

The Early Transmission and Renditions of the *Yijing*: The Jesuits' 17th to mid-18th-Century Translation Strategies and Ideologies

Ming-che Lee

Long viewed as a divinatory, religious, historical and philosophical work with roots in ancient Chinese culture, the *Yijing* has secured an idiosyncratic position in the Western academic sinology. This paper looks at the motives, strategies and ideologies with which the early Jesuit missionaries introduced the *Yijing* to the West, particularly with reference to the biblical exegesis tradition and how its derivative “Figurism” had influenced their interpretation and translation of this work. The present study purports to investigate how the Jesuit missionaries had appropriated the *Yijing* at multiple levels to facilitate the Confucian-Christian synthesis (following Matteo Ricci’s Accommodation approach), in order to proselytize the Chinese gentry by mitigating the conspicuous discrepancies between Christianity and Ruism. With the acquiescence of the Roman Church and the patronage of the Kangxi Emperor, the Jesuit missionaries studied, interpreted and rendered the *Yijing*. Driven by an emic perspective based on Figuristic ideologies, a certain group of Jesuit missionary scholars penetrated and rewrote the *Yijing* to reduce the degree of passive resistance once this enigmatic Chinese canonical text encountered Christian civilization. What they did to a certain extent led to the reciprocal inter-culturation of China and the West. However, the Figurists’ overly accommodating approach and their deliberate emphasis on the esoteric revelation of the “biblical truth” encrypted in the *Yijing* simultaneously prevented this text from being accepted by the reason-oriented European literati. Nonetheless, the Figurists’ translation and dissemination of the *Yijing*, did grant traditional Chinese cosmology, then in a peripheral position, access to the European literary polysystem as a challenge to the central Christian doctrines. Undoubtedly their efforts made a crucial contribution to the cultural communication between China and the West from 17th to mid-18th centuries.

Keywords: *Yijing*, Jesuit, Figurism, Joachim Bouvet, ideology

Received: July 16, 2019

Revised: November 12, 2019; December 4, 2019

Accepted: December 18, 2019

Ming-che Lee, PhD student, Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation, National Taiwan Normal University, E-mail: mingchelee520@gmail.com

《易經》的最初西傳與翻譯： 17 至 18 世紀中葉耶穌會士的翻譯策略 和意識形態初探

李明哲

《易經》在 16 世紀末葉傳入歐洲之後，便以中國卜筮、宗教、歷史及哲學經典的多重樣貌，成為西方漢學研究的顯學之一。本文旨在檢視初期耶穌會傳教士將《易經》傳入西方的動機、方法與意識形態，特別是與《聖經》詮釋傳統 (biblical exegesis) 一脈相承的索隱派思想 (Figurism)，如何影響了 17 至 18 世紀中葉在中國本土的耶穌會士對《易經》的詮釋與翻譯，並得出若干結論：初期耶穌會士從不同層次挪用並詮釋《易經》文本，試圖弭平天、儒之間在神學教義、歷史觀、及哲學思想上的歧異，以遂行利瑪竇「適應政策」以降之「儒耶一家」(Confucian-Christian synthesis) 文化融入策略，最終達成傳教目的。他們在教廷和康熙皇帝的默許和贊助下，深入研究、理解並翻譯《易經》，這種基於文化主位 (emic perspective) 意識形態的索隱詮釋觀點促使部分耶穌會譯者介入改寫《易經》原典，以降低這本玄奧中國經典與西方基督教文明相遇時所遭到的抵抗。此舉雖一定程度促成了近代中西雙向的文化涵化 (interculturalization)，然而以白晉為首的索隱詮釋法過於穿鑿附會，其刻意強調天教啟示真理的神祕性反而不利《易經》被重理性思辨的歐洲學界所接受。儘管如此，經由他們對《易經》的譯介，原本處於歐洲文學多元系統邊緣的中國宇宙觀終為西方神學傳統帶來了一定衝擊，對於 17 至 18 世紀中葉的中西文化交流有其不可磨滅的貢獻。

關鍵詞：《易經》、耶穌會、索隱派、白晉、意識形態

收件：2019 年 7 月 16 日

修改：2019 年 11 月 12 日、2019 年 12 月 4 日

接受：2019 年 12 月 18 日

Introduction

The present paper aims to explore the motives, approaches and ideologies adopted by the early Jesuit missionaries to create a cultural alliance between the *Yijing*¹ 易經 and Christianity so as to facilitate the Confucian-Christian synthesis. *Yijing* scholars used to describe this phenomenon by specifying factors leading to it mostly from historical perspectives. However, little has been done to address this issue from Translation Studies perspectives, such as Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, Gadamerian hermeneutics, and Lefevere's rewriting formula. Observing the issue from a position following the "cultural turn" in Translation Studies, I have conducted a study to pursue this matter further to re-examine the politics and ideologies engaged in the earliest transmission and translation of the *Yijing* in the West through a socio-cultural prism.

Polysystem theory, developed in the 1970s by Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury, emphasizes that translated literature operates as part of the cultural, literary and historical system of the receptor language, and the position it occupies determines what translation strategies to be employed. If the translated literature assumes a lower position within the polysystem strata (i.e., the Chinese canon *Yijing* in the West), it is subordinated to the literary norms of the target system (i.e., the Christianity-governed Europe). Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical

¹ To ensure consistency, the Pinyin romanization is adopted to transliterate all Chinese characters throughout this article, only with exceptions for their original use in book titles or quotes.

hermeneutics specifically justifies the significance of the reader/translator's fore-structural prejudices (i.e., the Jesuit missionaries' interpretation of the *Yijing* corpus) capable of providing the "correct" understanding of a given text's meaning. For him, the criterion for meaning is both the author and the reader/translator's intention. André Lefevere's rewriting theory draws our attention to other cultural, social and political factors, deeming translation as a manipulative literary practice undertaken in the service of powers (i.e., the Roman Church/Kangxi 康熙 Emperor's patronage and French Figurists' ideology), which is sometimes exemplified in the distortion of translated literature. When it comes to the translation and dissemination of the *Yijing* at its early stage on the journey to the West, one must take into account the socio-political factors and ideological concerns as a whole to examine the complex process of the two-directional cultural assimilation. Combining the three contemporary Translation Studies perspectives, this article is dedicated to providing a different angle to look at the issue that previous *Yijing* scholars had sparingly resorted to.

The first part of this paper, based on the available literature, outlines the content and cultural significance of the *Yijing* as well as its early encounter with the West, including a brief history of their cultural collision, Matteo Ricci's adaptation legacy, and the features characterizing the early exegesis of the *Yijing* based on Even-Zohar's polysystem theory and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. The second part provides an overview of how the Figurism approach had influenced the Jesuits' "prejudiced" perception and epistemological rendition of the *Yijing*, particularly pertaining to the French Jesuits'

Figuristic translations pursuant to André Lefevere's rewriting formula. The third part deliberates a comparative analysis of the translation of a specific *gua* 卦 and the conflicting effects of the counter-Figurism renditions. The final part deals with the Jesuits' "two-directional domestication" labor via translating the *Yijing* for evangelism in China and a brief discussion of this phenomenon, followed by a succinct conclusion summarizing this sophisticated bilateral assimilation and its unparalleled cultural significance.

The Content of the *Yijing* and Its Cultural Significance

The *Yijing*, or previously known as the *Book of Changes*, has long served as a philosophical and ethical discernment tool to pilot one's life or to govern state operations in feudal China. It encompasses the original *Zhouyi* 周易 corpus and the 10 Ruism-based Appendixes (*shiyi* 十翼, or *Ten Wings*, commentaries of the *Zhouyi*). *Zhouyi* is comprised of 64 hexagrams (*gua*) conceived out of the eight trigrams (*bagua* 八卦), with a specific *guaci* 卦辭 (or *tuan* 彖, denoting "judgment" or "explanation") attached to illuminate the immanent meaning of the hexagram.² Each hexagram is given a name (*guaming* 卦名)

² Traditionally King Wen (文王, 1171-1122 BC, founder of the Zhou Period) is said to have formulated the 64 six-line hexagrams based on the 8 three-line trigrams invented by the legendary sage "Fuxi 伏羲," whereas the Duke of Zhou (周公, 1120-1094 BC, son of King Wen) is said to have verbalized each of the six lines constituting a hexagram, known as *yaoci* 爻辭 (a short explanatory statement of each line). The line is portrayed as either "broken (— —)" or "unbroken (—)," representing the dualistic elements *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽, respectively.

characterized by an object, a circumstance, a quality, an attitude, an emotion, an interaction...etc. For example, *Shihe* (噬嗑 ䷔, Gnawing Through, hexagram no. 21) represents the image of an open mouth with an obstacle between the lips, implying that one must bite through the obstacle to achieve success. However, the pictorial correlation between each *guaming* and its corresponding image seems to have been arbitrarily assigned without symbolic or lexical cohesions.

