

Orientis Aura
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**Thomas Aquinas Theology in Jesuit
Geographical Books of Ming and Qing
Dynasties in China and Scholars' Reactions**

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Abstract

Introduction

At the end of the 16th century, Jesuit missionaries such as Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) arrived in China. They traveled from Macau to Zhaoqing in Guangdong, where they established a small church. In the church, Ricci displayed a world map from Abraham Ortelius' (1527–1598) atlas *Typus Orbis Terrarum* (1570). Chinese scholars who saw the map were amazed, and some even requested copies from Ricci to present as gifts to other officials. As a result, Ricci used the Latin version of the world map he had brought as a base, supplemented it with content from Chinese maps such as the *Guangyu Tu*, and repositioned China from the far right of Western maps to the center. He then created a Chinese version of the world map. Ricci's Chinese world map was reprinted multiple times in China, but due to the fragile nature of paper maps, many of these editions have been lost. Today, only two versions survive: the *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu* and the *Liangyi Xuanlan Tu*. Following Ricci, other Jesuits such as Giulio Aleni (1582–1649) and Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688) also produced Chinese world maps, titled *Wanguo Quantu* and *Kunyu Quantu*. Additionally, Aleni and Verbiest compiled geographical works such as *Zhifang Waiji* and *Kunyu Tushuo*. Due to the depth of traditional Chinese culture, Ricci and his colleagues hoped to use these Chinese maps and geographical works to build relationships with Chinese scholars, officials, and even the emperor, ultimately aiming to spread their religion teachings. Within these maps and geographical works, Ricci and others also introduced the theology of Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274).

1. Thomas Aquinas' Theology in the Maps and Geographical Works of Jesuit Missionaries in Ming and Qing China

In 1602, Matteo Ricci published the Chinese world map *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*. In the section of the map dedicated to Europe, he noted: "This continent of Europe consists of more than thirty countries, all of which follow the laws of their former kings, rejecting all heresies and

solely revering the holy teachings of the Lord of Heaven, God."¹ Additionally, in the section on "Rudeya", the map states: "The Lord of Heaven was born in this land, and thus it is called the Holy Land."² Furthermore, in the postscript to the *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*, Ricci wrote: "It is said that heaven and earth form a great book, which only the noble-minded can read, and thus the Way is revealed. For by understanding heaven and earth, one can prove the supreme goodness, greatness, and unity of the Lord who governs them. Those who do not study abandon heaven, and learning that does not strive for the greatest truths, reducing multiplicity to unity, is hardly true learning. I, Ricci, though unworthy, have translated this map of the world, not to claim it as a source of knowledge, but to encourage those who seek it to find it for themselves. I hope this will resonate with all who share this heaven and earth."³ In this passage, we can see Ricci's introduction of Thomas Aquinas' argument that the one true Lord of heaven and earth is God.

In addition to these ideas, Giulio Aleni, an Italian Jesuit who came to China after Matteo Ricci, not only wrote *Xixue Fan* to introduce Thomas Aquinas' theology to China but also delved deeper into Catholic teachings, particularly the theology of Thomas Aquinas, in his world geography book *Zhifang Waiji*. For example, in the section on "Duerge", Aleni wrote: "The northwestern countries of Persia were all annexed by Duerge. Among them is a country called Arabia, where there is a great mountain named Sinai. In ancient times, the Lord of Heaven descended to instruct the people, summoning a holy man named Moses to this mountain. He was given the Ten Commandments, inscribed on stone tablets—three commandments on the left tablet and seven on the right. These are the Ten Commandments that are still transmitted today."⁴

¹ Zhu Weizheng, *Collected Chinese Works and Translations of Matteo Ricci*, Fudan University Press, 2001, p. 214.

² Zhu Weizheng, *Collected Chinese Works and Translations of Matteo Ricci*, Fudan University Press, 2001, p. 211.

³ Zhu Weizheng, *Collected Chinese Works and Translations of Matteo Ricci*, Fudan University Press, 2001, p. 183.

⁴ Giulio Aleni, *Zhifang Waiji*, annotated by Xie Fang, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2000, p. 48.

