood himself, writ far more moderately of the perfections of this people, than he thought.” 51 Webb was more outspoken, asserting that if Martini who had “in a manner from his cradle to his grave studied their [Chinese] Antiquities…written what he thought, and declar[ed] his mind plainly,” there should have been less doubt about the eastern chronology. 52 The mid-century chronological disputation arose chiefly from this perception of the objectivity of Martini’s work.

The mid-seventeenth century witnessed various attempts to reconcile Chinese antiquity with scriptural chronology. In chapter 47 of his *Artificia Hominum, Admiranda Naturae in Sina et Europa* (1655), Adam Preyel deals with the very incompatibility between “Chronologia sinae” and the Mosaic history. 53 Whereas Preyel claims the priority of Chinese history, Brian Walton (1600-61) seeks to “synchronize” eastern and biblical timelines in his *Polyglot Bible* (1657). 54 Vossius was the most explicit Chinese

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51 Vossius, *Dissertatio de vera ætate mundi* (1659), 45; and Webb, *Historical Essay*, 58.  
apologist, for he expressly called the Chinese “a race of men by far the most skilled in
letters of all the peoples than ever were,” and who “preserve a continued History
compiled from their monuments, and annual exploits of four thousand five hundred years.
Writers they have more antient than even Moses himself.”55 But in spite of this eulogy,
Vossius nevertheless insisted on the primacy of Hebrew history, trying to accommodate
eastern antiquity by insisting on a Septuagint-based chronology in his De septuaginta
interpretibus (1661). In addition, Vossius famously disputed with the Leiden historian
Georg Horn (1620-70) over Chinese chronology.56 Despite his initial disapproval, Horn
ultimately admitted the authenticity of Martini’s account in his Arca Noae (1666).57

Webb stood out as the most adamant defender of Martini’s Sinicae historiae. For
Webb, Martini “in his own thoughts, had an higher opinion of this people [the Chinese],
than he deemed fitting to be vulgarly made known.” Webb corroborates this high estimate
by citing the Jesuit missionary’s own discussion of his sources.58 Martini himself writes
that “the History of it by the Chinois themselves even from all Antiquity written,
comprehendeth almost three thousand years before the birth of CHRIST, as more
evidently by the Epitomy and Chronology out of their Annals appears.”59 Also, the Jesuit
historian declares that his work “epitomized their [Chinese] History from their Original

56 For works yielded out of this controversy see van Kley, “Europe’s ‘Discovery’ of
China,” 364, no. 18.
57 Georg Horn, Arca Noae sive historia imperiorum et regnorum (Leiden, 1666).
59 Webb, Historical Essay, 47.
Annals, and innumerable their other Books, yet extant even at this day amongst them from their first beginning to be a Nation." 60 Further, Martini’s description of the manner in which the Chinese composed their chronicles also suggests a trust in their authenticity. Martini notes that “it is unlawfull for any but the Historiographer Royal to intermeddle therewith, and criminal also, for the Writer of the succeeding times, to alter the preceding History.” 61 This strict supervision in history compiling described by Martini, Webb argues, is confirmed by Jean Nieuhoff (1618-72), steward to the 1655-57 Dutch embassy to Beijing. In his An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham Emperour of China (1669), Nieuhoff relates that “The Emperours of China”

have evermore laboured to have the Annals of their Empire written by the most learned of all their philosophers, whom they chuse and oblige to that end, which makes this people glory, that there is nothing that surpasseth the truth of their Histories, and particularly those which are written from the two thousand, two hundred, and seventh year before the birth of Christ. 62

This rigorous surveillance over history writing insures the unparalleled “certainty” of

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60 Webb, Historical Essay, 50; see Martini, Sinicae Historiae, “Ad Lectorem.”
61 Webb, Historical Essay, 158; for Martini’s own statement see Sinicae Historiae, “Ad Lectorem,” and 10.
62 Webb, Historical Essay, 158.
Chinese antiquity. Given the authenticity of Chinese history as is verified by both Martini and Nieuhoff, Webb claims, we should “make great use of Martinius his Authority.”

Another issue closely linked with the chronology polemic is the debate over the primitive status of Chinese language. The connection is crystal clear: if Chinese language was, as Webb asserts, “the Primitive Tongue, which was common to the whole world before the flood,” then the antiquity of its history should be conceded. The French Universalist Jean Bodin argued for the pertinence of language to the study of ethnic origins. Since “the primary origin of all races ought to be attributed to the people from whom the idioms flow,” Bodin claims, one of the “proof of origins” lies in “the old roots in language” or “the linguistic traces.” So confusion of names constitutes a major source of chronological errors, Bodin explains, for instance,

the Persians called the leaders of the Persians and the Assyrians by names different from those the Greeks used, and the Hebrews used still others. From these the Egyptians also differed, for each wished to retain the force and purity of their own idiom. Sometimes the names were even obliterated. In this way were created problems about the kings of Assyrians, Persians, and Egyptians, from

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63 Martini, Sinicae historiae, 10.
64 Webb, Historical Essay, 50.
65 Webb, Historical Essay, 77,
which the system of chronology was derived.  

Put another way, the history of a race is inextricably tied with its language, and the confusion of language leads inevitably to misplaced chronology. The inseparable relation of language and chronology complicated seventeenth-century controversy over Chinese antiquity. The primitive feature of Chinese “real” characters tended to corroborate the authenticity of its chronology. In his *The Advancement of Learning*, Francis Bacon remarks that “it is the use of China, and the kingdoms of the high Levant to write in Characters Real, which express neither letters nor words in gross, but Things or Notions.”  

Bacon’s “real” characters proved a major inspiration of Renaissance language reform. Whereas the Primitivists represented by the two German thinkers Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) and Johann H. Alsted (1588-1638) evoked Bacon to assert the priority of the language Adam spoke in Eden, the Universalists such as John Wilkins (1614-72) and George Dalgarno (1626-87) resorted to the “real” character thesis to propose an artificial *lingua franca*.  

Webb went a step further, declaring unambiguously

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the primacy of the Chinese language. In fact, the eastern language had caused such widespread influence upon Renaissance linguistic innovation that the Royal Society appointed a special committee in 1668 to check its efficacy as a universal lexicon. Among the members of this *ad hoc* committee were such notable thinkers as Robert Boyle, Christopher Wren, John Wallis, and Robert Hooke. The debate over the primitive status of Chinese language served to add fuel to the disputation over its antique history.

II: Milton’s Knowledge of the Chronological Controversy

Milton was aware of the seventeenth-century chronological debate incited by Martini’s *Sinicae historiae*. In a letter to Milton dated June [?] 1656, Oldenburg says,

I believe that you have already read the reply which Maresius has made to the defender of the pre-Adamites, to whom a certain Martini, a fellow-countryman sent to Rome as agent of the Chinese mission, will shortly undertake a rejoinder. For this man reports, in a preface to a book which he has published about the tartar war, that he has brought back with him very old books of Chinese history and calendars leading with extraordinary accuracy from the very flood of Noah; and thence he promises to reconcile Chinese chronology with that which our

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sacred writings record, than which nothing could better protect the antiquity of the Mosaic and Adamite epoch. (YP7:491)

The book about the “tartar war” Oldenburg mentions is Martini’s *De Bello Tartarico Historia* that appeared in Rome in 1654.\(^{71}\) One year later, the Dutch cartographer Joan Blaeu (1596-1673) published Martini’s *Novus Atlas Sinensis* as volume VI of his *Atlas maior* in Amsterdam.\(^{72}\) Both *Tartarico* and *Atlas Sinensis* put forward propaganda of *Sinicae historiae*. This is why, as Oldenburg notes, even before its formal publication in 1658 in Munich, there had been much speculation about the Jesuit’s work on Chinese ancient history. The affirmative tone in Oldenburg’s statement that “I believe that you have already read” indicates knowledge of Milton’s attention to the chronology issue.

Two interconnected polemics stand out in Oldenburg’s epistle. The first is the chronological controversy signaled in Martini’s preface to *Tartarico*, that is, the conflict between Chinese chronology and “that which our scared writings record.” According to Oldenburg, Martini “promise[d],” with his book on Chinese antiquity, to “reconcile” eastern and scriptural chronologies and thereby “better protect the antiquity of the Mosaic and Adamite epoch.” Hence lies the second polemic touched on by Oldenburg—the

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\(^{71}\) Martini’s *Tartarico* was reprinted over 20 times before 1710. It was translated into English in 1655 under the title of *The Conquest of the Great and Most Renowned Empire of China by the Invasion of the Tartars*, and contained as an appendix to Semedo’s *Monarchy of China*.

“pre-Adamites” thesis proposed by La Peyrère in his *Prae-Adamitae* (1655), a radical doctrine that directly challenged the “Adamite epoch.”73 La Peyrère’s theory proved so heretical that it attracted nineteen refutations in 1656 alone, and the writer himself was forced to recant through conversion to Catholicism within one year after his work saw print.74 Since the French theologian Samuel Desmarests or Maresius (1599-1673) was “La Peyrère’s strongest opponent,” his *Refutatio fabulae praeadamiticae* (1656) should be numbered among those refutations.”75

Chinese chronology appeared as a double-edged tool that could at once bolster and counteract La Peyrère’s heretical thesis. Paul Cornelius observes that “conflicting sacred and profane chronologies gave evidence that the early dynasties of these countries [China included] had existed, and the early rulers of these countries had lived, in antediluvian times.”76 La Peyrère himself claimed the Chinese source of his theory, arguing that

Hebrew history “is wonderfully reconciled with all prophane Records whether ancient or

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73 La Peyrère’s *Prae-Adamitae* (Amsterdam, 1655) or *Men before Adam* (London, 1656) was the first part of his *A Theological Systeme upon that Presupposition that Men were before Adam* (London, 1656). Queen Christina of Sweden paid for the publication of *Prae-Adamitae* in 1655. For La Peyrère’s theory see Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère*; 26-41; Poole, “Seventeenth-century Preadamism, and an Anonymous English Preadamist”; and Philip Almond, “Adam, Pre-Adamites, and Extra-Terrestrial Beings in Early Modern Europe,” *Journal of Religious History* 30.2 (2006):163-74.


75 Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère*, 34.

new, to wit, those of the Caldeans, Egyptians, Sycthians, and Chinensians.”77 If scholars conceded Chinese antiquity, it was but a short step to accept the pre-Adamic thesis, which is why Martini believed that the eastern chronology could be elicited to refute “the defender of the pre-Adamites.” Martini, Oldenburg writes, “will shortly undertake a rejoinder” to Maresius’s “reply” with evidence from the eastern history, a response that can “reconcile” Chinese and scriptural chronologies and thereby “protect the antiquity of the Mosaic and Adamite epoch.”

As is shown in the word “reconcile,” Oldenburg and Milton, like Donne, Stillingfleet, and Leibniz, were also concerned with the “irreconcilableness” of Chinese chronology. Milton’s concern can be seen from his reply to Oldenburg dated June 25 1656. In this letter, Milton confirms the “doubtless” eagerness a mere “promise[]” from the Jesuit historian has provoked, especially among Oxford intellectuals, as he states:

Meanwhile you yourself rightly observe that there are too many there [in Oxford] who by their empty quibbling contaminate both the divine and the human…That ancient Chinese calendar, from the flood on, which you say is promised by the Jesuit Martini, is doubtless eagerly anticipated because of its novelty; but I do not see what authority or support it could add to the Mosaic books. (YP7:492)

This response indicates considerable knowledge of the chronology polemic. For Milton,

77 La Peyrère, Theological Systeme (1656), 18; and Popkin, Isaac La Peyrère, 47-48.
it is out of pure “novelty” that people “eagerly anticipated” Martini’s work, because he himself could not see “what authority or support” Chinese antiquity would “add to the Mosaic books.” The doubt implied in the statement that “I do not see” is twofold: the skepticism is either directed at Oxford scholars or at Martini’s promise of his book on Chinese antiquity. Oxford intellectuals are expecting to find in Martini’s treatise evidence that can corroborate the Mosaic calendar. But Milton for his part cannot “see” the ground of this hope, which might suggest that he considers Chinese chronology either unreliable or challenging rather than supporting the biblical timeline. But it is most likely that Milton discredits Chinese antiquity because of the credence it lent to the pre-Adamic doctrine, an association apparently much on Oldenburg’s mind.78 So Milton’s comments, instead of showing that “he was not much interested in the matter” or that “alternative chronologies are branded as superfluous,”79 signal that he did reflect upon the chronological issue brought up by Oldenburg. Even if Milton was skeptical whether Chinese chronology could “add” any “authority or support” to the Mosaic books, he had most likely felt obliged to justify his position against “too many” anticipants of Martini’s work.

78 Oldenburg’s next extant letter (late 1656) tried to draw another response from Milton on the chronological issue, but Milton’s reply did not survive. Poole, “Milton and Science,” 22. Milton’s disapproval of the pre-Adamic thesis could have something to do with Claudius Salmasius (1588-1653), his reputed adversary in the regicide debate. In his De Armis Climactericis (1648), Salmasius presents some astronomical and astrological materials that corroborate La Peyrère’s thesis. La Peyrère wrote to thank Salmasius for researching on behalf of “mes pre-Adamites.” Mentioned by La Peyrère in his letter to De La Mare dated June 1660; quoted in Popkin, Isaac La Peyrère, 48.

79 YP7:491; and Poole, “Milton and Science,” 22.
Milton’s attention to the chronology debate manifested in his correspondence with Oldenburg was supported by his enthusiasm for Byzantine chronological works expressed in his epistle to Emeric Bigot dated March 24, 1657. Oldenburg’s words apparently set Milton seriously considering the chronology problematic or refreshing an old concern. Nine months after receiving Oldenburg’s letter, Milton wrote to Bigot, asking his addressee to buy him some works by “Byzantine Historians.” (YP 7:498)

Among the seven historians mentioned by Milton, four signal his interest in the chronological issue at this particular point of his life.\(^{80}\) Constantine Manasses’s (d.1187) *Epitome of History* is a metrical chronicle of the world from the creation to 1081 AD, and Michael Glycas’s (c.1118-1200) *Annals* starts from the creation to the death of Alexiss I Commenus (1118). The third chronological treatise requested by Milton was St. Theophanes’s *Chronography* (810-15), a work that deals with the accession of Diocletian (284) down to Michael I (813). St. Theophanes’s work is a continuation of his friend Syncellus’s *Extract of Chronography*, which documents events from the creation to 284. The Syncellus-Theophanes’s combination, as the last and the most extensive chronology in Greek, represents, as Cyril Mango says, the “greatest achievement of Byzantine historical scholarship.”\(^{81}\)

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81 Quoted in *The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of*
810-78), the fourth chronologer referred to by Milton in the letter, produced a Latin chronology out of the writings of Theophanes, Syncellus, and Nicephorus, which helped spread the Syncellus-Theophanes’s synthesis to western Europe. Syncellus-Theophanes’s chronology proved of vital importance to Scaliger’s radical theory and the early modern chronological controversy in particular. Milton may have hoped that a careful perusal of the original sources might lead to findings that could refute Scaliger’s proleptic time.82

Milton’s concern with Chinese antiquity was also suggested by his interest in eastern geography.83 This interest can be conjectured from his letter to Peter Heimbach dated November 8, 1656, written five months after he received Oldenburg’s epistle on Martini’s *Historia sinicae* and eight months after he wrote to Bigot on Byzantine historians. The close proximity of these dates indicates their possible connection with the chronological issue. In this letter to Heimbach, Milton repeats his former request about the purchase of some atlases. After directing his correspondent to “find out the lowest price of the book,” he says,

I beg you to do me the further favor to find out, so that you can tell me when you

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82 Salmasius might have, again, played a part in Milton’s interest in Scaliger’s innovation. Salmasius took the professorship formerly held by Scaliger at Leiden in 1631 and was on intimate terms with Isaac Casaubon, Scaliger’s close correspondent. In addition, Milton discusses Scaliger’s doctrine of “number” in his *Art of Logic* (1672), though interest in number does not necessarily indicate an equal interest in chronology. (YP 8:233)

return, how many volumes there are in the whole work and which of the two editions, Blaeu’s or Jansen’s, is the fuller and more accurate. This I hope to hear from you personally on your speedy return, rather than by another letter.

