

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mapping *tianxia* and mapping the world: Cosmopolitan ideas in geographic sources of fifteenth- to eighteenth-century China

Elke Papelitzky 

Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (IKOS), University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

Email: elke.papelitzky@ikos.uio.no

(Received 6 March 2023; revised 1 September 2023; accepted 5 September 2023)

Abstract

The concept of *tianxia* (All-under-Heaven) has been described as a Chinese version of cosmopolitanism. However, *tianxia* is a hard-to-define term, with political, cultural, and geographic meanings. From the fifteenth century onwards, maps exist that claim to show *tianxia*, therefore allowing us to reconstruct how Chinese mapmakers understood *tianxia*'s geographic extent. Other terms in the titles of maps that show space beyond the borders of the Ming and Qing states include *huayi* (civilized and barbarian/Chinese and non-Chinese), *wanguo* (10,000 countries), and *sihai* (four seas). This article examines the geographic extent of these terms and changes in their usage between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. It argues that Ming Chinese mapmakers and scholars presented *tianxia* as equivalent to the Ming empire and used terms such as *huayi* and *wanguo* to advertise the maps as showing regions far away, like western Asia and the Americas. Jesuits in China, on the other hand, applied a broader meaning of *tianxia*, equating it with the whole globe. During the Qing, the extent of *tianxia* expanded to represent a cosmopolitan empire connected to a range of surrounding states, embedded in a wider world.

Keywords: *Tianxia*; history of mapmaking; cosmopolitanism; Ming and Qing history; world views

Introduction

World maps allow their readers to take in the whole world at one glance. By finding one's hometown or country on a map, readers can imagine themselves as part of a greater whole, to become a cosmopolite—a world citizen. At the same time, when designing these maps, their makers have to make choices about what to include and what to exclude, thus constructing a 'world'.¹ The concept of the 'world' changes over space and time. In early modern China, the voyages of Zheng He 鄭和 (1371–1433) brought established trade routes in the Indian Ocean even more closely into the

¹They become 'worldmakers', a topic explored in Ayesha Ramachandran, *The worldmakers: Global imagining in early modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

geographic imagination of the scholarly elite. From the late sixteenth century, Jesuits entered these discussions on world geography, and the Manila galleon trade across the Pacific between the late sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries brought the worlds of China and the Americas closer together. As a result, the period between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries saw the creation of many artefacts that engage with world geography and ideas of cosmopolitanism, continuing mapping practices that were particularly influential during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when the vast Mongol empire ruled much of Eurasia.² Maps therefore can help us to understand one aspect of the cosmopolitan pasts of China, the topic of this special issue. In this article, I will follow Gerard Delanty's proposal to examine cosmopolitanism, avoiding Eurocentric definitions and uncovering Chinese understandings of cosmopolitanism through the lens of mapmakers.³

One concept that can be understood as a Chinese idea of cosmopolitanism is that of *tianxia* 天下, usually translated as 'All-under-Heaven'.⁴ Defining *tianxia* is not easy: it can be interpreted as a political construct, a world view, a cultural and philosophical set of values, and a geographical concept.⁵ The meaning of *tianxia* did not remain the same throughout history, further complicating our understanding of the term.⁶ Even in strictly geographical terms, *tianxia* is ambiguous: does it describe the part of the world directly under the control of the currently ruling 'Chinese' state(s) or the whole world, including where no 'Chinese' state exerts control? How were regions the Chinese states had diplomatic ties with distinguished from those they did not?

At least for the geographical aspect of the question—where is *tianxia*?—maps can provide an answer. Previous research has identified a set of maps collectively called *tianxia* maps based on their geographic scope.⁷ These maps show the Ming and Qing

²On the exchange of geographic knowledge in the Mongol period, see Hyunhee Park, *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic worlds: Cross-cultural exchange in pre-modern Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Miya Noriko 宮紀子, *Mongoru teikoku ga unda sōkaizu: Chizu ha kataru モンゴル帝国が生んだ世界図: 地図は語る* (Tokyo: Nihon keizai shinbun shuppansha, 2007).

³Gerard Delanty, 'Not all is lost in translation: World varieties of cosmopolitanism', *Cultural Sociology*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2014, pp. 374–391.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 383.

⁵For studies exploring these various meanings of *tianxia*, see, for example, Mark Edward Lewis and Mei-yu Hsieh, 'Tianxia and the invention of empire in East Asia', in *Chinese visions of world order: Tianxia, culture, and world politics*, (ed.) Ban Wang (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), pp. 25–48; Marc Andre Matten, *Imagining a postnational world: Hegemony and space in modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Elena Barabantseva, 'Change vs. order: Shijie meets tianxia in China's interactions with the world', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2009, pp. 129–155.

⁶Ge Zhaoguang, for example, argues that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the China-centric world view of *tianxia* gave rise to that of *wanguo* 萬國 (10,000 countries): 'an imaginary "all under Heaven"' that was replaced by 'the realistic sense of "ten thousand kingdoms"'. See Ge Zhaoguang, *Here in 'China' I dwell: Reconstructing historical discourses of China for our time* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), p. 76. Scholars working on the nineteenth century, on the other hand, equate the concept of *tianxia* with that of *wanguo* and contrast it to a new world order emerging in the late nineteenth century. See, for example, Matten, *Imagining a postnational world*, p. 46.

⁷Guan Yanbo 管彦波, 'Mingdai de yutu shijie: "Tianxia tixi" yu "huayi zhiyu" de chengzhuang jianbian' 明代的輿圖世界: "天下体系"与"华夷秩序"的承转渐变, *Minzu yanjiu* 民族研究, no. 6, 2014, pp. 101–110; Zhang Qiong, *Making the new world their own: Chinese encounters with Jesuit science in the Age of Discovery* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 142–147; Richard J. Smith, *Mapping China and managing the world: Culture, cartography and cosmology in late imperial times* (London: Routledge, 2013), esp. pp. 70–75.

empire at the centre, surrounded by several other countries. They have been considered 'world maps', representing an earlier Chinese world view and have been understood as representing a phase of Chinese mapmaking that was slowly replaced by 'modern' mapping practices and a wider knowledge of the world.⁸ This line of research creates two issues that hinder us from fully considering the spatial extent of *tianxia*. By equating the concept of *tianxia* with 'world' and declaring these maps 'world maps' without considering when they were made and without conducting a detailed analysis of the space shown on the maps, we are led to assume a lack of knowledge on the part of the Chinese mapmakers. The geographic scope of what constitutes the 'world' expanded over time through exploration, newly formed trade connections, and exchange. Nevertheless, what we can observe on many of the maps that have been called *tianxia* maps is that, despite the trading links of the Ming and Qing across the Pacific, the Americas are usually absent. Can we therefore really call this set of maps 'world maps' when they were made at a time when these trade connections existed? Secondly, although previous research has grouped these maps together based on a similar concept of space, not all claim to be maps of *tianxia*. Yet, from the fifteenth century onwards, maps exist that use the term *tianxia* in the titles. When considering maps with the term *tianxia* in the titles, we end up with a set of maps substantially different from those discussed in the previous literature. Looking in detail at the titles of the maps and the extent of the space they claim to show, can reveal where the mapmakers thought *tianxia* to be.

The title is an important element of a book or a map. It shows the reader what they can expect by advertising the contents.⁹ Titles are sometimes hard to determine with certainty, as Gérard Genette points out, yet they are a fundamental element of a book.¹⁰ In the case of Chinese books, difficulties arise in identifying the title when different titles are used in various places within a book (such as cover pages or the statements at the beginning of a *juan*) to refer to it.¹¹ Maps as well do not always have one single, easy-to-identify title. Considering elements of their titles can help uncover the relationship between maps or lead to a better understanding of the contents and, in the case of Chinese maps, how the mapmakers positioned China in the world.¹² The term

⁸Zhang Qiong called these maps 'Chinese world maps of the Tianxia (All under Heaven) genre': Zhang, *Making the new world their own*, p. 142. Richard Smith uses 'world' or 'world maps' in quotation marks to describe these maps: Smith, *Mapping China and managing the world*, pp. 69, 70, 85. I, as well, have written that they 'should be considered as a kind of world map': Elke Papelitzky, 'Sand, water, and stars: Chinese mapping of the Gobi and Taklamakan deserts', *T'oung Pao*, vol. 107, no. 3–4, 2021, pp. 376–416, here p. 382. On the knowledge of these maps being replaced by 'modern' mapping practices, see, for example, Laura Pflug, 'From "all under heaven" to "China in the world": Chinese visual imaginations from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', in *Mapping Asia: Cartographic encounters between East and West*, (eds) Martijn Storms et al. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), pp. 247–263.

⁹Christian Jacob, *The sovereign map: Theoretical approaches in cartography throughout history* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 192–201.

¹⁰Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation*, (trans.) Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 55.

¹¹Elke Papelitzky, *Writing world history in Late Ming China and the perception of maritime Asia* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2020), pp. 49–53.

¹²See, for example, the studies of Timothy Brook and Nicolas Standaert: Timothy Brook, *Completing the map of the world. Cartographic interaction between China and Europe* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 2020), p. 18; Nicolas Standaert, 'The making of "China" out of "Da Ming"', *Journal of Asian History*,

tianxia closely relates to other terms that situate China in the wider world which appear in the titles of maps: *huayi* 華夷 (civilized and barbarian/Chinese and non-Chinese), *siyi* 四夷 (four barbarians), *wanguo* 萬國 (10,000 countries), and *sihai* 四海 (four seas). Like *tianxia*, each of these terms was continuously being redefined and reinterpreted.

For this article, I have collected 70 maps from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries that either show the Americas (comprising just over a third of the 70 maps) or that have one of the terms *tianxia*, *wanguo*, *huayi*, or *siyi* in its title. Except for maps with *huayi* in the title, no map meets these criteria prior to the fifteenth century, and nearly all 70 maps date to the second half of the sixteenth century or later. The majority are maps published in books, most of them geographical works by commercial publishers that were aimed at a wide readership. Due to the publishing practices during the Ming and Qing, these 70 maps are not all completely different images; they often look very similar with only minor differences, sometimes including a change in title. By discussing *tianxia* and other related concepts used in this set of maps, this article aims to shed light on the geography of *tianxia*, what mapping the world in fifteenth- to eighteenth-century China entailed, and the extent to which these maps expressed cosmopolitanism.

A map of the Ming empire or a map of *tianxia*?