The section in *Zhifang Waiji* that focuses on Catholicism and Thomas Aquinas' theological thought is the chapter on "Rudeya," which primarily refers to the ancient region of Palestine where the Jewish people lived.⁵In this chapter, Aleni first introduces Judea as the "fertile land initially bestowed by the Lord of Heaven to humanity," describing it as "rich and abundant, densely populated."⁶He also mentions that during the founding of Judea, there was "a great sage named Abraham." To help Chinese readers better understand the era in which Abraham lived, Aleni notes that this period roughly corresponds to the reign of Emperor Shun in Chinese history. Furthermore, Aleni introduces the Bible and some of its contents: "The most significant event in the scriptures is the descent of the Lord of Heaven to save humanity from sin and open the path to eternal salvation." He adds, "Later, He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, named Jesus, which means 'Savior.'"⁷

In the chapter on Judea, Aleni dedicates a lengthy passage to introducing Thomas Aquinas' theological concept of the oneness of God⁸. This demonstrates Aleni's emphasis on Aquinas' theology and his eagerness to introduce this thought to contemporary Chinese scholars. In this section, Aleni writes: "Here, I will briefly outline several key tenets of our faith: First, in heaven and earth, there is only one supreme and greatest Lord and Father of all creation, and there can be no other. This one is none other than the Lord of Heaven, God, whose wisdom, power, and goodness are boundless. All spirits, creatures, and things are created by God and sustained by His care. Human fortunes, misfortunes, and lifespans are all governed by Him. Therefore, the one whom we should revere, fear, and love is solely the Lord of Heaven. Beyond this, whether spirits or humans, those who teach people to serve the Lord of Heaven with pure devotion are good spirits and righteous people. Those who lure others to seek

⁵ Giulio Aleni, *Zhifang Waiji*, annotated by Xie Fang, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2000, p. 56.

⁶ Giulio Aleni, *Zhifang Waiji*, annotated by Xie Fang, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2000, p. 52.

⁷ Giulio Aleni, *Zhifang Waiji*, annotated by Xie Fang, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2000, p. 53.

⁸ In the Chinese world maps and geographical works of the Jesuits and scholars of the Ming and Qing dynasties, terms such as "Lord of Heaven," "God," and "Creator" were often used interchangeably or mixed.

blessings or avoid calamities through other means are usurping the place of the Lord of Heaven and openly seizing His authority. They are undoubtedly evil spirits and wicked people, and those who worship and offer sacrifices to them will inevitably incur guilt. Second, in heaven and earth, only the Lord of Heaven is the true Lord, and thus His holy teachings alone are the true faith. Following them leads one to practice true goodness and abstain from evil, enabling ascent to heaven and eternal escape from hell. Other religions are established by humans and cannot lead to true goodness, absolve sin, or enable ascent to heaven and escape from hell. Third, humans have both a physical body and a soul; the body may perish, but the soul is imperishable. During one's lifetime, one may perform good deeds and avoid evil. Once life ends, one's character is fixed and can never be altered. At that time, the Lord of Heaven will judge and reward or punish accordingly. Those who purely serve the Lord of Heaven and love others as themselves will ascend to heaven to join the angels and saints, enjoying eternal bliss. Those who do not love or believe in the Lord of Heaven and violate His commandments will fall into hell, suffering eternal torment. ... Thus, the essential teachings of our faith urge people to truly repent and reform, to obtain forgiveness and enjoy the eternal bliss of heaven. There are dedicated books that elaborate on these teachings."

Giulio Aleni also frequently mentions the three theological virtues identified by Thomas Aquinas—"faith," "hope," and "charity"—throughout his book. For example, when introducing the Catholic faith in Europe, he writes: "The people of Europe adhere to the true teachings of the Lord of Heaven, upholding two principles: first, to love and revere the Lord of Heaven above all things; second, to love others as oneself. To love and revere the Lord of Heaven, one must firmly cultivate the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, ⁹while diligently practicing rituals of worship. Temples for worship are established everywhere, from the capital cities to the smallest villages. ... To love others as oneself means: first, to love their souls, guiding them to do good and avoid evil, so they may fully enjoy the blessings bestowed by heaven; second, to love their physical bodies, for if I am not compassionate toward others, the Lord of Heaven will not be

⁹ These are the three theological virtues identified by Thomas Aquinas.

compassionate toward me."¹⁰Following this passage, the author also mentions organizations and hospitals established in Europe at the time to assist widows, orphans, and the lonely, further illustrating how Europeans who practiced Catholicism embodied the virtue of "charity."