The *Yijing*'s influence had expanded to pre-modern East Asia, such as Korea and Japan, where the *Yijing* was self-consciously incorporated by local elites into their cultural context. For example, the dominant principles applied in the Korean alphabet system “Hangul” (invented in 1443) are remarkably congruent with those prevailing in the *Yijing*, such as *yin-yang* 陰陽 and *taiji* 太極 (the supreme ultimate). Likewise, the genesis of numerous Japanese *gengos* 元号 (an imperial era name used to number years during an emperor's reign) also originated from the *Yijing*. For example, *Joji* 貞治 (1362-1368) is derived from the treatise on the first-Six *yaoci* of *Xun* (巽 ䷸, Penetrating, hexagram no. 57): *li wuren zhi zhen, zhi zhi ye* 利武人之貞，志治也 (it would be advantageous for him to have the firmness of a brave soldier—his mind would in that case be well governed) (Legge, 1964, pp. 338-339).³ In a nutshell, in China and the Sinosphere, the *Yijing* has been dealt with as an augural manual for prognostics or

³ The English translation provided here and henceforth is by the British translator James Legge (1964).

guidelines for governing a country.⁴ However, given the later influence of the Neo-Ruism (a philosophy developed c. 1000 AD as a renaissance of Ruism in response to the ideas of Daoism and Buddhism), the book has generally been viewed as an esteemed Chinese classic unveiling the humanistic elements supposedly inherent in Ruism doctrines. It should be noted that the *Yijing* and its derivative figures and diagrams are the primary source from which the Neo-Ruism cosmology is drawn.

The *Yijing*'s Early Encounter With the West

Although it remains unclear as to when exactly the earliest arrival of the *Yijing* in the West took place, there is a consensus unanimously reached by *Yijing* scholars in China and abroad: The *Yijing* embarked on its journey to the West no later than the last decade of the 16th century. During the 17th to mid-18th centuries, in order to win converts and promote their missionary propaganda, the Jesuit missionaries made grandiose efforts to identify affinities between the Holy Writ and the Ruist canonized classics. To go further on this trajectory, one of the

⁴ Traditionally Chinese scholars tend to dispose of the *Yijing* as an oracular guidebook predicting one's auspicious/inauspicious future. This viewpoint can be espoused by the following example from *Chunqiu Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) across 722-468 BC. In Book III *Duke of Zhuang*, the 22nd Year (672 BC): "Duke Li of Chen [...], during whose boyhood there came one of the historiographers of Zhou to see the marquis of Chen, having with him the Zhou yi. The marquis made him consult it by the milfoil on the future of the boy, when he found the diagram *Guan* ䷓ [觀, Contemplating, hexagram no. 20], and then by the change of manipulation, the diagram *Pi* ䷋ [否, Obstruction, hexagram no. 12] [...]. We behold the light of the State. This is auspicious for one to be the king's guest [莊公 22 年：周史有以《周易》見陳侯者，陳侯使筮之，遇觀之否，曰，是謂觀國之光，利用賓于王]" (Legge, 1872, "COMMENTARY," para. 8).

key factors leading to the foundation of academic sinology emerging in the early 19th century is the European intellectuals' discovery and investigation of the *Yijing*.

A Brief History of the *Yijing* Meeting the West

As far back as 1585, Juan González de Mendoza, a Spanish Catholic bishop, compiled the earliest Western encyclopedic history of China: *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reyno de la China* (*The History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China and the Situation Thereof*).⁵ The two-volume book is a Spanish missionaries' joint account of what they observed about China in the 16th century for the curious European reader. It should be noted that Mendoza himself did not visit China, and the first volume of his book is chiefly sourced from the field report of an Augustinian missionary Martin de Rada in 1575. According to Mendoza, the notion of "heaven," symbolized by a Chinese character "in the first caract or letter of the crosse row" (=天), is generally understood among the Chinese people as "the creator of all things visible and inuisible" (Mendoza, 1585/2010, p. 39). In Chapter 5 "Of the Opinion They Haue of the Beginning of the World, and of the Creation of Man" in the Second Book of the First Volume, Mendoza depicts a supreme

⁵ This two-volume book was first published in Rome in 1585 and was translated at Richard Hakluyt's suggestion in 1588, becoming the first detailed account of China available in English. The quotes cited here are from the 1853 translation published in London, which was reprinted in 2010 by the Cambridge University Press. Interested readers can resort to He Gaoji's (何高濟) Chinese translation *Zhonghua Da Diguo Shi* 中華大帝國史 (Beijing: Zhonghua Publishing House, 1998). It is worth reading for its valuable expository gloss.

being “Tayn” (*taiyi* 太乙 = *taiji* 太極), a “resident of heaven,” who “by his great science did separate heaven and earth” and “create a man of nothing” (Mendoza, 1585/2010, p. 50).⁶ He also sketches out the heroic inventor “Ocheutey” (also named “Fuh-he-te” in the original footnote as an equivalent to “Fuxi”) who “was the inuentor of many things and ordained marriage, and to play on many and diuers instruments” (Mendoza, 1585/2010, p. 52). According to the renowned Chinese scholar Wang Bi’s 王弼 *Zhouyizhu* 周易注 (Commentary on *Zhouyi*), Fuxi is the one who had formulated the pristine *bagua* and the derivative 64 hexagrams. However, modern scholars incline toward treating the *bagua*’s sagely authorship with skepticism due to recent advances in archaeology and paleography.

The first scholar to “rationally” introduce the *Yijing* to the West is possibly the Portuguese Jesuit missionary Álvaro de Semedo (Zeng Dezhao 曾德昭, renamed from Xie Wulu 謝務祿) (Zhang, 1998, p. 124). He authored a long “exact account” of the affairs of China under the title *Relaçao da pragaçao da fé no reyno da China e outros adjacentes* (Relation of the plague of the faith in the Kingdom of China and other adjacent countries), which was published in 1641 and translated into English in 1655 entitled *The History of That Great and Renowned Monarchy of China*. As the starter of Chapter 10 “Of the Books and Sciences of the Chinesses,” Semedo sketched out the

⁶ Mendoza (1585/2010) seemed to deify “Tayn” by assigning him supernatural power to create the first man called “Panzon,” who, according to the original footnote, is an equivalent to “Pwan-koo, the Adam of the Chinese” (p. 50). Pwan-koo is the transliteration of Pangu 盤古, the creator of all in some versions of Chinese mythology.

three ancient Chinese sages “Fohi (Fuxi), Xinon (Shennong 神農), and Hoamsi (Huangdi 黃帝),” recognizing them as the first three kings to present “their morall and speculative sciences, *by way of mysticall, even and odd numbers, and other ciphers and notes* [emphasis added]” (Semedo, 1655, pp. 47-48). According to Semedo (1655), an outstanding Zhou King “Checuam” (Jichang 姬昌, King Wen’s name) published “these numbers and ancient notes, and made a booke of them, intituled *Yechim*” (p. 48). Semedo opined that the *Yekim*, coupled with the *Ten Wings*, ranked top of the Ruist *Wujing* 五經 (the *Five Classics*), believing that the five sacred books had been composed by the revered master *Confusio* (Confucius):

But returning to the Bookes which he published, they are these following; The first is called *Yekim*, and treateth of his *naturall Philosophie* [emphasis added], and of the generation and corruption of things; of *Fate* [emphasis added], or *Judiciary Prognostication* [emphasis added] from these and other things, and from naturall principles; Philosophizing by way of *numbers, figures, and symbols* [emphasis added], applying all to moralitie and good government. (Semedo, 1655, p. 49)⁷

Semedo is also the first European missionary paying exceptional attention to Neo-Ruist scholars’ perspective on the *Yijing*’s philosophical system. These alternative thinkers became prominent

⁷ It seems that Semedo used two transliterations “*Yekim*” and “*Yechim*” to denote the original corpus *Zhouyi* and the compilation work *Yijing*, respectively.

during the Song and Ming Dynasties trying to resume the notion of the Confucian *Daotong* 道統 (transmission of the true way) via their re-interpretation of the *Yijing*. One of their central theses is to use *taiji* rather than *Shangdi* 上帝 as the genesis of all creations. For example, in Zhou Dunyi's 周敦頤 *Taiji Tushuo* 太極圖說 (The explanation of the diagram of the supreme ultimate), the famous opening phrase *wuji er taiji* 無極而太極 (limitless ultimate then supreme ultimate) demonstrates their "atheistic" and "materialistic" orientation over which the Jesuit exegetes expressed anxieties (Mungello, 1989, pp. 305-307).