Early to mid-Ming geographical works equated the extent of *tianxia* with that of the Ming state. In 1461, the Ming state published a gazetteer—*Da Ming yitong zhi* 大明一統志 (Gazetteer of the unified great Ming)—describing the geography of the whole empire. At the beginning of the book there is a general map of the Ming state and a map for each of its provinces. At the top of the general map is the title ‘*Da Ming yitong zhi tu*’ 大明一統之圖 (Map of the unified great Ming; Figure 2), but the preface to the gazetteer describes the first map in the volume as a ‘*Tianxia zongtu*’ 天下總圖 (Complete map of *tianxia*).¹³ The preface also outlines the division of *tianxia* into circuits and provinces over the course of history, portraying *tianxia* as the region the ‘Chinese’ state had control over. Due to the popularity of the gazetteer, other scholars replicated this map in their own privately or commercially published works. Most of them keep the title of the map as ‘*Da Ming yitong zhi tu*’, but a 1541 commercial guidebook to the geography of the Ming changed it to ‘*Da Ming yitong tianxia zhi tu*’ 大明一統天下之圖 (Map of the unified great Ming of *tianxia*), which makes it the earliest extant map I am aware of with *tianxia* in its title.¹⁴ Aside from labelling the provinces

vol. 50, no. 2, 2016, pp. 307–328. Brook studied the term *quantu* 全圖 (a complete map) and argued that these maps claimed comprehensiveness of depicted space. He attributes the term to Jesuits, arguing that the term only appears after 1600. However, at least one earlier map, the general map of China in the *Chouhai tubian* 籌海圖編 (1562), bears the title *quantu*. A digital version of the 1562 print is available from the National Archives of Japan, Tokyo, Japan: <https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/img/4213017>, [accessed 28 September 2023]; map on pp. 15–16. Nevertheless, the term started to vastly gain popularity after 1600.

¹³Li Xian 李賢 and Peng Shi 彭時, *Da Ming yitong zhi* 大明一統志, 1461, http://shanben.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/main_p.php?nu=B2443000&order=rn_no&no=00378, [accessed 28 September 2023], *Da Ming yitong zhi tu xu* 2b.

¹⁴*Da Ming yitong wenwu zhushi yamen guan zhi* 大明一統文武功司衙門官制, 1541, <http://rbook.ncl.edu.tw/NCLSearch/Search/SearchDetail?item=7a1c6dbbe7ea4510b533e3f2de441269fdg2NTcyMg2&SourceID=>, [accessed 28 September 2023], map on pp. 9 and 10 of the scan. On this work, and the usage



Figure 1. 'Tianxia zongtu' in *Huiji yutu beikao quanshu* (1633). This map shows the geography of the Ming. Height of paper circa 26 cm. Source: National Archives of Japan, Tokyo, Japan.

of the Ming state, both maps name a few non-Chinese places and peoples such as Japan, Korea, Ryukyu, the Western Region, the northern 'barbarians', and the Jurchen.¹⁵ These places and peoples are described in the last two chapters of the gazetteer under the heading 'Outer barbarians' (*waiyi* 外夷), a common way of labelling chapters in the non-Chinese world in Ming geographical texts. However, the places on the map were not all the non-Chinese countries and peoples the state gazetteer mentions in its last two chapters, they were simply countries and regions directly bordering the Ming state, making this not a world map but a map of the Ming and its direct neighbours.

In the mid-seventeenth century, both before and after the Qing takeover of Beijing in 1644, more books started to feature maps with *tianxia* in the title. In the *Huiji yutu beikao quanshu* 彙輯輿圖備考全書 (Complete reference book of collected maps, 1633), as well as in a Qing edition of the *Guangyu ji* 廣輿記 (Record of extended lands), the

of the maps of the *Da Ming yitong zhi* more generally during the Ming, see Mario Cams, 'The confusions of space: Reading Ming China's comprehensive geographies', *Monumenta Serica*, no. 69, 2021, pp. 515–547.

¹⁵The *Da Ming yitong zhi* visually distinguishes the names of the Chinese provinces and the names of the bordering regions by placing black boxes around the place names of the provinces but not around the non-Chinese regions.



Figure 2. 'Da Ming yitong zhi tu' in a late Ming edition of the *Da Ming yitong zhi* published by Wanshoutang 萬壽堂. Height of paper circa 25 cm. Digitally assembled. Source: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 4 L.sin. D 70- I, Munich, Germany.

general maps of China are titled 'Tianxia zongtu' (Figure 1).¹⁶ Similarly, the 1645 *Ditu zongyao* 地圖綜要 (Complete essential maps) includes a map titled 'Tianxia yudi fenli zongtu' 天下輿地分里總圖 (Complete map of *tianxia* and the lands divided by *li*).¹⁷ The layout of these maps resembles that of the general map of China found in other geographical works, usually titled 'Yudi zongtu' 輿地總圖 (Complete map of the lands) (or similar), without invoking *tianxia*.¹⁸ A similar process of changing the title of a map from one of the Ming empire to one of *tianxia* can be seen in an edition of the general

¹⁶Pan Guangzu 潘光祖, Li Yunxiang 李雲翔 and Fu Changchen 傅昌辰, *Huiji yutu beikao quan-shu* 彙輯輿圖備考全書, 1633, <https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/img/4752499>, [accessed 28 September 2023], 1.3b–4a. An undated print of the *Guangyu ji* with the 'Tianxia zongtu' map is held by the Bavarian State Library, Munich, Germany (urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00078014-6). Other extant editions of this work call the map 'Guangyu zongtu' 廣輿總圖 or 'Zongdi yutu' 總地輿圖.

¹⁷Zhu Guoda 朱國達 and Zhu Shaoben 朱紹本, *Ditu zongyao* 地圖綜要, 1645, <https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/img/4752519>, [accessed 28 September 2023], *zongjuan*, 12b–13a.

¹⁸See, for example, Luo Hongxian's atlas, *Guang yutu* 廣輿圖 (Extended territorial maps, first printed 1556 or 1557).



Figure 3. 'Tianxia yitong zhi tu' in *Tianxia yitong zhi* published by the Wanshoutang. This print is from a later print run of *Da Ming yitong zhi*, where the characters for 'Da Ming' were replaced by 'Tianxia' by altering the printing blocks. Height of paper circa 25 cm. Digitally assembled. Source: Waseda University Library, Tokyo, Japan.

gazetteer of the Ming, which exists in two versions: the first is titled *Da Ming yitong zhi* and keeps the title of the map 'Da Ming yitong zhi tu'. Sometime after 1644, the same printing blocks were used to make a new print run. The blocks, however, needed to be altered: the characters 'Da Ming' were carved away and were replaced by 'Tianxia'. The title of the book became *Tianxia yitong zhi* and of the map 'Tianxia yitong zhi tu' (compare Figures 2 and 3). The Ming existed no more, but the term *tianxia* proved to be a fitting replacement.

That general maps of China started to be titled maps of *tianxia* more frequently around the time of the transition from Ming to Qing is no coincidence. The *Ditu zongyao* includes a preface dated to the spring of 1645 by a scholar from Jiangxi, a region that was at the time still in the hands of the Southern Ming. This preface explains that *tianxia* (and not the Ming state) was 'in chaos'.¹⁹ The Manchu conquest had implications that went beyond a simple matter of territoriality, pushing scholars and publishers in the early Qing to highlight that the Ming was *tianxia*, an idea that already existed.

¹⁹Zhu Guoda and Zhu Shaoben, *Ditu zongyao*, xu, 1b.

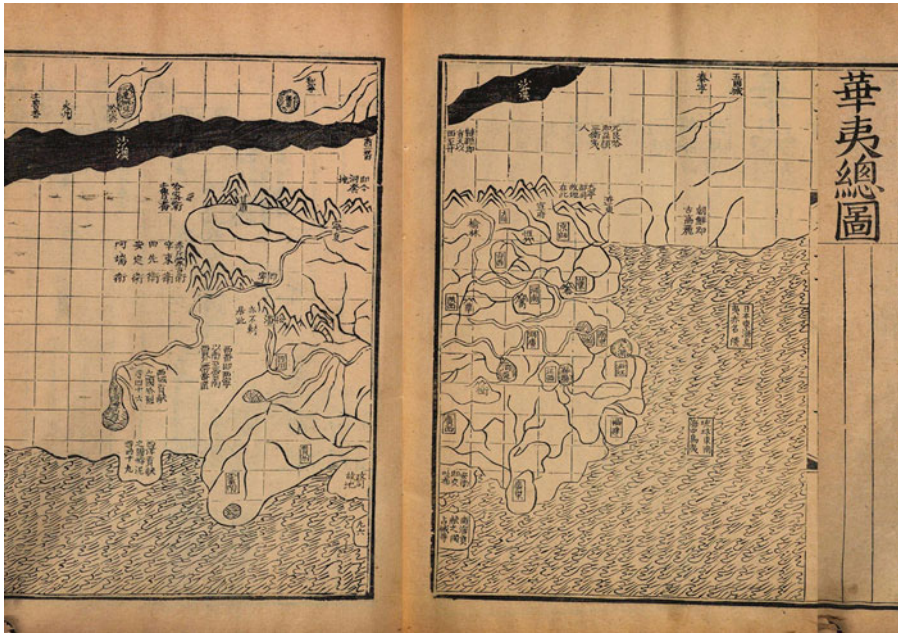


Figure 4. ‘Huayi zongtu’ in the 1799 edition of the *Guang yutu*, which closely models the 1579 edition. This map shows the geography of the Ming and summarizes several non-Chinese countries and regions surrounding China. The title of the map is on the previous page. Height of paper circa 35.5 cm. Digitally assembled. Source: Nationalbibliothek Wien, Vienna, Austria.

Throughout the Ming and the first decades of the Qing, the extent of *tianxia* was equivalent to the extent of the Ming empire.

To emphasize that their maps showed regions further away, Ming mapmakers used other terms. One concept that was popular before the transition to the Qing was that of *huayi*: the ‘civilized’ contrasted with the ‘barbarian’, a term which appears in the titles of maps as early as the twelfth century.²⁰ The 1579 edition and the 1799 reissue of the popular atlas *Guang yutu* 廣輿圖 (Extended territorial maps) include a map titled ‘Huayi zongtu’ 華夷總圖 (Complete map of the civilized and the barbarian; Figure 4), showing China at the centre.²¹ With a few exceptions, such as Japan,

²⁰Hilde De Weerd, ‘Maps and memory: Readings of cartography in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Song China’, *Imago Mundi*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2009, pp. 145–167.

²¹Luo Hongxian, *Guang yutu*, 1799, <http://data.onb.ac.at/rep/10389353>, [accessed 28 September 2023], 2.102b–103a. Actual prints of the 1579 edition of the *Guang yutu* are rare. Unno was aware only of prints at Tenri University Library in Nara (incomplete) and the Maeda Iktokukai 前田育徳会 in Tokyo. I examined both prints in May 2024. See Unno Kazutaka 海野一隆, *Chizu bunkashijō no Kōyozu* 地図文化史上の廣輿圖 (Tokyo: Tōyō bunko, 2010), p. 50. According to Unno, the 1799 edition is modelled closely after the 1579 one with some additional annotations and some censorship of material on the Jurchen: Unno, *Chizu bunkashijō no Kōyozu*, p. 53. As many 1799 reprints do not include the information that they are the reprint, library catalogues often mistakenly catalogue the 1799 edition as the 1579 one. The first two editions of the *Guang yutu* (1556/1557 and 1558) do not include this map, and the 1566 edition calls it ‘Siyi zongtu’ 四夷總圖 (Complete map of all barbarians).