Zhifang Waiji contains extensive introductions to Catholicism, particularly in its descriptions of European countries such as Spain, France, and Italy. It covers Catholic doctrines, churches and their furnishings, miraculous healings performed by kings through divine power, and the role of the Pope. However, these sections rarely connect to Thomas Aquinas' theology.

Zhifang Waiji was first published in 1623 during the Ming Dynasty and is the earliest known Chinese-language world geography book. After its publication, it was widely read by both Chinese and foreign audiences, exerting a significant influence. In 1624, the year after its publication, the scholar Xiong Renlin compiled *Diwei*, which drew heavily from *Zhifang Waiji*. During the Qing Dynasty, the scholar Wang Honghan compiled *Qianxiang Kuntu Gejing*, which also borrowed extensively from *Zhifang Waiji*. Additionally, later Jesuit missionaries in China referenced Aleni's *Zhifang Waiji* when compiling their own Chinese-language world geography works.

Matteo Ricci and Giulio Aleni were both Jesuits who came to China during the Ming Dynasty. In the Qing Dynasty, the Belgian Jesuit Ferdinand Verbiest arrived in China and compiled *Kunyu Tushuo*. This book was another Chinese-language world geography work published in China after Aleni's *Zhifang Waiji*. Much of the content in *Kunyu Tushuo* was derived from *Zhifang Waiji*, with some additional material from the annotations in Ricci's *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*. However, unlike the explanatory notes on world regions in *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu* or the geographical knowledge in *Zhifang Waiji*, *Kunyu Tushuo* introduced elements of physical geography, such as the names of famous rivers and

¹⁰ Giulio Aleni, *Zhifang Waiji*, annotated by Xie Fang, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2000, pp. 70–71.

mountains around the world, as well as explanations of earthquakes and their causes. Verbiest also appended 32 illustrations to *Kunyu Tushuo*, depicting exotic flowers and animals, ships, the "Seven Wonders of the World," and the Roman Colosseum, titled "Illustrations of Exotic Things," "Illustrations of the Seven Wonders," and "Illustrations of Public Entertainment." However, this book does not extensively discuss Thomas Aquinas' theology, and even omits the chapter on Judea from *Zhifang Waiji*, which was dedicated to such content. Furthermore, Verbiest removed other Catholic-related content from *Zhifang Waiji*, such as the descriptions of Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments in the chapter on Persia.

However, in addition to his monograph, Ferdinand Verbiest also created a Chinese world map titled *Kunyu Quantu*. On this map, Verbiest marked several important locations related to Catholicism and provided brief explanatory notes. Many of these place names and annotations were derived from Matteo Ricci's *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*, although Verbiest adjusted the positions of some locations. For example, *Kunyu Quantu* marks the location of "Rudeya" , with a small annotation below it: "The Lord of Heaven was born here, and thus it is called the Holy Land." In *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*, a similar annotation appears to the left of the same place name: "The Lord of Heaven was born in this land, and thus it is called the Holy Land." The only difference is that *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu* places Judea slightly to the left above the Red Sea, while *Kunyu Quantu* places it to the right of the Red Sea.



Rudeya in *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*¹¹. Rudeya in *Kunyu Quantu*¹²

¹¹ [Italian]Matteo Ricci,*Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*,Yugong Edition,Kyoto University Library.

¹² [Belgian]Ferdinand Verbiest,*Kunyu Quantu*, Year Jiayin (1674),Kangxi,Hebei University Library.