In 1658, the Italian Jesuit Martino Martini (魏匡國) published a Latin work titled *Sinicae Historiae Decas Prima: res à gentis origine ad Christum natum in extrema Asia, sive magno Sinarum imperio gestas complexa* (The first decade of the history of China: Covering the events that took place in extreme Asia, or in the great empire of China, since the origin of the [human] race until the birth of Christ), which is the first-ever historical document in the West encompassing the Chinese chronology that demonstrated the reliability and validity of the ancient Chinese history (Mungello, 1989; Pfister, 1932). The first chapter briefly depicts Chinese mythology and the *Yijing*, asserting that Fuxi (= 2952 BC) was the first Chinese emperor who had composed the original *Zhouyi* c. 600 years prior to the Genesis Deluge (= 2348 BC), which harshly challenged the Christian creationism. His book is the earliest in the West recognizing the significance of the *Yijing*, in which a table with the 64 hexagrams in the *Xiantian Baguatu* 先天八卦圖 (The anterior-heaven arrangement of the eight trigrams) was printed for

the first time in Europe, but was falsely printed backwards and upside down (Lundbæk, 1991, pp. 31-32). Martini claimed that Fuxi was the originator of the eight emblematic figures based on the folklore of *Hetu Luoshu* 河圖洛書 (Yellow River chart & Luo River document).⁸

In 1763, the German scholar Johann Heinrich Schumacher published an insightful treatise *Die verborgenen Alterthümer der Chineser aus dem uralten canonischen Buche Yeking untersucht* (The hidden antiquities of the Chinese from the ancient canon book *Yeking* examined). Similar to Martini's historical interpretation, Schumacher managed to historicize the *Yijing* based on its documentation of partial pre-Western Zhou occurrences in *Tai* (泰 ䷊, The Great Arrives, hexagram no. 11), *Jian* (漸 ䷴, Gradual Advance, hexagram no. 53), *Xiaoguo* (小過 ䷽, Small Excess, hexagram no. 62), and *Jiji* (既濟 ䷾, After Completion, hexagram no. 63) (Shchutskii, 1960/1979, p. 21). As the Soviet sinologist Shchutskii argued in his *Researches on the I Ching*, by the late 1800s, the *Yijing* had undergone a transformation from a purely mantic text to a composite of oracular-philosophical literature, making it constantly encountered in Chinese philosophical writings with enormously different interpretations. To summarize, by the mid-18th century, the *Yijing* had been apprehended in the West at least from three perspectives: prophetic, philosophical and historical.

⁸ Legend has it that Fuxi found a celestial dragon-horse and a tortoise bearing mystic markings emerging from the Yellow River and Luo River, and transcribed them into the eight symbols. According to *Xicizhuan* 繫辭傳 (one of the *Ten Wings*, allegedly composed by Confucius or his disciple(s) approximately a few centuries after the appearance of the *Zhouyi*), the “sages took advantage of” the documents and “imitated them (by means of the Yi)” so as to “inform men (in divining of the lines making up the diagrams)” (河出圖，洛出書，聖人則之) (Legge, 1964, p. 374).

Unfortunately, the mainstream opinion among the missionaries in late dynastic China seemed to dispose of the *Yijing* more as a book of witchcraft which was “insane,” “heretic” and “superstitious” without profound teachings (Wilhelm & Wilhelm, 1979, p. 8).⁹

Ricci’s Accommodation and Synthesis Policy

In imperial China, the heterodox non-Ruism teachings could usually only be blended in conformity with the orthodox Ruism, taking the form of a syncretism of systems (particularly the Daoism and Buddhism) (Mungello, 1989, p. 55). In a similar vein, Ricci (1603/1985) promulgated his accommodation method (an attempt to sinicize or indigenize Christianity by permitting Chinese Christians to sustain traditional rites and ancestor-worshipping practices) and carefully handled the combination of this “pagan” but dominant Chinese philosophy with Christianity by initiating the investigation on the *Yijing*, quoting “*di chu hu zhen*” 帝出乎震 (God comes forth in Zhen)¹⁰ in his 1603 book *Tianzhu Shiyi* 天主實義 (*The True Meaning*

⁹ This pejorative viewpoint is shared by distinguished missionaries like Nicholas Longobardi (龍華民), Gabriel de Magalhães (安文思), Louis le Comte (李明), and Claude de Visdelou (劉應) (Witek, 1982, p. 457).

¹⁰ This quote is from *Shuo Gua* 說卦 (Discourses on the trigrams), one of the *Ten Wings*. *Shuo Gua* elaborates on the eight trigrams and the particular image inherent in each of them. As a Protestant missionary, Legge’s rendering of *Di* 帝 (the supreme ruler) as “God” could be seen as a legacy of Ricci’s accommodation approach. In a conversation Ricci had with Chinese literati, Ricci explained to his Chinese friends Western views about the existence of the Judeo-Christian God as cited below:

“《易》曰：「帝出乎震。」夫帝也者，非天之謂，蒼天者抱八方，何能出於一乎？The Book of Changes has the following: This word Sovereign [Lord] emerges from Chen in the East. This word ‘Sovereign’ or ‘Emperor’ does not connote the material heavens. Since the blue sky embraces the eight directions, how can it emerge from one direction only?” (Ricci, 1603/1985, p. 123)

of the Lord of Heaven), disclosing his unshakeable view that the Judeo-Christian God is the creator of myriad things. In this catechism Ricci quoted the *Yijing* six times, laying emphasis on the philosophy-prone commentary *Xicizhuan*. At the same time, he put forward the remarkable similarities shared by Ruism and Christianity in order to convert the Chinese literati and the imperial court: “the *Lord of Heaven* [emphasis added] created heaven, earth, and the myriad things, and controls and sustains them [...]. Thus this is the Lord of Heaven, the one our Western nations term *Deus*” (Ricci, 1603/1985, p. 70).

Ricci’s adaptation strategy was to accept the Chinese loan-terms *Di* (Sovereign Lord/Emperor) and *Shangdi* (the highest deity) as the semantic equivalents of *Deus* for its divine attributes and qualities (Kim, 2004, p. 2). Furthermore, he avoided criticizing fundamental Confucian doctrines and sought to interpret where they seemed to contradict his holy faith. In that case, Ricci’s attempt was drawn from the re-interpretation of the *Yijing* to reveal and confirm the “solid fact” that the Chinese had been worshipping the monotheistic God from the very beginning of their history. In other words, he proposed a Confucian-Christian synthesis within the orthodox paradigm of Chinese syncretism to facilitate the harmony between Christianity and Ruism. According to Ricci, Ruism should be construed as a kind of philosophy based on natural laws (as can be observed in the Confucianized *Yijing* commentaries), rather than a deity-worshipping religion filled with transcendental elements. Paradoxically, Ricci was later astounded to find the Neo-Ruism master Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 philosophical writings short of terms like *Shangdi*, which was an awkward departure from

his adaptation policy. Although Ricci quoted the *Yijing* to justify the ancient Chinese's awareness of the biblical God, he clearly renounced any equivalence between the "Taikieo" (*taiji*, the fundamental doctrine of the *Yijing* incorporated into Neo-Ruism) and the Christian God. One must bear in mind that the early Latin translations for *taiji*: "radix prima" (primary source), "summa origo" (highest origin), and "verum inexhauribilis" (true infinity) exemplified *taiji* being at least a competitive candidate to be used as the proper name for the Christian God (Collani, 2007, p. 237). To sum up, Ricci was very vigilant and flexible in his meditative attempt to synthesize Christianity and Ruism. However, his method was deprecated by a few of his coetaneous Jesuits and a majority of non-Jesuit missionaries.

