

I

Orientalism and the Longue Durée

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....

John 1.1

It seems fitting that this book opens with this line from the New Testament, for throughout this book we will be dealing with words, with origins or beginnings, and with gods. While many other factors came into play, European, and especially German, scholarly orientalism in the nineteenth and even early twentieth centuries remained powerfully rooted in humanistic traditions that reach back into the early modern or even the Hellenistic world and are rooted in the interpretation of Jewish and Christian scriptures. I did not begin this project with such a conviction, but as I read the works of the German scholars, I recognized that the issues of central importance to them were not ones that could be explained in any sensible way by limiting myself to the Wilhelmine era or to the modern, secular study of India, the Islamic world, and China. German-speaking Central Europeans have taken up a variety of positions with respect to the peoples, cultures, and histories of the ever-shifting geographical entity known to the nineteenth century as “the Orient” – but I discovered that for those who devoted serious study to the subject, what mattered most was the *ancient* Near and Middle East, the birthplace of most of the world’s religious texts. The key debates revolved around questions most students of “orientalism” ignore, seemingly obscure questions such as how to date the Zend Avesta or to assess the authorship of the Pentateuch. For the most part, my research brought me face to face not with policy makers but with the descendants of those often rebarbarative and iconoclastic theologians and philologists featured in such masterpieces of early modern intellectual history as Anthony Grafton’s *Defenders of the Text*, Frances Yates’s *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, and D. P. Walker’s *The Ancient Theology*. I have been forced to conclude that German orientalism – defined as the serious and sustained study of the cultures of Asia – was not a product of the modern, imperial age, but something much older, richer, and stranger, something enduringly shaped by the longing to hear God’s word, to understand the meaning of his revelation, and to propagate (Christian) truths as one understood them. But I have also concluded, and will attempt to persuade my readers as well, that this legacy was by no means a simple one, and endowed German orientalism with a cultural ambivalence we have yet to appreciate.

Several very venerable Christian traditions played an important role in shaping the study of eastern languages and cultures in western Europe, most prominent among which were biblical exegesis and what we might call informed evangelizing. Biblical exegesis, or *critica sacra*, the critically informed drawing out of the meaning of sacred scripture, was born with the first efforts to collate and translate the scriptures themselves, and was similar in many ways to textual traditions practiced by the other “peoples of the book,” Muslims and Jews. Christian theologians from the church fathers forward were well aware that textual divergences, internal contradictions, and obscure passages offered grounds for heresy or schism, and were anxious to create stable, defensible readings. They regularly performed various kinds of exegesis, applying reason and refined linguistic skills to elucidate God’s words. Already in the third century, the learned Origen sought to demonstrate the plenitude of God’s word by offering parallel, but non-identical, Greek and Hebrew versions of the Old Testament in his *Hexapla*. Like his near contemporaries Jerome and Augustine, Origen knew that non-Christians were also engaged in critical readings of scripture; their criticisms too needed to be taken into account if Christianity’s truth were to be universally convincing.¹ European scholars who followed in the church fathers’ traces knew that this sort of textual work was both necessary and a bit dangerous; those who practiced it used their skills to shore up Christian belief, but often, too, their immersion in the languages and cultures of non-Christians laid them open to charges of heresy. Compelled again and again to tackle the crucial theological question, what did Christianity owe to Judaism? They presumed a supercessionist relationship, but acknowledged, in one way or the other, Christianity’s profound debts to the ancient Israelites, whose history was clearly rooted in the Levant.

