

CHINA

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“THE FIRST DEFINITIVE EUROPEAN WORK ON THE CHINESE EMPIRE” (HILL)

Du Halde, Jean Baptiste (1674-1743). *Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie Chinoise, des cartes générales et particulières de ces pays, de la carte générale & des cartes particulières du Thibet, & de la Corée : & ornée d'un grand nombre de figures et de vignettes gravées en taille-douce.* Paris, Chez P. G. Lemercier, 1735.

Four volumes, folio (422x280 mm). Vol. I: [4], VIII, LII, III, [1], 592 pages. [25] engraved plates. Vol. II: [4], IV, 725, [1] pages. [10] engraved plates. Vol. III: [2], IV, 564, [4] pages. [5] engraved plates. Vol. IV: [4], II, 520 pages. [25] engraved plates. Lacking the last blank leaf in vol. II and the half-title in vol. III. Over all the work contains 65 plates after Antoine Humblot, including 8 double plates (costumes, village views, hunting, fishing, etc.), 10 city plans, one plate showing Beijing's observatory, one portrait of Confucius, one numismatic plate, one music plate and 43 maps, mostly folding. Contemporary mottled calf, gilt spine with six raised bands and double morocco lettering-piece, red edges. Joints partly skillfully repaired, some light browning, but a fine set. Provenance: Mr. de Rumare; Bibliotheque Mery de Bellegarde (ex-libris to front pastedown).

Rare first edition, issued in only about two hundred copies. Du Halde, a Parisian Jesuit, collected and edited the letters, published and unpublished, of twenty-seven Jesuit missionaries including particularly Martino Martini's *Sinicae Historicae* (1658) and Lecomte's *Nouveaux Memoires* (1696). Although compiled by a Jesuit, Du Halde was under severe pressure to say as little as possible about the progress of Christianity in Asia, lest it would show the disagreements within the Order about such contentious issues as the Rites controversy. Hence the emphasis falls heavily on secular material.

Historically the work is regarded as monumental from a textual point of view because of the vast amount and variety of interesting details on Chinese political institutions, education, language, medicine, science, customs, and artifacts, and it is one of the earliest European sources on Chinese ceramics. Visually, it also publishes for the first time forty-three maps by Jean-Baptiste Bourignon d'Anville, the leading cartographer of the time. These maps were commissioned by the Kangxi emperor from Jesuit surveys, printed xylographically in Beijing, then sent to Paris to be engraved by d'Anville. They comprise the second European atlas of China, the first of Tibet and Korea, and include the first published map and account of Vitus Bering's expedition to the North Pacific - this is the first map to depict any part of Alaska.

Notwithstanding various inaccuracies, Du Halde's work remains today “the bible of European Sinophilia” (Lowendahl).

THE WONDERS OF CHINA

Kircher, Athanasius. *China Monumentis ... illustrata.* Amsterdam: Jansson, 1667.

Folio. Engraved title, 2 folding maps, portrait, 23 plates (2 folding), five supplied from another copy, and 59 half-page text engravings. [14], 237, [11] pp. Early calf, morocco label, edges sprinkled red. Joints slightly tender at top, some foxing, occasional browning. A fine, fresh copy.

First edition. One of the grandest and most important works on China up to its time, Kircher's *China Illustrata* (*China, Illustrated Through Its Monuments, Both Sacred and Profane*) inaugurated the late 17th-century age of European fascination with China. This first edition is in Latin; the book was quickly reissued in Dutch, English, and French. Kircher's wide-ranging and magnificently illustrated work covers Chinese language, history, religion, government, architecture, mechanical marvels, and natural wonders. The work brought to the attention of large numbers of Westerners wonders and curiosities of the Far East including foot binding, Confucianism, the Great Wall, lacquer, bird's nest soup, and tea.

One of the most distinguished German scholars of the 17th century, Kircher (1601-1680) is sometimes called "the last Renaissance man." He made wide-ranging contributions in oriental studies, geology, and medicine. He attempted to collect and catalogue the world's knowledge, employing a vast network of correspondents to gather information.

This book represents a milestone in the study of Chinese language. Kircher learned from missionary Michael Boym of the now-famous Nestorian inscription at His-an fu, which showed that Christian missionaries reached China in A.D. 781. The transcription and transliteration of the His-an fu inscription, printed here for the first time, make up "**the first Chinese vocabulary ever printed in the West . . . the standard text for the study of Chinese until the nineteenth century**" (Merrill).

This is a very handsome, fresh copy in an early unrestored binding.

(Marco Polo.) Ramusio, Giovanni Battista. Delle navigationi et viaggi. Venice: Giunta, 1563, 1556, and 1559.