(YP7:495)

The urgency and earnestness expressed in the statement that “This I hope to hear from yourself personally, on your speedy return, rather than by another letter” shows the impact of the chronological polemic upon Milton’s mind. “Blaeu” refers both to Willem Janszoon Blaeu (1571-1638) who founded one of Europe’s greatest cartographic publishing firms in 1599, and his son Johannes Blaeu (1596-1673), who inherited his father’s business and became the official cartographer of the Dutch East India Company. The Blaeus had two chief competitors: Henricus Hondius (1563-1612) and Jan Jansen or Jansson (1588-1664)—Jansen joined and took over Hondius’s map-making business in 1630. The “Jansen” in Milton’s letter means this very rival of the Blaeus. One salient feature that distinguishes the Blaeus’ atlas is its incorporation of Martini’s *Atlas Sinensis* in the 11-volume *Atlas Maior* (1662). In the Preface to Volume V of his *Atlas* (1654), Blaeu announced the title of the sixth volume, that is, *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (1655), as he remarks:

But look, while I was occupied herewith (i.e., with the Ancient Geography of Ptolemy), the Reverend Father Martinus Martinius comes from India, and brings with him the figurations and descriptions of the Empire of China. He insists that I print and publish these. Therefore I leave off all other things for the time being, in order to push forward this work.86

Containing a general map of China and fifteen maps of individual Chinese provinces, the Blaeu-Martini atlas “gives the most complete description of China of the time” possessed by the west.87 In his earnest resolve to purchase the best atlases he could lay hand on, Milton was informed enough to know the authority of the Blaeu-Martini atlas in studying the eastern country. Jansen’s *China Veteribus Sinarum Regio nunc Incolis Tame dicta* (1636) was almost identical to Blaeu’s, which might explain why Milton wanted to know which Atlas (presumably of the Far East), “Blaeu’s or Jansen’s, is the fuller and more accurate.”

III: The Chronological Issue and Milton’s Pre-historical Time

To “assert Eternal Providence / And justify the ways of God to men,” Milton undertakes, above all, to establish the priority of the biblical timeline. Milton’s belief in

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the primacy of scriptural chronology was consistent with his general conviction of the
universality of the biblical economy. In his *The Christian Doctrine*, he explicitly asserts
the universal humanity represented by Adam, “for Adam, the parent and head of all men,
either stood or fell as a representative of the whole human race” (YP6:384). For Milton,
the second Adam is a universal signifier too, because the communion of the members of
Christ “need not be subject to spatial considerations: it includes people from many
remote countries, and from all ages since the creation of the world” (YP6:500). Since
Christ is the head of the Church, he observes in *The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings
out of the Church* (1659), “the Christian Church is universal; not ti’d to nation, dioces or
parish, but consisting of many particular churches complete in themselves” (YP7:292).

The chronological polemic informs Milton’s representation of the overcall timeline
of Hebrew history. To contest Scaliger’s proleptic time that seemed to bolster Egyptian
and Chinese antiquities and defend the primacy of scriptural calendar against alternative
systems of time, Milton identifies in Hebrew history a special species of time:
pre-historical time. Miltonic pre-historical time consists of three sub-categories:
pre-creation, heavenly, and paradisiacal time. To illustrate the certainty of this particular
species of biblical time, Milton adopts three apologetic strategies. First, he uses the epic
genre and the principle of causality to accord scriptural chronology with both a universal
scope and a consistent timeline. Second, he employs the narrative technique of multiple
points of view to prove the certainty of the creation and thereby pre-creation time. Third,
he resorts to the analogous approach to represent the supernatural heavenly time and to
Adam and Eve’s recollections to describe the historicity of paradisiacal time.

Milton uses the epic genre and the causal principle it entails to bring out the universality of the biblical timeline. When Chinese history spoke powerfully through Martini’s chronicles, a mere literal exegesis or a catalogue of the biblical timetables as is represented in Ussher’s *Annales* appeared a feeble apologetic tactic. Compared with abstract chronological doctrine or those “useless records of either uncertaine, or unsound antiquity” (YP1:624), an epic dramatization seems a more powerful tool with which to “assert Eternal Providence,” since the genre itself gives the subject matter a cosmic amplitude. Milton might have derived the idea of representing the Mosaic history within a dramatic framework from Hugo Grotius’s (1583-1645) *Adamus Exul* (1601) and Du Bartas’s (1544-90) *La Sepmaine ou Creation du monde* (1578) and its sequel *La Seconde Semaine ou enfance du monde* (1584) as is translated by Joshua Sylvester. But the universal history dramatized in *Paradise Lost* proves most compelling, for here, as Patrides says, “we have the most successful attempt in poetry to fuse the essential aspects of Christian view of history into a magnificent whole” and “we have the universalistic and Christocentric view of history.” Moreover, the universal dimension registered in the epic genre is reinforced by the causal principle Milton attributes to Hebrew history. In Chapter 23 of his *Poetics*, Aristotle claims that unlike epic poetry, history lacks a causal

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plot because it deals with episodic events. 

But in *Paradise Lost*, Milton dramatizes what happens before, during, and after the fall by fusing together the historical and epic conventions, a rhetorical maneuver that enables him to ascribe a causal unity to scriptural history. In truth, the epic genre itself encodes the cause-effect dynamic. Unlike tabular chronicles marked by discontinuous gaps and blanks, an epic dramatization, though thrusting into the middle of the events at the outset, aims at bringing into sharper focus the function of the middle to join the beginning and the end into a causal whole. An imaginative narrative plot that encodes causal necessity and probability, and an epic form that, instead of fragmenting, integrates those epochal biblical events into an organic whole, combine to generate a universal template that has the capacity to accommodate any histories.

Creation was the point by which biblical time was reckoned. Milton identifies pre-creation time in both his prose work and epic poem. The imagination of an inscrutable pre-creation epoch was a staple feature of Renaissance chronological thinking. Scaliger’s “proleptic time” addressed the time “assumed before the Mosaic computation.” For Donne, since “we are utterly disprovided of any history of the Worlds Creation,” we should “defend and maintain this Book of Moses to be Historical, and therefore literally

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to be interpreted.”\textsuperscript{91} But we should, he says, allegorically interpret those “dayes mention’d before the Creation of these Planets which made days.”\textsuperscript{92} Milton also believed in pre-creation time, as he writes in \textit{The Christian Doctrine}, “there is certainly no reason why we should conform to the popular belief that motion and time, which is the measure of motion, could not, according to our concepts of ‘before’ and ‘after,’ have existed before this world was made” (YP6:313-14). For Milton pre-creation eternality means none other than antiquity, as he remarks, “all the words which the scriptures use to mean eternity often mean only earthly times, or antiquity” (YP6:143). By equating eternity with antiquity, he at once affirms the historical status of the Mosaic books and endlessly prolongs scriptural time. In addition, Milton’s also expresses the creation’s epochal status in the image of memory. After Raphael finishes relating the heavenly war, Adam “desire[s] to know” “how this World…first began” “before his memory” (7.61-66). In response to Raphael’s account, Adam offers to “relate[] what was done / Ere my remembrance” (8.203-04). Here human memory is the criterion that marks “this transient world, the race of time” from the timeless eternity.

Milton adopts the narrative technique of multiple points of view to prove the certainty of the creation and thereby pre-creation time. He puts the opposition view in the mouth of Satan. For the fallen angel, the creation is a “strange point and new,” for, he interrogates, “who saw / When this creation was? Remember’st thou / Thy making, while

\textsuperscript{91} Donne, \textit{Essayes in Divinity}, 21.  
\textsuperscript{92} Donne, \textit{Essayes}, 38-39.
the Maker gave thee being? ” (5.855-59) To refute Satan’s heretical view, Milton presents
five alternative accounts of the creation given respectively by Eve (4.449-91); Adam
(8.203-16); the royal guard Uriel (3.709-35); the loyal Abdiel (5.823-25); and Raphael
(7.174-557) the “Divine Interpreter” (7.72). So five witnesses who have either seen or
heard about God’s creation of the world are enlisted to reinforce the certainty of the
creation, a certainty that, in turn, lends credence to those events happened in pre-creation
time. The implicit message is that, there is no need to posit “proleptic” time—the
pre-creation abyss in scriptural chronology is eternal enough to contain any profane
histories, Egyptian and Chinese antiquities included.

While pre-creation time allows Milton to counteract Scaliger’s proleptic time that
tended to support Egyptian and Chinese chronologies, supernatural heavenly time has the
miraculous power to incorporate any system of time. But rather than a fabulous category,
Milton’s heavenly time or “Heav’n’s great Year” (5.583) can be analogously understood.
Milton’s “great Year” derives but differs from the “Great Year” described by Plato in
Timaeus. Whereas the Platonic Great Year is a temporal system based on the cyclic
movement of heavenly bodies, Milton’s is an analytical concept used to describe divine
time.93 Milton defines time as that which “applied / To motion, measures all things
durable / By present, past, and future” (5.580-82). But divine motion cannot be described

Heinemann, 1929), 75-83; for the association between Platonic and Miltonic Great Year
see Albert R. Cirillo, “Noon-Midnight and the Temporal Structure of Paradise Lost,”
in temporal time, for “the speed of Gods / Time count not” (10.90-91) and “Immediate
are the Acts of God, more swift / Than time or motion” (7.176-77). The uncountable
nature of time in heaven is symbolized in “a Cave / Within the Mount of God, fast by this
Throne, / Where light and darkness in perpetual round / Lodge and dislodge by turns.”
This “perpetual” cycle of light and darkness “makes through Heav’n / Grateful
vicissitude, like Day and Night” (6.4-8). “Heaven’s great Year” is proposed by Milton
precisely to address this unique species of time. To preempt charges of inventing a
fabulous category, Milton tries to show that heavenly time, though uncountable and
unutterable, can nevertheless be comprehended analogously, an approach summarily
articulated by Raphael. To explicate “what surmounts the reach / Of human sense,”
Raphael says, “I shall delineate so, / By lik’ning spiritual to corporeal forms, / As may
express them best” (5.571-74). Raphael himself describes heaven’s “Grateful vicissitude,
like Day and Night.” Similarly, God remarks that “two days are past, / Two days, as we
compute the days of Heav’n” (6.684-85). The comparative prepositions “like” and “as”
indicate the analogous approach to divine time.

Like pre-creation and heavenly time, paradisiacal time is peculiar to Hebrew
history and and signals the amplitude of scriptural timeline to contain profane histories.
To prove the certainty of this special species of pre-historical time, Milton articulates it in
terms of human experience. In Book IV, Eve tells Adam what has happened on her first
wakening up to her being (4.449-91), a story cast in the form of recollection. Likewise,
when conversing with Raphael, Adam recalls a series of events that occurred after his
first coming into being (8.253-71): the dream of his own creation (8.286-91), the
guidance by the “Heav’nly vision” (8.356) to paradise (8.319-21), God’s prohibition
about the tree of Knowledge (8.323-33), his expostulation with God about a fit society
(8.403-11), as well as his envisioning of Eve’s creation (8.495-99). Thus rather than an
abstract concept, paradisiacal time is depicted as real events recollected by the first pair,
lived experiences that attest to its physicality and therefore authenticity.

IV: Chinese Antiquity, Milton’s “two Chinas” and Global Cosmopolitanism

The fall, another distinctive epochal moment in scriptural chronology, symbolizes
the starting-point of historical time. Whereas pre-creation time is corroborated by five
narrators and prelapsarian time is vividly registered in Adam and Eve’s lived experiences,
postlapsarian history finds an eloquent articulation in Adam’s unfolding of world
histories. A chief aim of the historical revelation featured in Book XI is to bring out the
universal dimension of Hebrew history, a universality physically expressed in the global
sweep of Adam’s prophetic “visions.” Standing on the “highest” hilltop in Paradise,
Adam obtains a “clearest Ken” of “The Hemisphere of Earth,” which “Stretcht out to the
amplest reach of prospect lay” (11:377-80).

China and the Far East figure prominently the global picture outlined in Adam’s
overview. Under Michael’s guidance, Adam perceives,

… the Seat
Of mightiest Empire, from the destin’d Walls

Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can

And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir’s Throne,

To Paquin of Sinaean Kings, and thence

To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul

Down to the golden Chersonese, or where

The Persian in Ecbatan sat… (11.386-93)

The long list of place names in this passage effectively conjures a panoramic picture of the whole known world. Standing on the “highest” (11.378) hilltop in Paradise and looking towards where the Sun rises, Adam marks out, above all, the Great Wall of China that divides “Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can” and “Paquin of Sinaean Kings.” Shifting his eyes from the Far East southwards, he catches sight of India and the golden Chersonese; northward the Russian capital “Mosco” (11.395) comes into view. In Eurasia, he perceives “Temir’s” Throne in “Samarchand,” and “Ecbatan,” the royal seat of the Persian Shah. Along the eastern coast of Africa, he sees “Ercoco,” “Mombaza, and Quiloa, and Melinda / And Sofala” (11.398-400). African cities along the Mediterranean Sea such as “Morocco and Algiers, and Tremisen” (11.404) are also captivated by Adam’s sweeping glance. The westward survey rests momentarily upon “Rome,” a formidable city that “was to sway / The World” (11.405-06). Moreover, though his eyes cannot reach the world across the oceans, Adam zooms into focus “in spirit” the rich cities of “Peru,”
“Mexico” “Guiana,” and “El Dorado” in western India (11.407-11). This string of place names sets forth a grand picture of a globalized world. The literary prototype of Adam’s global trip was Ruggiero’s cosmic journey in Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (1516).\(^{94}\) After escaping Alcina’s court and deciding “to complete the circle he had started, so as to girdle the earth, like the sun,” Ruggiero “chose to take a different way back” to the west. China is the starting point of this return trip: “On his journey he saw Cathay to one side and to the other Mangiana, as he passed over great Quinsai [Hangzhou].”\(^{95}\) The far-ranging journeys depicted by both Ariosto and Milton feature thus the emergence of a global economy and the importance of the Far East in this economy.