In the medieval Christian world, there was already another important role for the scholar of Near Eastern languages, or “orientalist”: – to understand the non-Christian cultures to whom the gospel could be preached. Informed evangelization, like *critica sacra*, was a very old task that required unusual linguistic skills in the effort to defend and spread Christian faith. Even in the centuries in which Christian states were far weaker and less wealthy than the Ottoman, Chinese, Moghul, and Safavid Empires, evangelists presumed Christian superiority – that was, of course, doctrinally non-negotiable. Those who learned foreign languages were charged with understanding non-Christian cultures so that infidels and heathens could more easily be converted. But along the hermeneutical path, there are many dangers, for who is to say exactly *how much* and *what kind* of

¹ On Origen’s quite risky exegetical model, see Peter N. Miller, “Making the Paris Polyglot Bible: Humanism and Orientalism in the Early Seventeenth Century,” in Herbert Jaumann, ed., *Die europäische Gelehrtenrepublik im Zeitalter des Konfessionalismus* (Wiesbaden, 2001), pp. 60–1, 74–5. Modern historians have perhaps underestimated the extent to which the exchange of polemics, especially between Jewish, Muslim, and Christian scholars, has, since medieval times, pushed forward the art of interpreting scripture – or the penchant for criticizing it. See Edward Breuer, *The Limits of Enlightenment: Jews, Germans and the Eighteenth-Century Study of Scripture* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), pp. 78–9; also, Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton, NJ, 1986), and Martin Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund: Radikale Frühaufklärung in Deutschland, 1680–1720* (Hamburg, 2002).

understanding is necessary? In the course of this study, we will meet many an orientalist who began by seeking to defend his or her own faith, and ended by discovering new problems or points of view, many who thought they might be useful to clerical or political authorities, but ended up complicating received wisdom. Again, traditions that began as Christian ones shaped post-Enlightenment practices; but again, too, these were already ambivalent traditions, with unpredictable applications and outcomes.

Of course, the study of the East in the West was shaped by other traditions too, perhaps especially by the study of another of Europe's special peoples, the Greeks. The specialness of the Greeks was not something introduced by J. J. Winckelmann in the eighteenth century; arguments for and against Greek specialness already appear in ancient texts such as in Herodotus, Plotinus, and Iamblichus, and we should recall that the first great philhellenists were the Romans, not the Germans. Interest in the Greeks was again partly theological; the world of the church fathers was one suffused with questions about relations between the Greeks and the Jews – after all, the earliest extant version of the Old Testament – the Septuagint – was in Greek, as were the writings of Saint Paul, and Greek is the language of the New Testament.² But there was considerable interest in the “secular” side of Greek culture as well. Greek art, literature, and philosophy were respected even in medieval times. It was possible to look upon at least some Greeks and Romans as noble pagans, and to acknowledge the cultural achievements of the Byzantine Empire. But the real breakthrough came with Byzantium's fall, and the flooding of western Europe with Greek scholars and eastern manuscripts; and then came the Renaissance, which made it acceptable for learned men and women to devote sustained attention and affection to the works of the classical, pre-Christian world. One of the stories we will be following throughout is the story of paganism's rise to respectability, something that not only helped classical scholarship achieve its dominant status in the nineteenth-century humanities but also made possible an increasingly non-perjorative and historicist study of Asian cultural history. Most disciplinary histories of oriental studies ignore the not just parallel but interconnected history of classical scholarship and thus fail to appreciate how differently specialization and secularization affected fields that were, even in the late eighteenth century, sister-sciences. But to understand orientalism as its nineteenth-century practitioners did, we cannot omit this part of the story.

There are also less fusty and formalized traditions that informed oriental studies from ancient times and which further complicate the claim that orientalism has always been about creating “others.” One of these was Neoplatonism, a Hellenistic school of thought, which looked to eastern wisdom as well as Platonic reason to understand the deepest truths of existence. Alexandrian, Gnostic, or Manichean ideas were, in varying ways, mixed with and often preferred to classical or Christian

² This is not to say, however, that all “Greeks” were understood to belong ethnically or culturally to Europe, Christendom, or the West, all of which are concepts that cannot be applied transhistorically. It was well known, for example, that the Septuagint had been rendered into Greek for the use of Alexandrian Jews, and that large Greek communities could be found throughout the Ottoman Empire. But the Christian attempt to assert the superiority of New Testament ideas over those of the Old Testament did inflect, and after the eighteenth century help to shape, an opposition between Greeks and Jews.