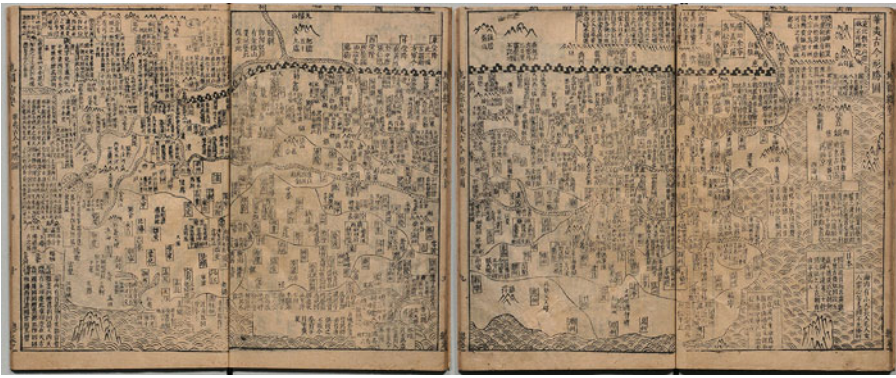


Figure 5. 'Huayi gujin xingsheng tu' in *Ditu zongyao* (1644). This map shows China at the centre surrounded by annotations of non-Chinese countries and regions. Height of paper *circa* 26 cm. Source: National Archives of Japan, Tokyo, Japan.

Korea, and the Mongols, non-Chinese regions and peoples are not named individually but grouped together. The map states, for example: 'The tribute bringing countries in the Western Ocean like Boni [Brunei] etc., 49 [in total]' 西洋貢獻之國崙泥等四十九. Although at first glance, the geographic space on 'Huayi zongtu' and 'Da Ming yitong zhi tu' looks the same, in grouping and naming all the non-Chinese countries, the geographic extent of the 1579/1799 map broadened. The map provides a visual index of *all* non-Chinese people mentioned on the pages that follow the map. The title here clearly advertises the contents and showcases that this map shows more than the Ming empire. The 'Huayi gujin xingsheng (zhi) tu' 華夷古今形勝(之)圖 (Map of advantageous terrains of the civilized and the barbarian then and now) in Zhang Huang's 章潢 (1527–1608) encyclopedia *Tushu bian* 圖書編 (Compendium of illustrations and writings, 1613) and in a nearly identical configuration in the *Ditu zongyao* extends the geographic boundaries even further (Figure 5).²² Although it still groups countries together, it names more and further away places, including India, Arabia, and Java, and provides brief descriptions of several of these places. These *huayi* maps present a view of the extent of the world popular in Ming writings, focusing on countries that had official relations with the Ming state.²³

Huayi in combination with *sihai*, the four seas, also appears as the main descriptive terms on a Buddhist world map. Titled 'Sihai huayi zongtu' 四海華夷總圖 (Complete map of the four seas and the civilized and the barbarian; Figure 6), it shows India at the centre on the same landmass as China, surrounded by several islands.²⁴ A note in the corner of the sheet explains that the map depicts the continent of Jambudvīpa (Nanzhanbuzhou 南瞻部州), which is in the middle of the four seas (*sihai*). India takes up most of the space, with China only a small section of the continent, making this an

²² Zhu Guoda and Zhu Shaoben, *Ditu zongyao, zongjuan*, 8b–10a. See also Zhang Huang 章潢, *Tushu bian* 圖書編, 1613, <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:28553803>, [accessed 28 September 2023], 34.3a–4b.

²³ This essentially means excluding the Portuguese and Dutch, as many texts in the late Ming did. See Papelitzky, *Writing world history*, pp. 153–155.

²⁴ Zhang Huang, *Tushu bian*, 29.39b–40a.

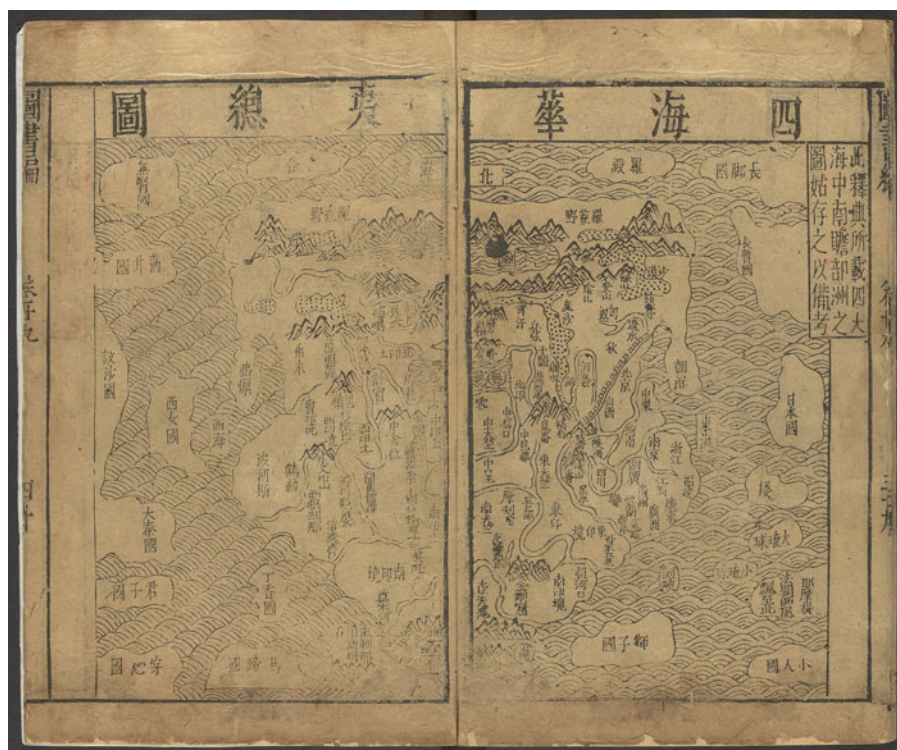


Figure 6. 'Sihai huayi zongtu' in *Tushu bian* (1613). A Buddhist world map depicting the continent of Jambudvīpa with India at its centre and China at the margin, surrounded by islands of other countries. Height of paper circa 27 cm. Source: Harvard-Yenching Library, Cambridge, MA, United States of America.

unconventional map of the depiction of *huayi*, as the *hua* is decentred. The 'Sihai huayi zongtu' is not the only nor the earliest Buddhist map with a similar configuration of the continents, but the title is unusual and brings the Buddhist world view closer to a China-centred one, even though the mapmaker did not follow through graphically, thus somewhat disconnecting the title from the contents.²⁵ All these *huayi* maps focus essentially on showing China in association with other places in Asia that had direct contact with the Ming state through political or religious connections.

Mapping lands far away

At the same time that these *tianxia* and *huayi* maps were made, Ming mapmakers created comprehensive maps that depicted places further away. During the early Ming, maps that show Africa and Europe incorporated knowledge gained during the Mongol Yuan empire.²⁶ European maritime expansion in the sixteenth century took

²⁵Alexander Akin, *East Asian cartographic print culture: The Late Ming publishing boom and its trans-regional connections* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), pp. 123–133.

²⁶On the influence of the Mongol empire on world maps, see Miya, *Mongoru teikoku ga unda sekaizu*. The First Historical Archive in Beijing, China, holds a manuscript map titled *Da Ming hunyi tu* 大明混一圖 (Unified map of the Great Ming) that might be one of these early Ming examples.

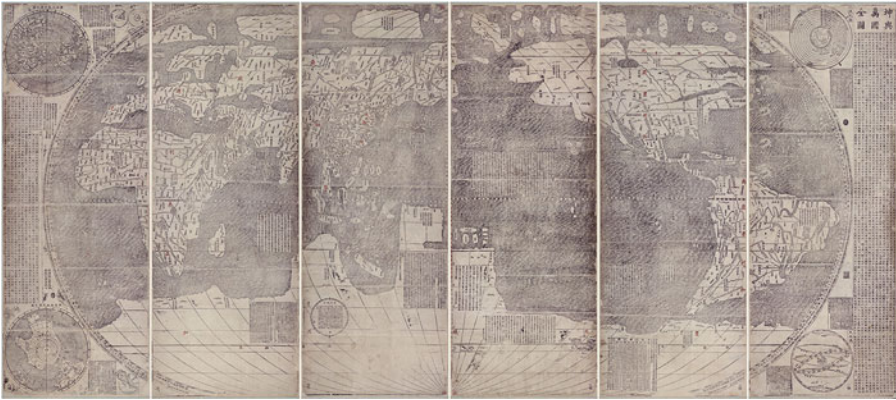


Figure 7. *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, Beijing, 1602, circa 161 × 371 cm. Source: Miyagi Prefectural Library, Sendai, Japan.

the geographical understanding of the world beyond the regions that had hitherto been mapped. China connected to trade networks that spanned the entire globe, west via the Indian Ocean and east over the Pacific via Manila. With these expanding global networks, the number of countries and peoples to be mapped and written about grew as well. From the late sixteenth century onwards, Chinese scholars took part in creating maps that show not only a Sinocentric Asia, but also Europe, Africa, and the Americas together. With this expanded view, new terms appeared in the titles of world maps, most notably *wanguo*, *kunyu* 坤輿 (earth), and *diqu* 地球 (globe).

Like *huayi*, *wanguo* refers to the countries and people shown on the map. Literally, it means 10,000 countries, but stands for ‘all’ countries, and had already been used in Chinese writings for centuries, before appearing in the title of maps. The most prominent example of such a map is the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* 坤輿萬國全圖 (Complete map of all countries on earth) by Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), Li Zhizao 李之藻 (1565–1630), and others, printed in Beijing in 1602. It is a world map that combines Renaissance and Chinese knowledge of world geography and shows Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the imaginary southern continent Magellanica (Figure 7). Likewise, the ‘Wanguo quantu’ 萬國全圖 (Complete map of all countries), published in Giulio Aleni (1582–1649) and Yang Tingyun’s 楊廷筠 (1557–1627) *Zhifang waiji* 職方外紀 (Record of everything beyond the administration, 1623), shows the same configuration of landmasses as the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* and uses the term *wanguo* to highlight the wide-reaching extent of the space shown on the map (Figure 8). On the 1602 map, however, *wanguo* is not the only term to advertise the far-reaching extent of space, but it is combined with the term *kunyu*.

Kunyu refers to the whole globe and appears not only on the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* but also consistently on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century world maps made with the involvement of Jesuits, three of which bear the title *Kunyu quantu* 坤輿全圖 (Complete map of the earth).²⁷ The term *kunyu* needs some further explanation. *Kun* is

²⁷These *Kunyu quantu* include: with the involvement of Francesco Sambiasi (1582–1649, map circa 1639), Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688, map 1674), and Michel Benoist (1715–1775, map 1760).