Folio. Three volumes. 3 folding plates in Vol. I, 7 double-page maps in vol. III, numerous woodcut illustrations, maps, and plans. Vol. I title and last leaf stained and repaired, e5-6 supplied. Volume II, quire H supplied, rejoined. Early blind-paneled calf, minor restoration, early manuscript paper label at foot of spine. Some browning, staining, and spotting, some dampstaining, minor worming. Lower portion of Western Hemisphere map trimmed and supplied in manuscript. **An especially handsome and fresh set.**

First editions of volumes II and II, third edition of volume I. Ramusio (1485-1557), the great Venetian Renaissance humanist, began corresponding with fellow humanist scholars, explorers, and travelers as early as 1525 in order to gather accounts of the Age of Exploration. In 1548 he began to assemble the work, which was first printed in 1550 (vol. I), 1556 (vol. III) and 1559 (the delayed Vol. II). Numerous revisions and reprints followed, and Ramusio spawned countless imitators and successors such as Hakluyt, Purchas, and De Bry.

The second volume contains **the most complete and most influential text of Marco Polo's book of his travels.** The discovery and publication of this most important Marco Polo text was Ramusio's greatest achievement. In his preface, the first attempt at a biography of Marco Polo, Ramusio compares Marco Polo with Christopher Columbus and concludes that Marco's was the greater accomplishment. Ramusio had unique access to early Marco Polo manuscripts and determined to publish a critical edition based on several manuscripts including a now-lost manuscript containing "the supplementary recollections of the Traveller, noted down at a later period of his life" (Yule), here published for the first time. Sir Henry Yule's standard English translation of Marco Polo, using two early manuscripts, includes numerous interpolations of Ramusio's text. Yule notes, "**The picture in Ramusio, taken as a whole, is so much more brilliant, interesting, and complete than in the older texts,** that I thought of substituting it entirely for the other."

"Among the 150 surviving medieval manuscripts [of Marco Polo's Travels], there are two distinct traditions ... The first (A) derives from a very early Franco-Italian version, probably a copy of the original text written in French or Franco-Italian while Marco was in prison. The second (B) which, despite the sparseness of its manuscript tradition is unquestionably authentic, is found, apart from two fragments, only in the Latin version written around 1470, now in the chapter library in Toledo, in an 18th-century copy of that work, and in **the Italian translation from other manuscripts by the Venetian humanist Giambattista Ramusio, published in 1559.** The modern Moule-Pelliot edition assumes that both the A and B traditions derive from a lost copy of the one original autograph. This is conceivable, but it seems more probable to me that there were two original versions. "The first (A), Rustichello's version begun in prison in Genoa, was designed for general consumption.

The second (B) . . . represents a more personal authorial statement, and for that very reason enjoyed a much more limited circulation” (p. 58). Larner notes that the B version (i.e. the one printed by Ramusio), is **“of great importance, containing much material which is not to be found in the A texts”** (Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*).

Thus the Ramusio text of Marco Polo is the most complete early text, the version most widely disseminated during the Age of Discovery, and an essential basis for the modern standard critical edition and the continued transmission of the timeless tales of Marco Polo.

The second volume also contains the **“first printed reference to tea** in European literature” (Saberi, *Tea: A Global History*), a relation to Ramusio by the Persian merchant Chaggi Memet, who “told me that over all the country of Cathay they made use of another plant, or rather of its leaves. This is called by those people *Chiai Catai* [China tea], and grows in the district of Cathay, which is called *Cacianfu* [Sichuan]. This is commonly used and much esteemed over all those countries. They take of that herb whether dry or fresh, and boil it well in water ...” (Folios 78-91).

Other texts included in these volumes, collected from printed sources, include accounts of Amerigo Vespucci, Vasco Da Gama, Magellan, and Leo Africanus (Vol. I); accounts of travels in Persia, China, and Muscovy (Vol. II); and accounts by and about Cortés, Coronado, Pizarro, and Orellana (Vol. III). The third volume contains a wealth of new World accounts including first printings of Cartier and Verrazano and important New World maps and illustrations. Please inquire for more details.

“The publication of Ramusio may be said to open an era in the literary history of Voyages and Navigation. Instead of accounts carelessly copied and translated from previous collections, perpetuating errors and anachronisms, we find in this valuable work, original narratives which betray the hand of a scholar of great critical acumen. Not should we forget that we are indebted to Ramusio for the preservation of accounts of voyages of the utmost importance to the student of American history; and did his work contain only the ‘Relatione d’un gentilhuomo del Sig. Fernando Cortese,’ and the first voyage of Jacques Cartier to Canada, the two capital relations would entitle the Raccolta to a prominent place in any American library” (Harrisse, *Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima*).

VERY RARE. Sets of Ramusio in uniform early bindings are very scarce, and examples with multiple first editions are of the greatest rarity (uniform sets with all three first editions are essentially unheard of, with none in the auction records of the past century).