As mentioned earlier, Verbiest's *Kunyu Tushuo* omitted the detailed introduction of Rudeya, but his Chinese world map still marked this location. This difference in treatment suggests that Verbiest may have been conflicted about how to present such content, likely due to his dual identity—not only as a Jesuit missionary but also as the Director of the Astronomical Bureau (钦天监监正) in the Qing Dynasty, a trusted official of the Kangxi Emperor. In this sense, he was also a Qing-era scholar. Although the Kangxi Emperor maintained a relatively tolerant attitude toward Catholicism during Verbiest's tenure, some scholars viewed Catholicism as a potentially rebellious sect, akin to the "White Lotus Society," which could threaten imperial authority. Some even included prohibitions against Catholicism in local official documents. During the "Calendar Case" (康熙历狱), the scholar Yang Guangxian vehemently opposed Catholicism. It was likely under such complex circumstances that Verbiest adopted different approaches to handling content related to Judea in *Kunyu Quantu* and *Kunyu Tushuo*.

After Verbiest, Jesuit missionaries rarely published Chinese world maps or compiled world geographical works in China. However, the Chinese world maps and geographical works created by Verbiest, Ricci, and Aleni continued to circulate. The geographical knowledge and Catholic-related content, including Thomas Aquinas' theology, introduced in these works were seen and read by many Ming and Qing scholars. Some of these scholars later compiled their own Chinese world geography works, holding varying attitudes toward the geographical knowledge and theological content presented by the Jesuits.

2. Ming and Qing Scholars' Reactions to Thomas Aquinas' Theology in Jesuit Maps and Geographical Works

The maps and geographical works produced by Jesuit missionaries during the Ming and Qing dynasties sparked significant reactions among Chinese scholars. The introduction of Thomas Aquinas' theology, in particular, presented entirely new ideas to these scholars. Their reactions can be categorized into the following three types:

(1) Scholars Who Rejected Thomas Aquinas' Theology

Although Christianity had been introduced to China twice before the Ming and Qing dynasties—once during the Tang Dynasty as "Nestorianism" (景教) and once during the Yuan Dynasty as "Yelikewen" (也里可温)—neither had as much impact as the Jesuit missions of the Ming and Qing periods. As a result, Ming and Qing scholars had limited understanding of Christian doctrines. Moreover, most scholars were deeply influenced by the idea that China was the "center of the world" .¹³ Consequently, many scholars rejected the Christian teachings and Thomas Aquinas' theology introduced by Ricci, Aleni, and others. A representative example is the Ming-Qing scholar Xiong Renlin, who handled such content in his work *Diwei*.

Diwei was the first Chinese world geography book compiled by a Chinese scholar, completed the year after *Zhifang Waiji* was published. Much of its content was derived from *Zhifang Waiji*. A comparison of the two books' tables of contents reveals that *Diwei* largely follows the structure of *Zhifang Waiji*, with both placing Asia first. However, Xiong Renlin followed his father's terminology, referring to Asia as "Da Zhan Na" (大瞻纳) instead of "Asia" (亚细亚). Both books proceed to cover

¹³ In traditional Chinese texts, "天下" refers to the "world," and the phrase "All under heaven is the king's land" ("普天之下，莫非王土") reflects the belief that China was the center of the world.

Europe, Africa, America, Magellanica (a term for the southern continent), and maritime topics, including sea names, marine life, and ocean conditions (in *Diwei*, this section is titled "Hai Xing Zhi" in the table of contents but referred to as "Hai Zhuang" and "Hai Bo" in the text).

While referencing *Zhifang Waiji* to compile *Diwei*, Xiong Renlin noted the introduction of Thomas Aquinas' theology but chose to omit or rewrite such content. For example, Aleni's description of a Catholic church in the Judea chapter of *Zhifang Waiji* reads: "During the Spring and Autumn period, there were two holy kings: the father, David, and the son, Solomon. They built a grand temple for the Lord of Heaven, adorned with gold, jade, and precious gems, exquisitely beautiful, at a cost of thirty billion."¹⁴In *Diwei*, Xiong Renlin condensed this to: "There is a temple for worshipping the Lord of Heaven."¹⁵Similarly, Xiong Renlin entirely removed the section in *Zhifang Waiji* that introduced Thomas Aquinas' concept of the oneness of God.