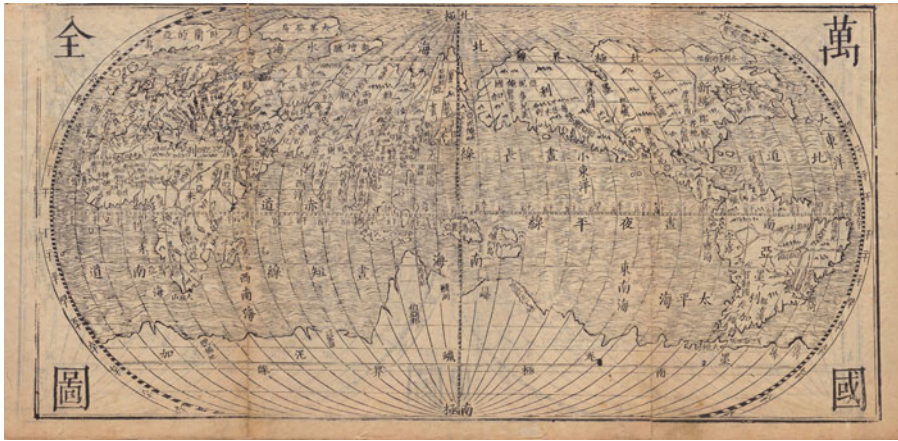


Figure 8. 'Wanguo quantu' in *Zhifang waiji* (1623). Height of paper circa 25.5 cm. Digitally assembled. Source: National Archives of Japan, Tokyo, Japan.

one of the eight trigrams and represents earth. Jesuits used *kun* in combination with the first trigram *qian* 乾 (representing heaven), as in *qiankun* 乾坤, to translate the Catholic vision of 'universe'. Like *kun*, *yu* 輿 means 'earth', especially in connection with the character *di* 地, either as *diyu* 地輿 or *yudi* 輿地. By combining *kun* and *yu*, the term signifies earth as opposed to the heaven, encompassing *all* of planet Earth. This is not a new combination, as the term *kunyu* has been used at least since the seventh century,²⁸ but only in the seventeenth century does it appear in titles of maps. The title *Kunyu wanguo quantu* is possibly closely modelled after that of Abraham Ortelius's (1527–1598) world map 'Typus orbis terrarum' (Image of the lands of the globe) in his atlas *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (Display of the lands of the globe; first edition 1570), copies of which Ricci had with him in China, and which served as one of the sources for the *Kunyu wanguo quantu*.²⁹

Direct comparison between the 'Wanguo quantu' (Figure 8) and the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* (Figure 7) reveals a further dimension of the term *kunyu*. The margins of the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* are filled with information about the earth's sphericity and the heavenly bodies. This cosmological dimension is missing from the 'Wanguo quantu' but we can find it in the three *Kunyu quantu*. The term *kunyu* advertised the contents of the maps as something more extensive, going beyond the simple geography of the earth. *Diqiu* fulfilled a similar function. This term, literally referring to the terrestrial globe, or its slight variation *dadi yuankiu* 大地圓球 (spherical earth) appears in the

²⁸Kong Yingda's 孔穎達 (574–648) commentary to the *Yijing* 易經 explains that *kunyu* stands for the earth. Luo Zhufeng 羅竹風 (ed.), *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu, 1986–1994), s.v. *kunyu* 坤輿.

²⁹Huang Shijian 黃時鑒 and Gong Yingyan 龔纓晏, *Li Madou shijie ditu yanjiu* 利瑪竇世界地圖研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2004), p. 69. On the terms *kunyu* and *qiankun* in titles of maps, see Mario Cams, 'Circling the square: Encompassing global geography on large commercial maps', in *Remapping the world in East Asia: Toward a global history of the 'Ricci Maps'*, (eds) Mario Cams and Elke Pappelitzky (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, forthcoming).

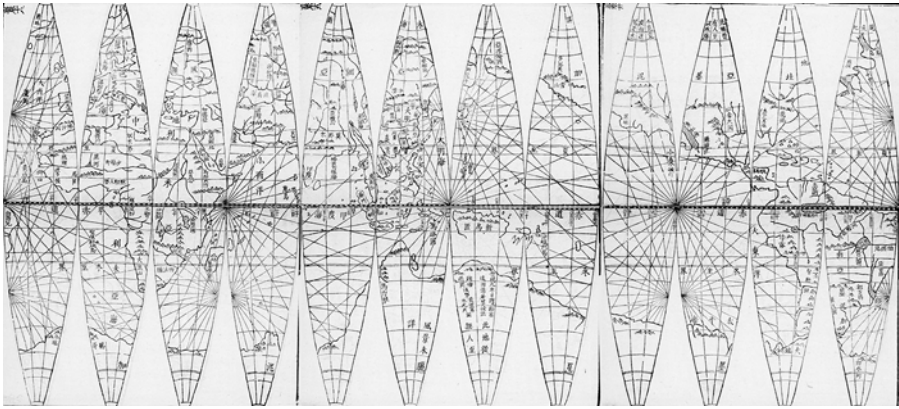


Figure 9. 'Diqu shi'er changyuan xing tu' 地球十二長圓形圖 (Map of the terrestrial globe in twelve oval pieces) in *Huntian yishuo* 渾天儀說. Gores of a terrestrial globe. The gores span over three folios, digitally assembled. Source: Gallica/Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France.

title of a few seventeenth- and eighteenth-century maps and prints of globe gores such as the 1636 globe by Adam Schall von Bell (1591–1666), Huang Hongxian 黃宏憲, and Zhu Guangda 朱光大 (Figure 9).³⁰ These artefacts all embed the image of earth with astronomical information, thus also providing a cosmological dimension.³¹

In the decades that followed the publication of the *Kunyu wanguo quantu*, *wanguo* and *kunyu* appeared on maps made without any direct involvement of the Jesuits.³² However, the mapmakers did not necessarily keep the cosmological implications of the term *kunyu*³³ nor did they follow the configuration of continents as on the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* and 'Wanguo quantu'. An otherwise unknown teacher by the name of Liang Zhou 梁輅 made a map titled *Qiankun wanguo quantu gujin renwu shiji* 乾坤萬國全圖古今人物事跡 (Complete map of all countries of heaven and earth, with famous persons and important events then and now, 1603?) which, like the earlier

³⁰ Adam Schall von Bell, Giacomo Rho and Li Tianjing 李天經, *Huntian yishuo* 渾天儀說, 1636, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9002837q>, [accessed 4 October 2023], 5.18a–20b.

³¹ Other examples include: You Yi 游藝, *Tianjing huowen qianji* 天經或問前集, 1675, 1.20b–21a, world map: 'Dadi yuanqiu zhuguo quantu' 大地圓球諸國全圖 (Complete map of the various countries on the round sphere of the big earth); Jie Xuan 揭喧, *Xuanji yishu* 璇璣遺述, 1765, in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), mo. 8a–9a, globe: 'Dadi hunlun wuzhou yuanqiu quantu' 大地渾輪五州圓球全圖 (Complete map of the big earth, everything, and the five continents in its round spherical shape); abbreviated to 'Diqu tu' 地球圖 (Map of the terrestrial globe) in the table of contents.

³² See, for example, Xiong Mingyu's 熊明遇 (1579–1649) 'Kunyu wanguo quantu' (Xiong Mingyu 熊明遇, *Gezhi cao* 格致草, 1648, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00080039-2, 152b). Although it shares the title of the 1602 map, it differs in size and configuration. As it was printed in a book, Xiong's map is significantly smaller and centres on the Atlantic instead of the Pacific.

³³ A late eighteenth-century (?) manuscript map now held by Zürich University Library, Switzerland, titled *Kunyu tu* 坤輿圖 (Map of the earth) might have been made without any direct Jesuit involvement. This map only shows two hemispheres without any astronomical information. See Claudia de Morsier-Fritz, 'The recently found map of the world (Kunyu tu 坤輿圖): A philological survey', *Asiatische Studien—Études Asiatiques*, vol. 75, no. 4, 2021, pp. 947–1029.

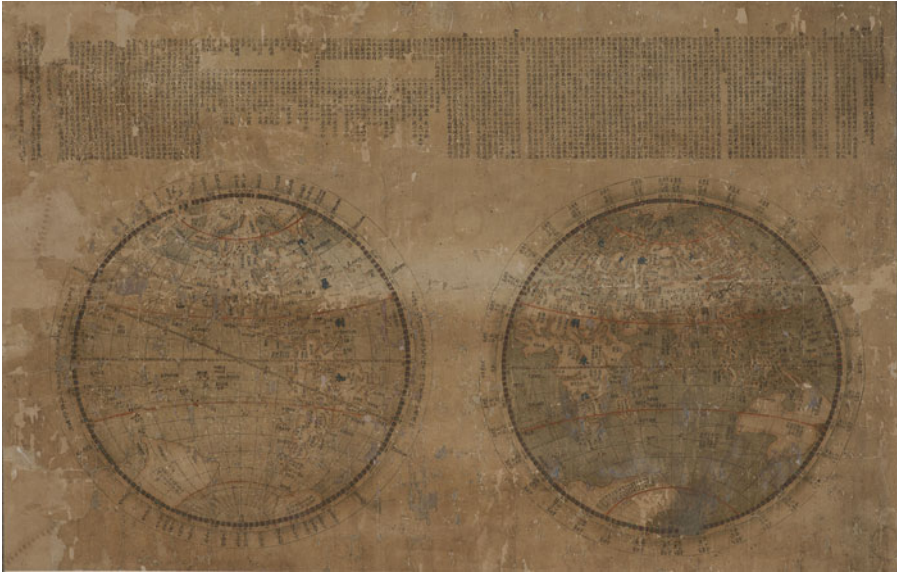


Figure 10. Zhuang Tingfu's *Da Qing tongshu zhigong wanguo jingwei diqiu shi fangyu gujin tu* (1800). 60 × 93 cm. Source: MacLean Collection, MC29773, Illinois, United States of America.

huayi maps, shows a large China at the centre surrounded by annotations of non-Chinese regions, which extend as far west as India and Mecca in Asia, as well as the Americas and Magellanica.³⁴ The similarity in title to the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* is no coincidence: place names of non-Chinese regions were taken from the 1602 map.³⁵ With the term *wanguo* in the title, Liang Zhou expanded the extent of the geographic space mapped without copying strictly from the *Kunyu wanguo quantu* and without necessarily considering the shape of the continents. To Chinese scholars, the terms *wanguo* and *kunyu* therefore represented ways of extending the mapped world compared to contemporary maps of *tianxia*, *huayi*, or the Ming empire, but usage of these terms did not necessitate emulating every aspect of Renaissance mapmaking practices.

For most of the eighteenth century, no maps with *wanguo* in the title seem to have been produced. Only in the final decade was such a map created again: Zhuang Tingfu's 莊廷勇 *Da Qing tongshu zhigong wanguo jingwei diqiu shi fangyu gujin tu* 大清統屬職貢萬國經緯地球式方輿古今圖 (Map of the earth then and now, showing the great Qing, all countries bringing tribute and the globe according to longitude and latitude) with editions extant from 1794 and 1800 (Figure 10).³⁶ The map shows

³⁴Cao Wanru 曹婉如 et al. (eds), *Zhongguo gudai ditu ji: Mingdai* 中国古代地图集: 明代 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1994), plate 145.

³⁵For details, see Cams, 'Circling the square'.

³⁶The 1794 version of the map is combined on a sheet titled *Jingban tianwen diyu quantu* 京版天文地輿全圖 with two other small maps—a world map and a map of one of the two hemispheres; a copy is held in the Library of Congress, Washington, DC, United States of America, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3200.ct003384>, [accessed 2 October 2023]. The 1800 version includes only Zhuang Tingfu's two hemisphere map. On this map, see Richard A. Pegg, *Cartographic traditions in East Asian maps* (Honolulu:

two hemispheres: Eurasia-Africa and Australia on the right and the Americas on the left; the oceans are filled with lines connecting places. Zhuang Tingfu commented on other countries bringing tribute to the Qing court, emphasizing China's central role and connection to the world, mirroring the connected nature of the mapped oceanic space. In the seventeenth and then again in the late eighteenth centuries, the term *wanguo* was consistently used in titles to advertise artefacts that mapped the Americas and other places far from China. Furthermore, on Zhuang Tingfu's late eighteenth-century map, the term *wanguo* displayed an even more cosmopolitan vision in that it showed a world connected by lines.