Characteristics of the Early Exegesis of the *Yijing*

According to Hart (2013), French linguist Benveniste saw the ties between language and thought as "coextensive, interdependent, and indispensable to each other" (p. 57). His kernel argument asserts that linguistic form is not exclusively for the practice of transmissibility; it is, in a broader sense, "for the realization of thought" (Benveniste, 1966/1973, p. 56). The philological barriers and philosophical incommensurabilities between the *Yijing* and the biblical dogmas had made it far more complex and difficult to alleviate the heavily culture-loaded "foreignness" of the subject matter to which the *Yijing* relates. The canonized *Yijing*, replete with unfathomable religiosity and impenetrable symbolism, appears obscure and occult, making it exceedingly difficult to comprehend and translate, for "it is ancient,

multi-layered and often almost hopelessly ambiguous” (Smith, 2015, p. 385). In fact, during its early travels to the West, the concerns over how to render metaphysical concepts like *tian* 天, *Shangdi*, or *taiji* into radically varied European languages kindled a lengthy academic wrangle among the Western intelligentsia. Since the Jesuit missionaries were in the vanguard of introducing the “heretic” *Yijing* to the Western readership who barely had access to the original, their interpretive attempt can be understood in the sense of intercultural textualization to expand the *Yijing*’s cultural influence by shaping a reader-friendly image of the canon per se. As postulated by functionalist Itamar Even-Zohar, there is a linkage between translated literature in the receiving literary polysystem and its translation norms. He negates the concept of equivalence, considering translated literature as an ongoing dynamic mutation determined by the given social, cultural, and historical framework (Even-Zohar, 1990; Munday, 2001). Their hierarchical relations would have been established from the very beginning, setting the socioliterary status of the translated literature. When assuming a central position, translated literature holds sway as a major source of alternative/innovatory repertoire and as a primary element in the formation of new models and poetics for the target culture. When translated literature occupies a peripheral position (i.e., the *Yijing*) in a stable, well-established and self-sufficient literary system (i.e., the Christian culture), the foreign items are more likely to be adapted to fit the mainstream target norms to maximize the chance of the translation being accepted, otherwise the imported texts may be deemed irrelevant or even threatening and would end up meeting with passive resistance.

One must bear in mind that meaning is not diachronically stable. As Gadamer (1967/1976) puts it, all interpretation is situational and subservient to a specific time-framed context, thus the reading activity is literally engaging the reader at a given time in a particular culture into a dynamic relationship with the text. The conflict-laden early encounter of the *Yijing* and the West somehow vindicates the inference that the Jesuit missionaries' hermeneutic reconstruction and integration tasks were by no means a simple communicative activity. It is necessary to acknowledge the "legitimate prejudices" applied in their exegesis which provided a justified hermeneutical horizon to bring their a priori perception of the *Yijing* into play. Borrowing Heidegger's "fore-structures" of understanding, Gadamer employs the term "prejudices" (*Vorurteile*) to demonstrate how translators (simultaneously interpreters) may inherit the prejudgment from their past in the process of acculturation to constitute a "historical reality" and the "correct understanding" (Schmidt, 2006, pp. 100-101). It was precisely their ideological preconceptions that had made possible the manifold operations of power and interpretation embodied in acculturating the *Yijing* with Christianity.

Before I move on to discuss the early Jesuit translations, we should note that the translation of the *Yijing* is a three-stage model: intersemiotic, intralingual and interlingual translation (Jakobson, 2000). Intersemiotic translation refers to non-verbal signs (images of *gua*) being expounded by verbal signs (*guaci* and *yaoci*); intralingual translation denotes the rewording or paraphrasing of the obsolete *Yijing* text mainly from Ruist and Daoist perspectives within the

language of Chinese; interlingual translation involves the exaggerated affinities between Christianity and Ruism suggested by the Jesuit scholar translators in response to the “double cultural imperative” from China and the West (Liu, 2005, pp. 4-5; Standaert, 1999, pp. 354-357). When juxtaposed between the authoritative Roman Church and the advantageous Ruist intellectuals, the Jesuit translators preaching in China where Ruism occupied a predominant position were bound to vacillate between the two of them via identifying their paradoxical similarities. As can be observed under Michel Foucault’s asymmetrical *savoir-pouvoir* conceptual lens, the Roman Church and the Kangxi Emperor’s political intervention (patronage: power) and the Jesuit missionaries’ proactive participation (expertise: knowledge/ideology) imposed in the transcoding of the *Yijing* disclosed a certain degree of biased subjectivity governing the Jesuits’ idealization of China.

Jesuit Translations and Figurism

The first translator of the *Yijing*, according to some Chinese scholars, is the French Jesuit Nicolas Trigault (金尼閣), who published in China a Latin rendition of the Ruist *Five Classics* entitled *Pentabiblion Sinense quod primae atque adeo Sacrae Auctoritatis apud illos est* (The Chinese *Five Classics*: The first sacred books of China, 1626) (Wang, 2015, p. 39; Yang, 1996, p. 65). Unfortunately, his translation had been lost. Trigault was a disciple of Matteo Ricci and an adherent of his accommodation approach. According to *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, Ricci believed that the messages of the supreme God had long been revealed in ancient Chinese classics,

so the Jesuit missionaries' top priority was to consolidate the faith: *wu Tienzhu, nai gu jingshu suocheng Shangdi ye* 吾天主，乃古經書所稱上帝也 (our Lord of Heaven refers to the *Shangdi* mentioned in ancient Chinese classics). Ricci's policy to unite Christianity and Ruism was echoed by his translation collaborator Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (a Chinese scholar-bureaucrat and Catholic convert), who accepted essential Christian doctrines by recapitulating Ricci's thoughts as *bu Ru yi Fo* 補儒易佛 (supplementing Ruism and replacing Buddhism by Christianity). According to Anna Seo's study, "Christology" is the core of Xu's understanding of *Tianzhu*, and the ultimate goal of Ruism is to realize Confucian ideals by worshipping *Tianzhu* in awe and veneration (Seo, 2012, p. 112). The cardinal argument of *bu Ru yi Fo* is to amplify the similarities between Ruism and Christianity while inflating the differences between the latter and Buddhism (e.g., to eliminate the Buddhist idolatry materials) so as to seek the psychological recognition of the Chinese literati and the European missionaries in China.

The first printed translation of *Wujing* had to wait until 1687, when the first European translation (in Latin) from *Zhouyi* was included in a Jesuit compilation known as *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive, Scientia Sinensis* (Confucius the philosopher of China) published in Paris. The book has a Chinese title *Xiwen Sishu Zhijie* 西文四書直解 (The literal exegesis of the *Four Books* in a Western language), compiled jointly by Flemish Jesuit Philippe Couplet (柏應里), Austrian Jesuit Chrétien Herdtrich (恩里格), Italian Jesuit Prospero Intorcetta (殷鐸澤), and Flemish Jesuit François de Rougemont (魯日滿). This book has an appendix of the 64 hexagrams with a brief explanation for each. Chapter 6 introduces the dyad *ying-yang*, the

figures of *bagua*, the 64 hexagrams and the concept of *taiji*; Chapter 7 elaborates on the first 14 *guaming* and their corresponding *guaci*. In chapter 8, Intorcetta made the first-ever attempt to translate a specific *gua* in plain Latin: *Qian* (謙 ䷎, Humility, hexagram no. 15). Although the four Jesuit authors appeared defensive of Ricci's accommodation approach, in contrast to Ricci, they were more critical of the *Yijing* in two aspects: First, they were more conservative and suspicious about the sagely authorship of Fuxi and the antiquity of the Chinese chronology. Second, they denounced the *Yijing* as the worst superstition for its negative influence on the Neo-Ruism philosophy (Lundbæk, 1983; Mungello, 1989), for the materialistic concept of *taiji* developed in the *Yijing* was likely to jeopardize the Jesuits' fusion efforts. Simply put, in their eyes, the signifier *taiji* could pose a dangerous threat to the logocentric Christology.

The Role and Impact of Figurism

Another perspective to look at the *Yijing* was initiated by a number of learned sinophily French Figurists. Figurism is an intellectual and theological movement subject to the censorship tactics led by Joachim Bouvet (白晉), Jean-Francois Foucquet (傅聖澤), Joseph Henri-Marie de Prémare (馬若瑟) and Jean-Alexis de Gollet (郭中傳). Its origin is grounded on the Christian apologetics called *prisca theologia* (ancient theology) which argues that certain archaic pagan texts contain vestiges of the biblical revelation, for Christianity is the only perennial religion across all human civilizations (Standaert, 2001, pp. 668-669). During the late Renaissance in the 17th century, the adherents of the revived Figurism endeavored to establish a profound association

between the Chinese anthropology, language, religion and philosophy (particularly in the *Yijing*) with Christianity traditions. For example, the German Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher claimed in his famous 1667 treatise *China Illustrata* that the Chinese were descended from the sons of Ham, that Confucius was Hermes Trismegistus/Moses, and that the Chinese script writing system had originated from the Egyptian hieroglyphs. He identified Fuxi as the sage who had acquired the pictorial writing formula from Noah's descendants. On the other hand, the French clergyman Paul Beurrier claimed that the Chinese were among those peoples who had received the pre-Christian revealed theology, and Fuxi himself was the offspring of Noah. According to Beurrier, the eight symbolic *guas* were divine revelations by the supreme Christian God (Wang, 2015, p. 38). As a consequence, the Chinese were erroneously believed to possess the biblical knowledge, and the *Yijing* in particular was identified as a repository housing such sacred knowledge due to its mystical attributes.