To illustrate the global scope of Adam’s cosmic survey, Milton uses the coordinate of history and geography, a topos made popular by the so-called “universal history” project. Flourishing in France in the sixteenth century, the universal history program was an intellectual movement that undertook to reassess the historical sources of theology, jurisdiction, and history against a uniform chronological standard.\(^{96}\) Cartographers who sought to encompass the world within a single grid provided a conceptual model for the


\(^{95}\) Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, 100, 101.

\(^{96}\) For Renaissance works on universal history see Francois Baudouin, *De institutione historiae universae et eius cum jurisprudentia conjunctione* (Paris, 1561); Melchior Cano, *De locis theologicis* (Salamanca, 1563); and Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (Paris, 1566) or its English translation *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*. 
Universalists to comprehend all histories within a unifying template. Bodin’s *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (1565) marks the high water of this project. For Bodin, “the arrangement of history” is more easily understood with the “analogy to cosmography,” because “like a man who wishes to understand cosmography, the historian must devote some study to a representation of the whole universe in a small map.”97 By coordinating history and geography in the same template, Bodin says, one can “join to observations of the past reflections for the future and compare the causes of obscure things, studying the efficient causes and the ends of each as if they were placed beneath their eyes.”98 In the preface to his *Principal Navigations*, Richard Hakluyt explicitly calls “Geographie and chronologic” “the Sunne and the Monne, the right eye and the left of all history” (PN1: xxxix). Milton subscribed to the same view. He observes in *The History of Britain* (1670) that without recording one’s history, one would “be ever Children in the Knowledge of Times and Ages” (YP5:2). In *Of Education* (1644) he urges his students to learn to use “the Globes, and all the maps first with the old names; and then with the new” (YP 2:189), a geographical pedagogy that emphasizes historical comparison. Since, as Peters argues, Adam’s overview encompasses the whole expanses of human history and geography, to catalogue geographical places is to enumerate histories and empires symbolized by those places. Adam’s survey encapsulates, therefore, global geography and world histories.

The histories and cultures included in Adam’s global overview signify at once their irreducible place in a universal chronology and Milton’s global cosmopolitanism to engage cultural differences. Paul Stevens holds that Milton shows “Leviticus thinking” regarding cultural diversities, according to which, England, like the elected nation of Israel, forms its national identity in denigrating other peoples and cultures. For Walter S. H. Lim, “Milton may celebrate the fraternity of shared experience based on commonality of political vision,” but “he generally holds a distrust of cultural mingling.” Milton’s “mingling” of profane histories and empires in Adam’s prophetic survey compels us to reconsider his response to the cultural and religious “other.” In fact, rather than an exclusionary or distrustful attitude, Milton’s inclusion of non-Christian histories within the “visions” of the biblical patriarch exhibits a cosmopolitan will to embrace cultural differences. Milton’s cosmopolitanism towards alternative accounts of time was not singular. Most of those who sought to construct a universal chronology displayed a cosmopolitan tolerance of profane histories. Bodin remarks that “I call that history universal which embraces the affairs of all, or of the most famous peoples, or of those whose deeds in war and in peace have been handed down to us from an early stage

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of their national growth."¹⁰¹ Likewise, Scaliger observes that scriptural chronology can justify itself only by referring to significant events in secular and non-Christian histories, as he puts it,

Suppose some great expert in the sacred history—one, that is, who has a complete knowledge of the most important historical intervals, as established by certain computation from Moses and the other books of the Bible—cannot connect any part of it to a fixed epoch in Greek or Roman history. Efforts of this kind can be of no use either to him or to students of the ancient world.

Scaliger cites the “learning of the Jews” as a case in point. The Jews “have made so much progress in computing the intervals in sacred history as to be very close to the truth,” but as “they have no knowledge—or only a corrupt one—of events outside their tradition, they go badly wrong when they try to deal with sacred history without the help of foreign history.”¹⁰² Markley denies Milton’s indebtedness to the universal history project, because this program “demean(s) the Mosaic account by suggesting that the Old Testament’s chronological and moral coherence requires buttressing from pagan sources.”¹⁰³ But the undifferentiated juxtaposition of a broad array of profane histories in

¹⁰¹ Bodin, Method, 21.
¹⁰² Scaliger, De emendatione temporum (1583), 2; quoted in Grafton, Historical Chronology, 262-63.
¹⁰³ Markley, “Destin’d Walls,” 194. Also see and Markley, “Newton, Corruption, and the
Adam’s global survey bespeaks recognition of their necessary place in constructing a universal timetable —scriptural timeline cannot justifiably assume universality unless “buttress[ed]” by those annals. David Porter calls the juxtaposition of histories “across national and cultural boundaries” “historical cosmopolitanism,” a framework that “requires reciprocity in the construction of comparative frameworks, insisting on a multiplicity of perspectives to unsettle the complacency of univocal teleologies.” In juxtaposing a vast array of widely differing histories and cultures, Milton shows precisely a “historical cosmopolitanism” that emphasizes the contribution of multiple perspectives to the representation of world history, though rather than to “unsettle the complacency of univocal teleologies,” he intends to reassert the primacy of Hebrew history.

Milton’s cosmopolitan will to engage cultural diversities is not limited to Paradise Lost. In Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (1649), he already contemplated a “brother-hood between man and man over all the world,” a cosmopolitan community bonded together by a new kind of “Gospel” or “Law among equals” (YP 3:214-15). In The Second Defence (1653), he famously imagines “embark[ing] on a journey” and “surveying on high far-flung regions and territories across the sea, faces numberless and unknown.” “From the Pillars of Hercules all the way to the farthest boundaries of India,” he says, “I seem to be leading home again everywhere in the world, after a vast space of


104 Porter, “Sinicizing Early Modernity,” 299
time, Liberty herself” (YP 4:554-55). What is expressed here is a global cosmopolitanism
both to embrace the human diversity embodied by the foreign “faces” in those “far-flung
regions and territories” and to envision a single family of mankind in terms of liberty.
China that marks “the farthest boundaries of India” partakes of this global community
through its antique culture as well as commercial trade.

In calling “Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can” and “Paquin of Sinaean Kings” “The
Seat / Of mightiest Empire,” Milton shows recognition of the eminence of the Far
East in world history, a status acknowledged by most medieval and Renaissance
observers. In his “On Experience,” Montaigne calls China “a kingdom whose polity and
sciences surpass our own exemplars in many kinds of excellence” and “whose history
teaches me that the world is more abundant and diverse than either the ancients or we
realized.”105 For Bacon, the three inventions of China, that is, “printing, gunpowder and
the magnet,” “have changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world; the
first in literature; the second in warfare; the third in navigation.”106 China boasted not
only an edifying history and unparalleled scientific achievements but also mighty
monarchs and great riches. In his Travels, Marco Polo states that “all the world’s great
potentates put together have not such riches as belong to the Great Khan alone.”107 For
Sir John Mandeville, “the kingdom of Cathay is the largest kingdom there is in the world

106 Bacon, The New Organon, 118.
107 Polo, Travels, 149.
and the Great Chan is the strongest emperor there is under the firmament.”108 In his the
Mighty Kingdom of China, Mendoza declares pointedly that Ming China is “the mightiest
and biggest” kingdom that thrives with “need of none other nation,” because “they haue
sufficient of all things necessarie to the maintaining of humane life.”109 Athanasius
Kircher (1602-80), Martini’s mentor at the Collegio Romano, refers to the Qing Empire
as the “richest and most powerful nation in the world” in his China Illustrata (1667).110
In calling the Far East “seat” of the “mightiest Empire,” Milton evokes this very tradition
of glorifying the “Middle Kingdom.”

Whereas “mightiest” signals Milton’s high regard for eastern empires, his coupling
of “Cambalu” and “Paquin,” two cities that mean the same place, indicates a nicer
knowledge of Chinese history than hitherto has been realized. Both “Cambalu,” the
Capital of the Yuan Empire (1271-1368) built by the Mongol Tartars, and “Paquin,” the
imperial seat of the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911), refer to present-day Beijing.

Allan H. Gilbert maintains that Milton’s alignment of “Cambalu” and “Paquin” shows his
ignorance,111 and for Y. Z. Chang this coupling indicates that Milton “err[ed] concerning
Cathay and China, by which he meant “two countries.” However, Chang argues, “his
error was not the result of ignorance; it was the honest and excusable mistake of a sound
and cautious scholar, unwilling to embrace a facile identification based on what he

108 Mandeville, 139.
109 Mendoza, Mighty Kingdom of China, vol.1. 81, 93.
110 Athanasius Kircher, China Illustrata (Amsterdam, 1667), 166.
111 Gilbert, Geographical Dictionary, 65, 77-78.
thought was flimsy and dubious evidence.”  

Chang traces Milton’s “two Chinas” to the Portuguese Jesuit Benedict Goes’s travel account (1615) and the French geographer Pierre Davity’s [d’Avity] Les Estats, Empires, et Principautez du Monde (1614). Milton did draw upon Goes’s narrative, but as Henry Yule says, Goes, instead of impressing the idea of “two Chinas,” made “CATHAY ... finally disappear from view, leaving CHINA only in the mouths and minds of men.”  

Though Davity considered Cathay and China two nations in his Les Estats, his conclusion was soon superseded by later accounts. In his Hakluytus Posthumus, Purchas observes that neither those who “confound Cathay with China” nor those who “wholly separate them” should be followed, since “the present kingdome of China comprehends the best part of Cathay, besides the ancient Chinian limits, by Polo called Mangi.”  

Purchas’s “present kingdome of China” means the Ming Empire, which did incorporate most of “Cathay,” the northern part of China in the Yuan dynasty, and “Mangi,” a derogatory epithet given by the Mongol rulers to the Han Chinese in the southern part of the empire. Webb also drew attention to the various appellations of China, as he writes in his Historical Essay, “That this outmost Region of the known World, which Martinius calls the extreme part of Asia, is by some called Serica, Sina, or China by others, by the Tartars Cathay and Mangin...But the Chinois

113 Yule, ed., Cathay and the Way Thither, vol. 4. 171.
call their Empire *Chung-hoa*, and *Chung-hue*.  

“Chunghoa” or “Chunghue” [Zhonghua] means none other than “the Middle Kingdom.” In fact, Ricci and Trigault had already clarified the relations of almost all the terms mentioned by Purchas and Webb in their *Journals* published in 1614. Goes, even before leaving for China in 1603 with the special mission to investigate “whether the name of an empire coterminous with China might have been extended also to the latter [Cathay],” “had heard indeed, by extracts of Father Matthew’s [Ricci] letters from the capital of China, that Cathay was but another name for the Chinese empire.” Thus by the 1650s, “the Middle Kingdom” meant specifically the Qing Empire erected by the Manchu Tartars upon the ruin of the Ming dynasty in 1644, an empire that encompassed within its vast boundaries the regions designated by all the epithets in Purchas and Webb’s remarks. Accordingly, by the time Milton composed *Paradise Lost*, China was already a clearly defined geographical and cultural space. This is why Webb observed in 1669 that “Their [Chinese] discovery is generally completed; their Antiquity certainly known; Their Language plainly understood…Time being to make known the rest.” Given the definite contour of China in the middle of the seventeenth century, Markley says, “Milton’s doubling of Cambalu and Beijing, Cathay and China” are “sonorously anachronistic.”

Milton’s “two Chinas” suggests both his acknowledgement and awareness of the

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challenge posed by Chinese antiquity. Instead of “error” or “ignorance” as Chang or Gilbert claim, or an “anachronistic” mistake that “underscores his [Milton’s] and his contemporaries’ continuing fascination with the Chinese” as Markley holds, Milton juxtaposes Cambalu and Paquin chiefly for apologetic purpose. To incorporate, in an imaginary and prophetic vision, the “mightiest Empire” and its deep antiquity, testifies to, more than anything else, the universality of scriptural timeline. Just as Milton shows tribute to the eastern empires through the epithet “mightiest,” he knows and acknowledges that Cambalu and Paquin are representative symbols of Chinese dynastic history, a recognition that indicates his awareness of eastern antiquity. As the capital seat of three long dynasties (Yuan, Ming, and Qing), Cambalu and Paquin call to mind different historical events and monarchial rules, which is precisely what Milton intends to bring out in coupling two names that mean the same place. To reveal the future history of Adam’s offspring, Michael guides Adam onto the highest hilltop in Paradise so that “His eye might there command wherever stood / City of old or modern Fame” (11.385-86). The word “command” is significant in bearing out the universal dimension of scriptural timeline. “To command” means “to have authority over; to be master of; to hold in control or subjection; to sway, rule.”¹²¹ In commanding “City of old or modern Fame,” Adam mentally masters and dominates cities of all over the world. That Adam’s gaze falls first upon the “destin’d Walls” of China, a synecdoche of Chinese civilization, suggests

the necessary enfolding and primary importance of the Far East in a universal template. The adjective “destin’d” vividly evokes the inevitable succession of formidable empires and the endless battles fought between the Han Chinese and its barbarian neighbors across the fated “Walls” that mark civilized from uncivilized societies. For Milton, Adam’s prophetic “visions” can “command” even the “mightiest Empire” in the world, and, presumably, its deep antiquity as well. The assimilating strategy he deploys here is very simple: to subsume the two exemplary synecdochical symbols of China—Beijing and the Great Wall—within Adam’s historical survey. The ideological commanding signified in Adam’s overview is represented as both a historical and geographical incorporation. When Adam directs his eyes under Michael’s guidance eastwards, both divine and human “visions” capture China. The three place names, Cambalu, Paquin, and the “destin’d Walls,” indicate that Adam’s visual comprehension is simultaneously a geographical incorporation. Further, given that China is encompassed within Adam’s prophetic “visions” and that the history revealed by Michael registers the experiences of Adam’s descendents, it is a logical inference that the Chinese also sprung from the loins of the first biblical patriarch. The “seat” of the “mightiest Empire” is thus not only historically but also territorially and generically contained in the scriptural symbolic system. Though all the histories listed in Adam’s cosmographical table enjoy equal status in the universal chronology represented by Hebrew history, Chinese history is exemplary in that its antiquity directly challenges the chronological authority of such fundamental scriptural tenets as the creation, the flood, and Abraham’s patriarchy.
Chapter V Milton’s Tartar:

“Global Leviathan” vs. “Global Commonwealth”

The image of empire features prominently in Milton’s epic poems. As is shown in Satan’s offer of Parthia and Rome, the “temptation of empire” is a major theme of *Paradise Regained*.1 Similarly, in *Paradise Lost* a chief aim of Satan’s venture to Eden is to “Divide[] Empire with Heav’n’s King” (4.111).2 Miltonic empire is a controversial image that has absorbed much critical energy. As Sharon Achinstein notes, most critics focus on identifying Milton’s anti-or pro-empire tendencies, studying “whether, and at what time, and in what ways, Milton opposed empire.”3 Robert Fallon denies Milton’s endorsement of imperialism before the Restoration, but he concedes that “the image of empire may well have suggested to the poet a paradigm for the political framework of his great epics,” in which “the spiritual struggle between good and evil for the human soul is described as the clash of two great nations contending for control of a distant possession of one of them.”4 Bruce McLeod maintains that England’s absence and Rome’s fleeting appearance in Adam’s historical survey in book XI indicate that Milton locates the

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“Lordly eye” in England and “is (re)producing the space of empire from an imperial view point.” In contrast, David Quint holds that Milton’s epic poem presents “an indictment of European expansion and colonialism that includes his own countrymen.” Similarly, David Armitage argues that though Milton “produce[d] an epic whose secondary narrative was of Satan’s exploration and colonization of a new world,” the poet’s “continuing commitment to the political program of English humanism ensured that this would be a consciously anti-imperial epic.”