Not all titles of maps that show this global image of the world make a claim to comprehensiveness. In 1603, Ricci and Li Yingshi 李應試 (1559–1620?) printed a map, titled *Liangyi xuanlan tu* 兩儀玄覽圖 (Mysterious visual map of the two forms), the configuration of which resembles the *Kunyu wanguo quantu*. This title does not use any of the terms such as *wanguo*, *tianxia*, or *kunyu*. Several world maps in Ming geographies that show the Americas are titled 'Shanhai yudi quantu' 山海輿地全圖 (Complete map of mountains, seas, and lands) or, in a rare example, just 'Yudi quantu' 輿地全圖 (Complete map of the lands). The map titled 'Shanhai yudi quantu', which first appeared in a printed book in 1602, served to illustrate the world in subsequent works throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both in books and on sheet maps.³⁷ From the seventeenth century onwards, world maps that showed the Americas, among other places, were therefore using the terms *wanguo*, *diqu*, and *kunyu* to emphasize their comprehensiveness, but certainly not all such maps employed these terms.

Expanding *tianxia* and *sihai*

Although most maps from the time around the Ming-Qing transition with the term *tianxia* in their titles equated *tianxia* with the Ming empire, at first glance two related,

MacLean Collection, University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), pp. 35–42; Smith, *Mapping China*, pp. 77–78. In the nineteenth century the term *wanguo* gained popularity, with several maps as well as books using this term in their title. For a discussion of maps with *wanguo* in the title produced in the mid-nineteenth century, see Richard A. Pegg, 'A Chinese map of the world dated 1858', *Mapline*, no. 125, 2016, pp. 1–11; Zou Zhenhuan 鄒振環, 'Wan Qing shijie ditu de xin jiangou: Cong Wanguo dadi quantu dao Dadi quanqiu yilan zhi tu' 晚清世界地圖的新建構—從《萬國大地全圖》到《大地全球一覽之圖》, 故宮學術季刊, vol. 31, no. 1, 2013, pp. 117–142.

³⁷The earliest extant book that included the 'Shanhai yudi quantu' is Feng Yingjing 馮應京, *Yueling guangyi* 月令廣義, 1602, <https://nrs.lib.harvard.edu/urn-3:fhcl:4739755>, [accessed 28 September 2023], shoujuan, 60b–61a. See also Wang Qi 王圻, *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會, 1609, <https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/img/4210181>, [accessed 28 September 2023], dili 1.2ab. Its replica also appeared as 'Neiban shanhai tianwen quantu' 內板山海天文全圖 on the late eighteenth-century sheet maps by Ma Junliang. On this map, see Roderich Ptak, 'The Sino-European map (*Shanhai yudi quantu*) in the encyclopaedia *Sancai tuhui*', in *The perception of maritime space in traditional Chinese sources*, (eds) Angela Schottenhammer and Roderich Ptak (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), pp. 191–207; Unno Kazutaka 海野一隆, 'Min, Shin ni okeru Mateo Ricchikei sekaizu: Shutoshite shinshiryō no kentō' 明・清におけるマテオ・リッチ系世界図—主として新史料の検討, in *Tōzai chizu bunka kōshōshi kenkyū* 東西地図文化交渉史研究 (Ōsaka: Seibundō, 2003), pp. 33–92, here pp. 72–75. For the world map titled 'Yudi quantu', see Xiong Renlin 熊人霖, *Diwei* 地緯, 1648, <https://lcn.loc.gov/2012402250>, [accessed 2 October 2023], 186a.

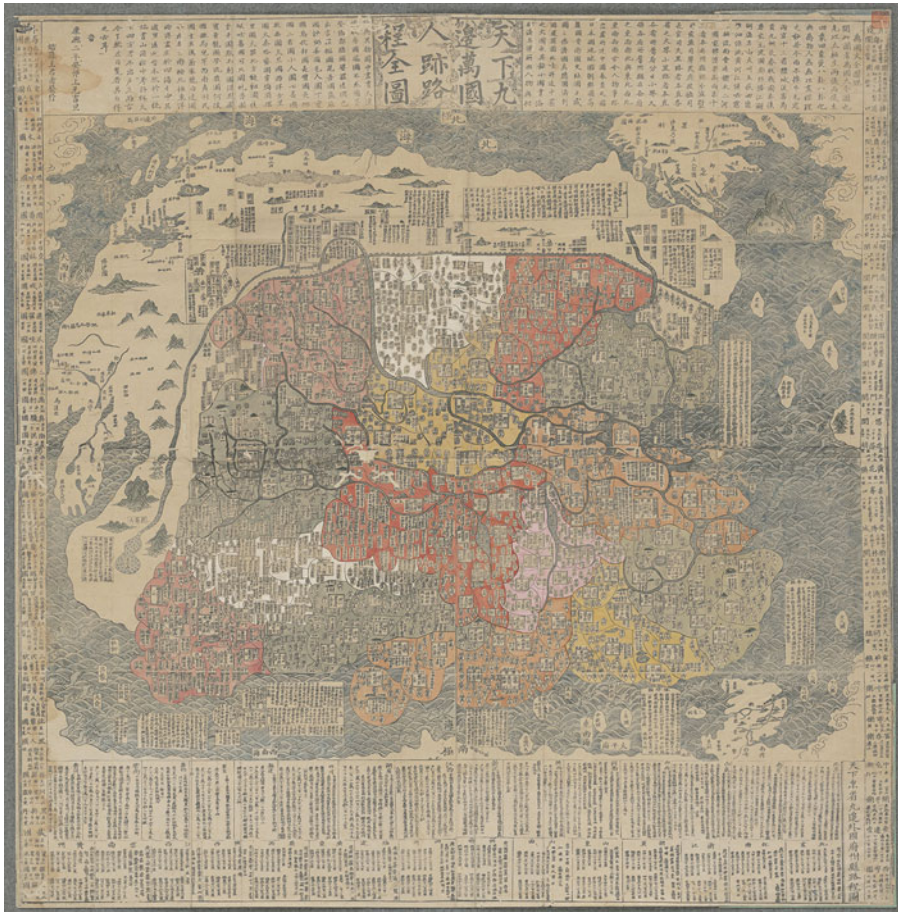


Figure 11. Wang Junfu's *Tianxia jiubian wanguo renji lucheng quantu* (1663). 125 × 123 cm. Source: Yokohama City University Library, Yokohama, Japan.

commercial publications from this period appear to expand the scope of *tianxia*. They combine a Sinocentric vision of the world with a depiction of Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Magellanica mapped at the margins, with the title including the term *tianxia* (Figure 11). The first one is a single sheet published by Cao Junyi 曹君義 in 1644, with the title *Tianxia jiubian fenye renji lucheng quantu* 天下九邊分野人跡路程全圖 (Complete map of *tianxia*, the nine frontiers, astral allocations, human traces, and route itineraries) appearing in large characters in the top.³⁸ The artefact is divided into multiple parts. The world map, combining elements from a map of the Ming empire and the 'Wanguo quantu' (Figure 8), occupies the centre. Textual elements surround it on all sides. In the upper register, a preface titled 'Wanguo da quantu shuo' 萬國大全圖說 (Explanation of the large complete map of all countries) provides an alternative title,

³⁸On this and related maps, see Cams, 'Circling the square'.

highlighting that the map is one of *wanguo*.³⁹ In the lower register, the use of the term *tianxia* is reserved for Chinese provinces: a section titled ‘*Tianxia liangjing shisansheng fuzhouxian lucheng*’ 天下兩京十三省府州縣路程 (An itinerary of the two capitals, thirteen provinces, prefectures, sub-prefectures, and counties of *tianxia*) gives information on distances between administrative units of the Ming empire. The part to the right of the map further explains the geography of the frontier region north of the Ming empire named ‘Nine frontiers’ (*jiubian*), while the register on the left lists foreign countries under the heading *waiguo* 外國 (literally ‘outer countries’). Although the map shows Europe, Africa, and the Americas, no country from these continents appears in the list of *waiguo*. These textual elements around the map clarify several points: the map is one of *wanguo*; the Americas are part of *wanguo*; *tianxia* only extends over the geography of the Ming. The title *Tianxia jiubian fenye renji lucheng quantu* therefore applies to the whole artefact and not just the map on it.

The importance of the term *wanguo* in the title is further emphasized by a map published in 1663 by Wang Junfu 王君甫 that is similar in many respects to Cao Junyi’s map. While keeping the geographic scope, configuration, and textual elements the same, the title of Wang’s artefact is changed to *Tianxia jiubian wanguo renji lucheng quantu* 天下九邊萬國人跡路程全圖 (Complete map of *tianxia*, the nine frontiers, all countries, traces of human presence, and itineraries; Figure 11), thus replacing *fenye* (astral allocations) with *wanguo*. Wang Junfu’s title reflects three of the four textual elements in the margins of the artefact. Although these two artefacts use the term *tianxia* in the title, it was *wanguo* that was the key term indicating the mapping of non-Chinese regions far away from Ming or Qing China. As in the case of Liang Zhou, mapping these far away regions under the umbrella of *wanguo* did not imply strictly following the shape of the continents of earlier maps.

In the eighteenth century, mapmakers expanded the scope of *tianxia* to follow political circumstances, using it to define a new cosmopolitan vision of the Qing empire. When the *Tushu bian* was republished in the late eighteenth century as part of the imperial collection *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, the editors changed the title of the ‘*Huayi gujin xingsheng zhi tu*’ discussed above to ‘*Gujin tianxia xingsheng zhi tu*’ 古今天下形勝之圖 (Map of advantageous terrains of *tianxia* then and now).⁴⁰ Now that Manchus ruled China, the concept of *huayi* had become outdated, and so a new term needed to be found for the title of the map.⁴¹ This expanded the scope of *tianxia* to encompass not only the Ming and Qing empire, but also many of its neighbours. Furthermore, maps of a series, of which most bear the title *Da Qing (wannian) yitong tianxia quantu* 大清(萬年)一統天下全圖 (Complete map of the (everlasting), unified great Qing of *tianxia*), exist in multiple iterations, the earliest extant one dating to 1714.⁴² These maps therefore appeared a few decades after Taiwan and shortly after

³⁹This text does mention the term *tianxia* once, but its description of the extent of *tianxia* is ambiguous. The last sentence states that the map serves to allow the reader to examine *tianxia* and the four directions (*tianxia sifang* 天下四方) without having to leave one’s house.

⁴⁰Zhang Huang 章潢, *Tushu bian* 圖書編, 1782, in *Yingyin wenyuange Siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), pp. 34.4a–5b.

⁴¹On the concept of *huayi* during the Qing, see Matthew W. Mosca, ‘Neither Chinese nor outsiders: Yi and non-Yi in the Qing imperial worldview’, *Asia Major*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2020, pp. 103–146.