It can be surmised that Figurism evolved out of a hermeneutic need for the West to comprehend an exotic culture and to compliment the Chinese literati's insufficient perception of the original meaning of their sacred scriptures. In a narrower sense, "the Chinese antiquity did not belong to the Chinese exclusively *but to early mankind as a whole* [emphasis added]" (Lackner, 1991, p. 135). As such, Figurism is literally a preconceived interpretive attempt to make the Chinese aware of the "distanciation" separating their own understanding and the classics in question. Sometimes Figurist scholars even favored the accuracy of Chinese chronicles over that of the Bible.

The first recorded instance of the term Figurism (*figurisme*)

perhaps stemmed from a letter written by the French humanist Nicolas Fréret dated December 1732 mirroring the defamatory views of other Jesuit opponents for its affinities in regard to Europe's typological biblical exegesis that "Christ is prefigured in the Old Testament by means of letters, words, persons and events" (Lackner, 1991, pp. 130-133; Mungello, 1989, pp. 309-310). The original purpose of Jesuit Figurism was to identify biblical patriarchs and *figuras* (figures/signs) mentioned in symbolical and allegorical forms in ancient Chinese annals, particularly the *Yijing*, such as the fall of the rebellious angels (as revealed in *Jiaren* 家人 ䷤, Household, hexagram no. 37) and the virgin birth of Jesus by his mother Mary (as implied in the fifth-Six *yaoci* of hexagram no. 11 *Tai* 泰: *Di Yi guimei* 帝乙歸妹, [king] Ti-yi's [rule about the] marriage of his younger sister) (Legge, 1964, p. 82).

The analysis of Chinese characters was also widely used by Figurists. For example, Fouquet claimed *yi* 易 was a combination of *ri* 日 (representing "the Father" and the creator of light) and *yue* 月 (representing "the Son" and the humanity), so that "易" can be deemed as the Hypostatic Union (the union of Christ's humanity and divinity in one existence). Sometimes Figurism is nicknamed "Yijingism," because in Figurist discourses, there exist close ties between the *Yijing* and the Christian configuration of the biblical figures and doctrines. However, the Figurism movement fell victim to bitter derogation from the Chinese gentry and their Christian counterparts in China and Europe. The untenable Figurist speculations intensified suspicions in Rome, causing Figurism to be rejected by the Holy See and to be severely criticized by fellow Jesuit missionaries, leading to many of

their manuscripts being refused publication in Europe.

French Figurists and Their Translations

The key contributor of the Figurism movement was one of the five French royal mathematicians (Mathématiciens du Roy) Joachim Bouvet, who was sent by Louis XIV to the court of China. As an ardent admirer of the *Yijing*, Bouvet immersed himself in the metaphysical propositions of the *Yijing*, spending the last 20 years of his life studying the book under the tutoring and patronage of the Kangxi Emperor. In his letter dated November 3, 1714, Bouvet indicated that it was the emperor who “imposed the really hardest work on me to depict *the hidden doctrinal principles of the Yijing suppressed for a long time* [emphasis added]” (as cited in Collani, 2007, p. 253). Bouvet considered the philosophy implied in the *Yijing* very similar to those found in Plato and Aristotle’s philosophical systems. The book’s legitimate principles regarding Chinese philosophy incredibly accorded with Christian doctrines in the most profound sense. Bouvet was pleased to find “prefigurations of Moses, Enoch and other biblical figures, even Christ himself, in *Yijing*” (Rutt, 1996, p. 62). For example, to Bouvet, the prevalent term *daren* 大人 (great man) in the recurring *yaoci* phrase *lijian daren* 利見大人 (it will be advantageous to meet with the great man) unmistakably betokens the Messiah.

In July 1710, the Kangxi Emperor urged Bouvet twice to finish the translation of the *Yijing*. However, Bouvet and his collaborator (Foucquet) did not complete the full translation of the *Yijing* during the rest of Kangxi’s reign. Bouvet and his co-worker Foucquet authored a number of essays dedicated to their investigations and reflections on

the *Yijing* in classical Chinese compiled under the title *Yixue Zongzhi* 易學總旨 (General principles of *Yijing* studies), and presented it to the Kangxi Emperor. Two years later (1712), Bouvet re-rendered *Yixue Zongzhi* into Latin titled *Idea generalis doctrinae libri Yè Kim* (General idea of the doctrinal *Yijing*), which is a brief exposition of the *Yijing* philosophical principles. The values of this book are mainly manifested in two aspects: (a) The covert meanings of specific numbers in the *bagua* are unconcealed by their corresponding Chinese characters that can be broken down into semantic indicators. For example, the three unbroken lines of the *qian* 乾 trigram ☰ represent the Trinity and number 3 (三); Heaven (天) can be dissected into man (人) and number 2 (二); number 8 (八) denotes the eight surviving people boarding Noah's Ark.¹¹ Moreover, Bouvet's research findings had to certain extent facilitated Li Guangdi's 李光地 compilation of the annotated *Yijing* entitled *Yuzuan Zhouyi Zhezong* 御纂周易折中 (The imperially commissioned balanced compendium on *Zhouyi*, 1715).¹²

¹¹ They are Noah and his wife, his three sons and three daughter-in-laws. Another archetypal example is the Chinese character *chuan* 船, which is composed of *zhou* 舟 (boat) and 8 persons (八+口). According to Bouvet, Noah (father) and his wife (mother) represent *qian* trigram (乾卦 = *yang*, masculinity) and *kun* trigram (坤卦 = *ying*, femininity) while the three sons symbolize *zhen*, *kan*, *gen* trigrams (震, 坎, 艮) and the three daughter-in-laws embody *xun*, *li*, *dui* trigrams (巽, 離, 兌). In other words, these eight survivors indicate the pristine *bagua* (= the eight trigrams) (as cited in Standaert, 2001, p. 675).

¹² Li Guangdi was a Neo-Ruism courtier under Kangxi's reign, part of whose work was to underscore similarities between Ruism and teachings of Daoism and Buddhism. His exceptional interest in Western science brought light to his collaboration with Bouvet under Kangxi's patronage. Li's memorial dated August 10, 1712 showcases the mystique of certain numbers in Chinese tradition. For example, "9" represents "Heavenly Rulers (*Tian-huang* 天皇)", "8" emblemizes "Earthly Rulers (*Di-huang* 地皇)" and "7" denotes "Human Rulers (*Ren-huang* 人皇)," respectively (Collani, 2007, pp. 255-256). The Heaven-Earth-Human (*Tian Di Ren* 天地人) is a sophisticated Chinese trinity representing the three elements of the universe.

Interestingly, Li's work was substantially based on Neo-Ruist rabbi Zhu Xi's *Zhouyi Benyi* 周易本義 (The original meaning of *Zhouyi*), which had influenced Régis' 1723 Latin translation of the *Yijing* in line with the metaphysical Song orthodoxy where the superstitious and esoteric elements involved in Daoism and Buddhism were abandoned. (b) The *Yijing* and the Bible shared considerable similarities in terms of divinity and philosophical configurations. For example, Bouvet argues that the doctrines of *Yijing* are in all respects compatible with the Christianity dogmas (*wu bu he yu tianjiao* 無不合於天教) (as cited in Han, 2004, p. 321). In his 1712 book an illustrative example is provided: the Chinese character 需 in *Hsu* (䷄, Waiting, hexagram no. 5) resembles the image of clouds approaching downwards from the heaven, symbolizing the image of "God" on auspicious clouds descending from the sky. The fifth-Nine *yaoci* of *Hsu* stresses that *xu yu jiushi, zhen ji* 需于酒食，貞吉 ([its subject] waiting amidst the appliances of a feast. Through his firmness and correctness there will be good fortune) (Legge, 1964, p. 67), which, in Bouvet's interpretation, refers to the holy bread and wine (= the flesh and blood of Jesus = salvation) eaten at the Holy Communion (as cited in Chen, 2017, p. 191).