ones. Neoplatonism experienced a Renaissance-era revival in late fifteenth century, thanks in part to the location of Horapollon's *Hieroglyphica*, a late Greek treatise, which purported to explain the allegorical secrets of the hieroglyphs. The text, we now know, contained many misleading attempts at symbolic readings, but it was long regarded, Erik Iversen argues, "with something like a sacred awe." From the fifteenth to the early nineteenth century, scholars depended upon it in their attempts to understand the supposedly mystical language eastern priests had employed in order to reserve special truths for the elite.³ On the heels of this discovery came Marsilio Ficino's translation of the writings of the great Egyptian priest-cum-philosopher Hermes Trismegistus, who was rumored to have possessed knowledge later elaborated by Socrates and even Moses. Ficino's *Pimander* – the first part of what we now know as the *Corpus Hermeticum* – appeared in 1471, making it one of the first printed books in Europe. Esoteric though it was, the *Pimander* would go through sixteen editions before the end of the sixteenth century.⁴

The man who brought together the older Neoplatonism and the newer Egyptizing texts was the Italian humanist Pico della Mirandola. Pico also drew on his knowledge of a third source of mystical wisdom, the Jewish Kabbalah. In his *Conclusions* (1486–7), Pico sought to demonstrate in 900 propositions that the world's major theologies and philosophies – Christian, pagan, Jewish, and Muslim – set forth the same truths. By resolving apparent contradictions and dissimilarities between the faiths, Pico hoped to create a universal system to which all rational men could subscribe.⁵ Thus was born the idea of the *philosophia perennis* and a long tradition of esoteric attempts to reconcile pagan philosophies with Christianity.⁶ Here, we meet a strain of western thought which saw Asian religious and philosophical ideas as compatible with Christianity and which recognized the possibility of extremely ancient oriental ideas as foundational for western ones. It has had a long and formative effect on oriental scholarship, from the Kabbalist Johannes Reuchlin to the romantic poet Friedrich Rückert, and from the Catholic polymath Athanasius Kircher to the theosophical impresario Madame Blavatsky. It is an iconoclastic tradition, one that produced Giordano Bruno, burned at the stake in 1600, and Guillaume Postel, convicted of heresy by the Venetian Inquisition, imprisoned for four years, and then confined as a lunatic in St. Martin's Priory near Paris. And its patrons, from Cosimo di' Medici to the eighteenth-century Masons, were often iconoclasts as well. But as we will see, iconoclasm was by no means unusual among later orientalist even during the staid and sober mid-nineteenth century.

The Hermetic tradition may seem strange and even a bit silly, but the study of Egyptian priestly secrets actually had a very powerful effect on scholarship, for

³ Erik Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition* (Princeton, NJ, 1993; reprint of 1961 edition), pp. 47–9, quotation p. 49.

⁴ Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago, 1979), p. 14.

⁵ Frank Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), p. 40.

⁶ For a magisterial treatment of this intellectual tradition, see Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Philosophia perennis: Historical Outlines of Western Spirituality in Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Thought* (Dordrecht, Netherlands, 2004).

early modern fascination with eastern wisdom helped to broaden the range of cultures to which primeval revelation, of some sort, might have been available.⁷ The newly available texts seemed to explain a passage in Acts (7:22) in which it was said that Moses was “well versed” in “all the wisdom of Egypt.” As Jan Assmann has written, this set in motion a process of identifying biblical and ancient oriental parallels and propelled forward the process of ennobling – or at least treating more respectfully – pagan ideas. In this era, Assmann writes, “. . . the wall of intranslatability collapsed and Egypt began to appear as the origin, rather than the ‘other,’ of Biblical monotheism.”⁸ We will see the collapse of many more of these “walls of intranslatability” over time; for the present, it is sufficient to note that what we now call Egyptology did not begin (or end!) with Champollion but has its proper origins in Pico’s esoteric “science” as well as in his late antique sources.