⁴²These maps claim descent from a map (*yutu* 輿圖) by Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–1695), which is no longer extant. The 1714 map was prepared by Yan Yong 閻詒 (1709 *jinshi*) and Yang Kaiyuan 楊開沅



Figure 12. Wang Ri'ang's *Tianxia yitong tianxia quantu* (1724). 138 × 117cm. Source: Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea.

Outer Mongolia had become part of the Qing empire. This fact is alluded to in the first sentence of a short note on the 1714 map: 'The expanse of the territory of the present dynasty is unprecedented' 本朝幅員之廣亘古未有. The extent mapped went even beyond the new conquests: the 1714 map mentions several countries in the maritime space south and east of the Qing empire. Eleven years later, in 1725, Wang Ri'ang 汪日昂 extended *tianxia* even further on a map with the same title (Figure 12). In the map's upper left corner, a small ocean includes several islands that designate

with a preface by Yan Yong dated 1714. For a reproduction of this map, see Walter Fuchs, 'Materialien zur Kartographie der Mandju-Zeit II', *Monumenta Serica*, no. 3, 1938, pp. 189–231, between pp. 208 and 209.

European countries (for example, Helan 荷蘭, 'Holland' and Ganxila 干系臘, 'Castille'). These additions reflect the importance of relations between the Qing empire and these places. Furthermore, on the 1725 map, the islands south and east of China are now connected by lines to the Qing state.⁴³

The lines that connect the Qing empire with Southeast Asia on the 1725 map have their origins in a political debate that took place during the last years of the reign of the Kangxi emperor (r. 1661–1722). In 1717, the emperor had banned trade between the Qing empire and Southeast Asia, a ban that was not popular among his officials. To convince the emperor to lift it, the naval commander of Fujian Shi Shipiao 施世驃 (1667–1721) presented him with a map of Southeast Asia that showed the Qing empire clearly connected by lines with the maritime world, highlighting how the Qing empire relied on trade and connections.⁴⁴ This cosmopolitan vision of the Qing empire was then picked up by Wang Ri'ang in his 1725 map, and became the most popular depiction of the Qing empire until at least the mid-nineteenth century, with multiple commercially published maps adapting this spatial configuration with the title *Da Qing (wannian) yitong tianxia quantu*.⁴⁵ They show that *tianxia* was the Qing empire surrounded by its closest neighbours.

During the Ming, these *tianxia* maps showed overlapping concepts of geographical space as understood by the Ming court, scholars, and commercial publishers. During the Qing, however, these concepts diverged. The *Da Qing (wannian) yitong tianxia quantu* do not represent the way the Manchu court understood and mapped the empire. We can observe the court's vision in the three extensive mapping projects of the eighteenth century, in Chinese titled *Huangyu quanlan tu* 皇輿全覽圖 (Overview maps of imperial territories) partly based on extensive land surveys.⁴⁶ Although the maps resulting from these projects also extended the geographic space beyond the strict boundaries of the Qing empire, they focus on continental space and on representing this space in as much detail as possible. From the late eighteenth century onwards, court maps also started to show the boundaries of the Qing empire.⁴⁷ On all the *Da Qing (wannian) yitong tianxia quantu*, however, the exact extent of the Qing empire remained undefined. None of these maps marks the political borders of the empire, and only the desert strip serves somewhat as the only visual, cultural boundary.⁴⁸

Early eighteenth-century scholars not only reconsidered mapping *tianxia*, but also the extent of *sihai*. In 1730, Chen Lunjiong 陳倫炯 completed a book about the maritime world based on what his father had learnt on his travels in Southeast Asia.

⁴³Zhou Xin 周鑫, 'Wang Ri'ang *Da Qing yitong tianxia quantu* yu 17–18 shiji Zhongguo Nanhai zhishi de shengcheng chuandi' 汪日昂《大清一统天下全图》与17–18世纪中国南海知识的生成传递, *Haiyang shi yanjiu* 海洋史研究, no. 14, 2020, pp. 226–253.

⁴⁴Elke Papelitzky, 'Making a case for trade: Shi Shipiao's map of the eastern and southern oceans', *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine*, forthcoming.

⁴⁵For a list and discussion, see Unno, *Chizu bunkashijō no Kōyozu*, pp. 238–256.

⁴⁶Mario Cams, *Companions in geography: East-West collaboration in the mapping of Qing China (c.1685–1735)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017). For scans, see www.qingmaps.org, [accessed 28 September 2023].

⁴⁷See, for example, the map of the Qing empire in the *Da Qing yitong zhi* 大清一统志: Heshen 和珅 et al., *Qinding Da Qing yitong zhi* 钦定大清一统志, 1790, in *Yingyin wenyuange Siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), pp. 1.1b–2a.

⁴⁸Papelitzky, 'Sand, water, and stars', pp. 404–406.

This *Haiguo wenjian lu* 海國聞見錄 (Things heard and seen about maritime countries, published in 1744) includes one hemisphere of a world map titled ‘Sihai zongtu’ 四海總圖 (Complete map of the four seas).⁴⁹ The map shows Europe, Africa, and Australia. A few decades later, a certain Ma Junliang 馬俊良 would explain that the second hemisphere was missing because the *Haiguo wenjian lu* was based on personal travel accounts.⁵⁰ Like the *sihai* map from the Ming, Chen Lunjiong’s map focused on the connected Eurasian landmass. It only expanded on the *sihai* map slightly but does not cover the whole globe (although one could argue that he did indeed map all the oceans). Although eighteenth-century mapmakers used the same terms as their Ming predecessors, for them the scope of *tianxia*, *wanguo*, and *sihai* expanded, serving to contextualize the Qing in the wider world.

Combining maps and terms

The extent of what constitutes *tianxia* can best be grasped when looking at artefacts that combine a map of *tianxia* with other maps. Several seventeenth-century books do just that. Although in the eighteenth century, *tianxia* had become a replacement for the term *huayi*, in the 1640s, scholars still distinguished between the two terms. The *Ditu zongyao* starts with the *huayi* map discussed above (Figure 5), followed by maps of *tianxia* that show essentially the Ming and include barely any non-Chinese place names. Published only a decade earlier, the *Huiji yutu beikao* makes a similar distinction between *tianxia* and the wider world. The first map in this work is a map of the world in two hemispheres (Figure 13).⁵¹ This map is followed by the map of China titled ‘Tianxia zongtu’ (Figure 1), after which the book’s creators inserted maps of every Chinese province. The maps are arranged from the largest to the smallest, indicating that the geographic space of the subsequent maps is part of the previous one. The two-hemisphere map encompasses *tianxia* but shows much more.

This idea that *tianxia* was only a part of a more extensive world is not unique to these seventeenth-century works but can also be gleaned from eighteenth-century sources. One example is the 1722 *Sancai yiguan tu* 三才一貫圖 (Aligned illustration of the three powers [i.e. heaven, earth, humankind]), an artefact combining multiple maps, illustrations, and textual elements on one sheet of paper (see Figures 14–16).⁵² At the top of the sheet is a circular world map titled ‘Tiandi quantu’ 天地全圖 (Complete map of heaven and earth) showing Eurasia, Africa, the Americas, and Magellanica. To this

⁴⁹Chen Lunjiong 陳倫炯, *Haiguo wenjian lu* 海國聞見錄, 1744, in the National Library of China, Beijing, China, juan 2.

⁵⁰Ma Junliang makes this statement on the *Jingban tianwen quantu* 京版天文全圖 (Complete map of the writings of heaven printed in the capital). For a scan, see, for example, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b52519593q>, [accessed 4 October 2023].

⁵¹The title of the map in the table of contents is ‘Tianwen chandu si da buzhou tu’ 天文纏度四大部洲圖 (Map of the heaven entwined by degrees with the four continents), while on the pages of the map itself, the title is given simply as ‘Chandu tu’ 纏度圖 (Map of entwined degrees).

⁵²This map was made by members of the Lü 呂 family; <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/gmd/g7820.ct002402>, [accessed 28 September 2023]. Its elements and composition are explored in Ouyang Nan 欧阳楠, ‘Zhongxi wenhua tiaoshi zhong de qian jindai zhishi xitong: Meiguo guohui tushuguan cang “Sancai yiguan tu” yanjiu’ 中西文化调适中的前近代知识系统——美国国会图书馆藏《三才一贯图》研究, *Zhongguo lishi dili luncong* 中国历史地理论丛, vol. 27, no. 03, 2012, pp. 133–145.

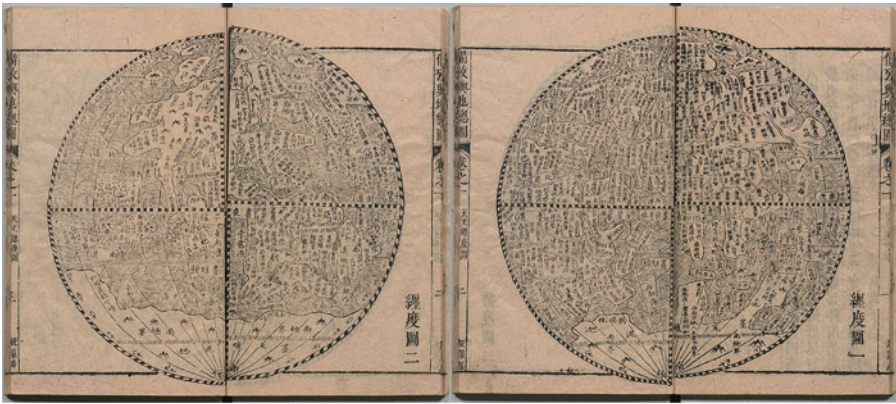


Figure 13. The 'Chandu tu' in *Huiji yutu beikao quantu* (1633) showing the Americas. The map is followed by the 'Tianxia zongtu' (Figure 1). Source: National Archives of Japan, Tokyo, Japan.

map's lower left is a square map titled 'Da Qing wannian yitong tianxia quantu' showing the Qing empire and a few islands in the sea. By labelling the map of the Qing empire as a map of *tianxia* but giving the map showing Europe, Africa, and the Americas a different title, the designers of the *Sancai yiguan tu* made it clear that these faraway continents were not part of *tianxia*. In his *Haiguo wenjian lu* Chen Lunjiong makes a similar distinction. Only the geography of the coast of China is described under the term *tianxia*; for everything beyond, he uses terms such as *dongyang* 東洋 (eastern ocean) or *nanyang* 南洋 (southern ocean).⁵³ His 'Sihai zongtu', showing all of Asia, Africa, and Europe, is a map inclusive of *tianxia* but not of *tianxia*. In essence, all these artefacts show that *tianxia* was only part of a wider world—a wider world that in many cases included the Americas and other faraway parts of the world.⁵⁴

While the titles of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century maps co-authored by Jesuits do not use the term *tianxia* to showcase a global outlook, works (co-)written by Jesuits still engaged with the term *tianxia*. From the sixteenth century, we have examples of the translation of the term *tianxia* into Latin varying between designating the whole globe (*orbis terrarum*) and China (*regnum, locus regius*) in a single document. However, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century geographical sources use *tianxia* to

⁵³In the *Haiguo wenjian lu*, the section on the geography of the coast of the Qing is titled: 'Tianxia yanhai xingshi lu' 天下沿海形勢錄 (Record of the shape of the coast of *tianxia*).