Joseph Henri-Marie de Prémare is another French Jesuit Figurist investigating the *Yijing* obviously for evangelical purposes, as can be observed in the following two examples:

Table 1

Comparison of de Prémare and Legge's Translations of Pi and Ding Hexagrams

Hexagram	Original text	Translation
<i>Pi</i> 否 ䷋	九五：休否，	de Prémare's translation ¹³
Hexagram no. 12	大人吉。其亡	The evil is extinguished.
The fifth-Nine <i>yaoci</i>	其亡，繫于苞 桑。	The Great Man has brought about good fortune. Alas! He has perished! He has perished! He has been hung from a tree! (as cited in Lackner, 1991, pp. 140-141)
		Legge's translation
		In the fifth NINE, undivided, we see him who brings the distress and obstruction to a close,--the great man and fortunate. (But let him say), 'We may perish! We may perish!' (so shall the state of things become firm, as if) bound to a clump of bushy mulberry trees. (Legge, 1964, pp. 84-85)
<i>Ding</i> 鼎 ䷱	聖人亨以享上	de Prémare's translation
Hexagram no. 50	帝，而大亨以	The Saint sacrifices himself to the Supreme Lord
<i>Tuan</i> 象 commentary	養聖賢。	(shang-ti), and, at same time, he sacrifices himself in order to nourish the Saints and the Sages. (as cited in Lackner, 1991, p. 141)
		Legge's translation
		The sages cooked their offerings in order to present them to God, and made great feasts to nourish their wise and able (ministers). (Legge, 1964, p. 255)

¹³ His Latin translation manuscript was titled *Selecta quaedam vestigia praecipuorum religionis christianae dogmatum ex antiquis sinarum libris eruta* (Selected religious teachings of ancient Chinese books unearthed). It was completed in 1724 but was not published until 1837, and was translated by A. Bonnetty and Paul Perny into French in 1878. The English version cited here was translated by Michael Lackner in 1991.

According to de Prémare's translation, both the "Saint" (*shengren* 聖人) and "the Great man" (*daren* 大人) are the equivalents of Jesus Christ, whose incarnation and salvation are "figuristically" expounded. In light of either denotative or connotative sense, de Prémare's rendering is absolutely imprecise and incoherent in comparison with traditional Ruist interpretations. In contrast, with the assistance of the late-Qing progressive thinker/translator Wang Tao 王韜, James Legge translated the enigmatic original, which was "designedly wrapped up in mysterious phraseology" (Legge, 1964, p. xcv) in a literal and intelligible manner.¹⁴ The salient difference identified here shows that de Prémare was trying to manipulate and process the *Yijing* text to influence the way the target audience read the work. In other words, he and his fellow Jesuits were preparing adapted foreign texts "appropriate" for the TL readership to "make them fit in with the dominant, or one of dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time" (Lefevere, 2004, p. 8). According to André Lefevere, translation takes the form of "refraction" or "rewriting" involving social factors and institutional forces to systematically dictate the reception or rejection of the translated literature, such as patronage and ideology. Patrons (the church and the court with "power") must count on "professionals" (Figurist bilingual translators with "knowledge")

¹⁴ Wang Tao was one of the earliest newsmen in modern China, who used to be a traditional Ruist scholar but later became an advocate of social reform after the Opium War. In August 1854, he was baptized as a Christian convert. During his refuge in Hong Kong from 1862 to 1867, he was commissioned by the London Missionary Society to help James Legge translate traditional Chinese classics, including the *Book of Documents* and the *Bamboo Annals*. In November 1867, he was invited by James Legge to visit Scotland and assisted him to translate other Ruism classics, including the *Book of Songs* and the *Book of Rites*. In spring of 1870, they completed the translation of the *Book of Changes*.

to bring the translated literature (the *Yijing*) in accord with their ideology (Figurism/Confucian-Christian synthesis), as understood in the aforementioned Foucaultian sense. In Lefevere's (2004) words, translation is "the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting, and potentially the most influential" (p. 9) adaptation reflecting a dominant ideology to function in the receiving culture. However, the Figurists' overtly visible renderings were to some extent against the interests of the Roman Church for fear of pagan contamination. Their abusive and unrestrained over-accommodation was bound to result in a defensive suppression from the conservative Chinese intellectuals and a dismissive rejection by other Christian denominations in China, especially their rival Dominican and Franciscan missionaries.

Different Renditions of Hexagram 15 “*Qian*”

As discussed previously, Intorcetta was the first missionary to translate *Qian* (謙 ䷎, hexagram no. 15) in Latin included in Couplet's 1687 book.¹⁵ His translation positively relates the ethical value implied in *Qian* to the core virtue of “humilitas” (humbleness) widely highlighted by Christians. Despite that, he refrained from interpreting this profound idea from a theological perspective. Echoing this viewpoint, the French sinologist Claude de Visdelou, known as a disloyal Jesuit with a critical attitude against Figurism and the *Yijing*,

¹⁵ In the first part of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, there is a very long introduction called *Proemialis Declaratio* (written by Intorcetta and revised by Couplet), in which there are detailed descriptions of the hexagram *Qian*.

translated *Qian* in a similar manner. In his science-prone opinion, the *Yijing*, based on Li Guangdi's 1715 imperial edition, is a purely superstitious book filled with hexagrams which are simply a symbolic description of nature and human life. He was banished to Macau by the offended Kangxi Emperor in 1707 for openly rejecting the Jesuit accommodation position (over the Rites Controversy). Visdelou recalled the line statements of *Qian* from memory, preserving the first adequate description of *Qian* in his 1728 manuscript *Notice du livre chinois nommé Yi-King ou Livre canonique des changements, avec des notes* (Notice of the Chinese book named *Yi-King* or canonical *Book of Changes* with notes) appending a sample translation, which is the earliest known hexagram translation into a modern European language (French).¹⁶ It should be noted that the Kangxi Emperor died in December 1722, and Visdelou created his translation mainly because Hexagram 15 is the *locus classicus* (authoritative subject) for accommodationists (Rutt, 2013, p. 64). Visdelou described the symbol ☶☷ as a mountain ☶ (*gen* 艮) beneath the earth ☷ (*kun* 坤), which resembles a great man submitting himself to other people in possession of less virtue. According to him, humility can overcome everything (L'humilite surmonte tout), and the humble man can use humility to cross the great river (l'honnete homme humble, humble, se serve de l'humilite pour traverser le grand fleuve). His translation is a quantum leap if compared with Intorcetta's version, because it for the first time

¹⁶ Visdelou's complete French translation of *Qian* is included in Richard Rutt's (2013) *Zhouyi: A New Translation With Commentary of the Book of Changes* (p. 64).

included usual extracts from three of the *Ten Wings*: *Tuanzhuan* 象傳 (Treatise on the judgments) and *Xiangzhuan* 象傳 (Treatise on the symbols, comprised of *Daxiang* 大象 and *Xiaoxiang* 小象). Visdelou also invented the terms *trigramme* and *hexagramme* used to represent the three-line and six-line diagrams, a precious legacy inherited by all later translators.

Visdelou's rendition was apparently philosophical, which was followed suit by Jean-Baptiste Régis' (雷孝思) 1834 interpretation of the *Qian* translation: "Humility, or humbleness, is going deep into the soul" (Régis, 1834, pp. 443-445). By comparison, Bouvet rendered *Qian* more religiously as God humbling himself by the incarnation of his son who "humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross" (as cited in Collani, 2007, p. 275). The following citation by Collani is the English translation of Bouvet's explanation:

The 15th hexagram, "kien kua" (*Qian gua* 謙卦), is the mountain, buried below the earth, a symbol of the divine majesty, emptied by incarnation of his human figure. Modesty is the principle of persistence in justice; the righteous holds out till the end of his life. [...] By means of his holy humbleness, the righteous persists in holiness till the end and in this way gains justice. All peoples on earth voluntarily submit to his divine example. (Collani, 2007, p. 275)¹⁷

¹⁷ *Kien* is a 17th-century French transliteration of *Qian*.