Hermeticism and Neoplatonism were long-lasting forms in which Westerners paid tribute to eastern wisdom; but there were other images and stereotypes which were equally ancient and enduring. Donald Lach has shown, for example, the image of India as mysterious and monstrous and that of the Brahmins as wise, simple, and pure was already current in Hellenistic Greek literature.⁹ Jesuit characterizations of China were much younger, but just as lasting and that of fanatical Islamic infidels even more so. Images generated by the spice and silk trades were extremely influential and remarkably durable.¹⁰ But, like Wolfgang Schivelbusch, I am not convinced that the images and associations created as a result of this trade were exclusively derogatory ones; Europeans did admire eastern craftsmanship and covet Chinese and Persian luxuries, even if they often polemicized against them. Of course, Europeans treated non-Christians at least in part as “others” – though Montesquieu, for example, meant his *Persian Letters* (1721) to show that they were not all that different, and that France, perhaps, was the less civilized country. In point of fact, Montesquieu surely had more in common with Mughal courtiers than with the peasants of Languedoc – and I believe he knew that, too. “Othering” then is neither new nor is it consistent or internally coherent, and did not create a set of immutable and mutually exclusive European and oriental identities.

This survey of intellectual traditions over the *longue durée* offers a provocative opening, but more important to this study is an understanding of the individuals, institutions, and practices that shaped early modern studies of oriental cultures. The first portion of this chapter tries to offer some insights into individuals and institutional arrangements and to underscore, in this context, the importance of chronological questions for oriental studies. We begin with a brief

⁷ Similarly, early missionaries to China wondered if similarities between Confucian and Christian ideas might point to an *ur*-international revelation, one that perhaps preceded God’s special, historical revelation to the ancient Israelites. See D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY, 1972).

⁸ Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), p. 55.

⁹ Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. II, *A Century of Wonder*, book 2, *The Scholarly Disciplines* (Chicago, IL, 1977), pp. 85–7.

¹⁰ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise: A Social History of Spices, Stimulants and Intoxicants*, trans. David Jacobson (New York, 1992), pp. 3–14.

discussion of *Orientalistik*'s long history of ambivalent relationships with the orthodox churches and with the state. We then investigate the ways in which Enlightenment scholarship transformed older traditions, a critical subject, which is often the end point of early modern studies or the point of departure for modern ones, but too rarely the critical bridge that allows inquirers to traverse the full distance between the Renaissance and the Great War. Also, it was in the course of the eighteenth century that already existing differences in Europe's reception of individual oriental cultures began to generate many of the parameters within which nineteenth-century specialized fields would operate. Thus, one portion of this chapter will be given over to surveying what each of the major "Orients" meant to their western interpreters. The next section treats "the peculiarities of German orientalism"¹¹; here, we return to a discussion of the centrality of Reformation-era Christian humanism in laying the foundations for *Orientalistik* and also underline the importance of Frederician tolerance and the diversity of Germandom's numerous university cultures in enabling the development of more extensive and intensive studies of Near Eastern texts. And finally, we turn to two of the most influential eighteenth-century German readers of God's words, J. D. Michaelis and J. G. Herder, for whom the orientalist's *ur-text*, the Old Testament, was the starting point for a new sort of *Kulturschichte* as well as the enduring foundation for Christian faith.

INDIVIDUALS, INSTITUTIONS, ICONOCLASMS

There never seems to have been a time during which Europeans did *not* want to know about Asian cultures – perhaps, because for so long, European "civilization" remained a backwater, its states comparatively barbaric, small, and poor. Herodotus, it should be recalled, was deeply interested in Persia and Egypt and the first major translation project we know of – the rendering of the Hebrew Bible into Greek by "the seventy" – involved the translation of oriental texts. The church fathers were very knowledgeable about oriental religions (they had to be, if for no other reason than to define the "heresies" around them), and though relations between Christians and Muslims in Spain as well as Central and Southeastern Europe were usually tense, and often much worse, there were also moments of peaceful coexistence and individuals who successfully crossed religious or political borders. As Donald Lach has shown, throughout the Middle Ages, Europeans read reworkings of the Alexander romance and of Indian parables; later, medieval readers delighted in the travelogues of Sir John Mandeville (ca. 1371) and Marco Polo and constructed fabulous stories about India and "Cathay."¹² Pilgrims and Crusaders brought back relics, stories, and manuscripts. But most Europeans' interest in the Orient was superficial or passing, while the individuals we have

¹¹ German historians will recognize this, rightly, as an attempt to engage the debate begun by David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley's seminal book, *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford, 1984).