A major problem with this scholarship is that critics tend to use the umbrella concept “imperial” to describe Milton’s image of empire. In fact, Milton differentiates between the empire as it is represented by Satan and Chaos and the spiritual empire registered in the rule of the Son or Jesus Christ. Whereas Satan and Chaos aspire to

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8 Since Paradise Regained signposts several times the identity of the “Son” with “Jesus,” I use these two terms as synonyms. For instance, “The Father’s voice / From heaven
imperial expansion and conquest, the Son symbolizes a kind of spiritual and ethical rule.

Since the two forms of sovereignty represented in Milton’s epic poems aim at universal rather than regional or national governance, I use the framework of globalization/cosmopolitan theory to study Milton’s conception of empire.9

Modern globalization theory contrasts “empire” with “cosmopolis.” According to the OED, the word “empire” means both “imperial rule” and “an extensive territory (esp. an aggregate of many separate states) under the sway of an emperor or supreme ruler.” Originating from the Roman *imperium*, the adjective “imperial” denotes literally what pertains to an empire, and figuratively the supreme authority to rule and command subject territories. “Cosmopolis” comes from “cosmopolite,” a word that indicates a “citizen of the world” or “one who regards or treats the whole world as his country.”10 Barry Gills argues that though both cosmopolis and empire express “an idea of human unity and community,” they nevertheless “represent two antithetical conceptions and practices of world-consciousness and world order.” Whereas empire means “the naked pursuit of power and wealth,” Gill says, cosmopolis signifies “our spiritual side and our quest for harmony, moral order, and community.”11 Fred Dallmayr also compares

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9 For a globalization approach to Milton’s imagination of an international legal order, see Peters, “Bridge over Chaos.”
cosmopolis with empire, arguing that the “juncture of radical state autonomy and globalization” “gives rise to two opposing tendencies”:

on the one hand, the ambitions of empire where globalization is subjected to global sovereignty (a global Leviathan); on the other side, a democratic cosmopolis (global commonwealth) achieved through the subordination of sovereignty to global interdependence.

Dallmayr defines “a global Leviathan” as “the extension of political and military power beyond the scope of the metropolitan homeland, that is, the wielding of dominion over foreign territories inhabited by non-citizen populations.” By comparison, “a global commonwealth” is an institution that “embrac[es] different cultures and societies and [is] held together not by a central Leviathan but by lateral connections and bonds of cultural and political interdependence.”12

But empire and cosmopolis are not “antithetical” for those who seek to define empire in terms of cosmopolitanism, that is, as a juridical and ethical rather than imperial concept. Adam Watson maintains that “ethnic and civic loyalties increasingly found their place within an imperial political and cultural horizon.”13 In their controversial work

Routledge, 2008), 5, 6.9.


13 Adam Watson, The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical
Empire, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri also claim that “the classical concept of empire united juridical categories and universal ethical values, making them work together as an organic whole.”14 In a globalized world, Hardt and Negri argue, “sovereignty has taken on a new form, composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule.” The two authors give this “new global form of sovereignty” the name of “empire,” defining it as a “global concept under the direction of a single conductor, a unitary power that maintains the social peace and produces its ethical truths.” The reason they choose “empire” to designate the new authority in a global age is that, Hardt and Negri explain, though “every juridical system is in some way a crystallization of a specific set of values,” empire “pushes the coincidence and universality of the ethical and juridical to the extreme.”15 Andrew Jones calls Hardt and Negri’s new governance structure “globalization-as-empire,”16 but I will call it a cosmopolitan empire on account of the emphasis they put on its social and ethical capacities, attributes that signal a “cosmopolitan will” to embrace and “engage human diversity.”17 The two aspects of empire, that is, its imperial and cosmopolitan implications, are exemplified in the rule of Rome—the Roman Empire not only dominated but also showed considerable tolerance towards the cultural diversities it

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15 Hardt and Negri, Empire, xi, xii, 10.
17 Hollinger, Postethnic America, 84.
contained. In truth, as is argued by Amy Chua, in their rise to “global hegemony,” almost all empires in history were noted for their remarkable “tolerance” of various religions and nationals subsumed under the imperial rules.\textsuperscript{18}

This chapter adopts at once an anti-and pro-empire position. Drawing upon both the “imperial” and “cosmopolitan” definitions of empire in globalization theory, I argue that Milton conceives both a “global Leviathan” and a “global commonwealth” in his epic poems. According to Julie S. Peters:

From the Hill of Paradise Michael not only gives Adam a vision of the whole expanse of human history, with its lessons about \textit{failed empire}, but also shows him the whole expanse of human geography—the great ‘Hemisphere of earth…/ Strecht out to the amlest reach’ (11.379-80), with its promise of \textit{happy empire}.\textsuperscript{19}

Whereas the “failed empire” described by Peters reflects the “Global Leviathan,” the “happy empire” is manifested in the “global commonwealth” symbolized in the Son’s rule. Specifically, while representing the “global Leviathan” in the imperial ambitions of Satan, Chaos, and God, Milton imagines the “global commonwealth” in the rule of the Son. What Milton opposes is the “imperial” empire, and what he champions is a “cosmopolitan” empire. On the one hand, what is fought for between God, Satan, and

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\textsuperscript{18} Amy Chua, \textit{How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance – and Why They Fall} (New York: Doubleday, 2007), xxi.
\textsuperscript{19} Peters, “Bridge over Chaos,” 278, my own italics.
\end{flushright}
Chaos is imperial hegemony or a “global leviathan.” God is determined to defend his “ancient” “claim / of Deity or Empire” (5.723-24) against the “rebellious crew” (4.952), and after the heavenly war he seeks to “over Hell extend / His Empire” (2.325-26). Satan also targets “Imperial Sov’ranty” (2.446). Not satisfied with “build[ing]” a “growing Empire” in Hell (2.315), Satan aspires to “divide[] Empire with Heav’n’s King.” Chaos participates in the imperial rivalry by allying himself with Satan, accepting Satan’s offer to help “reduce” the created world to “her original darkness” and “once more / Erect the Standard there of ancient Night” (2.983-86). All these endeavors evince an imperial ambition for universal lordship, attempts that are deemed by Milton as “Hatching vain Empires” (2.378).

One prototype for Milton’s idea of a “global Leviathan” is the empire built by the Mongol Tartars. Milton associates both Satan and his crew and Chaos with the figure of the Tartar in Paradise Lost. Satan, when making his way to Eden, is likened to “the roving Tartar” “dislodging from a Region scarce of prey” (3.432-33). Book X speaks of the wandering of the fallen angels as the “retir[ing]” of “the Tartar from his Russian Foe” (10.431-33). The inassimilable chaos amidst God’s creation is compared to “The black tartareous cold Infernal dregs / Adverse to life” (7.238-39), and it is the gunpowder made of “Tartarean Sulphur” (2.69) that enables the rebellious angels to achieve a decisive balance with the heavenly army and to premeditate further wars against God in the “great consult” (1.798). Most critics link Milton’s Tartars with Muslim Sultans in the Middle
and Near East. Eric Song proves to be an exception in tracing the origin of Milton’s Tartarian image to the Tartary under the Mongols’ rule. For Song, Milton “deploy[s] the figure of the Tartar both to question the stability of political order based upon exclusion and conquest and to advance a critique of expansionist ambitions underwritten by any sense of national ascendency.” I argue for the Tartarian source of Satan and Chaos as well, but whereas Song focuses on its significance to Milton’s conception of national politics and culture, I study its relevance to his imagination of global governance.

Milton’s Tartars most powerfully evoke, I shall show, the whole Mongol empire founded by Genghis Khan (1162-1227) and his descendents, a world empire that encompassed within its vast boundaries not only the Middle and Near East but also the Far East and part of Europe.

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21 Eric B. Song, “Nation, Empire, and the Strange Fire of the Tartars in Milton’s Poetry and Prose,” *Milton Studies* 47 (2008): 119-44. For Milton’s Tartars also see Michael Bryson, “‘His Tyranny Who Begins’: the Biblical Roots of Divine Kingship and Milton’s Rejection of Heaven’s King,” *Milton Studies* 43(2004): 111-44. “Tartary” means the vast area under the Mongol rule. As Richard W. Cogley notes, for early modern England, “Tartary was generally seen as running from the northern and eastern banks of the Caspian Sea (or even more capacious, from the northeast of the Black Sea) all the way to the land or strait of Anian. Cathay (northern China) was often included within Tartary, but Han China (China proper) was usually placed outside it.” Cogley, “‘The Most Vile and Barbarous Nation of all the World’: Giles Fletcher the Elder’s *The Tartars Or, Ten Tribes* (ca.1610),” *Renaissance Quarterly* 58.3 (2005): 781-814; 796-97.

22 Song, “Strange Fire of the Tartars,” 120.

For early modern Europeans, the word “Tartar” called to mind at once the Mongols and Manchus, two distinct yet interconnected nomadic tribes in the Eurasian steppe that not only overthrew two powerful Chinese dynasties but also built their own empires upon their ruin.\(^{24}\) As the English chronicler Matthew Paris (1200-59) noted, “they [the Mongols] are called Tartars, from a river called Tartar, which runs through their mountains.”\(^{25}\) The Mongols were known to western Europe through the far-ranging campaigns they waged against both the Muslims and Christians in 1218-60.\(^{26}\) By conquering the Song Dynasty (960-1279) in China, Moscow and the regions around the Volga-Don Steppes, a large part of the Islamic world, and above all, a host of nations in Christendom, the Mongols established a world empire that stretched from the Pacific to the banks of Danube and from the Volga to the Ganges, the largest continuous land empire the world had ever seen. This vast empire is given the pride of place by Milton in the catalogue of the geographical regions Adam surveys in his overview of “all Earth’s Kingdoms and thir Glory” (11.384) in book XI of *Paradise Lost*. Milton explicitly calls

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\(^{25}\) Paris, 314.

the two capital cities, “Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can” and “Paquin of Sinaean Kings,” “seat / Of the mightiest Empire” (11.386-90). Both “Cambalu” and “Paquin” mean present-day Beijing. “Cambalu” was the capital city of the Yuan Empire (1271-1368) built by Genghis Khan’s grandson Kubilai Khan (1215-94), and it changed its name into “Paquin” when it became the capital of the Ming Empire (1368-1644). After the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) replaced Ming, Paquin continued to be the imperial seat. Further, as is shown in the various place names mentioned together with the Tartars, Milton reproduces not only the Mongol empire but also its western campaigns in his epic poem, a reproduction that, I shall show, echoes his discussion of the Mongol-Muscovia relation in *A Brief History of Moscovia* (1682).

The study of Milton’s image of empire in light of the Mongols’ world conquest provides new insight into the heavenly war and the global warfare triggered by Satan’s subversion of Eden. If the heavenly war is fought within the territorial borders of Heaven, Satan’s conquest of Paradise involves all major power centers, that is, Heaven, Hell, Chaos, and Earth in a global war. The “global leviathan” Satan undertakes to forge definitely draws upon the formidable empires built by the Romans, Charlemagne, the Hapsburgs, the Spanish, and the Ottoman Turks. But the Tartarian association of both Satan and Chaos also suggests the inspiration of the Mongol empire. The imperial model represented by the Mongols proves especially pertinent to study Milton’s idea of “global leviathan,” on three accounts. First, Miltonic Satan shares with the Mongol Khans the title of the “Prince of Hell,” a heathen sovereign who dares to raise military standards
against the Christian God and his regime. Satan is frequently called “Prince of Hell” (2.313; 4.871; 10.621) in Milton’s epic poem, and medieval Princes such as Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250) and King Louis IX of France (1214-70) explicitly accorded this title to the Mongol Khans. Whereas Milton’s Satan attempts to challenge the supremacy of God, Guyuk Khan (1206-48), in his letter to Pope Innocent IV (1243-54) dated 1246, demands “the great Pope, together with all the Princes” to “come in person to serve us.”

Further, though worshipping some natural deity called God or the Eternal Sky, the Mongols were fundamentally atheists who showed a remarkable tolerance of the various religious groups under its rule, which distinguished them from the monotheistic Turks and Persians. Similarly, Satan is called “Th’ Apostate” (6.100), and his rebellious army designated as a “cursed” (6.806), “Godless” (6.811), and “Atheist crew” (6.370). What the “Godless” crew attempt to build is a “heathenish government” (YP7:424) like that of the Mongols.

Second, compared with the conquests of other empires like Rome and the Habsburgs, which were largely confined to the Mediterranean ring and the European continent, the Mongol empire aspired to global hegemony. The global enterprise of the Spanish empire might also be a source of the Satanic empire in Paradise Lost. But Mammon’s proposal to dig “Gems and Gold” in the “Desert soil” of Hell (2.270-71), a

27 Dawson ed., 85.
28 For the Mongols’ religion see Polo, Travels, 160-61; and Mendoza, Mighty Kingdom of China, 54. For the Mongols’ tolerance of various religions see Dawson ed., 237.
28 For the Mongols’ religion see Polo, Travels, 160-61; and Mendoza, Mighty Kingdom of China, 54. For the Mongols’ tolerance of various religions see Dawson ed., 237.
proposal that recalls Spain’s exploitation of American mines, is vetoed by the “great consult” in Pandemonium. In effect, it is not a commercial but a political empire that is on the minds of Satan and Beelzebub, the “Pillar of State” whose “Atlantean shoulders” are “fit to bear / The weight of mightiest Monarchies” (300-06). Directed by Satan, Beelzebub imposes upon the “infernal States” (2.387) the imperial plan to “possess” (2.365) Eden so that “this nether Empire” “might rise / By policy” (2.296-97). The “mightiest” monarchy Satan and Beelzebub aspire to forge echoes the “mightiest” empires towering in “Cambalu” or “Paquin.” The global sovereignty of the Mongols is expressly declared by Guyuk Khan in the same letter to the Pope: “from the rising of the sun to its setting, all the lands have been made subject to me. Who could do this contrary, to the command of God?”29 Like Satan, the Mongol Khans made it a state policy to build a world empire through imperial conquests, an ambition trumpeted to the world not only through military expeditions but also royal decrees and seals. Genghis Khans made it a royal command to “bring all nations into subjection if possible” so that “they alone shall rule the world.”30 Guyuk called himself “The strength of God, the Emperor of all men,” impressing upon his royal seal the inscription that “God in heaven and Guyuc Chan on earth, the strength of God, the seal of the Emperor of all men.”31

Last but most importantly, the figure of the Tartar allows Milton to represent not only imperial “over-reach” (10.879) but also the limitations of this far-reaching endeavor.