Xiong Renlin's revisions were rooted in his Confucian beliefs. In his view, Christianity was not a culture distinct from Confucianism but rather shared a common origin with it. This perspective aligns closely with the "Chinese Origins of Western Learning" (西学之源) theory. In the postscript to *Diwei*, titled "Diwei Xi," Xiong Renlin elaborates on his reasoning for omitting Thomas Aquinas' theology and related content: "The Way of Confucianism is vast indeed! Scholars, farmers, artisans, and merchants are all followers of Confucianism; the relationships between ruler and subject, father and son, elder and younger brothers, husband and wife, and friends are all matters of Confucianism. The boundaries between barbarians and the civilized are all within the realm of Confucianism. The

¹⁴ Giulio Aleni, *Zhifang Waiji*, annotated by Xie Fang, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2000, p. 53.

¹⁵ [Ming] Xiong Renlin, *Diwei*, "Judea Zhi," in Hanyu Tong, edited by Xiong Zhixue, Qing Shunzhi 5th Year (1648), Youyutang Edition, National Library of China, p. 51.]

teachings of Jesus are a branch of Confucianism; the techniques of Laozi are a provisional teaching of Confucianism."¹⁶

2. Scholars Who Accepted Thomas Aquinas' Theology

Not all Ming and Qing scholars rejected the theological ideas of Thomas Aquinas presented in these maps and geographical works. Some scholars accepted these ideas and incorporated them into their own geographical writings. For example, the Qing scholar Wang Honghan included significant discussions of these ideas in his work *Qianxiang Kuntu Gejing*. *Qianxiang Kuntu Gejing* is a manuscript primarily introducing Western astronomical and world geographical knowledge. While the geographical content is largely derived from Verbiest's *Kunyu Tushuo*, its treatment of Thomas Aquinas' theology and other Catholic-related content differs significantly from *Kunyu Tushuo*.

At the beginning of the geographical section of *Qianxiang Kuntu Gejing*, Wang Honghan included a preface-like essay titled "The Origin of Heaven and Earth" (天地原始), in which he criticized Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism for their inability to provide a reasonable explanation for the origins of heaven, earth, and humanity. He argued that only Catholic teachings could adequately address this question. He then provided a detailed introduction to Thomas Aquinas' concept of the oneness of God, as well as the stories of Adam and Eve, accompanied by his own commentary: "However, the Lord did not create heaven and earth in an infinite past but rather a few thousand years ago. This was to make people understand that the universe and all living things have a beginning and were created by the true Lord, so that they might humbly serve Him. If we examine the order of creation, it was completed in six days. The Lord could have created everything in an instant, but He chose six days to make it resemble the gradual formation of later things, so that people

¹⁶ [Ming] Xiong Renlin, Diwei, "Diwei Xi," in Hanyu Tong, edited by Xiong Zhixue, Qing Shunzhi 5th Year (1648), Youyutang Edition, National Library of China, p. 194. For punctuation, see [Ming] Xiong Renlin, annotated by Hong Jianrong, *Hanyu Tong Jiaoshi*, Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press, 2017, p. 220.

might understand that the ongoing process of creation is sustained by the same power that created heaven and earth. On the first day, He created nine orders of angels in the heavens. Some obeyed the Lord and became good spirits, while others rebelled and became evil. Thus, the distinction between good and evil was established, and their fates were determined. Those who ascended became angels, and those who fell became devils. After six days, He created humanity, one man and one woman. The man was named Adam, and the woman was named Eve. The reason heaven, earth, and all things were created before humanity was to show that everything in the world was prepared for us, and the Creator arranged everything meticulously for our benefit. Therefore, we should be eternally grateful."¹⁷At the end of this essay, Wang Honghan explained that he wrote this section because Chinese historical texts lacked any discussion of the Catholic creation narrative, and he wished to provide a detailed introduction to these ideas.

Following "The Origin of Heaven and Earth" is an essay by Zhu Zongyuan titled "The End of Heaven and Earth Is Predetermined" (天地之终有期). Zhu Zongyuan, also a scholar, later became a Catholic. In this essay, he discussed the concept of the oneness of God: "Jesus said that the end of heaven and earth will come like a thunderclap. Even the angels in heaven do not know the time. Therefore, the scriptures do not record the exact date but only the signs of its approach. When the end is near, all under heaven, regardless of people, creatures, or barbarian nations, will follow the teachings of the Lord of Heaven."¹⁸Wang Honghan's "The Origin of Heaven and Earth" explains how God created the world, while Zhu Zongyuan's "The End of Heaven and Earth Is Predetermined" describes how God will remain the sole ruler at the end of the world. These two essays complement each other, completing the introduction to the concept of the oneness of God.