FOUNDING WORK OF TAOISM

Lao Tzu. **Lao Tseu Tao Te King. Le Livre de la Voie et de la Vertu . . . traduit en Français . . . par Stanislaus Julien.** Paris: l'Imprimerie Royale, 1842.

xliv, 304 pp. Contemporary black paper boards, old manuscript spine label. Spine and edges worn.

First edition of the complete *Tao Te Ching* to be published in a Western language. The first of the two parts had been published in Paris in 1838. The founding work of Taoism, the *Tao-te Ching* is said to have been written in the 6th century BCE by Lao-Tzu (or Laozi, “Old Master”), a contemporary of Confucius and a central figure of Chinese culture and history. The book was first a philosophy, but it evolved into a religion when it was adopted officially in 440 CE, when Lao-Tzu was venerated as a deity.

Lao-Tzu’s famously cryptic *Tao-te Ching* is one of the Five Chinese Classics and **one of the most widely read books in history**. Apart from the Bible, it is likely the most-translated classic ever published.

FROM THE LIBRARY OF A COLONIAL AMERICAN JEW
WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE SILK INDUSTRY

Semedo, Alvarez. **The History of the Great and Renowned Monarchy of China. . . Lately written in Italian [sic.] by . . . Semedo, a Portughess, after he had resided twenty two yeares at the court, and other famous cities of the kingdom.** London: E. Tyler for John Crook, 1655.

Folio. 2 engraved portraits, 2 maps, one folding, 1 plate. Contemporary paneled calf. Extremities rubbed, spine chipped at head and foot. A very good copy in an appealing period binding.

Provenance: A splendid Jewish-American association copy from the library of Joseph Solomon Ottolenghe (1711-1775), ink stamp on title, marginalia. Ottolenghe, born Giuseppe Salomone Ottolenghi i Casale Monferratto in Italy in 1711, was invited to England by his uncle. He converted from Judaism to English Protestantism and emigrated to Savannah, Georgia in 1751, first to work as a missionary among the blacks. Later he was appointed as superintendent of the local silk industry and published a treatise on the breeding of silk worms. He served as a member of the Georgia legislature from 1761-1765.

First edition in English. Alvarez Semedo (or Semmedo) served as Portuguese Procurado General for China. The first part of the present work was first published in Madrid in 1642. Much of the information is derived from first-hand observation and is “as yet unaffected by the later racialist or colonialist mythologies” that pervaded the work of later authors (Lust). The second part is based on Martino Martini’s *De Bello Tartarico Historia* (1654), the story of the Manchu conquest of China, a work that was at the time was considered the best general description of China.

Society of Jesus. Lettere annue del Giappone dell'anno MDCXXII. E della Cina del 1621 & 1622. Al Molto Rev. in Christo P. Mutio Vitelleschi preposto generale della Compagnia di Giesù. Milan, Giovanni Battista Cerri, 1627.

8° (170x110 mm). Collation: A⁸(+χ²), B-S⁸, T². [2], [4, dedication], 3-291, [1] pages. Jesuit emblem on the title-page. With two engraved plates depicting the prison where father Carlo Spinola remained for over three years and the fire that burned him. Contemporary vellum, over pasteboards. A very good copy, in its original conditions. One corner damaged, flyleaves missing, title-page slightly spotted, a few marginal waterstains.

This collection of Jesuit letters from China and Japan was published at the same time in Rome by Corbelletti, and in Milan by Cerri. The Milan edition is much rarer than the Roman one. The present copy contains a dedication addressed by the printer to the Counts Carlo and Coriolano Visconti and dated Milan, 14 May 1627, which is not recorded elsewhere. The volume contains letters by Girolamo Maiorca (fols. A2r-K3r), dated Macao, 30 September 1623; Nicholas Trigault (fols. K3v-P4v), dated Hangzhou, 15 August 1622; and Alvarez Semedo (fols. P5r-T1r), dated Nanjing, 23 June 1623.

“The letter of 1621 from China, written by Nicholas Trigault from Hangchow (pp. 150-232) is full of material on the advance of the Manchus in northern China; the capture of Liaotung, the fear for the safety of Peking, and the outbreak of local rebellions against the young Ming emperor. This is followed by a letter (pp. 233-290) on the same subjects written by Alvarez Semmedo from Nanch'ang, capital of Kiangsi province, in 1623 in which he reports that three million have died in these wars and that unrest is spreading throughout the country” (D.F. Lach-D.J. van Kley, eds., *Asia in the Making of Europe*, Chicago-London 1993, III, pp. 375-376).

Carlo Spinola (Genoa, 1564-1622) arrived in Japan in 1602 and settled in Nagasaki. He preached for eleven years, founding a school and converting over five thousand Japanese. In 1611 he was appointed as procurator of the Jesuit province and then vicar and provincial. After the outbreak of the anti-Christian persecution in 1614, he had to live and preach clandestinely under a false name. Captured in 1618, he spent almost four years in prison before being burned alive on September 22, 1622.