¹² Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. II, book 2, *The Scholarly Disciplines* (Chicago, IL, 1977), pp. 91–116, 330–1. See also Nina Berman, "Thoughts on Zionism in the Context of German Middle Eastern Relations," pp. 138–9.

to deal with in this book were of a different sort – men and women who learned to read and sometimes speak oriental languages or who made the effort to travel to the East and to study its cultures intensively. Their relationships with other Europeans – patrons, colleagues, readers, and rivals – and with non-Europeans structured the work that they did, as did the intellectual traditions they drew upon and the institutional structures they inhabited. In this section, we sketch some of these pursuits, passions, and patronage relationships, hoping to understand what it meant to devote oneself to oriental studies before the Enlightenment, and what those who made this choice contributed to European cultural history as a whole.

There were, of course, various ways to be an early modern orientalist and various Orients one could study. The most common and culturally acceptable kind of orientalist was the Old Testament scholar, for the simple reason that theology was a steady line of work; one could seek a job as a priest, a pastor, a translator, a missionary, or a professor of theology, for there were as yet no academic jobs for “secular” orientalists. Before the Reformation, there were few theologians with oriental language skills at the universities, for demonstrating the plenitude of God’s word, as had Origen, could be a rather dicey business. The first professors of oriental studies, appointed by the Council of Vienne (1311–12) to propagate Catholicism among the Jews, Muslims, and eastern Christians, were regularly accused of siding with the infidel; before the sixteenth century, students of Arabic and Hebrew were often labeled heretics. The field’s importance began to grow as the Protestant and Catholic Reformations spread, demonstrating to scholars the importance of reading Old Testament Hebrew and convincing the Popes of the need to draw eastern Christians back into the Church Universal. Once the utility of learning oriental languages became clear, Catholic and especially Protestant princes and clerical authorities were willing to countenance the spread of orientalism.

Europe’s fragmented power structures and religious divergences spurred the proliferation of new forms of oriental scholarship. Bible translations and editions, studies of biblical “antiquities” and philologically informed commentaries abounded, their authors intending not to destroy the credibility of the scriptures but to validate and clarify them and to defend particular doctrinal positions. Many church officials began to fear that biblical interpretation was falling into inappropriate hands, and creating new heresies rather than healing schisms; but the rapid spread of the printing press made controlling the marketplace of ideas impossible; already by the 1530s, Frank Manuel argues, so many European presses were able to produce Hebrew characters that the Inquisition could not keep up.¹³ More fonts were introduced as Jesuits, opposed to strict Latinity, began to push for the printing of religious literature in non-European, as well as European, vernacular languages. Printers, some of them specializing in travel literature, vocabularies, or exotic miscellanies, played an essential role in introducing Europeans to a vast number of new languages over the course of the sixteenth century, a process Donald Lach described as the “rebabelization” of the continent.¹⁴

¹³ Manuel, *Broken Staff*, p. 31.

¹⁴ Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. II, *A Century of Wonder*, book 3, *The Scholarly Disciplines* (Chicago, 1977), pp. 525–43.

Of course, there were plenty of scholarly orientalists outside the colleges and courts; learned Jews, importantly, produced many studies Christians read and used, whether or not the latter acknowledged their sources. Among Christians, there were also private scholars, knowledgeable travelers, booksellers and traders, diplomats, and above all missionaries, whose relationships with political and church officials varied widely. It would be a mistake to ignore the missionaries' contributions to scholarship as well as their essential collecting and disseminating roles. They went to places no other Europeans would or could visit and often stayed for a long time. They collected large numbers of manuscripts and sent home detailed reports. To preach the gospel effectively, they often found that they had to learn languages other Europeans did not know, and to help both their parishioners and missionaries who might follow them, they sometimes wrote their own grammars or dictionaries or translated scriptures into native languages. The Lutheran missionary Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg (1682–1719), for example, spent his career in India, where he produced the first Tamil dictionary; in addition to translating Luther's catechism and parts of the Bible into Tamil, Ziegenbalg also moved in the opposite direction, translating Tamil moral texts into German in the belief that these demonstrated that the Indians were once monotheists.¹⁵ Although, for understandable reasons, the collections missionaries sent back often focused on religious matters – or on rituals or philosophies they took to be the nearest equivalents to Christian practices and beliefs – they, like the diplomats, also often had considerable amounts of free time on their hands, which they used, according to their personal druthers, to collect plants or bugs or to worry about irregular verbs or local marriage customs.