29 Dawson ed., 86.
31 Dawson ed., 86.
As “the Parent of many Nations,” the Mongol empire disintegrated after reaching its zenith, a disintegration that gave rise to a host of new regions and nations in Eurasia. Genghis Khan’s eldest son Jochi came into possession of the Khanate of Kipchak or the Golden Horde in 1227, which was later inherited by Jochi’s own son Badu. Genghis Khan’s second son Chaghadai founded the Khanate in Transoxania in central Asia in 1242. In Mongolia, headquarter of the Mongol rule, Ogodei and his son Guyuk ruled as Great Khans successively until 1251. The Mongol founder’s youngest son Tolui ruled as regent during 1227-29, and Tolui’s three sons carved the largest share of the empire between them. Tolui’s eldest son Mongke became the Great Khan in 1251, and Mongke’s brother Kubilai, after succeeding him in 1260, erected the Yuan Empire in 1271.

Mongke’s other brother Hulegu built the Ilkhanate in Persia in 1258. However, though issuing from the same ancestor, the four Khanates involved themselves in endless wars and rivalries for territorial dominion. As Peter Jackson notes, the confederation between the Mamluks in Egypt and the Khanate of Kipchak against the Persian Ilkhanate around 1260 marks the “dissolution” of the Mongol Empire. Likewise, though originating

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33 For the scattering of Khanates from the Mongol political center see Polo, *Travels*, 152, 313; and Mandeville, 147-48.

from “one Almighty” (5.469) and “sons of one great Sire” (6.95), “Angel[s] should with Angel[s] war” (6.92) in heaven. The futility of the imperial rivalry between the great power centers in *Paradise Lost* recalls the collapsing of the Mongol empire.

The limitations of an imperial project suggested in the Tartarian association of Satan and Chaos, together with Jesus’s rejection of the Roman and Parthian empires in *Paradise Regained*, are intended by Milton to bear out the necessity of instituting a new sovereignty in the Son. This new authority, I claim, captures the idea of “global commonwealth” described by Dallmayr. In *A Readie and Easie Way* (1660), Milton writes, “a free commonwealth” is

Not only held by wisest men in all ages the noblest, the manliest, the equallest, the justest government, the most agreeable to all due libertie and proportioned equalitie, both human, civil, and Christian, most cherishing to virtue and true religion, but also (I may say it with greatest probabiliteit) planely commended, or rather enjoined by our Saviour himself, to all Christians, not without remarkable disallowance, and the brand of *gentilism* upon kingship. (YP7:424)

What characterizes Milton’s “commonwealth” is its ability to address “libertie,” “equalitie,” “virtue,” and “true religion,” ideas that speak evidently of its spiritual and ethical capacities. The national institutional form Milton envisaged in his political treatise was re-presented as the infrastructure of the Son’s universal rule in his epic poems. Since
the Son intends to “guide nations in the way of truth / By saving doctrine” (PR3.473-4), his rule aims at an ethical, spiritual, and juridical governance that goes beyond territorial borders. For Hardt and Negri, empire symbolizes not “a historical regime originating in conquest” but “an order that effectively suspends history and thereby fixes the existing state of affairs for eternity.” The global commonwealth Milton imagines in the Son’s rule is not a real historical institution either; instead, it is a “spirituall architecture” (YP 2:555) that seeks to “define a project of international order,”35 an order that can refocus the religious and ethical loyalties once harnessed within the framework of the nation state.

A globalization approach to Milton’s image of empire naturally challenges his alleged nationalism.36 A nationalist model refers both to claims of “national outlook” and “methodological nationalism” that presuppose that “the nation-state creates and controls the ‘container’ of society.”37 In modern globalization theory the empire /cosmopolis conceptual paradigm is often proposed in opposition to the state system. David Held and Anthony McGrew suggest that “the roles and functions of states” be “rearticulated, reconstituted and re-embedded at the intersection of regionalizing and globalizing networks and systems.”38 Ulrich Beck uses the ideas of “cosmopolitanism” to reconcile the conflict between the global and national models, on the grounds that in a globalized world “cultural ties, loyalties and identities have expanded beyond national borders and

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35 Hardt and Negri, Empire, 14.
36 The nationalist approach to Milton is crystallized in Loewenstein and Stevens eds., Early Modern Nationalism and Milton’s England.
37 Beck, Cosmopolitan Vision, 2.
38 Held and McGrew, eds. Globalization / Anti-Globalization, 211.
systems of control.”39 For Herfried Munkler, “the failure of states, and especially their
collapse, is more likely to prompt the intervention or creation of empires.”40 The early
modern state, as a political unity that replaced medieval feudal lord-vassal system and the
Holy Roman Empire, was instituted as a legitimate form of organizing national life in the
Westphalia conference (1648). But this state system, especially when ruled by monarchs,
showed limitations in addressing religious and ethical issues that cut across national
borders.41

It is both the perception of the insufficiency of the monarchical system to articulate
his liberal principles and the awareness of the limitations of imperial outreach, I argue,
that compelled Milton to seek alternative world governance in a cosmopolitan empire.42
George Dunne holds that nationalism “consists in a narrow and arrogant assumption of
the finality of national cultural forms. To these forms it attaches absolute value and is
thus incapable of recognizing the values inherent in other cultures”43. After the

40 Herfried Munkler, The Logic of World Domination from Ancient Rome to the United
41 On the limitations of nation states and the importance of the Westphalia settlement of
1648 see Peters, “Bridge over Chaos,” 280; Stephen Krasner, “Compromising
and Decline of the State (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999); Charles W. Kegley Jr. and
Gregory A. Raymond, Exorcising the Ghost of Westphalia: Building World Order in the
New Millennium (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002); and Benno Teschke, The Myth of
1648: Class, Geopolitics, and the Making of Modern International Relations (London:
Verso, 2003).
42 For Milton’s critique of Monarchy see his Eikonoklastes (1649) and The Tenure of
Kings and Magistrates (1650).
43 Dunne, Generation of Giants, 18
Restoration, the “national cultural forms” embodied by the English monarchy could no longer represent “absolute value.” Milton expressly states that “Christ apparently forbids his disciples to admit of any such heathenish government” (YP7:424) as the monarchy to be restored in England. Put another way, after being yoked once again to monarchy, the English nationalism Milton vehemently championed in earlier years ceased to be a reference point to conceptualize “human, civil, and religious” liberty (YP 3:215). The nationalist model cannot address the various forces that go beyond territorial control in Paradise Lost either. The imperial contenders cause a “universal ruin” (6.797) exceeding the power of national sovereignty. God’s monarchial rule proves unable to prevent the revolt of the rebellious angels; nor can it contain the “tartareous” residue amidst his creation. What Satan embarks on is a global and trans-territorial enterprise; and Chaos is ever ready to thrust the whole created world back into anarchy. In his attempt to build an “Empire tyrannous,” Nimrod, the “mighty Hunter” “Before the Lord” (12.32-34), engenders linguistic diversities that cannot be articulated by a single national language. These globalizing tendencies have apparently gone beyond the jurisdiction of a territorial state and involved all in a global community. Thus it is but natural that the “saving doctrine” proposed by the Son targets a global institution beyond the national state. The new authority Milton invests in the Son aims at a rule in which “All Nations” can be entrusted (12.328-29).

I: Milton’s Representation of the Mongols’ Warfare and Sources for the Tartars
To understand the source for Milton’s knowledge of the Tartars, we need to know first how the west came to the knowledge of the Mongols.\textsuperscript{44} It was Mongol warfare that disclosed the Far East to the medieval west, bringing it onto the center stage of global affairs. To achieve world dominion, the Mongols launched a three-pronged imperial project: to subdue the Song Empire in the south, the Islamic world in middle and southwest Asia, and Christian Europe in the West. In 1218 the Mongols, led by Genghis Khan himself, rode into the Khwarizmi Empire (1077-1231) and sacked its capital Samarquand [Samarkand]. Meanwhile, Genghis Khan dispatched his eldest son Jochi and his two generals Jebe and Subotei into Caucasus and the Kipchak Steppe in 1221. This special squad conquered in quick succession the Georgians, the Kipchak (also called Kuman Turks) residing on the Volga-Don Steppes, and the Russians on the Dnieper. In 1241, Ogodei Khan (1186-1241) started a second military movement. After destroying Moscow and Kiev, the Mongols, commanded by Jochi’s son Batu, marched further west, defeating the confederated armies of the Germans, Poles, and Hungarians and stationing their equestrians at, as Emperor Frederick II said, “the door of Christendom.”\textsuperscript{45} As is noted by the Armenia historian Hetoum or Hayton in his \textit{La fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient}, while Batu scored victories in eastern Europe, his father Jochi “conquered the

\textsuperscript{44} Morgan identifies four major “sources” of the Mongols: the only surviving Mongols source, that is, \textit{The Secret History of the Mongols} (c.1240); the Chinese Official \textit{Yuanshi} or \textit{History of the Yuan Dynasty} (1370); the Persian records; and European sources represented by Paris’s account. See Morgan, \textit{The Mongols}, 8-25. See \textit{The Secret History of the Mongols: The Life and Times of Chinggis Khan}, trans. and ed. Urgunge Onon (London: Routledge, 2001).

\textsuperscript{45} Paris, 346.
kingdom of Turkestan and lesser Persia, extending his lordship to the Phison River."46

On the Far Eastern front in 1271, Kubilai Khan overthrew the Song dynasty and built the Yuan Empire. In the southwest in 1258, Hulegu subdued Bagdad, took Allepo and Damascus, and built the Ilkhanate. Before the abrupt appearance of multitudes of Tartarian equestrians, the Far East, though mentioned by the ancients, was largely concealed from the west. For Paris, the Tartars “came with the force of lightening into the territories of the Christians,” because “never till this time [1241] has there been any mode of access to them[the Tartars]; nor have they themselves come forth, so as to allow any knowledge of their customs or persons to be gained through common intercourse with other men.”47 In his Purchas his Pilgrimage (1617), Samuel Purchas also remarks that the “armies” and “Marchants” of the “Carthaginians, Macedonians, and Romanes” had once “discouered” the east, but that knowledge was “drowne(d)” over by “flouds of barbarous people.” It is the “terrible thunder-clap, with the lightening and noyse of their Armies” that declared, once again, the Far East to the West.48

Most tellingly, the Mongols’ western campaigns show up, though chiefly as place names, in Paradise Lost. In Book XI, under Michael’s guidance, Adam perceives,

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47 Paris, 313.

48 Purchas, Purchas His Pilgrimage (1617), vol.1. 463.
….the Seat

Of mightiest Empire, from the destin’d Walls

Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can

And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir’s Throne,

To Paquin of Sinaean Kings, and thence

To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul

Down to the golden Chersonese, or where

The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since

In Hispahan, or where the Russian Ksar

In Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance,

Turkestan-born… (11.386-96)

Here, by virtue of a series of place names, Milton presents an outline of the world order shaped by the Mongol invasions. The Khwarizmi Empire, the first kingdom collapsed under the Mongols’ attack, ruled over a large part of present Persia, Turkey, and India in the thirteenth century. So most of the capital seats enumerated in this passage, such as “Samarchand,” “Cambalu” and “Paquin” (present Beijing), and “Ecbatan were once subjugated under the Tartarian rule. “Mosco” and the cities around it were the second to yield to the iron hooves of the Mongol equestrians. “The roving Tartar” in Book III who are bent on the “Indian streams” (3.436) might refer to Genghis Khan or his brave sons
who, scaling the “snowy ridge” of “Imaus” (3.431), a mountain in the Himalayan range that reaches the Ganges, marched towards the Islamic world. In Book X, Milton writes,

As when the Tartar from his Russian Foe

By Astracan over the Snowy Plains

Retires, or Bactrian sophi from the horns

Of Turkish Crescent, leaves all waste beyond

The Realm of Aladule, in his retreat

To Tauris or Casbeen. (10.431-36)

“Sophi” meant Persian Shah for early modern Europe. The “retreat” of the Persian king “to Tauris or Casbeen” refers most likely to Shah Alā al-Dīn Muhammad II (1200-20) of the Khwarizmi Empire, who fled and died on an island in the Caspian Sea after the Mongols occupied Samarkand. After the death of his father, prince Jalāl al-Dīn set up his capital at Tabriz (“Tauris”) in1225. The “waste” left by the royal fugitive represented in Milton’s epic poem recalls thus the immense ruin and desolation inflicted by the Mongols.49 The “Russian Foe” and “Astrakhan” or “Astracan” where once resided “Tartars of Mangat” (YP8:484-85) elicit the Mongols’ conquest of Moscovia, a historical

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49 For Jalāl al-Dīn’s fleeing from the Mongols see Peter Jackson, “Jalāl al-Dīn, the Mongols, and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjāb and Sind,” Iran 28 (1990): 45-54.
fact that finds a more detailed account in his *History of Moscovia*. Here Milton relates that George, son of the Duke of Moscovia, “was slain in battle by the Tartar Prince *Bathy* [Batu], who subdued *Muscovia* and made it a tributary” in 1237. “This *Bathy*, say the *Russians*,” Milton writes, “was the Father of *Tamerlan*, whom they call *Temirkutla*” (YP8:512-13). Batu was Genghis Khan’s grandson who inherited the Khanate of the Golden Horde. Tamerlane (1336-1405) was the tragic hero of Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587-88). Western historians tended to regard Genghis Khan as “Tamerline or one of his successors,” an identification that, the Jesuit missionary Nicholas Trigault says, “seems to me with good reason.” However, in his *De Bello Tartarico Historia* (1654), Martino Martini discredited the legend that “Tamberlain” had “subdued” China. Martini is right. Tamerlane was neither Genghis Khan as Trigault thought nor his grandson Batu who subdued Moscovia, as Milton mentioned. Tamerlane came into power a century after Genghis Khan, though he himself claimed genealogy from the Mongol founder. Tamerlane did plan to make a conquest of China, but he died when marching his army there in 1405. Nevertheless, the popularity of the legend itself indicates the Renaissance tendency to misidentify Tamerlane with Genghis Khan or Kubilai Khan who actually conquered China. In just stating what the Russians “say,”

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52 Martini, *Invasion of the Tartars*, 255.
53 For more on Tamerlane see Morgan, *The Mongols*, 174-77.
Milton showed a noncommittal attitude towards the Tamerlane legend. Apart from the Tartarian conquest of Moscovia, Milton also displayed knowledge of the Mongols’ invasion of Europe when remarking that “the Tartars wasted also *Polonia, Silesia*, and *Hungaria*, till Pope Innocent the Fourth obtain’d peace of them for 5 years” (YP8:512-13).