Although the four Jesuit scholar translators Intorcetta, Visdelou, Régis and Bouvet had rendered Hexagram 15 based on the general Christian virtue, the former three inclined towards its moral values while Bouvet emphasized its Christological connotation which was consistent with his figuristic ideology. The translation of *Qian* was a perfect example showcasing the dynamic complexity of mixed ideologies employed by Jesuit missionary scholars. They both deviated from traditional Ruist understanding of hexagram no. 15 by looking at it from either a philosophical or a figuristic perspective. Whichever perspective they opted for, they were virtually doing the same thing: to create a reader-friendly image of the *Yijing* text and bring the author closer to the audience.

Counter-Figurism Translations

Ironically, the first complete significant translation of the original *Zhouyi* (which was deemed more authentic) in a Western language (Latin)¹⁸ was conducted by three desperately counter-Figurism Jesuit missionary scholars: Jean-Baptiste Régis, Pierre-Vincent de Tartre (湯尚賢), and Joseph Marie Anne de Moyriac de Mailla (馮秉正). They unanimously decried the Figurist belief that the Christian faith had

¹⁸ James Legge claims in the *Translator's Preface* of his 1882 English edition (Legge made his first attempt to translate the *Yijing* in 1854 but he didn't fully render it until 1870): "When I first took the Yi in hand, there existed no translation of it in any western language but that of P. Regis and his coadjutors" (Legge, 1964, p. xcvi). According to the previous discussion, his claim is not completely correct.

long been preserved in ancient Chinese classics (Smith, 2015, p. 416). In fact, as an adversary of Figurism, Régis recognized the *Yijing*'s sacred status as holy as the Old Testament at least since 1715 (as cited in Collani, 2007, p. 260). Régis and his collaborators launched their translation work in 1707, but the preliminary draft was not finished until 1723. The final version was expanded and edited by Régis, based on Li Guangdi's imperial edition (which was dictated by Neo-Ruism doctrines) and the Manchu translation (Régis, 1834, p. 80). Unfortunately, Régis' manuscript had been left unnoticed at the Royal Library in Paris until the German Orientalist Julius von Mohl edited the printed version in 1834 (in Stuttgartiae) and 1839 (in Tubingue) titled *Y-King antiquissimus Sinarum liber quem ex Latina interpretation* (*Y-King*, an ancient Chinese book from Latin interpretation). This edition severely criticized Figurism, quoted/discussed Neo-Ruism concepts and cited "the authority of the Church fathers and Western philosophers for comparative purposes" (Rutt, 1996, p. 181). It is generally agreed that Régis' edition offered an academic access through which later sinologists could proceed with a rather holographic investigation of the *Yijing*. As James Legge commented: "Their version is all but unintelligible [...] and their view of the text [...] was an approximation to the truth" (Legge, 1964, pp. xcv-xcvi). Régis' edition could be a perfect material for further comparative analysis.

Antoine Gaubil (宋君榮), acclaimed as one of Europe's greatest sinologists in the 18th century, was another Jesuit opposing Figurism approach. He quoted the *Yijing* occasionally in his 1732 scientific writing *Histoire Abrégée de l'Astronomie Chinoise* (Abbreviated

history of Chinese astronomy) and deliberated the drawbacks of Figurism in his *Traité de la Chronologie Chinoise* (Treatise on Chinese chronology, 1732). His reflections during translating the *Yijing* were well-preserved in his correspondence with fellow European scholars, which was published in 1970. Gaubil (1970) described himself hampered in the boredom of the archaic ambiguity of the text (p. 497), but he still managed to almost finish the translation of the *Yijing* (particularly the *Ten Wings*, entitled *Le I-King*) from a “scientific” perspective around 1741, which, published in 1752, was the first comprehensive French translation.

Interculturation: A Two-Directional Domestication

The doctrines subsumed in the *Yijing*, in spite of their unfixed meaning, apparently played a crucial part in the Jesuit translators’ promulgation of the book in order to either philosophically or religiously justify their proselytizing motif. The labor was termed “double domestication” (Smith, 2012, p. 171). The double burden refers to the Jesuits’ endeavor to bring Christianity to China while justifying their evangelical agenda to earn the approval of their European supervisors. Their main task was to make the *Yijing* appear as familiar to the Europeans as the Bible to the Chinese. To be more specific, the Jesuits’ translating the *Yijing* was more of a double cultural penetration under the bilateral intellectual confrontation instead of communication. Another impetus of the double domestication was to facilitate later missionaries’ understanding of the Chinese language and philosophies

in canonical Ruism literatures. With their meticulously-manipulated translation and exegesis, they had lowered the almost unsurmountable lexical, religious, cultural and even political thresholds, making the *Yijing* more intelligible and accessible to the European academia.

On the other hand, to Bouvet and other Figurist missionaries, the best way for preaching Christianity in China was to convert the Kangxi Emperor first by convincing him that the ancient Chinese classics had preserved biblical history and teachings so as to “domesticate” the Chinese court and intellectuals. Their investigation of the *Yijing* can be construed as the optimal political capital to win the most important imperial patron’s endorsement. As Bouvet noted, if the Kangxi Emperor had doubted the presupposed compatibility between Ruism and Christianity, it would have been impossible for Christianity to exist in China. In other words, Bouvet’s work was fundamentally under the acquiescence of the Chinese court (the patronage factor).

The pioneer transmitters/translators’ first-hand observation and reading of the *Yijing*, though somewhat slanted against the exotic Lacanian *Other*, had exercised a significant impact on their double-domestication approach. The controversies over proper-name translation, incompatible philosophies and divinity issues resulted in a nearly insoluble impasse. The intercultural exchange between China and the West was basically under the interventional surveillance of the Roman Church (the institutional power), which had the final decision over what and how to translate the *Yijing* in order to maximize the Christianity interests.

According to Philip Louis, the impasse of ultimately being faithful

to the original can be solved through the aggressive translator's creative "abusive fidelity" (Louis, 1985). That is, the translators' authorial interference can be acceptable because they know precisely what should be preserved or abused in reproducing the ST meaning, as their intervention is "under the guise of a paradoxically abusive fidelity" (Arrojo, 1997, pp. 24-26). Thus, the inescapable flawed repetition of interpretative transcoding is inextricable from the translator's subjectivity and ideology. Since the shaping of meaning involves multifarious ties with language, culture, and thought, the translator as a TL mediator agent shall subjectify the re-production of the non-static original via intentional or unwitting interference, i.e., the translator's ideology and the authoritative patronage. A good exemplar is the early Jesuit translation of *Tian* 天 (*Qian* 乾, hexagram no. 1, representing masculinity or the primal element from which everything derives) as "Heaven," a term laden with Christian deistic connotations. Matteo Ricci recognized the Ruist conception of *Tian* and advocated the term *Tianzhu* 天主 (the supreme ruler of Heaven) as the proper name for God, which was inherited by later Jesuits and remains in circulation among present-day Chinese and Korean Catholics (as cited in Cawley, 2013, pp. 300-301). It can be concluded that the acculturation of Christianity in China (through paralleling the *Yijing* with the Bible) and the domestication of the *Yijing* in the West (through Figurism approach) epitomize the sophisticated bilateral assimilation. Given that, their "rewriting" and biased "interpretation" of the *Yijing* shall be legitimized on this matter.

Concluding Remarks

The overview of the early transmission and translation history of the *Yijing* indicates that the book had undergone multilayered redaction and exposition at multiple levels. Its outlandish format, oracular peculiarities and philosophical references with pre-history Chinese cosmology made it a daunting task to decipher and render the hexagrams and figures of *gua* in alignment first with the Figurism ideology, and then with the counter-Figurism theorization. As noted by Wong and Fuehrer (2015), these Jesuit missionaries “might have their own agendas” and “might have manipulated the texts” (p. X), whereby some of them might have appeared inadequate or questionable in harnessing the intricacy of Chinese language and Chinese people’s condensed way of thinking, “yet they were no doubt the pioneers in intercultural exchanges and communication between China and the West” (p. X). Without them, the journey of the *Yijing* to the West could have been impossible.

The translation history of the *Yijing* reminds us that exegesis never occurs in a vacuum. There exists no stable or dominant interpretation of a canonized text. The early Jesuit translations, either loosely faithful to or theologically twisted against the original, had functioned as a mouthpiece to voice their viewpoints or as a tool to address ideological problems they encountered when preaching Christianity in China. Through the early Latin and European vernacular translations, the Western audience began to foster the awareness of the importance

of the *Yijing* in various dimensions. For example, Denis Diderot, a revered “encyclopédiste,” initiated the approach dealing with the *Yijing* as the fundamental corpus for understanding Chinese philosophical traditions, which grasped the attention of Enlightenment intellectuals and prominent literary figures in facilitating the modernization of the West.