⁵⁴These artefacts are reminiscent of Ma Junliang's late eighteenth-century *Jingban tianwen quantu*. The *Jingban tianwen quantu* combines a replica of the 'Sihai zongtu' of the *Haiguo wenjian lu* and the circular world map (which had appeared as 'Shanghai yudi quantu' in many earlier works) in the upper register with a map of the Qing empire titled 'Yudi quantu' 輿地全圖 (Complete map of the land). Although the configuration of the 'Yudi quantu' is the same as that of many of the eighteenth-century *tianxia* maps, the term *tianxia* is not mentioned. In considering this a *tianxia* map, Smith, *Mapping China*, p. 75, argues that by combining the three maps, Ma 'gives the viewers an epistemological choice. Rather than trying to reconcile the two versions, Ma leaves the issue open.' However, nowhere does the map of the Qing empire claim to be a map of the world; it is only a map of the land. Like the other eighteenth-century examples, this map shows that the Qing empire was part of a wider world.

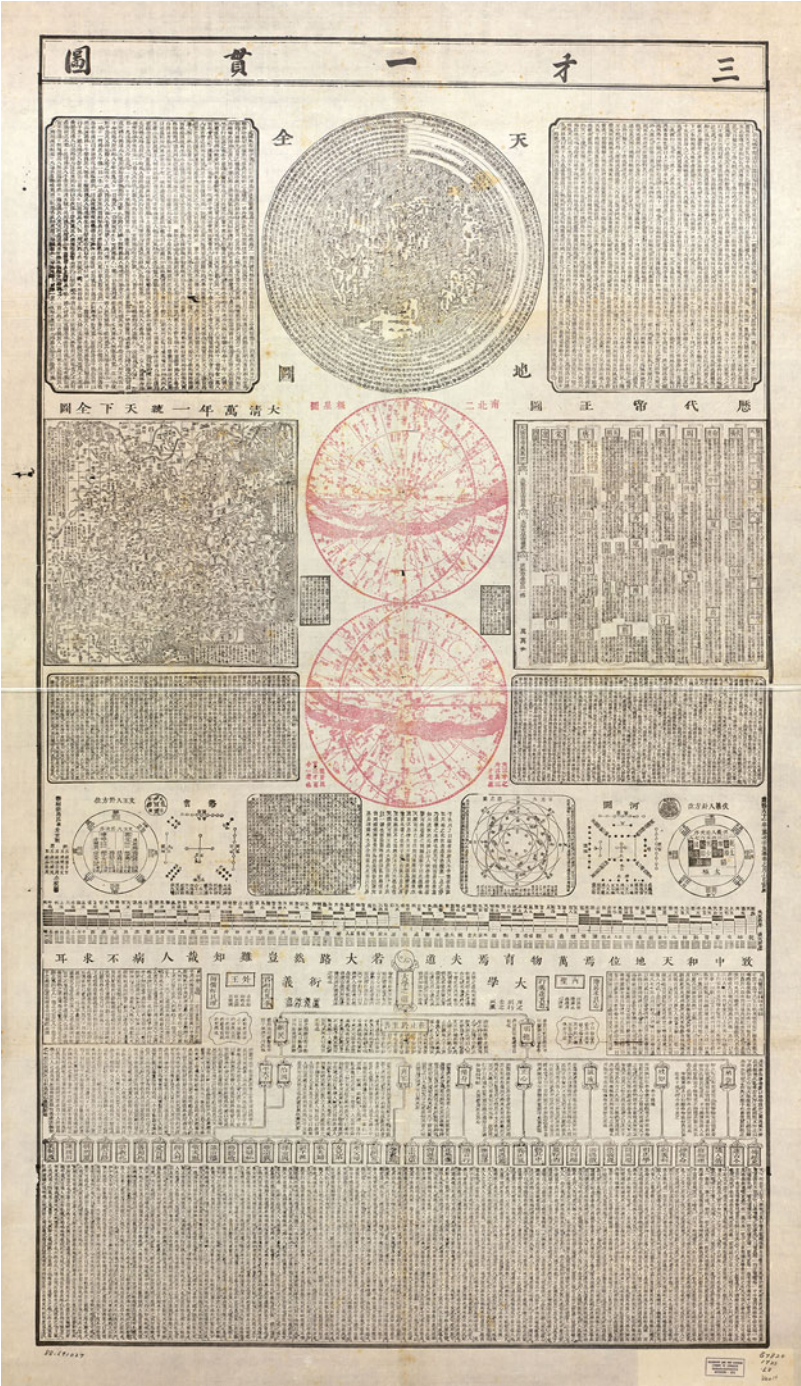


Figure 14. *Sancai yiguan tu* (1722). 155 × 89 cm. Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Washington, DC, United States of America.

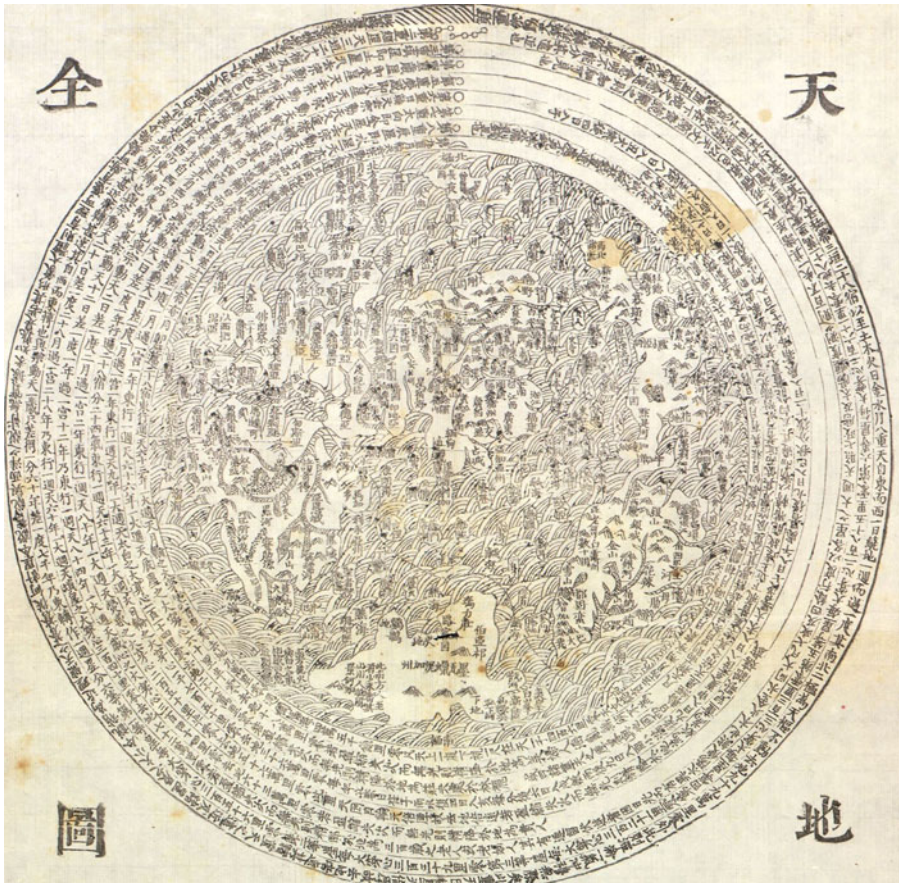


Figure 15. 'Tiandi quantu' on the *Sancai yiguan tu* (Figure 14).

mean the whole globe.⁵⁵ The *Zhifang waiji* for example, starts the chapters on Asia, Europe, and Africa with a statement about the continents being part of *tianxia* ('Asia is a continent of *tianxia*' 亞細亞者天下一大州也; 'The name of the second continent of *tianxia* is Europe' 天下第二大州名曰歐羅巴; 'The third continent of *tianxia* is called Libya [Africa]' 天下第三大州曰利未亞). The description of America is less clear, as the text does not mention *tianxia* in the first introductory sentence: 'America is the general name for the fourth continent' 亞墨利加第四大州總名也.⁵⁶ However, according

⁵⁵ Michele Ferrero, 'The Latin translations of Confucian terminology on government and rule in a 16th century manuscript of Michele Ruggieri, S.J.', in *Empire and politics in the Eastern and Western civilizations: Searching for a Respublica Romanosinica*, (eds) Andrea Balbo, Jaewon Ahn and Kihoon Kim (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), pp. 83–110, here p. 90.

⁵⁶ Giulio Aleni 艾儒略 and Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠, *Zhifang waiji* 職方外紀, Hangzhou 1623, www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko08/bunko08_c0488, [accessed 4 October 2023], 1.1a; 2.1a; 3.1a; 4.1a. In the case of Magellanica, only the second Fuzhou edition explains that 'The fifth continent of *tianxia* is called Magellanica' (5.1a). On the editions of the *Zhifang waiji*, see Yongjie Wang, 'Explaining European geography: The *Zhifang Waiji* and its editions', in *Remapping the world in East Asia*, (eds) Cams and Papelitzky.

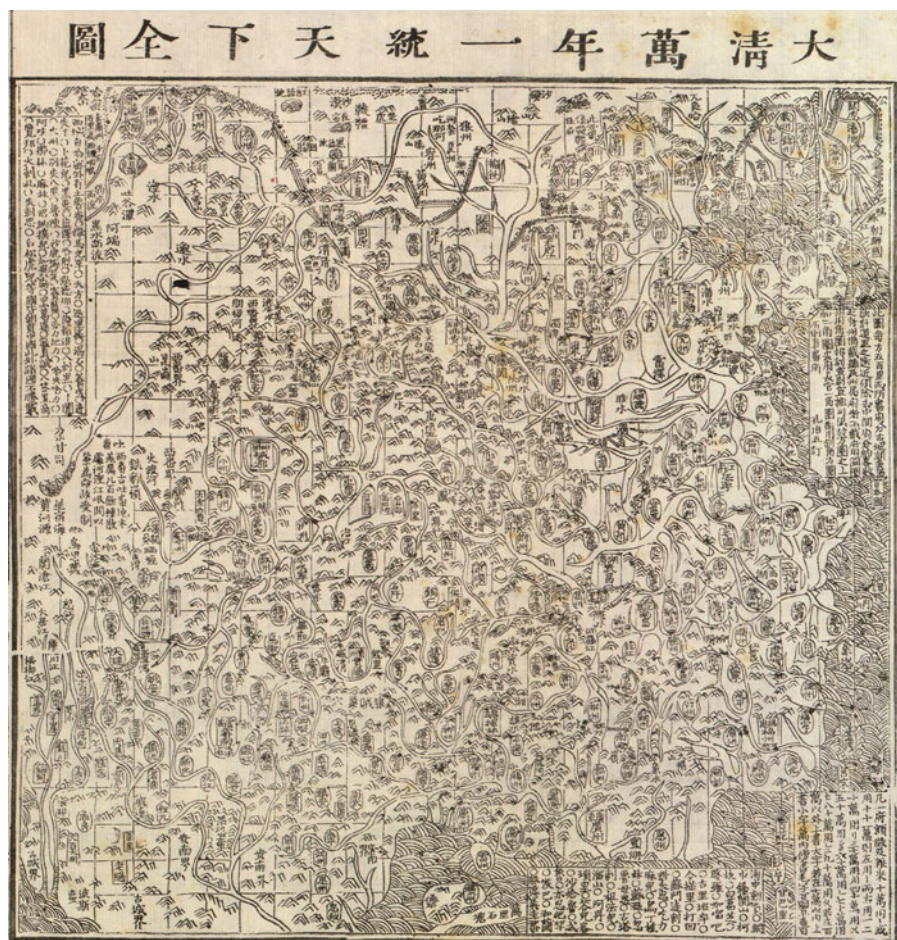


Figure 16. 'Da Qing wannian yitong tianxia quantu' on the *Sancai yiguan tu* (Figure 14).

to the rest of the description, America is clearly part of *tianxia* as well. Aleni and Yang even go as far as to state: 'The area [of the Americas] is extremely extensive, they share an equal half of *tianxia*' 地方極光平分天下之半.⁵⁷ Verbiest's geography book also includes several sections where *tianxia* is described as the equivalent of the whole globe.⁵⁸ In these Jesuit co-authored works, the Americas clearly belonged to *tianxia*.