What they usually did not have, at least while “in the field,” was access to a good European library, nor did they have, by virtue of their employment, the ability to proclaim their work “disinterested.” In fact, Ziegenbalg's description of Hindu practices, written in 1713, was too “objective” for his era; when the text of his *Mythologie* reached August Hermann Francke in Halle, the redoubtable Pietist refused to publish it, insisting that the point of his mission was to root out paganism, not to spread it in Europe.¹⁶ All of these factors would make it easier for nineteenth-century academic scholars to label missionary work “unscientific.” And yet, missionary reports and collections would continue to serve as the basis for many fields of oriental study right through the nineteenth century, and even long into the twentieth. Thus, to be an early modern orientalist, at least by the early seventeenth century, was to be a person in the middle of debates and with a set of skills – for example, the ability to read ancient oriental languages – that made the person increasingly interesting, though perhaps still rather threatening, to clerical patrons. For even those orientalists most devoted to serving the churches' purposes often ended up in doctrinal difficulty. Jesuit missionaries in

¹⁵ Walter Leifer, *Indien und die Deutschen: 500 Jahre Begegnung und Partnerschaft* (Tübingen, 1969), pp. 50–2.

¹⁶ Ziegenbalg's text finally appeared in 1791, but anonymously, and appeared under his own name, only in 1867. Glasenapp *Das Indienbild deutscher Denker* (Stuttgart, 1960), pp. 167–9; Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford, 1977), p. 59.

China, for example, found traces of monotheism in the Chinese classics, offering ground upon which conversions might be attempted but also awkwardly subverting the singularity of God's revelation to the Jews.¹⁷ Or, one might take the case of the learned French bishop Pierre-Daniel Huet, whose huge *Demonstratio evangelica* (1679) drew on his knowledge of Syriac, Hebrew, and Arabic sources to confirm the historicity of Old Testament passages, which could then be matched up with their New Testament fulfillments. But this attempt to answer Spinoza's challenges to biblical authority, like so many others to follow, led not to the certainty that Huet longed for, but, inevitably, to more disputes about the authenticity and accuracy of his sources.¹⁸ The English scholar John Dee used his Hebrew to converse with angels¹⁹ – nice work, but not exactly a dogmatically defensible use of one's gifts. Thus, orientalism – in the form of biblical criticism, apologetics, and Jesuit reportage – already in the early modern period became an acceptable, and even valued, form of humanistic learning and of propagating the faith, but not one that necessarily offered the practitioner a stable career or an easy conscience.

As for orientalism's relationships to state power before 1750, the situation was rather analogous. As we saw in the theological realm, here too both patrons and practitioners had their ideas about how oriental scholarship could advance their own aims; orientalism was never a "disinterested" science. Sir Thomas Roe was sent to see the Great Mughal in 1615 in the interest of expanding English commercial privileges; Louis XIV agreed to send French Jesuits to China in 1685, not for the sake of either Christian missionizing or pure astronomy, but to improve the quality of French navigational charts. In this case, Louis hoped that the imprimatur of the Académie des Sciences would deflect the opposition of the Portuguese.²⁰ But patrons in the early period did not always know what they wanted, much less what they would get, from funding – as did the Catholic church – Athanasius Kircher's studies of Chinese religions or Sebastião Mantique's stay in Bengal. And sometimes what they got surprised or vexed them. Some scholars worked for and pleased the state; others were thorns in its side. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, who served as emissary of the Holy Roman Emperor in Istanbul from 1554 to 1562, was in general helpful; he did manage to forestall renewed Habsburg–Ottoman warfare after the Turks' victory at Mohács in 1526. But he was successful, partly at least, because he stayed so long and humbly adapted himself to local conditions. His long, newsy letters (in Latin) to a well-placed friend during his stay include a famous, rather admiring account of Suleiman the Magnificent, a man who was, Busbecq recognized, much more in control of Europe's destiny than vice versa.²¹ Nor did politics, by any means, exhaust