We can with certainty identify five major sources of Milton’s Tartarian image: Paris’s chronicle of English History; the *Of the Russe Common Wealth* (1591) of Giles Fletcher the Elder (c.1548-1611), the English ambassador to Moscow in 1588; Purchas’s travel collections; Martini’s *Tartarico*; and the western literary tradition of representing the Mongol Tartars. Milton not only knew about Paris but also considered him “the best of our historians” (YP3:218). In a letter to Milton dated June 1656, Henry Oldenburg spoke of Martini’s *Tartarico* and the Jesuit historian’s “promise” to publish his *Sinicae historiae decas prima* (1658) (YP7:491), which suggests Milton’s possible acquaintance with both works on Chinese history. Though dealing mainly with the Manchu Tartars and their war with the Ming Empire, Martini’s *Tartarico* nevertheless draws attention to the historical connection between the two branches of the Tartarian family, that is, the Mongols and the Manchus who dominated the Northern steppe in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively. Theodore Haak (1605-90) told Samuel

55 On Milton’s various sources of the Tartars see Cawley, *Milton and the Literature of Travel*, 52-54.
Hartlib (1600-62), the famous educator to whom Milton dedicated his *Of Education* (1644), that “Milton is not only writing a Univ. History of Engl. But also an Epitome of all Purchas Volumes.” The work mentioned here refers to Purchas’s *Hakluytus Posthumus* or *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625), an augmented compilation of Richard Hakluyt’s posthumous travel collections. Milton himself confessed in his own notes that all of the material in his *History of Moscovia* came from Hakluyt and Purchas’s travel accounts. Both Hakluyt and Purchas adapted in their works Fletcher’s *Russe Commonwealth*, which presents an elaborate account of the Russian-Mongol relations.

Most medieval narratives of the Tartars appeared in Purchas’s comprehensive travel compendium. Marco Polo’s *Travels*, though focusing largely on the Yuan Empire, nevertheless gives “an unvarnished account of the usage and customs” of “the

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59 These include the works of Polo, Mandeville, William of Rubruque, Nicolo di conti, Gaspar da Cruz, Mendoza, Benedict Goes, Giles Fletcher the Elder, and Ricci, and Trigault. See Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus*, vols. 11, 12.
The chief concern of John of Plano Carpini (1182-1252) and William of Rubruck (1210-c.1270), the two medieval pontifical legates to the Mongol court, was the Mongol Empire before its conquest of the Han Chinese. A leading figure of the Franciscan order, Carpini was dispatched by Pope Innocent IV on an embassy to the Mongol court in 1245-47. Carpini’s *History of the Mongols* (1247) enjoyed great popularity in Europe, chiefly because it was incorporated into the Dominican friar Vincent of Beauvais’s (c.1190-1264) *Speculum Historiale*, the most widely disseminated part of his encyclopedic *Speculum Maius*. Rather than a diplomat like Carpini, Rubruck was sent by the King of France in 1253 as a missionary entrusted with the special mission to convert the Tartars. *The Journey of William Rubruck* (1253-55) is comparable to Polo’s *Travels* in both its geographical and anthropological breadth. After his return, Rubruck met in Paris the English philosopher Roger Bacon (c.1214-94), who took so great an interest in his Mongol account as to redact it into his famous *Opus Majus* (1267).

It is largely through the enthusiasm excited by Bacon in England that Rubruck’s work was well preserved and transmitted. The literary prototypes of Milton’s image of the Tartars came from Geoffrey Chaucer’s (c.1340-1400) “The Squire’s Tale” and Ludovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* (1516). Chaucer’s tale tells the story of Cambuskan, a Tartarian King who is celebrating a royal birthday with princess Canace and the two princes Algarsyf and

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60 Polo, *Travels*, 102, 101.
61 I’m indebted to Dawson’s *Mongol Mission* for these bibliographical sources.
Cambalus. During the feast, a knight rides in, holding four gifts from the king of Arabia and India—a brass steed, a magic mirror, a ring that can make its bearer understand birds’ language, and a sword that can cure any wound it inflicts. The knight gives the ring and mirror to Canace. The magical ring enables the Tartarian princess to learn the story of a falcon betrayed by her lover. At this juncture, the narrator declares that he will tell the adventures of Cambuskan, Cambalus, and Algarsif. So ends the poem. Both Edmund Spenser and Milton famously expressed the wish to complete Chaucer’s unfinished tale. While Spenser continued the story in Book Four of his *Faerie Queene*, Milton engaged it in both his prose work and poems. In “Il Penseroso” Milton evokes the “sad Virgin” (103) whose power could “call up him that left half told,”

The story of *Cambuscan* bold,

Of *Camball*, and of *Algarsife*,

And who had *Canace* to wife,

That owned the virtuous Ring and Glass,

And of the wondrous Horse of Brass,

On which the *Tartar* King did ride. (109-15)

In addition to Chaucer’s tale, Milton’s image of the Tartars also draws upon Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*. Tartary is one of the eastern countries visited by Orlando, who falls deeply in love with Angelica, a native of Cathay. In *Paradise Regained*, Milton, referring
to Ariosto, relates how Angelica’s lover “Agrican,” king of Tartary, “with all his Northern powers / Besieg’d Albraca,” the fortress of “Gallaphrone,” Angelica’s father and king of Cathay (PR3.338-42).

II: Satan, Chaos, and the Tartars: Global Imperialists

Herfried Munkler differentiates between “empire” and “imperial” projects in terms of “center” and “periphery.” Whereas imperialism “fixes its gaze on the goals of a few players in the center” and “downplay[s]” the periphery, Munkler argues, “theories of empire” “keep center and periphery equally in view.” Milton draws attention both to the center and the periphery in his representation of empire, but he puts special emphasis on the subordinate powers embodied by Satan and Chaos. The Satanic empire features as a subversive power in both of Milton’s epic poems. Though references to the “misrule / of Chaos” (7.271-72) are sporadic in Paradise Lost, when gathered together, they allow us to see a picture of “subaltern” rebellion no less powerful than that represented by Satan.

Paradise Lost stages two Satanic “revolt[s]” (6.262): the heavenly war and the sabotage of Eden. These two rebellions operate on different terrains. The war in heaven, though of a global dimension, is a civil strife or “Intestine War” (6.259). Satan’s revolt, a peripheral rebellion against the center, or a subaltern insurgence against an oppressive

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63 Munkler, World Domination, 27.
64 For the elite-subaltern theory, see Loomba, Colonialism / Postcolonialism, 166.
overlord, is condemned by God as “Treason” (3.207) “Against the high Supremacy of Heav’n” (3.205). In fact, Satan is only one of the many heavenly princes who are, though endowed with certain authority, subordinate to God who “reigns / Monarch in Heav’n” (1.637-38). The monarchy of heaven comprises a number of princely rules, with the power center located in God and the Son and the periphery delegated to “Scepter’d angels,” as the speaker says,

In Heav’n by many a Tow’red structure high,
Where Scepter’d Angels held thir residence,
And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his Hierarchy, the Orders bright. (1.733-37)

In such a strictly hierarchical regime, Satan, like other heavenly “Princes,” governs a designated number of angels with a “Royal seat” (5.756) on “The Mountain of the Congregation” (5.766) in the “The Quarters of the North” (5.689). It is only after the fall that the rebellious angels, once “Throne and Imperial Powers, off-spring of heav’n,” “chang[ed] style” and were “call’d / Princes of hell” (2.310-13). But for Satan, such “magnific Titles” as “Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, and Powers” are “merely titular” (5.772-74). Whatever power with which he is invested, he is a subordinate who has to pay “Knee-tribute” (5.782) not only to God but also to the newly
“anointed” Son (5. 605). Gabriel sharply points out Satan’s “servile[]” status: “who more than thou / Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored / Heaven’s awful monarch?” (4.958-59) But Satan insists that “those Imperial Titles” “assert / Our being ordain’d to govern, not to serve” (5.801-02). Thus it is both an acute sense of “injur’d merit” (1.98) and the resolve to “move” “the great Hierarchical Standard” (5.701) in heaven that initiate the subaltern revolt.

The civil war in Heaven is but a prelude to the global war waged between Hell, Earth, Chaos, and Heaven. Satan “Stand[ing] on the brink of Hell” and “Pondering his Voyage” (2.918-19) into Chaos resembles Julius Caesar overlooking the banks of the Rubicon in 49 BC. This is an “imperial moment” for both Caesar and Satan: a step backward meant to be an absolute sovereign of a peripheral state like Hell or Gaul; a step forward presaged a war of empire that might lead to universal dominance.65 Whereas Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon ended the Republic and ushered in the era of Roman Empire, Satan’s plunging into Chaos disturbed the balance of power intended by God in creating the new world, and directly triggered global warfare. Both imperial adventurers threw the former regime into anarchy, which made it imperative to establish a new form

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of sovereign power. Though lacking the grandeur of the heavenly war, Satan’s subversion of Eden, a mere colony that “lie[s] expos’d / The utmost border of his [God’s] Kingdom” (2.360-61), is a global project that involves almost all major power centers in a war of empire: Eden the object of competition, Hell the initiator, Chaos that agrees to form an alliance and facilitate Satan’s passage and is therefore complicit in the Satanic imperial project, God the chief rival, and Sin and Death who are in “League” (4.375) with Satan. Simply put, the global war is waged between the God-Son alliance and the Satan-Chaos-Sin/death confederation. Both the divine and hellish monarchs put their expansionist plans into practice. God creates “another World” (2.347) as “Th’ addition of his Empire” (7.555) and undertakes to “over Hell extend / His empire.” The Satanic crew not only “sit in darkness here / Hatching vain Empires” (2.377-78) but also seek to bring that “hatching” to fruition through Satan’s expedition. By comparison, Chaos and Sin and Death participate in the war of empire by reaping profits from the rivalry of the chief contenders. Chaos urges Satan, “go and speed / Havoc and spoil and ruin are my gain” (2.1009). Sin and Death not only share the “Trophies” (10.355) Satan gained from the downfall of mankind but also are “Create[d] / Plenipotent on Earth” (10.404) by Satan.

Figuratively speaking, the global warfare engineered by Satan necessarily infringes upon the integrity of territorial states. Satan’s cosmic journey to Eden unfolds a continual

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transgressing of territorial borders. After issuing from “Th’ infernal doors” (2.881), the
prince of Hell delves into the “hoary deep” (2.891) of Chaos. Emerging from the realm of
Chaos, Satan steps onto “the lower stair / That Scal’d by steps of Gold to Heaven Gate”
(3.540-41). At Satan’s “bold entrance on this place [Eden],” Gabriel rebukes him for
having “broke[n] the bounds prescrib’d / To thy transgressions, and disturb’d the charge /
Of others” (4.877-82). All these images—“doors,” “stair,” “Gate,” “entrance,” and
“bounds”—mark the frontiers of territorial states. The fact that sovereign borders are
repeatedly “transgress[ed]” (4.880) and “violate[d]” (4.883) by an adventurer bent on
“havoc and “ruin” indicates at once their vulnerability and the imperial nature of Satan’s
enterprise.

Whether in the civil war in heaven or the global war featured in Satan’s sabotage of
Eden, what is at stake is divine “Omnipotence” (5.722), that is, God’s spiritual and
temporal sovereignty. God explicitly states that what is endangered by the Satanic
rebellion is his “omnipotence” as is registered in his “ancient” “claim / of deity or
Empire” (5.723-24). In attempting to divide empire with God, Satan seeks precisely to
challenge God’s spiritual and imperial hegemony. In the “great consult,” Satan justifies
his expedition into Eden with claims of “public reasons just, / Honor and Empire with
revenge enlarg’d” (4.389-90). Here Satan unambiguously pronounces an imperial project:
“Public reasons,” “just / Honor,” and above all, the imperative to build an “Empire,”
these three necessities “compel[]”(4.391) him to wreak “revenge” upon the newly created
man. Satan’s ambition to usurp God’s authority is explicitly pointed out by the heavenly
chorus. In rebelling against God, the Chorus says, Satan has sought to “impair” the “Mighty King” of Heaven, “bound / Thy empire,” and “diminish” his “worshipers” (7.608-13). Though failing in this imperial attempt, Satan has nevertheless succeeded in “draw[ing] after him the third part of Heav’n’s Host” (5.710).

The Satanic rule represents an “equal” royalty to the divine throne, or as God puts it, his “foe” “intends to erect his Throne / Equal to ours” (5.725-26). The deistic and imperial primacy he asserts by “ancient[…claim” (5.723), God realizes, is “now” (5.721) grievously challenged by an “equal” “Throne.” Satan’s ambition to establish an “equal” sovereignty is mentioned a number of times in *Paradise Lost*. The Satanic crew “Towards him bend / With awful reverence prone; and as a God / Extol him equal to the highest in Heav’n” (2.477-79). Gabriel perceives Satan’s “hope / To dispossess” “Heav’n’s awful Monarch” and “reign” by himself (4.959-60). Equality proves the central point of contention between Satan and the loyal Abdiel. Satan justifies his rebellion on the grounds of the “unjust[ness]” for “equal[s]” to “Reign” “over equals” (5.819-20). Even if “to grant it thee unjust, / That equal over equals Monarch Reign,” Abdiel retorts, Satan is not so “great and glorious” as he “count[s]” himself (5.831-33). Despite this scathing taunt, Satan and his crew are resolved to prove by “our own right hand” “Who is our equal” (5.864-66). In fact, God himself admits that his “armed saints” (6.47) commanded by Michael and Gabriel are “Equal in number to that Godless crew / Rebellious” (6.49-50). God’s repetitive use of the royal first-person possessive pronoun “our” evinces a broad awareness of the danger posed to “our high place, our sanctuary, our hill”
Satan’s imperial “over-reach” to be “equal” to God resonates with the global ambition of the Tartars. Satan’s Tartarian association allows Milton to represent both the radical nature of the subaltern insurgence and the damage caused by the imperial contention. Pointedly identified as God’s “foe,” Miltonic Satan was “mighty Paramount” and “seem’d / Alone th’ Antagonist of Heav’n” (2.508-09). What the Satanic crew aspire is to “prevail / Against God and Messiah” (6.795-96). Likewise, in claiming to fight for God’s cause and raising military standards against Christendom, the Mongols proved a formidable enemy of the Christian God as well. In his *History of the Mongols*, Carpini observes that the Mongols “raised the standards of proceeding against the Church of God and the Roman Empire, and against all Christian kingdoms and nations of the West.”