In summary, the Chinese canon *Yijing*, then at a peripheral position in the European literary polysystem, was transmigrated through the rewriting magic based on the Figurism (or counter-Figurism) ideology as a result of the Confucian-Christian synthesis to get closer to the Western audience. However, the Figurists’ overly-accommodating approach and their deliberate emphasis on the esoteric revelation of the “biblical truth” encrypted in the *Yijing* prevented the book from being accepted by the reason-oriented European literati, and the fabricated/distorted image of China was simultaneously rejected by the Chinese intellectuals. That said, it was the Jesuit missionaries’ exhaustive endeavors that had made possible the re-interpretations of the *Yijing* to empower the cultural communications between China and the West during the 17th to mid-18th centuries. We must not forget that all translations are motivated by a specific skopos, an ideology or a mixture of them. Given that, the early transmission and translation of the *Yijing* had shed unrivaled light on the mutual understanding between the two great civilizations in a barely repeatable manner.

References

- Arrojo, R. (1997). The “death” of the author and the limits of the translator’s visibility. In Z. J. M. Snell-Hornby (Ed.), *Translation as intercultural communication: Selected papers from the EST Congress-Prague 1995* (pp. 21-32). Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Benveniste, E. (1973). *Problems in general linguistics* (M. E. Meek, Trans.). Miami, FL: University of Miami Press. (Original work published 1966)
- Cawley, K. N. (2013). De-constructing the name(s) of God: Matteo Ricci’s translational apostolate. *Translation Studies*, 6(3), 293-308.
- Chen, X. (2017). *Baijin yixue sixiang yanjiu: Yi Fandigang tushuguan jiancun Zhongwen yixue ziliao wei jichu* [A research of Joachim Bouvet’s thoughts about *Yijing*: Based on *Yijing*-related manuscripts preserved in the Vatican Apostolic Library]. Beijing, China: People’s Publishing House.
- Collani, C. v. (2007). The first encounter of the West with *Yijing*: Introduction to and edition of letters and Latin translations by French Jesuits from the 18th century. *Monumenta Serica*, 55, 227-387. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40727680>
- Even-Zohar, I. (1990). The position of translated literature within the literary polysystem. *Poetics Today*, 11(1), 45-51.
- Gadamer, H. (1976). *Philosophical hermeneutics* (D. E. Linge, Trans.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. (Original work

published 1967)

- Gaubil, A. (1970). *Correspondance de Pékin 1722-1759* [Letters from Beijing: 1722-1759]. Geneve, Switzerland: Librairie Droz.
- Han, Q. (2004). Zai lun Baijin de *Yijing* yanjiu [Revisiting Joachim Bouvet's *Yijing* studies]. In X. Rong & S. Li (Eds.), *Zhongwai guanxishi xin shiliao yu xin wenti* (pp. 315-323). Beijing, China: China Science.
- Hart, R. (2013). *Imagined civilizations*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jakobson, R. (2000). On linguistic aspects of translation. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader* (pp. 113-118). London, UK: Routledge.
- Kim, S. (2004). *Strange names of God: The missionary translation of the divine name and the Chinese responses to Matteo Ricci's "Shangti" in late Ming China, 1583-1644*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Lackner, M. (1991). Jesuit Figurism. In T. H. Lee (Ed.), *China and Europe: Images and influences in sixteenth to eighteenth centuries* (pp. 129-149). Hong Kong, China: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Lefevere, A. (2004). *Translation, rewriting and the manipulation of literary fame*. Shanghai, China: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Legge, J. (1872). *Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen* [Spring and autumn annals with the commentary of Zuo]. In J. Legge (Ed.), *Chinese classics* (Vol. 5). London, UK: Henry Frowde. Retrieved from

[http://www2.iath.virginia.edu:8080/exist/cocoon/xwomen/texts/
chunqiu/d2.9/1/0/bilingual](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu:8080/exist/cocoon/xwomen/texts/chunqiu/d2.9/1/0/bilingual)

- Legge, J. (1964). *I ching: Book of changes* (C. Chai & W. Chai, Eds.). New York, NY: University Books.
- Liu, Y. H. (2005). *Quanshi de yuanhuan: Mingmo Qingchu chuanjiaoshi dui Rujia jingdian de jieshi ji qi bentu hueiying* [Hermeneutic circle: Missionaries' interpretation of Ruist classics and the indigenous response in late dynastic China]. Beijing, China: Peking University Press.
- Louis, P. (1985). The measure of translation effects. In J. F. Graham (Ed.), *Difference in translation* (pp. 31-62). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Lundbæk, K. (1983). The image of Neo-Ruism in Confucius sinarum philosophus. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44(1), 19-30.
- Lundbæk, K. (1991). The first European translations of Chinese historical and philosophical works. In T. H. Lee (Ed.), *China and Europe: Images and influences in sixteenth to eighteenth centuries* (pp. 29-43). Hong Kong, China: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Mendoza, J. G. (2010). *The History of the great and mighty kingdom of China and the situation thereof* (Vol. 1) (R. Parke, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1585)
- Munday, J. (2001). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Mungello, D. E. (1989). *Curious land: Jesuit accommodation and*

- the origins of sinology*. Honolulu, HI: The University of Hawaii Press.
- Pfister, L. (1932). *Notices biographiques et bibliographiques sur les jésuites de l'ancienne mission de Chine: 1552-1773* [Biographical and bibliographical notes on the Jesuits of the ancient mission of China: 1552-1773]. Shanghai, China: Imprimerie de la Mission Catholique.
- Régis, J. (1834). *Y-king, antiquissimus Sinarum liber quem ex latina interpretationep* [Y-king, the ancient Chinese book of English interpretation]. Stuttgart, Germany: Sumptibus J. G. Cottae.
- Ricci, M. (1985). *The true meaning of the lord of heaven* (D. Lancashire & H. K. Peter, Trans.). Taipei, Taiwan: The Ricci Institute. (Original work published 1603)
- Rutt, R. (1996). *The book of changes (Zhouyi): A bronze age document translated with introduction and notes*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Rutt, R. (2013). *Zhouyi: A new translation with commentary of the book of changes*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Schmidt, L. K. (2006). Gadamer's theory of hermeneutic experience. In L. K. Schmidt (Ed.), *Understanding hermeneutics* (pp. 95-115). London, UK: Acumen.
- Semedo, A. (1655). *The history of that great and renowned monarchy of China*. London, UK: John Crook. Retrieved from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A59154.0001.001?view=toc>
- Seo, A. (2012). Xu Guangqi's thought on supplementing Ruism with Christianity. *Lingua Cultura*, 6(1), 108-116.
- Shchutskii, J. (1979). *Researches on the I Ching* (W. L. MacDonald &

- T. Hasegawa, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
(Original work published 1960)
- Smith, R. J. (2012). *The I Ching: A biography*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Smith, R. J. (2015). Collaborators and competitors: Western translations of the *Yijing* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In L. W. Wong & B. Fuehrer (Eds.), *Sinologists as translators in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries* (pp. 385-434). Hong Kong, China: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
- Standaert, N. (1999). Jesuit corporate culture as shaped by the Chinese. In J. W. O'Mally, G. A. Barley, S. J. Harris, & T. K. Kennedy (Eds.), *The Jesuits: Cultures, sciences, and the arts 1540-1773* (pp. 352-363). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Standaert, N. (Ed.). (2001). *Handbook of Christianity in China* (Vol. I). Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill.
- Wang, H. C. (2015). Religion, politics and culture: The Figurists and the study of the *Book of Changes* by foreign missionaries in China. *Literatures in Chinese*, 128, 37-44.
- Wilhelm, H., & Wilhelm, R. (1979). *Understanding the I Ching: The Wilhelm lectures on the book of changes*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Witek, J. (1982). *Controversial ideas in China and in Europe: A biography of Jean-Francois Foucquet, S. J. 1665-1741*. Rome, Italy: Institutum Historicum S. I.
- Wong, L. W., & Fuehrer, B. (Eds.). (2015). *Sinologists as translators in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries*. Hong Kong, China: The

Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Yang, H. S. (1996). Xifang *Yijing* yanjiu de qingxiang ji sikao [The inclination of the West's understanding of the *Yijing*] (Part 1). *Zhonghua Yixue*, 17(6), 64-66.

Zhang, X. P. (1998). *Yijing* zai xifan zaoqi de chuanbo [The early transmission of the *Yijing* in the West]. *Zhongguo Wenhua Yanjiu*, 22, 124-126.