¹⁷ [Qing]Wang Honghan, *Qianxiang Kuntu Gejing*, vol.9, pp.1-2, Kangxi 30th Year Manuscript, Zhejiang University Library, Rare Books Collection.

¹⁸ [Qing]Wang Honghan, *Qianxiang Kuntu Gejing*, vol.9, p.4, Kangxi 30th Year Manuscript, Zhejiang University Library, Rare Books Collection.

However, Wang Honghan did not conclude the discussion here and move directly to the geographical content. Instead, he wrote another essay titled "On the Origin of the Heavenly Bodies and the Seven Luminaries" (天地列宿七政形体原始论), in which he continued to introduce other doctrines of Thomas Aquinas, such as the Trinity: "Before the chaos took form, there was an eternal Lord, omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good, one being in three persons. He expressed His will and created heaven and earth."¹⁹

Additionally, while introducing world geographical knowledge, Wang Honghan referenced Verbiest's *Kunyu Tushuo* but did not include the chapter on Judea, which focused on Thomas Aquinas' theology. However, when referencing the chapter on Persia in *Kunyu Tushuo*, he did not omit the content about Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments, as Verbiest had done. Instead, he copied the relevant passage from *Zhifang Waiji*: "There is a great mountain named Sinai. In ancient times, the Lord of Heaven descended to instruct the people, summoning the holy man Moses to this mountain and giving him the Ten Commandments on stone tablets—three commandments on the left tablet and seven on the right. These are the Ten Commandments transmitted in the West today."²⁰ Like *Kunyu Tushuo* and *Zhifang Waiji*, Wang Honghan also discussed the Catholic faith in various European countries.

3. Scholars Who Were Neutral

Toward Thomas Aquinas' Theology

In addition to the two groups mentioned above, there were scholars who neither supported nor opposed the theological ideas of Thomas Aquinas introduced by Ricci, Aleni, and others. This neutrality stemmed

¹⁹ [Qing]Wang Honghan, *Qianxiang Kuntu Gejing*, vol.9, p.4, Kangxi 30th Year Manuscript, Zhejiang University Library, Rare Books Collection.

²⁰ [Qing]Wang Honghan, *Qianxiang Kuntu Gejing*, vol.11, p.10, Kangxi 30th Year Manuscript, Zhejiang University Library, Rare Books Collection.

from their lack of trust in the missionaries and their general indifference to the knowledge they brought.

These scholars distrusted Ricci, Aleni, and other foreigners, fearing that they might pose a threat to China's border security. As the Yuan Dynasty was a minority regime that had subjugated the Han Chinese, the Ming emperors were vigilant in preventing a recurrence of such a situation and in eliminating the remnants of Yuan military power. "After the unification of the Ming Empire, every autumn and winter, the emperors would send princes to lead troops on border patrols, venturing into desolate lands to hunt and then return. This was called 'pacifying the desert' and became an annual practice."²¹

This political and military context contributed to the spread of the concept of "defending against barbarians" (夷夏之防). "There are two great defenses in the world: between the civilized and the barbarians, and between the noble and the base. ... Barbarians and the civilized are born in different lands. Their lands differ, their energies differ, and thus their customs differ. With different customs, their knowledge and actions are entirely different. ... The boundaries of land and the distinctions of heavenly energy must not be confused. If they are, human order will collapse, and the people of the civilized world will be devoured and suffer. Preventing this early is essential to preserving human order and life, in accordance with heaven's will."²²

Influenced by the concept of "defending against barbarians," some scholars feared that Western missionaries like Ricci might secretly form alliances and threaten the central government. They vehemently opposed Ricci's presence in China and petitioned the emperor to send them back to their own countries: "We beg that (Ricci and others) be granted official robes and sent back to their homeland, and not be allowed to reside in the

²¹ [Ming]ZhuYunming, *Ye Ji,Congshu Jicheng Chubian*,vol.2801,Shanghai:Commercial Press,1936,p.8.