¹⁷ Walker, *The Ancient Theology*, pp. 200–3. Ricci's views were discussed in the introduction to the first Latin translation of Confucius (Paris, 1687). See also David E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Wiesbaden, 1985).

¹⁸ April Shelford, "Thinking Geometrically in Pierre-Daniel Huet's *Demonstratio evangelica*," in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63, no. 4 (2002): 615–16.

¹⁹ Deborah Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy and the End of Nature* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 165.

²⁰ Mungello, *Curious Land*, pp. 32, 36–7.

²¹ These letters appeared in print already in 1589. See the new edition, *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Oxford, 1927; reprint Baton Rouge, LA, 2005).

Busbecq's interest in and contribution to the study of things eastern. The slow-moving pace of early modern diplomacy also afforded him plenty of time to attend to his collections, and he is credited with having brought to Europe some 240 classical manuscripts, a large number of coins, and sundry exotic animals, as well as the lilac, and possibly even the most highly prized oriental commodity of the seventeenth century, the tulip.²² The Habsburgs did not particularly want any of these things – but they got them, and their circulation in Europe changed thought patterns in ways that went far beyond the satisfaction of Austria's political or economic interests.

If orientalism was never “disinterested,” it was also a science that used from the beginning whatever resources it could muster in order to achieve its ends. Over the course of many centuries, scholars, confronting unfamiliar cultures, employed essentially the same tactics: utilize people over whom one has power or influence to help force open recondite textual secrets. Just as Saint Jerome depended upon learned Jews to help him create the Vulgate, Ramón Lull, in the thirteenth century, purchased his own Arabic Moorish translator in the form of a slave. In medieval Toledo, scholars wishing to read Arabic texts often needed two intermediaries: educated Jews, who had Spanish and Arabic but probably no Latin, to render the text into old Spanish, and Spanish priests who could make crude Latin drafts; the more widely educated scholar would then be responsible for making an elegant Latin translation.²³ Similarly, Pico, Johannes Reuchlin, Johann Buxtorf, Isaac Causabon, and many others learned their Hebrew from Jews or Jewish converts; the Jesuits learned their Chinese and their Chinese geography from local mandarins, on whose sufferance they depended. Of course, the Chinese were also extracting information from the Jesuits. Another means to obtain knowledge of “others” was kidnapping, from which Columbus and his men did not shrink – but the Ottomans did it too, on a regular basis. Modified forms of kidnapping – such as the importing of Africans for exhibition and study or the hiring of indigenous language teachers at pitifully low salaries – were practiced by ethnographers and linguists right through the nineteenth century. As suggested by the Ottoman and Chinese examples above, we should recall that nonwesterners have also, from time to time, adopted similar tactics, employing Europeans as teachers, doctors, engineers, catalogers, map-makers, and military advisors, often without much acknowledgment of their contributions or commensurate compensation. And there have been cases in both places, especially in recent times, of something more like reciprocal learning. When we conclude this book with Richard Wilhelm, taught by Confucian scholars and devoted to his Chinese students, we begin to glimpse the foundations being laid for the new forms of exchange that have flowered since the 1970s.

If it is a mistake to overestimate or ignore early modern orientalism's interests, patronage structures, and entanglements in power relations, it is also a mistake – propagated by nineteenth-century self-promoters – to see early modern orientalism

²² Karl A. Roider, “Foreward,” in *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, pp. xii–xiii.

²³ A. Bausani, “Notes on the History of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Italy during the Middle Ages,” in *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* 3 (1955): 176.