Later Chinese scholars throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who read and reworked the *Zhifang waiji* tended to avoid the book's frequent use of *tianxia*.

⁵⁷ Aleni and Yang Tingyun, *Zhifang waiji*, 4.1a.

⁵⁸ A glimpse into the table of contents of his *Kunyu tushuo* 坤輿圖說 (Illustrated exposition of the earth) already shows this. The book includes, for example, a brief essay titled: 'All countries of *tianxia* are divided onto five continents' 天下萬國總分五大洲. Ferdinand Verbiest, *Kunyu tushuo* 坤輿圖說, 1674, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9006098w>, [accessed 4 October 2023], *mulu*, 1a.

Xiong Renlin 熊人霖 (1604–1667), for example, drawing from the *Zhifang waji* in his own world geography, starts the description of each continent in a similar manner to the earlier text. He writes that ‘Dazhanna [Asia] is the first continent of *tianxia* 大膽納者天下一大州也’. For all other continents, however, he avoids the term *tianxia*, only stating at the beginning of the chapters ‘the second continent is called Europe 次二之州曰歐羅巴’, ‘the third is called the continent of Africa 次三曰利未亞之州’, and ‘the fourth is called the continent of America 次四曰亞墨利加之州’, despite the *Zhifang waji* having clearly labelled Europe and Africa as continents of *tianxia*.⁵⁹ Although Xiong Renlin did not remove all references to *tianxia*, this rephrasing nevertheless shows a reluctance to extend *tianxia* to all continents.⁶⁰ Other scholars were more drastic in their rebuttal of the expansion of *tianxia* to include the whole known world: Chen Zushou 陳組綬 argues against the idea of China being one small country among many. He particularly takes issue with the claim of *tianxia* consisting of five continents, explaining that all of *tianxia* belongs to the Ming emperor.⁶¹ And while the editors of the *Siku quanshu tiyao* had summarized the *Zhifang waji*, claiming that ‘*tianxia* is divided into five continents 分天下為五大洲’, in the eighteenth century, Zhuang Tingfu slightly changed the wording to say: ‘*yudi* (earth) is divided into five continents 分輿地為五大洲’ in the introduction to his map.⁶² All these artefacts show that geographical texts co-authored by Jesuits describe *tianxia* as being equivalent to the whole globe—the *orbis terrarum*—while Ming and Qing scholars presented *tianxia* as only a part of the greater world.

Conclusion: Where is *tianxia*?

Looking at maps with the term *tianxia* in the title allows us to reconstruct Chinese ideas of cosmopolitanism. *Tianxia* implies a certain idea of cosmopolitanism—the idea that everything is connected ‘under heaven’ with China at the centre. What constitutes ‘everything’ is ambiguous. By looking at maps, we can address the question of the location of *tianxia*. The maps discussed in this article reveal a shift in meaning. The political uncertainties and the change of power in the mid-seventeenth century, both before and after the Qing conquest of Beijing, reinforced the idea that *tianxia* was geographically the same as the Ming empire. The Qing empire expanded from the late seventeenth century onwards, and so did *tianxia*. At this point, *tianxia* was not equivalent to the extent of the empire: it included places further away in Europe and Southeast Asia. It remained, however, a clearly hierarchical way of representing the world: the Qing empire was the centre and the largest area on the maps. Jesuits, on the other hand, had a broader concept of the meaning of *tianxia*; in their writing,

⁵⁹ Xiong Renlin, *Diwei*, 10a, 115a, 141a, 154a. On the change of the name of Asia to Dazhanna, see Zhang, *Making the new world their own*, pp. 335–337.

⁶⁰ The statement of the Americas sharing a half of *tianxia* is still there, although slightly rephrased compared to the *Zhifang waji*. Xiong Renlin, *Diwei*, 154b.

⁶¹ Chen Zushou 陳組綬, *Huang Ming zhifang ditu* 皇明職方地圖, 1636, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55009451t>, [accessed 4 October 2023], *huowen* 4ab. For a summary and discussion of the preface, see Akin, *East Asian cartographic print culture*, pp. 178–181.

⁶² Giulio Aleni 艾儒略, *Zhifang waji* 職方外紀, 1781, in *Yingyin Wenyuange Siku quanshu* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), *tiyao* 1a.

they included under *tianxia* the whole globe, as they knew it. However, this usage is not reflected in the maps they (co)authored, and neither was it followed by most Ming and Qing writers. The Americas, Africa, and Australia were not part of Chinese scholars' mapped *tianxia*.

Instead, these continents appear in maps with titles including terms like *wanguo* and *kunyu*. The creation of many of these world maps and the application of these terms in the titles were cosmopolitan processes. Ricci, Aleni, and Schall von Bell could not have produced these maps without Li Zhizao, Yang Tingyun, Huang Honxian, and Zhu Guangda who are explicitly credited in the artefacts, as well as the many uncredited helpers. Neither *wanguo* nor *kunyu* were terms invented in the seventeenth century, but they turned out to be fitting descriptors of the contents of the artefacts and it was this cooperation that led to the terms appearing in titles. Chinese scholars followed in the footsteps of these concretely cosmopolitan processes of mapmaking, resulting in expressions that showcased ideas of cosmopolitanism and the inclusion of faraway places by keeping the terms *wanguo* and *kunyu*. However, this does not mean that mapmakers followed the configurations of continents of the collaborative maps. Ideas of an ever-expanding world and the existence of the Americas could be included in Ming and Qing maps without having to comply with every aspect of Renaissance mapping. Aside from the difference in the understanding of the extent of *tianxia* between Jesuits and Chinese scholars, the ideas of the geographic extent of *tianxia*, *wanguo*, and *kunyu* are extremely consistent throughout the whole corpus of Ming and Qing maps that I examined, regardless of the materiality of the map, origins of the author, or printing place.

In Korea and Japan, mapmakers produced a wide range of maps with titles in Chinese characters that use the terms *tianxia* (K. *cheonha*, J. *tenka*) and *wanguo* (K. *man-guk*, J. *bankoku*). However, the usage of these words differed significantly from that of Ming and Qing China. In Joseon Korea, the term *cheonha* was employed much more frequently but less consistently. It could designate a map of the Chinese state surrounded by neighbouring countries, but it could also be the title of a world map in Korean atlases. These *Cheonha do* atlas maps form their own genre of world maps, drawing the continent in a circular shape surrounded by another ring of landmass. They are particular to Korean mapping. Some Korean atlases replaced these maps with configuration of landmasses taken from the 'Shanhai yudi quantu' or the 'Wanguo quantu'.⁶³ In Korea, the Americas could thus be part of *tianxia/cheonha*. In Japan, on the other hand, the term *tenka* hardly made it onto any maps, and Japanese mapmakers even replaced it when replicating Chinese maps.⁶⁴ Instead, the term *bankoku*

⁶³Yang Yulei, 'From China to Korea: Kim Suhong's *Cheonha gogeu daechong pyeollam do*', in *Remapping the world in East Asia*, (eds) Cams and Papelitzky; Soh Jeanyoung, 'Utopia and dystopia: *Cheonha do* and the reception of Renaissance geography in Late Joseon Korea', in *Remapping the world in East Asia*, (eds) Cams and Papelitzky.

⁶⁴See, for example, the Japanese reprint of Wang Junfu's map that was published around 1705 in Kyoto. One of the very few differences between the Chinese and Japanese print is the title, which was changed from *Tianxia jiubian/Tenka kyūhen...* to *Da Ming jiubian/Dai Min kyūhen...* For a scan, see, for example, <https://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0213167>, [accessed 28 September 2023]. However, not all Japanese mapmakers erased the traces of *tianxia* in the maps of China they produced. See Unno Kazutaka 海野一隆, 'Edo jidai kankō no Ajia shoiki chizu' 江戸時代刊行のアジア諸地域図, in *Tōyō chirigaku shi no kenkyū: Nihon hen* 東洋地理学史の研究: 日本編 (Osaka: Seibundō, 2005), pp. 335–424.

became an important concept. While Chinese mapmakers used the term sparingly and did not have a consistent way to identify maps that showed the Americas, nearly all world maps produced in the seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries in Japan do so.⁶⁵ *Bankoku* was even used in the title of Buddhist world maps.⁶⁶ Despite a rich exchange of maps between China, Korea, and Japan, terms and concepts were not necessarily preserved when moving from one region to another.

Tianxia maps have been presented as evidence that Qing mapmakers did not pay attention to, or were ignorant of, places far away. However, I would like to propose the opposite: these maps are evidence of a cosmopolitan Qing empire, an empire that was without doubt connected to other parts of the world, as the lines in the ocean very explicitly show. Regions further away were not mapped because they were not part of *tianxia*, but many mapmakers were well aware of their existence and made a conscious choice not to include them within *tianxia*, as the artefacts combining multiple maps show. The Americas might not have been part of *tianxia*, but this does not mean they were not part of the *world* and known space of the collective knowledge of Ming and Qing scholars. On these maps, *tianxia* is cosmopolitan not because it designates the whole known world, but because it shows the Qing empire connected to other parts of the world.

Acknowledgements. I would like to thank Annie Chan and Pamela Kyle Crossley for their careful editing of this article which helped me to refine my argument. Furthermore, I am grateful to Mario Cams and the members of the Early Modern History reading group at KU Leuven who read and commented on an earlier draft.

Funding statement. This research was supported by and contributes to the ERC AdG project TRANSPACIFIC, which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme (Grant agreement No. 833143).

Competing interests. The author declares none.

⁶⁵For a carto-bibliography, see Toshikazu Kaida, *World maps published in Tokugawa Japan: An illustrated catalog* (Tokyo: Ars Medica, 2022).

⁶⁶For example, Hōtan's 鳳潭 (1659–1738) Buddhist world map *Nansenbushū bankoku shōka no zu* 南瞻部洲萬國掌葉之圖 (Handy map of all countries of Jambudvīpa, 1710). See D. Max Moerman, *The Japanese Buddhist world map: Religious vision and the cartographic imagination* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2022), esp. pp. 176–205.

Cite this article: Papelitzky, Elke. 2025. 'Mapping *tianxia* and mapping the world: Cosmopolitan ideas in geographic sources of fifteenth- to eighteenth-century China'. *Modern Asian Studies*, pp. 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X23000306>