Paris remarked that the Tartars inflicted an “injury” at once “to Christ, to the Catholic Church, and all Christendom.” For Emperor Frederick, the Tartars intended to “subdu[e] the whole of the West,” “ruining and uprooting the faith and name of Christ.” The Emperor’s fear was not ungrounded. In the royal emissary delivered by Rubruck to the King of France, the Tartarian monarch declares openly, “This is the decree of the eternal God. In heaven there is but one eternal God, on earth there is but one Lord Chingis Chan, the son of God.”

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67 Dawson ed., 43-44.
68 Paris, 473.
69 Paris, 346.
his equalization of God’s “decree” with his own edict directly challenged the
omnipotence of the Christian God. Most remarkably, the self-styled God in the east
demanded “the great Pope, together with all the Princes” to “come in person to serve us.”
Thus unlike the “puny” Indian king, the “great Commander” of Hell (1.358) recalls
strongly the Mongol Khans in his imperial outreach and boldness to wage wars against
God’s regime. Like the Tartarian Khans who erected the “mightiest Empire,” Miltonic
Satan is “Fit to decide the Empire of great Heav’n” (6.303).

For the medieval west, the Mongol Khans belonged to “the race of Satan” residing in “Tartarus” or “Hell,” sharing with Satan the title of the “Prince of Hell.” Milton’s Satan declares that he “glor[ies] in the name” of “the Race / Of Satan,” because the title means “Antagonist of Heav’n’s Almighty King” (10.385-87). God commands Michael to “drive” the rebellious angels “into their place of punishment, the Gulf / of Tartarus, which ready opens wide / His fiery Chaos to receive thir fall” (6.52-55).

“Tartarus,” a cognate of “Tartary,” was the Greek and Roman term for the “underworld” or “Hell.” In Book Six of his Aeneid, the Roman poet Virgil uses “Tartarei” (295) to signify the underworld punishment for evil doers. In his The Tartars or Ten Tribes (c.1610), Fletcher remarks that “Tartaros” means “the place of the damned souls, and Hell it self, in resemblance, as may be thought, of like disorder and confusion of both the places.” To maintain order in heaven, the satanic race must be “scourag[d]…back to

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72 Giles Fletcher the Elder, That the Tartars are the Ten Tribes, who were Carried
Hell” (4.914). In like manner, to preserve the peace of Christendom, the Tartars must be “thrust” back into Tartarus, that is, Tartary. Medieval observers explicitly associated the Mongol Khans with the race residing in Tartarus or Hell. For Paris, the Mongols “are well called Tartars, as it were inhabitants of Tartarus,”73 and he called them “an immense horde of that detestable race of Satan” who “rushed forth, like demons loosed from Tartarus.”74 The King of France also observed that “if these people, whom we call Tartars, should come upon us, either we will thrust them back into the regions of Tartarus, whence they emanated, or else they shall send all of us to heaven.”75 In his letter to the English King Henry III (1207-72), Emperor Frederick writes, the Tartars “who have burst forth from the abodes of Tartarus, may find their pride humbled, after experiencing the strength of the West, and be thrust back to their own Tartarus.” 76

As powerful enemies of God, both the Mongols and the Satanic crew in Paradise Lost caused great damage and panic in Christendom, which renders it urgent for the Christians to fight back. Satan’s two revolts have reduced much of the created world to chaos and subjected the New World to the “misrule” (10.628) of Sin and Death. Likewise, the global ambition of the Mongols threw the whole of Christendom into anarchy.

Whereas Satan “drew after him the third part of Heav’n’s Host” into Hell, the Mongols Captives, and Transplanted by the Assyrians (c.1610), in Berry ed., Works of Giles Fletcher, 318-31, 321.
73 Paris, 312.
74 Paris, 312, my own italics.
75 Paris, 341.
76 Paris, 346.
succeeded in subduing a host of Christian nations. By 1241, Paris relates, the Tartars had “visited the northern provinces of the Christians” and “reduced to a desert the countries of Friesland, Gothland, Poland, Bohemia, and both divisions of Hungary, slaying or putting to flight princes, prelates, citizens, and rustics.” In inflicting “dreadful devastation and destruction,” these “barbarous” people had “struck great fear and terror into all Christendom.”

In a letter to all western princes, Emperor Frederick warns that by 1243 “six Christian kingdoms have already been destroyed, and the same fate hangs over the others,” and now the Tartars are physically stationed at “the door of Christendom,” “purposing to enter the boundaries of Germany.”

Since Satan seeks to “try / In battle, what our Power is, or our right” (5.728), God says to the Son:

Let us advise, and to this hazard draw

With speed what force is left, and all imploy

In our defense, lest unawares we lose

This our high place, our Sanctuary, our Hill (5.729-32)

God’s call for confederation against the “atheist crew” evokes Frederick’s urge to form a “potent European empire” against the Mongol invasions. In the same letter to the King of England, Frederick remarks that it is “Satan himself” who “has dragged them [the

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77 Paris, 339, 313. For the nations and regions brought under the Mongol rule also see Dawson ed., 29-32.

78 Paris, 473, 346.
Mongols] hither to die, before the victorious eagles of the potent European empire.”

Similarly, Carpini observed that “if Christians wish to save themselves, their country and Christendom, then ought kings, princes, barons, and rulers of countries to assemble together and by common consent send men to fight against the Tartars.” By appealing to an imaginary confederation, both the Emperor and the pontifical legate meant to mobilize western nations to battle against the Satanic forces bursting forth from the Far East.

Unlike Satan who ventures out to another world to compete with God for global hegemony, the “Throne / Of Chaos” (2.959-60), the personification of the anarchical forces that threaten the created world, appears a sedentary monarchy wanting in imperial initiatives. In truth, Milton’s Chaos is a powerful monarch with a tangible territory bordering Heaven and Hell and a resolute polity to contend with God for dominion. That Chaos resides on the very “Frontiers” of his realm (2.998) shows his constant alert to territorial sovereignty. So rather than a mere “abortive gulf” (2.441), the Chaotic realm features a political entity with a determined purpose to compete with God for “havoc and spoil and ruin.”

The subversive strategy Chaos adopts also registers in its Tartarian association. In Book VII, Raphael gives a vivid account of how the Son created the world through “the

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79 Paris, 347.
80 Dawson ed., 45-46.
spirit of God” (7.235). As is signified by such instrumental images as “voice” (7.221), “the fervid Wheels,” “the golden Compasses” (7.224-25), and the “brooding wings” (7.235), creation is simultaneously a commanding and circumscribing process. All these instruments are adopted by the Son with a definite purpose, that is, to bring under yoke and force to birth the intractable chaos. Most of chaos gets tamed, but there remain some “black tartareous cold Infernal dregs” that refuse to be warmed to life, whatever device is employed. The lower case “tartar” denotes “dregs,” and it first appeared in Arderne’s *Surgery* (c1425): “First I made hym ane emplastre of tartare of ale, i.[e]. dreggez.” *(Online OED)* These resistant “tartaceous” “dregs” amidst God’s creation constitute a fertile site of contention in Milton studies. John Rogers refers to these sediments as physical “tartar,” “the inassimilable elements purged from the system in the process of digestion,” which “introduce(s) into the otherwise monistic world of the poem a residual race of dualism.”*82* For Eric Song, “Despite God’s attempt to purge the ‘tartaceous’ dregs from Creation, chaotic elements persist to disrupt an ostensibly monist world by revealing its primordial fissures.”*83* I argue that Milton’s “tartaceous” deposits encode Chaos’s remarkable subversive strategy, a tactic adopted by the periphery to contend with the divine center for hegemony and territorial control.

Politically speaking, God’s “monistic” economy is erected at the exclusion of the anarchical (Chaos), the non-conformist (rebellion angels), and the incestuous (Sin)

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*83* Song, “Strange Fire of the Tartars,” 119.
“other.” Like the Satanic revolt, Chaos’s disruption of such an excluding polity symbolizes the rebellion of the periphery. Paris called the Tartars an “inhuman and brutal, outlawed, barbarous, and untamable people” who are fit “to be called monsters than men” or wild “beasts” “thirsting after and drinking blood.” Emperor Frederick thought “this race of people” “wild, outlawed, and ignorant of the laws of humanity.” For Fletcher, the Tatars had “the most vile and barbarous Nation of all the world.” In refusing to take on the forms imposed by the creator and sticking to their chaotic state, the tartareous sediments in Milton’s epic poem show the very inhuman or “untamable” stubbornness characteristic of the Tartars. Moreover, just as the Tartars were pushing into the heartland of Christendom, Chaos, by condensing itself into some seemingly insignificant deposit amidst creation, manages to lodge his resistance at the very heart of the divine economy. By rejecting being tamed to life by “the spirit of God,” Chaos asserts its powerful existence and irreducible part in the creation of the world.

Milton’s resistant tartareous dregs elicit in particular the degenerated state of the ten tribes of Israel, the exiled Jews who disappeared after the Babylonian captivity. The upper case “Tartar” means “residue or remainder,” especially the “residue” of the ten tribes of Israel. Fletcher remarks that “Tartar in the Syrian Tongue signifies Remnants or Remainders,” and “the Tartars are the Ten Tribes, who were Carried Captives, and

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84 Paris, 312.
85 Paris, 344.
86 Berry ed., Works of Giles Fletcher, 321.
Transplanted by the Assyrians.” Similarly, the English antiquary Edward Brerewood (c.1565-1613) noted that “It is alleaged that the word Taturi, or Totari…signifieth in the Syriaque and Hebrew tongues, a Residue or Remainder such as these Tartars are supposed to bee of the Ten Tribes.” The Renaissance association between the Tartars and the ten tribes was no mere conjecture—the Jews themselves practically made that connection when they learned about the great havoc wrought by the Tartars upon Christendom. According to Paris, the Tartars’ invasion uncovered “the enormous wickedness” or “hidden treachery and extraordinary deceit of the Jews.” While panic gripped Christendom, Paris says, the Jews looked at the victorious Mongols as “a portion of their race” or “brethren of the tribes of Israel” who came to “bring the whole world to subjection to them and to us.” Some Jews even went to the lengths of gathering “all the swords, daggers, and armour” and “assembl[ing] on a general summons in a secret place” to discuss how to welcome the Mongols “with valuable gifts, and receive them with the highest honour.” Paris’s chronicle of the Jews’ enthusiasm for the Tartars had most likely been on Milton’s mind when he represented the ten lost tribes in _Paradise Regained_. One of the reasons Jesus gives for refusing to deliver his fellowmen echoes Paris’s disparaging remarks about the ten tribes. For Paris, what makes the lost Jews most detestable is their apostate ways of “follow[ing] strange gods and unknown customs,”

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87 Berry ed., _Works of Giles Fletcher_, 322.
88 Edward Brerewood, _Enquiries Touching the Diversity of Languages, and Religions through the Chief Parts of the Worlde_ (London, 1614), xiii, 94.
89 Paris, 357-58.
which “perverted” them to “an evil way of thinking,” “confused” “their heart and language,” and “changed” their life “to that of the cruel and irrational wild beast.” Similarly, Jesus’s critique of the lost tribes also harps on their deviation from the Christian God. That he declines to “deliver[]” his “brethren, those ten Tribes” (PR3.374), Jesus says, is because they have become enemies of God with their “heathenish crimes” (PR3.419). The worshipping of “all the Idolatries of Heathen round” (PR3.418) have rendered them “distinguishable scarce / From Gentiles” (PR3.424-25). Since these “captive Tribes” “wrought their own captivity” (PR3.414-15), the Savior argues, they are not worthy to be redeemed.

In addition to engineering his own rebellion, Chaos also agrees to ally himself with Satan and is therefore complicit in Satan’s imperial project. On the one hand, he obeys the divine behest to provide the “dark materials” of chaos for the creation of “more Worlds” (2.916). But on the other hand, he offers the same “materials” for Satan to fabricate weapons to fight against God. To get a passport to Eden, Satan promises to assist Chaos to win back “all usurpation” by “reduc(ing)” them to their “original darkness” and reasserting the chaotic “sway” and “Standard” (2.983-85). Chaos’s endorsement of Satan’s plan signifies the joining of hands of the rebellious pair in their revolt against God. Apart from this diplomatic pact, their confederation is also registered in the “Tartarean sulphur” amidst Chaos. During the heavenly war, the Satanic crew turn the tide by resorting to “engines” and “Balls / Of missive ruin” (6.518-19). These

90 Paris, 314.
destructive weapons were made from the gunpowder or “Sulphurous and Nitrous Foam” dug from the earth (6.512, 516). Moreover, in the “great consult,” Moloch proposes “open War” (2.51), suggesting “O’er Heav’n’s high Tow’rs to force restless way” (2.62) by, once again, fabricating weapons out of “Tartarean sulphur” (2.69). This powerful agent, Moloch remarks, will “mix[]” and explode “his [God’s] throne itself” into “strange fire” (2.68-69). Thus the “Tartarean sulphur” nourished by Chaos provides powerful resources for the rebellion angels to meditate another war against Heaven and thereby negotiate terms of peace with God.

III: The Threat of Chaos and the “global commonwealth” Embodied in the Son’s Rule

Fear of Chaos is a chief motivation behind the establishment of empire. Toivo Koivukoski holds that “imperial compulsions” are “moved by a terror of civilizational collapse—a state of being that paradoxically produces a profound level of anxiety regarding potential future threats, while providing a commonsense basis for social cohesion within such large organizations as are empires.”91 Likewise, Munkler maintains that empires “see themselves as creators and guarantors of an order that ultimately depends on them and that they must defend against the outbreak of chaos,

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which they regard as a constant threat.”92 The Tartarian association of Satanic and
Chaotic empires in Paradise Lost suggests precisely a “terror of civilizational collapse.”
Paris records that the Tartars succeeded in “laying waste the country, committing great
slaughter, and striking inexpressible terror and alarm into every one.”93 For Emperor
Frederick, the Mongols who caused “a universal desolation of kingdoms” meant “the
general ruin of the whole world, especially of Christendom.”94 The “constant threat” of
chaos is a chief motif of Milton’s epic poems. An anarchical world graphically figures in
the “wilderness” in Paradise Regained, the background against which the drama of
competition for global “lord[ship]” (PR4.167) between Satan and the Son plays out. The
“vast immeasurable Abyss” that lies “Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild”
(7.211-12) forms a predominant backdrop of the world represented in Paradise Lost. To
make things worse, Satan and Chaos’s imperial ambitions threaten to thrust the created
world back to its uncreated chaotic state. After disrupting the “the great Hierarchical
Standard” in heaven, Satan reduces Eden to the “misrule” of Sin and Death. Not satisfied
with ruling over the “Eternal Anarchy” (2.896), Chaos, together with “Night,” the
“Consort of his Reign” (2.963), aspires to “gain” “Havoc and spoil and ruin” from
Satan’s imperial adventure. Chaos’s chief complaint to Satan is his competition with God
for territorial control. Bordering on the edge of Heaven, undermined by “Hell” from
beneath, and infiltrated by the newly created world, Chaos complains to Satan, his realm

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92 Munkler, World Domination, viii.
93 Paris, 313.
94 Paris, 341, 344.
is constantly “encroached on still through our intestine broils” (2.1001), impinged upon by the already created worlds, and above all, tyrannically usurped by God. Chaos and Night obviously do not take things lying down. “The womb / of unoriginal Night and Chaos wild” (10.476-77) is ever ready to “swallow[] up” created beings (2.149), “threaten[ing]” the “utter loss of being” with its “abortive gulf” (2.440-41).

