

PREFACE

前言



Throughout history, contacts between China and Europe have been mutually enriching, including in the field of philosophy, sciences or arts. In the field of astronomy, encounters started during the Ming dynasty. Prominent European Jesuits, including Matteo Ricci, Johann Adam Schall von Bell, and the Belgian Ferdinand Verbiest, shared with their Chinese counterparts their scientific knowledge, thus contributing to the advancement of astronomy in China.

Father Verbiest was a child of his time. He grew up in Europe, between the periods of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, when European scholars enjoyed an open, borderless intellectual space (the “republic of letters”) and communicated by letters and through their publications in a shared language, Latin. Inspired by his Christian faith,

纵观历史，中国与欧洲在哲学、科学或艺术等领域的接触一直很丰富。在天文学领域，中欧交流始于明朝。包括利玛窦、汤若望和比利时人南怀仁在内的欧洲著名耶稣会士与中国同行分享了他们的科学知识，从而促进了中国天文学的发展。

南怀仁是那个时代的产物。他成长于欧洲，处于文艺复兴和启蒙运动时期之间，当时欧洲学者享有一个开放的、无国界的智识空间（“文学共和国”），他们用共同的语言——拉丁语——通过书信和出版物进行交流。受他的基督信仰启发，南怀仁本人也热衷于学习数学和天文学。欧洲在科技领域的进步令他兴奋不已。经过长途跋涉，他于1659年从比利时抵达中国。在中国的岁月

Father Verbiest was himself an eager student of mathematics and astronomy. He was thrilled by progress in Europe in the fields of science and technology. After a long journey all the way from Belgium, he embarked in China in 1659. During his years spent in China, and advising directly the Emperor, he contributed significantly to Chinese astronomy and education, opening new avenues for cooperation and mutual understanding between East and West.

Arriving in Beijing in August 2023, as the new ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium, my mission is also to better understand China through its rich history and culture. Pursuing this, it was not long before I heard of the figure of Ferdinand Verbiest. His personal story and his influence on the Belgo-Chinese relations of that time, profoundly impressed me. So, it was a particular honor to organize an event to celebrate Verbiest's 400th anniversary in Beijing last October. The event was made possible with the help of the Yale Center Beijing, the Macau Ricci Institute and the Beijing Center for Chinese Studies and all of the wonderful speakers, to whom we are very grateful.

I hope this publication will also sweep you into the unique story of Ferdinand Verbiest and this fascinating chapter of Chinese history. While honoring Verbiest's achievements, this publication highlights the importance of cross-cultural exchanges in the shared pursuit of scientific progress, understanding, and friendship. As diplomacy serves the same spirit and objectives, Father Verbiest's walk of life sets a shining example that will inspire me while serving Belgium in China.



H.E. BRUNO ANGELET, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to China, Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium in China

里，他直接向皇帝提出建议，为中国的天文学和教育事业做出了巨大贡献，为东西方之间的合作和相互理解开辟了新途径。

作为比利时王国的新大使，我于2023年8月抵达北京，我的使命也是通过其丰富的历史和文化更好地了解中国。为此，我很快就听说了南怀仁的事迹。他的个人经历以及他对当时比中关系的影响给我留下了深刻印象。因此，去年10月，我非常荣幸地在北京组织了一次纪念南怀仁诞辰400周年的活动。那次活动得到了耶鲁大学北京中心、澳门利氏学院、北京中国学中心以及所有演讲嘉宾的大力支持，我们对此深表感谢。

我希望这本出版物也能将您带入南怀仁的独特故事和中国历史上这一引人入胜的篇章。在纪念南怀仁成就的同时，本刊物还强调了跨文化交流在共同追求科学进步、理解和友谊方面的重要性。外交的精神和目标是一致的，南怀仁的人生之路为我在中国为比利时服务树立了一个光辉的榜样。



安博宁，比利时王国驻华大使馆，比利时王国驻华大使