²² [Ming]Wang Fuzhi, *Du Tongjian Lun* ,vol.14,in Wanyou Wenku ,series2,Shanghai:Commercial Press,1936,p.256.

two capitals, associating with our people and causing trouble." However, the emperor did not approve their request.²³

Moreover, the Jesuits not only resided in China but also secured stable living and missionary conditions in Beijing and Nanjing. This further alarmed their opponents: because Christian gatherings had to take place at night, some scholars suspected that they were organizations like the "White Lotus Society," ostensibly gathering for religious purposes but secretly plotting to overthrow the government. After Ricci's death, some scholars adopted a more radical stance toward the missionaries, sending representatives to petition the emperor to expel them from China: "... In the 44th year of Wanli (1616), (the Vice Minister of Rites Xu Ruke), along with Vice Minister Shen Que and Supervising Secretary Yan Wenhui, jointly submitted a memorial condemning their heretical teachings for misleading the people and suspecting them of being imposters from Portugal. They urgently requested their expulsion."²⁴

Of course, it is important to recognize that these scholars' opposition to the missionaries was not blindly xenophobic. As Jacques Gernet pointed out: "One cannot assume that the criticisms or silence of the Chinese toward the missionaries' evangelism at this time were solely due to ignorance, xenophobia, or a narrow adherence to tradition."²⁵ Their concerns were primarily rooted in national security. However, because they believed the missionaries might pose a threat to the state, they naturally did not embrace the knowledge they brought, adopting a largely indifferent attitude.

²³ [Qing]Zhang Tingyu, ,edited, *Ming Shi*,vol.326,Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company,1974, p.8459.

²⁴ [Qing]Zhang Tingyu,edited, *Ming Shi*,vol.326,Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company,1974,p.8460.

²⁵ For details, see A Comparison of Christian and Chinese Worldviews in the 17th Century, translated from Diogenes, no. 105 (Paris, 1979). In [French] Jacques Gernet, translated by Geng Sheng, *China and Christianity: The First Encounter of Chinese and Western Cultures*, Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 2003, pp. 305–335.

3. Summary

In summary, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, Jesuit missionaries in China not only wrote monographs introducing Thomas Aquinas' theology but also included related content in the Chinese maps and geographical works they published. This process began with the arrival of Matteo Ricci and others in late Ming China and continued into the Qing Dynasty. The Jesuits published and compiled Chinese maps and geographical works such as *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*, *Kunyu Quantu*, *Zhifang Waiji*, and *Kunyu Tushuo*. Ming and Qing scholars who saw or read these maps and geographical works not only gained knowledge of world geography but were also exposed to Catholic-related content, including Thomas Aquinas' theology. Just as their reactions to the geographical knowledge varied, so too did their attitudes toward Aquinas' theology. Based on the above discussion, we can draw the following conclusions:

(1) The Jesuit missionaries hoped that by reading these maps and geographical works, Chinese scholars would gain an understanding of Thomas Aquinas' theology, thereby furthering the Jesuits' goal of spreading Catholicism in China.

(2) Due to differences in the timing of map publications and geographical works, changes in socio-cultural contexts, and the evolving status of individual missionaries, the introductions to Thomas Aquinas' theology in these works were not uniform. *Zhifang Waiji* provided extensive coverage of these topics, while *Kunyu Tushuo*, which was based on *Zhifang Waiji*, omitted much of this content, offering only sporadic mentions. The Chinese world maps published by the Jesuits provided the briefest introductions to Aquinas' theology, reflecting the limited textual capacity of maps compared to books.

(3) Ming and Qing scholars who read these maps and geographical works exhibited varied responses. Some accepted only the geographical knowledge and rejected Thomas Aquinas' theology; others not only accepted Aquinas' ideas but also incorporated them into their own writings

for others to read; still others, due to their distrust of the missionaries, adopted a neutral stance, neither accepting nor opposing Aquinas' theology.

(4)The Jesuits' introductions to Thomas Aquinas' theology in their Chinese maps and geographical works, along with the scholars' diverse reactions, highlight the challenges of mutual understanding and recognition between different cultures and belief systems.