Milton highlights the threat of chaos to bring out the necessity of instituting a new sovereignty that can forestall the “civilizational collapse” or “universal ruin” (6.797) threatened by the Satanic revolt. In globalization theory, empire is often regarded as an antidote to chaos. Hardt and Negri assert that “in Empire there is peace, in Empire there is the guarantee of justice for all peoples.”95 For Munkler, “fear of Chaos, and the self-appointed role of defender of order against disorder, good against evil, through which the empire sees and legitimizes itself, are corollaries of the imperial mission, which also represents a fundamental justification for world empire.”96 Milton’s God proclaims the Son’s rule at once to preempt “the outbreak of chaos” and erect a new “order.” What the Son assumes is precisely the “role of defender of order against disorder, good against evil,” a role that “legitimizes” the “world empire” he promotes. The Son’s power manifests itself most when the world tends to subject to the “misrule” of Chaos. It is at the critical moment when “all Heav’n / Had gone to wrack, with ruin overspread” (6.669-70) that God delegates the Son to “avenge[] / Upon his enemies” (6.676-77)

95 Hardt and Negri, Empire, 10.
96 Munkler, World Domination, viii.
during the heavenly war. It is to “repair / That detriment” (7.152-53) caused by the fallen angels that God commissions the Son to “create / Another World” (7.154-55). To remedy the havoc wrought by Sin and Death, the Son takes on the role of the “restorer of Mankind” (10.646).

The figure of the Son provides an ideal platform for Milton to imagine a new form of sovereignty that can not only arrest the threat of chaos but also address the limitations of territorial polities, whose rivalry for hegemony proves a major source of widespread chaos. The Son aims at governance beyond national borders. In *Paradise Regained*, Jesus rebukes Satan that “God hath justly giv’n the Nations up / To thy Delusions; justly, since they fell / Idolatrous” (PR1.442-44). For the two disciples Andrew and Simon, it is because “the kings of th’Earth…oppress / Thy chosen” that God thinks it “time” to “Send thy Messiah forth” (PR 2.42-45). So the new sovereignty the Son intends to erect is, rather than a kingly rule, a global governance that can “guide Nations in the way of truth” (PR2.473). Even Satan admits that the Son is “the head of Nations,” “Their King, their leader, and Supreme on Earth” (PR1.98-99). In *Paradise Lost*, God expressly proclaims that the Son is “Anointed universal King” and “Head Supreme,” and he will subsume all “Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions” “In Heaven, or Earth, or under Earth in Hell” (3.317-22) to his own rule. In effect, God institutes the Son’s governance with a view to replacing the kingly rule; as God himself puts it, “Then thou thy regal Sceptre

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shall lay by, / For regal Sceptre then no more shall need, / God shall be All in All” (3.339-41). The “regal Sceptre” is the archetypical symbol of monarchial rule. Thus the rule of the Son “in whom shall trust / All nations” (12.328-29) intends at once to overcome the limitations of national rule and to govern nations “in the way of truth.” By “all nations” Milton means not only “the sons of Abraham’s loins” but also “the Sons / Of Abraham’s Faith wherever through the world” (12.447-49). Thus Milton defines nations, rather than as territorial entities, in terms of “faith”—nations will participate in a global commonwealth as “the Sons / Of Abraham’s Faith.”

In seeking to govern nations by spiritual faith or truth and to achieve a “New Heav’n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell” (3.335), the Son’s universal sovereignty recalls both Hardt and Negri’s “empire” and Dallmayr’s “global commonwealth.” For Hardt and Negri, empire is directed by “a unitary power that maintains the social peace and produces its ethical truths,” and Dallmayr’s global cosmopolis “embrac[es] different cultures and societies and [is] held together…by lateral connections and bonds of cultural and political interdependence.” On the one hand, Satan unwittingly articulates the cosmopolitan nature of the Son’s rule when he remarks that the Son resembles his Father who regards it a “glory” to receive[] / Promiscuous from all Nations, Jew, or Greek / Or Barbarous, nor exception hath declar’d; / From us his foes pronounc’t glory he exacts” (PR3.117-20). In embracing “promiscuous[ly]” all nations and peoples and even the hostile forces, the universal authority represented by the Son means to refocus the various loyalties and identities once governed by the nation state toward a new institutional form.
On the other hand, the fundamental constitution of the Son’s “everlasting Kingdom” (PR 3.199), that is, the “better Cov’nant” (12.302), bears out the top priority the Savior accords to ethical and spiritual truths. God turns evil to good in creating man to fill the “vacant room” left by the rebellious angels; likewise, when Michael tries to distill ethical and political lessons from the sinful history initiated by the fall, divine “wisdom” once again “ordain’d / Good out of evil” (7.187-90). These lessons are epitomized in the new Covenant:

So Law appears imperfect, and but giv’n
With purpose to resign them in full time
Up to a better Cov’nant, disciplin’d
From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit,
From imposition of strict Laws, to free
Acceptance of large Grace, from servile fear
To filial, words of Law to works of Faith. (12.300-06)

Typology is used in this passage to signify, among others, two different modes of governance. The new covenant Adam and his offspring are to contract with the Son not only replaces the Mosaic “law” but also derives from and fulfills the old covenant God made with Abraham. The “shadowy Types” in the Old Testament become “truth,” the “Flesh” turns into “Spirit,” the “imposition of strict laws” is replaced by “acceptance of
large Grace,” “servile fear” by “filial” love, and “words of law” by “works of Faith.” Two different governance structures are evidently juxtaposed and contrasted here. Whereas shadowy types, flesh, strict laws, and servile fear characterize the kingly rule, truth, spirit, filial love, and faith speak of the ethos informing the new governance, an alternative form of sovereignty that symbolizes, as Gills puts it, “our spiritual side and our quest for harmony, moral order, and community.” For Milton, the new one is a “better cov’nant.”

The global cosmopolis promoted by the Son is far from a mere spiritual empire united by the bonds of “Abraham’s Faith” and the new covenant; it is a political commonwealth with its own “Tribunal” (3.326) to “judge,” “arraign[],” and “Sentence” (3.330-33) as well. Robert Fallon holds that “New Heav’n and Earth shall to the Ages rise” (10.647), heralding the end of politics itself, once God’s Creation will have achieved a state of existence that need no longer be defined in terms of the governing and the governed.  

In fact, the rule of the Son does not indicate “the end of politics itself,” nor does the Son merely “prefer[] a metaphorical, inward rule over liberal political might” as Eric Song claims. Rather, as Linda Gregerson argues, “the ‘inner man’ in question is not merely the self, a kingdom of one, but the soul of Nations.” By “the soul of Nations,” Gregerson most likely means the welfare, whether political or spiritual, of nation states. Thus though propounded as a spiritual principle, the Son’s “saving

98 Fallon, *Divided Empire*, 107
doctrine” has a political mission to regulate not only a private man, a nation or a
“selected nation,” but also a community of “nations.” In *Paradise Regained*, Satan,
consistent in his uncanny perception, penetrates the very political nature of the Son’s
governance. “Should Kings and Nations from thy mouth consult, / Thy Counsel would be
as the Oracle” (PR3.12-13), and “wert thou sought to deeds / That might require th’ array
of war,” Satan says to the Son, “thy skill / Of conduct would be such, that all the world /
Could not sustain thy Prowess, or subsist / In battle” (PR 3.16-19). The Son concedes to
Satan’s view. A peaceful doctrine will be propagated with “winning words” to “conquer
willing hearts” (PR1.222), the Son soliloquizes, but “the stubborn” can “only” be
“sudue[d]” (PR1.226) with “the array of war.” Moreover, the Son intends to institute an
“everlasting kingdom” that “shall to pieces dash / All Monarchies” (PR4.149-51), an
institution that apparently presupposes armed violence. But the Son does not endorse
imperial empires that “once just” and “conquer’d well” but later “govern ill the Nations
under yoke” (PR4.133-35). What he prefers is an institutional form that not only
conquers but also governs well, that is, a “global commonwealth” guided by a “saving
document.”
Donne and Milton’s responses to the cultural diversity represented by countries and nations in the Far East illustrate nicely the universalism/global cosmopolitanism framework. Donne’s accommodation of biblical discourse to new geographical discoveries as is symbolized by the strait of “Anyan” suggests consciousness of a globalized world, and his sermon to the Virginia Company and references to the Chinese gesture towards a cosmopolitan will to engage the non-Christian other. The global implications of Donne’s image of Spanish “pistolets” in “The Bracelet” register a perception of the interconnections enacted by the transcontinental trade of precious metals in the early modern period. Global cosmopolitanism informs Donne’s catalogue of world chronologies in his *Essayes in Divinity* as well—his embedding of this catalogue in a treatise on scriptural chronology signals a cosmopolitan will to negotiate historical differences. Milton’s universal perspective is epitomized in Adam’s survey of world empires in Book XI of *Paradise Lost*, an overview that encompasses, as Peters puts it, the whole expanse of world history and geography. Milton displays a global cosmopolitanism in his undifferentiated juxtaposition of profane histories and his willingness to accommodate them to the biblical timetable. Milton’s awareness of the Mongols’ imperial project and his conception of a cosmopolitan empire in the rule of the Son provide another instance of his global cosmopolitanism that seeks to engage the other.

Universalism/global cosmopolitanism is at once a central concept governing the
dissertation and a salient feature marking Donne and Milton’s thinking and outlook. As a conceptual framework, the universal/cosmopolitan lens allows us to see the early modern contact between east and west from a more comprehensive, moderate, and tolerant perspective. Throughout writing this dissertation, I have been consciously avoiding the charge of Sinocentrism. Both Eurocentrism and Sinocentrism are insufficient interpretive models, since each claims a superiority and centrality at the expense of the other. World history is a narrative that comprises the stories of all civilizations, and each story, in its unique way, contributes to its progress. Before the era of discovery, the Ptolemaic cosmogony and monotheistic worldview had confined the western horizon to Jerusalem and the Mediterranean ring and restricted religious conflict between Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The world beyond the four termini designated by Ptolemy was excluded from the world picture of western Europe. After Columbus and Vas da Gama’s epoch-making adventures, the western horizon started to expand to include the whole globe and the new pagans began to assume a place in the world picture of the west. Only a universal/global rather than Sino-or Euro-centric lens could do justice to this new configuration of the earth.

A universal vision and an increasingly cosmopolitan global consciousness were mental attributes unique to Renaissance cosmopolitans like Donne and Milton. The Universalism/global cosmopolitanism model assumes immediate relevance and urgency only for those who were confronted with, for the first time in their lives, a newly revealed globe. But Donne and Milton’s receptions of the new world other also entail limitations
typical of Renaissance cosmopolitans. A universal will to find commonality and a

cosmopolitan will to engage difference do not obviate the desire to subsume, appropriate,
or neutralize the alien other. As deeply committed Christians, Donne and Milton could
not transcend their religious upbringing and the “cultural forms” they were born into. The
central repertoire and concepts they used to interpret eastern culture came from a
fundamentally Eurocentric conceptual framework. Nevertheless, though unlike the
extremely tolerant Jesuits such as Ricci and Trigault who tried every means possible to
adapt to Chinese culture, Donne and Milton were well aware of the irresistible
globalizing forces that were transforming a “flat” earth into a “round” globe, an
awareness that compelled them to readjust their attitude towards the other. Rather than
directly denouncing Chinese culture as idolatrous and inferior as the Franciscans and
Dominicans friars did, they both recognized the limitation of a Eurocentric and
monotheistic perspective in a globalized world and exhibited the intellectual grace and
maturity to confront the challenge posed by the new pagan other. In fact, not only Donne
and Milton but also many Renaissance writers such as Shakespeare and Marlowe were
cosmopolitans who responded with unexpected generosity to newly discovered peoples
and cultures. Donne and Milton’s reactions are exemplary because the issues they raised
reflect the larger concern in the early modern encounter with a highly civilized “other”
that boasted an antique history, an advanced ethical system, and a powerful monarchial
empire.

My discussion of the resonance of China and the Mongols in Renaissance culture
and literature is far from exhaustive. The literary works I have examined are merely exemplary of the Renaissance imaginative response to the discovery of the regions along the Pacific Ring, and the themes I have touched on are representative of a multifaceted communication that involved various aspects of eastern and western cultures. Rather than providing a comprehensive picture, my study intends to open up new lines of inquiry for more sophisticated and nuanced engagement with the stimulating intellectual communication unique to the early phase of the east-west intercourse. I hope the various lines of inquiries I have broached in the present research can set some directions for scholars equally interested in the early modern reception of the new world embodied by China and the Far East.
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Post-Secondary Education and Degrees:
2005-12 Ph.D., Department of English, University of Toronto (expected 2012)
2004-05 M.A., Department of English, University of Toronto
1996-99 M.A., Department of English, Nanjing University, China
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Dissertation:
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Research Interest: early modern literature; globalization theory; early modern discovery, exploration, and travel literature; ethnic and colonial studies; classical and Renaissance philosophical, religious, and political theories

Honours and Awards:
2010-11 OGS: Thomas and Beverley Simpson Ontario Graduate Scholarship ($15,000)
2009: Folger Shakespeare Library Travel Grant (c. $800)
2006-08 CGS: Canada Graduate Scholarship, SSHRC ($105,000)
2006-08 SSHRC William E. Taylor Fellowship for the most outstanding doctoral award recipient ($36,000)
2007: Graduate Travel Award ($1,000)
2006-07  OGS: Ontario Graduate Scholarship ($15,000, declined)
2005-06  University of Toronto Fellowship ($12,000)

**Academic Publications:**

**Articles submitted:**
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**Published Article and Translations:**
Translated *Why People Believe Weird Things* by Michael Shermer (Hunan Press, 2001)
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**Encyclopedia work**

“English Language Teaching (ELT) in China and a ‘China English’ Model,” *History of the English Language (HEL) Online Encyclopedia*<http:www.chase.utoronto.ca/percy/courses/eng6365-mcdermott.htm>

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“Contact and Exchange: China and the West, Circa the Ming and Early Qing Dynasties,” Folger Shakespeare Library, Sept., 2010 (weekend workshop)


“Property Right and Feminine Jurisdiction in *The Rape of Lucrece*,” University of Toronto’s Early Modern Studies Seminar (EMSS) graduate, University of Toronto. May, 2009

**Related Work Experience:**

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2005-10    Teaching Assistant, University of Toronto, Canada
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